

**Manifestations of Cultural Change:  
Alsatian Identity between 1871 and the Interwar Period.  
Three Case Studies.**

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degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Modern Languages, October 2012.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

From 1871 up to the 1920s, Alsace, a region on the border between France and Germany, was forced to change its national affiliation several times. How, in this context, did the cultural identity of Alsace evolve? With what, and with whom, did Alsatians identify with, and why? In my exploration I will focus on three case studies. Their selection is determined by three criteria: one is that it is of importance to consider issues a vast majority of the population could relate to. Secondly, these case studies will mostly focus on Strasbourg. This is the capital of the region, its cultural centre and the location that France and Germany engaged with most. Finally, the selection is aided by the consideration that cultural identity is closely linked with the appropriation of particular spaces that are reconfigured according to changing socio-political contexts.

I will therefore first examine the historical development between 1871 and the 1920s, and embed into this the debate that surrounded the new imperial architecture in Strasbourg. This will be followed by an analysis of the promotional devices found in selected travel guides about Alsace that span several decades. Finally, I shall consider the more particular vision of Alsace promoted in caricatures by Hansi and Zislin, which draw upon regional attachments and national stereotypes and prejudices, but also determine clear and recognisable settings that Alsatians could easily engage with.

These case studies will show how Alsatian identity was promoted and challenged in daily life (and in specific spaces), which included, at times, propagandistic discourses, in order to make an assessment of the extent to which Alsatian identity evolved during a period of conflicting loyalties for the population.

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## INTRODUCTION

À travers ses paysages et son climat moral particulier, l'Alsace se montre au premier regard comme habitée par les souvenirs d'une histoire ballottée entre la France et l'Allemagne, par une mémoire-frontière qui reflète les grandes heures et les malheurs de toute l'histoire européenne depuis le Moyen Âge. Le paradoxe est bien que cette terre qui doit tant à la culture germanique ait affirmé son attachement à la France avec une telle intensité.<sup>1</sup>

Even in the twenty-first century Alsatian identity remains a subject of debate. Aspects today, just as much as in the past, include such diverse topics as language, gender, literature, history, politics and religion. Furthermore, besides their unique regional administrative systems, a few typically Alsatian attitudes still show that Alsatians consider themselves, consciously or not, to be different and somewhat separate from the rest of France, without acknowledging completely their Germanic characteristics. Where does this ambivalence concerning their affiliation and heritage come from? How does this affect identity? To answer these questions, this thesis endeavours to approach the topic of Alsatian identity during its most formative period, the years between 1871 up to the 1920s, first under German and then under French rule. My focus is on a selection of places and objects that proved relatively easy to shape, adapt and to make appear authentic within different political settings, thereby feeding into what Pierre Nora was to establish as *lieux de mémoire*. The selection is shaped by one particular criterion, namely the relevance these examples played in Alsatians', and in particular Strasbourg's daily life, which would make them easier to identify with. Architectural ventures and their inauguration, caricatures and travel-guides have in common that they usually relate to the majority of a population. They can be part of propaganda and political processes, but their impact is long-term and integral to an awareness of authenticity that proves crucial, in particular in a border region. For this reason, my case studies seek to avoid both the more folkloristic and literary examples of cultural identity. However, at the same time it needs to be acknowledged that in particular new architecture and caricatures were understood in terms of their

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Marie Mayeur, 'Une mémoire-frontière: L'Alsace,' in Pierre Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997; first publ. 1984), I, 1148.



propagandistic impetus as well, bridging a precarious divide between the old and the new, the traditional and seemingly authentic, and the interests that France and Germany pursued. While aspects of Alsatian identity have been studied before, these case studies are not only relevant for the topic of identity, but it is my conviction that their combination in this timeframe is also a novelty in the field.

Caricatures in daily newspapers and accessible publications, architecture that marks the capital's centre and as such finds multiple echoes in the press, and the introductions to popular travel-guides, present responses at particular points in time to a potential sense of crisis. As outlined in the historical framework in the first chapter, this sense of crisis determined peoples' cultural awareness for over fifty years under changing political constellations. Whilst no doubt shaped by political impetus, what these case studies have in common is a sense of cultural space: the 'typical' villages that made Alsace, and the centre of its capital, Strasbourg, all of which the local and international tourist was able to explore under guidance. German and French authorities consecutively sought to influence regional culture, in association with their political endeavours for the region.

In support of my arguments, in each chapter I focus on a particular individual, who highlights the importance of personalities in the context of the dynamics of change. They are those who, with different degrees of popularity and eminence, lend their voices to shared concerns or matters of interest. Curt Mündel became a by-word for Alsatian travel-guides. Hansi is to this day, a primary reference for 'typical Alsatian' caricatures. The Kaiser is used in relation to the major efforts to be made in terms of an amalgamation of cultures and ideas.

The first chapter, which is concerned with the historical framework, includes autobiographical references in relation to Alsace, which highlight the controversial reality of cultural identity and its communication. I showcase the awareness that Alsatians had of the French and German presence and, importantly, their impact, which over time became integral to a regional identity at once precarious and celebrated. Furthermore, this study is, albeit not exclusively, focused on the regional capital of Strasbourg, since it defined Alsace for both the French and the Germans and was the cultural reference

point for the whole region. Importantly, in Strasbourg more people were able to speak and read French, at the time, than in the rest of the region. This approach is also favoured by Jean-Marie Mayeur, in his essay included in Nora's work, which epitomises Strasbourg in the context of the culture of Alsace: 'Strasbourg: le promeneur qui découvre la ville a, en peu d'instant, la révélation de toute la sédimentation de cette longue mémoire visible dans la pierre.'<sup>2</sup>

The first chapter establishes the situation in Alsace following the Franco-Prussian War right up to the interwar years and provides the background as to how contemporary history may translate into questions of identity. The chapter thus identifies periods of particular tension, which triggered cultural reflections. Travel-guides, then, directly refer to (at least some of) these historical events, and have a promotional and informative function. Therefore they reveal references to an 'agreeable' history such as Strasbourg's cathedral or its medieval importance, but they also highlight selected aspects in the region that show shifts in perception. The guides focus on picturesque aspects to advertise the region to people outside Alsace in an 'authentic' manner, even while some of them clearly target Alsatians themselves and try, based on selection and focus, to foster a sense of belonging in terms of progress and identity. Importantly, it is the introductions to various editions that betray the agenda to understand the region and its capital in view of changing political parameters.

Then comes the chapter on architecture (an element often advertised in travel-guides), which uses extracts from the local press to explore the impact and reception of imperial architecture in Strasbourg at the time of its construction. This process reveals issues of identity as well as propagandistic manifestations of power structures, affirming the presence of an occupying power while the inauguration of the new buildings made sure to establish a strong awareness of a local event.

Finally comes the 'colourful' opposition to this imperial vision, shown through popular media in order to appeal to a larger audience. To this day Hansi and Zislin are household names in Alsace. Hansi – the better known amongst the two – stresses the folklore element in his drawings in order to promote Alsatian

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<sup>2</sup> Mayeur, I, 1148.

identity and pro-French propaganda. He promotes a 'perfect' rural Alsace and is fundamentally anti-German. Zislin's message is more political and ambivalent, and comments on contemporary events for an Alsatian audience in his caricatures, in contrast to Hansi, who seeks to promote, from his perspective, an 'authentic' image of Alsace to a non-Alsatian French audience. This chapter serves to show that both pursued a political agenda, but did so with the help of a strong local awareness, thereby grounding contemporary history in idealised or real places that their audiences were able to relate to.

## State of Research

The following provides a brief discussion of essential recent literature on Alsace that is concerned with various aspects of cultural identity.<sup>3</sup> It is indicative that the period between 1871 and 1918 has attracted most of the attention and this is mirrored in specific historical, gender-related and literary angles. However, what is missing and what this study seeks to address is the appropriation of real, changed, political and idealised spaces that determined Alsatian identity in day to day lives and thereby allowed for immediate reference points in transitional periods.

Marc Lienhard's assessment of Alsatian identity remains proof of the validity of a predominantly chronological approach: *Histoire (et aléas) de l'identité alsacienne*<sup>4</sup> emphasises the author's personal history with Alsace. Concepts of

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<sup>3</sup> More details on the Alsatian cultural identity can be found in older studies. Such as: Stephen L. Harp, *Learning to Be Loyal: Primary Schooling as Nation Building in Alsace and Lorraine, 1850-1940* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1998). Bernard Vogler, *Histoire culturelle de l'Alsace: Du Moyen Âge à nos jours, les très riches heures d'une région frontalière*, La bibliothèque alsacienne (Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue / DNA, 1993). Bonnie Menes Kahn, *My Father Spoke French: Nationalism and Legitimacy in Alsace, 1871-1914* (New York; London: Garland, 1990). Eugène Philipps, *La Crise d'identité: l'Alsace face à son destin* (Strasbourg: Société d'Édition de la Basse-Alsace, 1978). However, on Jewish identity, see: Vicki Caron, *Between France and Germany: The Jews of Alsace-Lorraine, 1871-1918* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988). On languages in Alsace, see: Pierre Klein, *Langues d'Alsace et pourquoi les Alsaciens renoncent-ils à leur bilinguisme? / Sprachen des Elsass und warum verzichten die Elsässer auf ihre Zweisprachigkeit?* (Haguenaue: Editions Nord Alsace, 2007). For a history of Alsace from an Alsatian perspective, see: Bernard Wittmann, *Die Geschichte des Elsass: Eine Innenansicht* (Kehl: Morstadt, 2009). Finally, for questions on Alsatian identity but during an earlier timeframe than the one used in this thesis, see: Claudia Nowak, *Was ist des Elsässers Vaterland? Die Konstruktion regionaler und nationaler Identitäten in einer Grenzregion zwischen Frankreich und Deutschland in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts (1813-1848)* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Marc Lienhard, *Histoire (et aléas) de l'identité alsacienne* (Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue, 2011). As a side note: Marc Lienhard is related to the Alsatian poet and writer Friedrich Lienhard (1865-1929), who chose to favour his German side in reaction to the Alsatians' rejection of Germany (in favour of France) after the Franco-Prussian War. He mentions him in his 'Avant-

religion and language play a pivotal role in his analysis (which thus differs from mine), through which he seeks to 'saisir le mieux possible le devenir de cette région au cours des siècles et de cerner l'identité ou les identités dans l'Alsace d'aujourd'hui.'<sup>5</sup> He defines two types of identity for Alsace: the identity 'attribuée',<sup>6</sup> which comes from an external perspective, given by someone or something outside the group or individual, and the identity 'vécue ou postulée par les intéressés,' which is 'le regard que les Alsaciens portent sur eux-mêmes, sur leur histoire et sur leur vécu; c'est leur manière de vivre et d'agir.'<sup>7</sup> These types of identity are particularly interesting and can be related to the 'insider/outsider' perspective that I consider in my second chapter. To strengthen his case, Lienhard uses various 'référents identitaires,' such as history and geography, as well as 'référents culturels,'<sup>8</sup> such as religion and language. He also tackles the temporality of the sense of identity and its link to memory, traditions and collective history, which is compatible with Nora's approach. As is common for Alsace, the issues of assimilation and autonomy also play a role in this debate over the crystallisation of an Alsatian identity – or rather multiple identities, as he sensibly argues. Lienhard's perspective on Alsatian history in this publication is thus actually another study of the formation and evolution of Alsatian identity throughout the ages, which highlights the importance of a number of repetitive features in any study on the subject, such as bilingualism or the role of religion in the region.

*Identität im Wandel: Die Elsässer*<sup>9</sup> emphasises the need for protecting local identities in a globalised world and provides a long-term historical perspective for Alsace, with the help of an account of distinctive periods in its history. For Lienhard, the importance of the French Revolution is worth special consideration, not least in view of the importance of the association with French culture and history, combined with the rather emotive aspect of the 'Freiheitserlebnis' that the Germans subsequently had to deal with:

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propos' (p. 9) when he explains his family's relationships with France and Germany throughout several generations.

<sup>5</sup> Lienhard, *Histoire (et aléas) de l'identité alsacienne*, p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> Lienhard, *Histoire (et aléas) de l'identité alsacienne*, p. 16.

<sup>7</sup> Lienhard, *Histoire (et aléas) de l'identité alsacienne*, p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> Lienhard, *Histoire (et aléas) de l'identité alsacienne*, p. 18.

<sup>9</sup> Marc Lienhard, *Identität im Wandel: Die Elsässer* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2010).

Insgesamt jedoch hat das Freiheitserlebnis, das mit der Revolution verbunden war, die elsässische Bevölkerung nachhaltig geprägt. Dies gilt auch für die napoleonische Ära: mehrere Generäle Napoleons stammten aus dem Elsass, und aufgrund bestimmter Neuregelungen entstand im Elsass so etwas wie eine Kaiserkult.<sup>10</sup>

Lienhard defines the characteristics of Alsatian identity by perusing different aspects of identity within this framework, most notably the dialect and the importance of eminent personalities. Hansi and Stoskopf, he argues (and I agree), partake in the building of a common identity for Alsatians, through personal or collective experiences. The reminiscence of an idealised France brings Lienhard to his differentiation between an oppressed and an 'open' identity. The oppression originates from post-war periods, when assimilation policies were strict on behalf of both German and French authorities, and propaganda was powerful. I will consider this in my first chapter. Lienhard stresses 'stark erlebte Zeiten,' times of increased perception due to particular dramas that combine collective and personal experiences in the light of contemporary identity, and this assertion goes some way in explaining the pronounced interest in this particular period.

Like Lienhard's *Histoire (et aléas) de l'identité alsacienne*, François Roth's *Alsace-Lorraine: Histoire d'un 'pays perdu': de 1870 à nos jours*,<sup>11</sup> studies (in part) Alsatian identity through history, but Roth focuses on the creation of 'Alsace-Lorraine' as a region during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 and its evolution through time and until the present day. His interest lies in the persistence of this expression in society and the *imaginaire national* (either in France or Germany), and its heritage – juridical, cultural, religious, and patrimonial – whose traces are still present today in Alsace and Moselle. Furthermore, he explores the German Empire's efforts to integrate its new conquest after 1871 and the ambiguous attitude of both acceptance and rejection by the people of Alsace-Lorraine towards Germany, which is of particular interest for my research. Questions of identity differ from mine, since they are raised primarily by the dual status of this entity: Alsace and Lorraine (which concerns, in fact, only a part of Moselle) share an identity in this

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<sup>10</sup> Lienhard, *Identität im Wandel: Die Elsässer*, p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> François Roth, *Alsace-Lorraine: Histoire d'un 'pays perdu': de 1870 à nos jours* (Nancy: Editions Place Stanislas, 2010).

appellation but may also differ culturally in various ways. The imaginary factor is also relevant for identity, since this region is fantasised and idealised as *pays perdu* by French nationalists, whereas this fantasy might actually differ from the local people's perception of their own identity.

In 'Becoming Alsatian: Anti-German and Pro-French Cultural Propaganda in Alsace, 1898–1914',<sup>12</sup> Detmar Klein examines the *Réveil de la conscience alsacienne* (Alsatian Awakening),<sup>13</sup> a cultural and artistic movement started in Alsace in the 1890s. Like Lienhard and Fischer (see the following page), Klein expands on Alsatian Theatre and Stoskopf, whose satirical plays are representative of that period. Klein also refers to elements of Alsatian folklore used for propagandistic purposes, particularly the allegorical figure of the Alsatian woman with the distinctive *coiffe* that was depicted in postcards and other types of iconography (such as caricatures), but also in folksongs and literary works (like plays, and yet again in the pro-French *Revue alsacienne illustrée* founded in 1898). She symbolised the pro-French and anti-German attitude of a part of the Alsatian population at the time and was also very popular with *revanchard* nationalists in France during the 1910s.<sup>14</sup>

Klein has focused a certain number of his academic works on Alsace, starting with his 2004 doctoral thesis: *Battleground of Cultures: 'Politics of Identities' and the National Question in Alsace under German Imperial Rule (1870-1914)*.<sup>15</sup> This thesis touches upon facets of Alsatian culture and identity, including Germanisation through education, as well as Alsatian theatre, literary movements, religion, *Baupolitik*, or Hansi and Zislin's caricatures symbolising the 'use of humour as a weapon'<sup>16</sup> against Germany – all case studies strongly embedded in politics, in contrast to my own perspective which favours the angle

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<sup>12</sup> Detmar Klein, 'Becoming Alsatian: Anti-German and pro-French cultural propaganda in Alsace, 1898-1914', in Barbara Kelly (ed.), *French Music, Culture and National Identity, 1870-1939* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2008), pp. 215-233.

<sup>13</sup> Klein, 'Becoming Alsatian,' p. 216.

<sup>14</sup> See also: Detmar Klein, 'Folklore as a Weapon: The Case of German-Annexed Alsace 1890-1914', in Timothy Baycroft (ed.), *Folklore and Nationalism in Europe during the Long Nineteenth Century* (Leiden; Boston; Cologne: Brill, 2012). Detmar Klein, 'The Virgin with the Sword: Marian Apparitions, Religion and National Identity in Alsace in the 1870s', *French History*, 21 (no. 4: December 2007), 411-430. Forthcoming publications include a monograph on 'culture wars in German-annexed Alsace', i.e., politics of identities and the national question in Alsace under German Imperial rule from 1870 to 1914.

<sup>15</sup> Detmar Klein, 'Battleground of Cultures: "Politics of Identities" and the National Question in Alsace under German Imperial Rule (1870-1914)' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, Royal Holloway, 2004; abstract in *Revue d'Alsace*, 132 (2006), 503-509).

<sup>16</sup> Klein, 'Battleground of Cultures', p. 234.

of integration in daily life. The period under study is also limited to the time of Alsace's German affiliation after the Franco-Prussian War and before the First World War, so the *malaise alsacien* is only alluded to in his conclusion – which demonstrates that 'cultural Alsatianisation' started as a reaction against cultural and political Germanisation in Alsace at the end of the nineteenth century, and eventually turned into a 'proto-national Alsatian identity.'<sup>17</sup> While this argument is interesting, I tend to disagree with the idea that Alsatian identity can be defined in a definitive way and reduced to a reaction of opposition to Germanisation. It is certainly part of the reason, but the Alsatians' ambiguous relationship to France also plays a considerable role in the shaping of their identity.

Finally, Christopher J. Fischer considers the chasm between national and regional matters in Alsace between 1870 and 1939. His study, *Alsace to the Alsatians? Visions and Divisions of Alsatian Regionalism, 1870-1939*,<sup>18</sup> emphasises the role of politics during a period of upheavals, in particular regionalism – although far from being a united effort – as a response to nationalist policies and the Alsatians' dual identification with both France and Germany. The particular and complex phenomenon of Alsatian regionalism – due in part to the region's specific history as a borderland between two warring countries – is categorised into three aspects; political, social, and cultural, and their ramifications, including identity. On his key concept of regionalism, Fischer concludes: 'Thus, regionalism served the Alsatians as a political language, as a cultural vision, and as a central community of identity.'<sup>19</sup> While I chose not to focus on the often-studied topic of politics in relation to Alsace, his ideas on regionalism have merit and some of them are relevant for identity too.

Áine McGillicuddy's study *René Schickele and Alsace: Cultural Identity between the Borders*<sup>20</sup> explores a literary angle and focuses on René Schickele (1883-1940), whose works aim at the defence of the double cultural heritage of Alsace and the reconciliation of France and Germany, even though this endeavour – at odds with the nationalist feelings that prevailed – was not always understood

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<sup>17</sup> Klein, 'Battleground of Cultures', p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> Christopher J. Fischer, *Alsace to the Alsatians? Visions and Divisions of Alsatian Regionalism, 1870-1939* (New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010).

<sup>19</sup> Fischer, p. 207.

<sup>20</sup> Áine McGillicuddy, *René Schickele and Alsace: Cultural Identity between the Borders*, Cultural Identity Studies, 11 (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2011).

and accepted by his French, German and Alsatian contemporaries. This approach furthers Lienhard's stress on the importance of individual personalities for identification purposes. Although Schickele's mother tongue was French, he deliberately chose to write in German.<sup>21</sup> Since the specific historical and political context of Alsace played an important role in Schickele's life and works ('My origins are my destiny'<sup>22</sup>), McGillicuddy questions the identification process in Alsace during his lifetime. It leads her to question 'how cultural identity is formed and how far it is determined by reference to the Other or in opposition to a dominant culture.'<sup>23</sup> She deals with theories pertaining to identity and nationalism in relation to the political issues of the time, namely 'the position of the border to either the east or west of Alsace'<sup>24</sup> as justifications for Alsace's national belonging.

This debate between the two nations was emphasised by the opposing philosophies of French *civilisation* versus German *Kultur*. France defended humanist ideals, such as freedom, democracy and progress against what was perceived as imperialist and authoritarian ideals, while Germany's *Kultur* associated its identity and 'Geist', based on tradition, 'spirituality, emotional and philosophical profundity and the organic.'<sup>25</sup> Both countries emphasised their differences and manipulated the official discourses for propagandistic purposes and to justify the need for war. Importantly for identity, Alsatians had adopted the French ideals of the Revolution, even though they kept their Germanic regional dialect, a fact that partly justified the region's belonging to Germany for the Germans. While Germans based their justification on a common historical past with Alsace, France emphasised the Alsatians' citizenship within the state. Regionalism in Alsace thus became a product of the Franco-German nationalist antagonisms and the German annexation of 1871. In time, Alsatians yearned for more autonomy and became more conscious of having a particular identity.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> 'Ich bin nicht mit ihr zur Welt gekommen, habe sie mir erst als Geliebte erwählt.' Cf. McGillicuddy, pp. 1-2.

<sup>22</sup> 'Meine Herkunft ist mein Schicksal.' Cf. McGillicuddy, p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> McGillicuddy, p. 5.

<sup>24</sup> McGillicuddy, p. 11.

<sup>25</sup> McGillicuddy, p. 20.

<sup>26</sup> On regionalism and literature also see: Andreas Kramer, *Regionalismus und Moderne. Studien zur deutschen Literatur 1900–1933* (Berlin: Weidler, 2006); here the second chapter on 'Elsass-Diskurse in der Deutschen Moderne' (pp. 65–142). The focus is on Schickele and his



McGillicuddy analyses the controversial drama *Hans im Schnakenloch*, written by René Schickele at the beginning of the First World War. It depicts, she argues, ‘the identity crisis and trauma for Alsatians forced to choose sides at this climactic point of Franco-German rivalries.’<sup>27</sup> Alsace is seen by Schickele as a ‘Mittelland’ whose particular cultural heritage should be used to reach for harmony between France and Germany. His ‘utopian vision’<sup>28</sup> considers the idea that Alsace should be a bridge that could bring together France and Germany, as each nation is reflected in its culture and identity. In the end Schickele left his ‘Heimat’ for the south of France and never returned, even though until the early 1930s he had been ‘committed to his personal mission of ‘geistiges Elsässertum’ (intellectual ‘Alsatianhood’), the recurrent theme in his literary output.’<sup>29</sup> Cultural identity is seen here through an individual’s fate, his writings and the reception he received within a certain cultural context. While this concept is of certain significance for my approach, I have deliberately chosen not to focus on literature (travel-guides being seen as marketing tools, although they are written works). I will consider Schickele (an admittedly important figure of Alsace) briefly in my first chapter, though purely from the perspective of identity.

Elizabeth Vlossak ‘genders’ the issue of identity. *Marianne or Germania? Nationalizing Women in Alsace, 1870-1946*<sup>30</sup> debunks the myth that all Alsatian women fought German influence after 1871 in favour of France, which was actually performed mostly by an elite *bourgeoisie*. Vlossak considers the polarisation of masculinity and femininity in historical analyses, as well as women’s role in nationalism and nation building. Alsatian women are conspicuously absent from historiographical accounts, even though they ‘played a pivotal role in French and German nation-building, and the development of an Alsatian identity.’<sup>31</sup> To illustrate her argument, Vlossak uses the allegory of Alsace, a woman in full traditional costume, also used as ‘a symbol of

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mentor Friedrich Lienhard, and the importance of the ‘Heimatkunstbewegung’ around 1900, which later was polarised between culture and politics. One of the prevalent sentiments in the literature is that Alsatian identity is the experience of continuous loss.

<sup>27</sup> McGillicuddy, p. 62.

<sup>28</sup> McGillicuddy, p. 13.

<sup>29</sup> McGillicuddy, p. 262.

<sup>30</sup> Elizabeth Vlossak, *Marianne or Germania? Nationalizing Women in Alsace, 1870-1946* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>31</sup> Vlossak, p. 33.

resistance to forced Germanization.<sup>32</sup> It was one of the political means of nationalism, in the nineteenth century, to give a tangible face to the nation through female allegories, such as Britannia, Germania, or Marianne. I will consider these allegorical figures in my fourth chapter, since they are also often represented in caricatures. Vlossak questions the role of female teachers – the only profession offered to women at the time, at least initially – in the Germanisation process, since they could either resist the system by giving additional French lessons to their students, or on the contrary feel ‘a more distinct sense of national belonging due to a professional, corporate identity that linked them to the other women teachers of Germany.’<sup>33</sup> Propaganda through education will be considered in my first chapter too. The war and return to France also ended (early) German ‘feminism’ in the region after it had just started to gain more support. Vlossak concludes:

A lack of real shared memories and perceived common interests, coupled with a regional identity that seemed to come into conflict with nationalist aims, impeded the progress of French nation-building in Alsace. For the women of Alsace, the only constants during these turbulent times, as it had been during the period of annexation, were family, religion, and the region itself.<sup>34</sup>

Alsatian women duly fell prey to National Socialist ideology, aided by National Socialist women associations, and girls who were required to enrol in Nazi youth programs if they wanted a place in secondary education.

This overview shows that a historical approach is hardly avoidable; however, it also proves the importance of a sense of specific places that make the historical developments more palpable for the Alsatians. They refer to Nora’s *lieux de mémoire*, which I will consider in the following and last part of this introduction.

### Identity, Memory, and Alsace

The above studies share the fact that Alsace was repeatedly forced to change its allegiance to France and Germany. With each change regional core values – such as the importance of the cultural heritage – came into question,

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<sup>32</sup> Vlossak, p. 34.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Vlossak, p. 252.

underlining the issue of what could be perceived as Alsatian. At the same time, Germany and France were equally at pains to make Alsace German and French respectively, and while it was easy to dismiss the respective nation-states, the issue of an Alsatian identity, and its place in the French and German states and cultures, proved to be far more difficult.

At the heart of my approach to Alsatian identity is Pierre Nora's groundbreaking work on a novel way of studying and defining cultural identity and memory,<sup>35</sup> since not only does Nora remain one of the most influential thinkers in the field, but he also paid particular attention to Alsace before 'transnational concepts' – dealing with conceptual exchanges between nations and in particular in border regions – attracted wider attention.<sup>36</sup> This chapter outlines some of the principal considerations that determine the discussion about identity and memory in Alsace but maintains its ultimate focus on Nora.

Identity can be the answer to the question 'Who or what am I?', but of course, there is no simple answer to it, particularly if one widens the perspective from the purely personal to include the question of a common heritage (like what it means to be Alsatian), which is what Nora is interested in. To define oneself, one also uses the concepts of difference from and similarity with something or someone else (like the Alsatians would distinguish themselves from the Germans after the annexation, for example). Indeed, 'difference' and 'same' are fundamental to the concepts of 'identity' and 'definition'. A thing has to be *distinguished* from other external things that it is not. And there have to be internal characteristics that are *in common / the same*.

Generally, 'cultural identity' can be defined as the identification or sense of belonging to a particular culture, represented by characteristic rules, norms and values. These can – more or less successfully – be reinforced with the help of culture, even though the notion of 'culture' itself is subject to different interpretations. Its meaning traditionally included art, literature and classical music, although it could also embody a broader interpretation likened to

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. Pierre Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, 3 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1997; first publ. 1984). This work consists of three volumes collecting articles by different contributors, including Nora himself, as regards French *lieux de mémoire*.

<sup>36</sup> See for example: William I. Robinson, 'Beyond Nation-State Paradigms: Globalization, Sociology, and the Challenge of Transnational Studies,' *Sociological Forum*, 13 (1998), 561-594.

civilisation. Pierre Nora introduced three notions to the concept of cultural identity: 'identité, mémoire, patrimoine',<sup>37</sup> which underline his specific interest in the notion of heritage (linked with history, especially for Alsace, as we shall see). In his concluding chapter of his study of France's *lieux de mémoire* he states:

Identité renvoie à une singularité qui se choisit, une spécificité qui s'assume, une permanence qui se reconnaît, une solidarité à soi-même qui s'éprouve. Mémoire signifie tout à la fois souvenirs, traditions, coutumes, habitudes, usages, mœurs, et couvre un champ qui va du conscient à l'à demi inconscient. Et patrimoine est carrément passé du bien qu'on possède par héritage au bien qui vous constitue.<sup>38</sup>

Nora outlines the importance of different phases and categories in history: '[...] puisque histoire de l'histoire, ils [les lieux de mémoire] sont la matière dont se construit l'histoire, histoire de ses instruments, de sa production et de ses procédures.'<sup>39</sup> He explains how the institutionalised and repetitive use of history altered the notion of memory, namely 'collective memory':

L'histoire, au sens où on l'entend spontanément, et qui exprimait essentiellement la nation, comme la nation s'exprimait essentiellement à travers elle, était devenue, par l'école et avec le temps, le cadre et le moule de notre mémoire collective. L'histoire scientifique elle-même, telle qu'elle s'est constituée en institutrice de la nation, constituait dans la rectification de cette tradition de mémoire, son enrichissement; mais si "critique" qu'elle se voulût, elle n'en représentait que l'approfondissement. Son but ultime consistait bien dans une identification par filiation. C'est en ce sens qu'histoire et mémoire ne faisaient qu'un; l'histoire était une mémoire vérifiée.<sup>40</sup>

For Nora, memory is associated with primitive societies and myth, in which it was 'embodied' as the transmission of ideas through ideas and gestures, but with no sense of chronology and distinction between past and present. According to Nora, this 'pure memory' does not exist anymore (which may actually not be necessarily true for every society and people), so there is a

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<sup>37</sup> Nora, 'L'ère de la commémoration', III, 4713.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Nora, 'Présentation', I, 15.

<sup>40</sup> Nora, 'L'ère de la commémoration', III, 4703-4704.

nostalgia for it, which is embodied in the popularity of commemorations today. Thus, the 'lieux de mémoire' are linked to a national feeling, but are merely vestiges of something which no longer exists, and which is always based on three meanings: material, symbolic and functional.<sup>41</sup> One could then wonder about whether there could be others, and, if so, what they might be. Nora further defines his concept: 'les lieux de mémoire ne sont pas ce dont on se souvient, mais là où la mémoire travaille; non la tradition elle-même, mais son laboratoire.'<sup>42</sup> He thus distinguishes between passive and active memory, the latter being the one he favours in his work. These *lieux de mémoire* actively participate in the shaping of a common memory, and, by expansion, the shaping of (cultural) identity.

Nora's notion of memory is particularly relevant for Alsace if one bears in mind that he chooses to position the region as one of his 'lieux de mémoire', namely a 'mémoire-frontière'.<sup>43</sup> Jean-Marie Mayeur, in 'Une mémoire-frontière: L'Alsace' (the article that is part of Nora's first volume of *Les lieux de mémoire*), justifies Nora's choice by retelling facts from Alsatian history that show the many *particularismes* of the region, organising his analysis in three parts: 'historical memory', 'political memory' and 'symbolical memory'. In the first part, he chooses Strasbourg, the 'wunderschöne Stadt',<sup>44</sup> as his main focus (which is also mine) to emphasise how historical events are reflected in its architecture and underline the region's dual identity. One such example is the *Place de la République (ex-Kaiserplatz)*, 'héritage de l'urbanisme du temps de l'annexion'<sup>45</sup> (cf. Chapter Three of this thesis). In the second part, Mayeur analyses the opposing nationalistic and propaganda discourses that were fostered by some parts of the Alsatian society, following the German annexation of 1871; some of these discourses and notions will be discussed in this thesis, including Hansi himself (in my fourth and final chapter). Finally, he refers to the symbolic value that the region 'Alsace-Lorraine' (here he favours the appellation that is compatible with François Roth's) has acquired in France throughout the years, since 1870 until the symbolical choice of Strasbourg, its capital, as one of the capitals of the European Union: 'D'espace disputé dans l'Europe des

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<sup>41</sup> Cf. Nora, 'Entre Mémoire et Histoire', I, 37.

<sup>42</sup> Nora, 'Présentation', I, 17-18.

<sup>43</sup> Mayeur, 'Une mémoire-frontière: L'Alsace,' *Les lieux de mémoire*, I, 1147.

<sup>44</sup> Mayeur, I, 1149, quoting a famous *Volkslied* favoured by the Alsatian *autonomistes*.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

antagonistes nationaux, de glaciés et de frontière contestée, l'Alsace se faisait gloire de devenir un pont, un carrefour, comme elle l'avait été en plusieurs temps de son histoire.<sup>46</sup> Thus, a place that used to crystallise the antagonisms of two countries has now acquired a multicultural and uncontroversial representation in Europe. This is, indeed, one solution to the issues of identity in Alsace. However, I prefer to look for and focus on the source of the problem in this thesis.

Alsace seems to be an inexhaustible source of contradictions. According to a national survey from 1985, 92.3% of Alsatians thought that the feeling of regional identity was 'intense' in Alsace,<sup>47</sup> which was higher than any other region in France; and yet, contrary to other French provinces, Alsace does not seem to possess any radical and violent movement in favour of regional autonomy. Mayeur points out that despite its Germanic history and culture, Alsace stays fiercely attached to France – particularly its republican ideals (as various authors, such as Marc Lienhard, have underlined). Those paradoxes convince him of the relevance of designating Alsace as a 'mémoire-frontière':

Ces paradoxes ne sont-ils pas ceux d'une "mémoire-frontière", qui oblige à reproduire constamment, sous peine de la voir se désintégrer, le lien entre sa composante spécifiquement alsacienne et sa composante française, présentes ensemble dans les hauts lieux de son histoire comme dans les complexités de sa mémoire politique, et dont les tensions expliquent assez la charge symbolique exceptionnelle que lui reconnaît l'imaginaire national?<sup>48</sup>

This concept of memory linked to an identifiable group of people is important in view of a 'collective memory'. On this concept, Jan Assmann distinguishes between a 'communicative memory,' which 'includes those varieties of collective memory that are based exclusively on everyday communications,'<sup>49</sup> while 'cultural memory is characterized by its distance from the everyday,'<sup>50</sup> it can be seen as a sort of archive – a safe place where one can store historical events.

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<sup>46</sup> Mayeur, I, 1148-1167, for the detail of this chapter's three parts analysis. Here: p. 1166.

<sup>47</sup> Mayeur, I, 1147.

<sup>48</sup> Mayeur, I, 1148.

<sup>49</sup> Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka, 'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity', *New German Critique*, 65 (1995), p. 126.

<sup>50</sup> It has a temporal fixity that makes it a bit dehumanized too. Cf. Assmann and Czaplicka, p. 129.

Each generation chooses which historical events it does wish to relate to – or which places become relevant under new circumstances. These notions are reminiscent of Nora's perspective on passive and active memory. The communicative (or active) memory, as mediated by the various images and texts in my case studies, underlines the accessibility for the population on a day-to-day basis.

Another particularity of Alsatian identity – related to the 'mémoire-frontière' mentioned by Mayeur – is from the effect of the conflicting French and German identities: 'one resolution to the problem of having two identities, or being identified by types and labels, is to create a new identity. It is the hybrid identity that includes a local and global identity form, merged to create the hybrid identity.'<sup>51</sup> In our case, this 'hybrid identity' can be the purely Alsatian identity (resulting from its mixed origins) praised and idealised by Hansi in his folkloric drawings, as well as the one found in the discourses of various travel-guides keen on targeting a local audience (cf. Chapters Four and Two, respectively, of this thesis).

As I have already mentioned, the notion of difference is – importantly for the case of Alsace – linked with the question of identity being created through experience, or having some fundamental root common to all individuals. For example, one might suggest that after being annexed by Germany in 1871, many Alsations rejected their German roots and traditions, as a way of showing their disapproval of the enforced situation, and chose to identify with the more recent French side of their culture, namely the ideals brought by the Enlightenment, the Revolution or Napoleon's rule.<sup>52</sup> However, the Germans brought modernisation to the region and its capital and underlined their historical links with Alsace through propagandistic works, such as the more visible imperial architecture found in Strasbourg (which will be studied in my third chapter). They also used the city's cathedral to emphasise the importance of the Gothic style, considered as typically German, in the region.<sup>53</sup> In return, the cathedral was frequently used in Alsatian caricatures with a French flag attached to its spire to represent the belonging to France – a complete reversal

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<sup>51</sup> Keri E. Iyall Smith and Patricia Leavy (eds), *Hybrid Identities: Theoretical and Empirical Examinations* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008), p. 4.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Mayeur, I, 1157-1158.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Mayeur, I, 1149.

of symbolisation to a different 'mère-patrie'.<sup>54</sup> The constant and long-lasting architectural reminders, added to the *malaise alsacien*<sup>55</sup> felt after the return to France in 1918, could thus inflict identity and cultural issues upon the population, who ended up relating to their own regional culture as a compromise (which, at this point, was considered problematic). If the Alsatians were neither German nor French, they would be a mix of both and their own Alsatian culture, as Detmar Klein concludes in his study of Alsatian identity.<sup>56</sup> Jean-Marie Mayeur had observed in a similar fashion that 'La "petite patrie" ne renvoie pas à la "grande patrie", France ou Allemagne, elle est la patrie même.'<sup>57</sup> The regional dialect with its various French and German elements could, for example, be considered as proof of the diversity aspect.

Marc Augé points at a further important consideration: the process of accumulating evidence that determine a culture leads unavoidably to a comparison between the present and 'ce que nous ne sommes plus' (quoting Pierre Nora in this passage).<sup>58</sup> Augé reminds us that 'l'habitant d'un lieu anthropologique vit dans l'histoire, il ne fait pas d'histoire.'<sup>59</sup> He provides a link between memory and historical space that may also serve to highlight Strasbourg's particular role in this context. Augé writes that 'il n'est aucune ville française qui n'aspire à être le centre d'une région de dimension variable et qui n'ait réussi, au fil des années et des siècles, à se constituer un centre monumental [...] qui tout à la fois matérialise et symbolise cette aspiration.'<sup>60</sup> In Strasbourg, the heart of the city is the Old City around the cathedral, with traditionally half-timbered Alsatian houses, but under German occupation the topography of the city underwent dramatic changes while the Old City centre did maintain some of its importance. Whether this enterprise was completely successful with the local population is fairly doubtful, but the Germans did bring modernisation to Alsace (both in architecture and administration), which differs – not necessarily negatively – from the old-fashioned Alsace idealised by Hansi

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<sup>54</sup> Cf. Mayeur, I, 1149, 1163.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Mayeur, I, 1158-1159.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Detmar Klein, 'Becoming Alsatian: Anti-German and pro-French cultural propaganda in Alsace, 1898-1914', in Barbara Kelly (ed.), *French Music, Culture and National Identity, 1870-1939* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2008).

<sup>57</sup> Mayeur, I, 1158.

<sup>58</sup> Marc Augé, *Non-Lieux: Introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1992), p. 37.

<sup>59</sup> Augé, pp. 71-72.

<sup>60</sup> Augé, p. 84.



in his drawings. Importantly, though, Augé highlights the role of space in the context of identity, which is linked to each of my case studies: regional landmarks in travel-guides (cf. Chapter Two), Strasbourg's imperial architecture (cf. Chapter Three), and Hansi's picturesque Alsace (cf. Chapter Four).

Besides spatial considerations, a state can end up being 'fragmented'<sup>61</sup> on a cultural level, which in some rare cases may translate itself into a real demand from a part of the population to separate from the original country if the differences are too important, even though it usually does not exceed a plea for more administrative autonomy in localised areas. This argument is particularly relevant for Alsace, which benefits from local laws that differ from the rest of France, commonly disassociated from the region through the local complementary expression 'de l'intérieur' (also noted by Mayeur).<sup>62</sup> Alsatians have always been fairly attached to those benefits and the autonomy acquired as a result of their history, and these benefits are now part of the collective memory and cultural identity. And yet, despite the relatively high 'level of segmentation',<sup>63</sup> compared with regions such as Corsica or Pays Basque, the population does not demand to be independent from France.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, one needs to consider whether the 'fragmentation' is not only experienced on national and regional levels, but also between the regional capital, Strasbourg, and the rest of Alsace, since the region's history is felt most strongly in the city.

Jonathan Friedman emphasises the importance of past history in the construction of strong cultural identities, and argues that the only way for national identities not to be overpowered by those cultural identities is to, apparently paradoxically, give them more freedom and independence.<sup>65</sup> Again, these considerations find an echo in the case of Alsace, where identity is linked time and again to the partly real and partly mythological past history of the region. An example of the need for local freedoms would be the assimilation policies that both France and Germany tried to implement in Alsace with counterproductive results (this will be considered in my first chapter). Thus, when French authorities tried to eradicate the German language in Alsace after

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<sup>61</sup> Cf. Jonathan Friedman, *Cultural Identity & Global Process* (London; Thousand Oaks; New Delhi: SAGE, 1994), p. 86.

<sup>62</sup> Mayeur, I, 1147.

<sup>63</sup> Friedman, p. 86.

<sup>64</sup> Mayeur, I, 1148.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Friedman, p. 117.

1918, they had to reassess their priorities promptly when they realised that only about 30% of the Alsatian population could actually speak French.<sup>66</sup> These troubles stemmed from the dichotomy between the Alsace idealised by the French and the reality of forty-seven years of German annexation, preceded by a long-term history between Alsace and Germany. As Mayeur remarks: ‘l’Alsace “retrouvée” en 1918 ne s’identifie pas pleinement au souvenir de la “vieille” Alsace.’<sup>67</sup> The period of *malaise alsacien* that is explained in my first chapter is a result of this situation.

Related to the cultural issue of language mentioned above is, for example, the tradition of Alsatian theatre that flourished during the German annexation of 1871 in Alsace (this, while not one of my chosen case studies, will be briefly considered in my first chapter). Written in the local dialect (when dialect was arguably thought to be the preferred language of non-educated people), it described the regular lives of Alsatian people in a satirical way, and it included some French expressions that were not completely understood by the majority of the population, but appreciated for their reference to what was understood at this point as the lost country, France. This example illustrates two notions: that of politics (satire against the Germans) and nationalism, as epitomised by the more or less subtle longing for France. Nation and politics are particularly important here for an understanding of the sense of identity. The process of writing – not least about architectural endeavours – in the regional and national press goes hand in hand with the development of ideological narratives, as will be underlined in the third chapter of this thesis. Indeed, the imperial architecture of the *Kaiserplatz* and the inauguration of the *Kaiserpalast* were part of a political process of identification implemented by the Germans in Alsace, which was vastly – and sometimes naively – relayed in the local press. Indeed, even some ostensibly regionalist publications seemed to succumb to the festive atmosphere generated by the inauguration in their articles, even though these events effectively celebrated the *Kaiser* and his power over the region (see my third chapter for more detail on this).

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<sup>66</sup> Bernard Vogler, *Histoire culturelle de l’Alsace: Du Moyen Âge à nos jours, les très riches heures d’une région frontrière*, La bibliothèque alsacienne (Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue / DNA, 1993), p. 388.

<sup>67</sup> Mayeur, I, 1165.

Regarding the efforts of Germanisation in Alsace, a facet of identity that is problematic here is the aforementioned affiliation to a nation while the region itself is claimed by two opposing countries. Brian Jenkins stresses that ‘the formation of all social and cultural identities necessarily involves a process of differentiation and demarcation, and that group identity is often reinforced by the stigmatisation of the “other.” Concepts like nationhood therefore have an inherent capacity to “exclude” as much as to “include”.’<sup>68</sup> In the case of Alsace, one such example is the period following the defeat of France by the Prussian Empire in 1871 and the consecutive annexation to the latter. In France, feelings of ‘bitterness at the loss of Alsace-Lorraine’ and ‘hope of eventual *revanche*’ were encouraged by the government and used ‘in pursuit of national unity.’<sup>69</sup> At the same time in the victorious country ‘the new German state showed little tolerance towards national minorities living within its territory’ and ‘Alsace-Lorraine was given an inferior administrative status.’<sup>70</sup> As a result, ‘the region was conscious of being “on the frontier,” and gradually developed the feeling of having a national role that was out of the ordinary,’<sup>71</sup> and eventually Alsatians ‘excluded’ the German side of their identity, in favour of their French one: this process is explained in more detail in my first chapter and will, in terms of setting boundaries and reinforcing belonging, also come to the fore in Hansi’s work (cf. Chapter Four of this thesis). The latter embraced the patriotic endeavours of the French *revanchards* and committed himself to the task of emphasising Alsace’s belonging to France (when the region was still part of German territories and afterwards) through his various works (mainly his many caricatures).

Considering Alsace’s rich – if conflicted – cultural identity, some suspect that an apparently ‘vibrant cultural identity’ actually hides a ‘lack of identity.’ This is what Alain Bihl defines as Alsace’s ‘negative identity’ and that he considers as a direct result of its historical past, ‘sandwiched between – two rival national

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<sup>68</sup> Brian Jenkins and Spyros A. Sofos (eds), *Nation and Identity in Contemporary Europe* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 2.

<sup>69</sup> Jenkins and Sofos, p. 103.

<sup>70</sup> Jenkins and Sofos, p. 12.

<sup>71</sup> Robert Tombs (ed.), *Nationhood and Nationalism in France: From Boulangism to the Great War 1889-1918* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 248.

entities.<sup>72</sup> Alsace would thus need 'a greater sense of connection with France'<sup>73</sup> to remedy this problem. While I can understand Bihr's perspective, I do not necessarily agree with it, if only because Alsace also had long periods of stability during which a sense of regional identity could start to take shape. Furthermore, one of my aims is to show that periods of conflicts can actually shape identity too, not erase it. Paul Smith argues:

On ne peut enfermer les Alsaciens dans un sentiment d'appartenance définitive et clos sur lui-même. Entre 1870 et 1918, la construction de leur identité offrait l'exemple d'un processus où toutes les attitudes de revendication, de compromis, d'intégration ou de rejet sont venues s'entrecroiser. C'est une manière aussi de remettre en cause l'opposition académique entre l'idée française de nation et la conception allemande de peuple.<sup>74</sup>

These arguments underline the fact that the Alsatians do not have a definitive sense of belonging, due to the various changes of nationality in their history. As a consequence, Alsatian identity is based on German concepts, such as the focus on the 'people' as the basis of society, as well as seemingly opposing French concepts, namely the preferred focus on the allegorical figure of the 'nation' (studied, namely, by Elizabeth Vlossak). Thus, the monumental and typical architecture of the *Kaiserplatz* served as a constant reminder that the Alsatians were henceforth part of the German population, while Hansi's caricatures served as a way for Alsatians to mock the Germans – as a kind of passive resistance to the authorities – and keep Francophile sentiments strong in the region (before 1918), in view of a possible return to the praised *mère-patrie*, France, in a near future. More importantly though, Hansi's caricatures allowed for a strong sense of particular, seemingly 'typical', places within Alsace and the German presence is depicted as 'out of place' (cf. Chapter Four of this thesis).

Andreas Huyssen, too, underlines the decisive link between time and space: 'Time and space as fundamentally contingent categories of historically rooted

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<sup>72</sup> Alain Bihr, 'Alsace, exception to the rule', *Le Monde diplomatique, English Edition* (1998) <<http://mondediplo.com/1998/05/07bihr>> [accessed on 22/04/10]. Same reference for previous sentence too.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Paul Smith, 'À la recherche d'une identité nationale en Alsace (1870-1918)', *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, 50 (1996), 23-35.

perception are always bound up with each other in complex ways, and the intensity of border-crossing memory discourses that characterizes so much of contemporary culture in so many different parts of the world today proves the point.<sup>75</sup> In a post-modern age, he argues that the contemporary need for memory stems from our identity issues and is the reason behind the accumulation of museums and places of commemoration – the latter being a reference to Nora’s work:

Lübbe’s musealization and Pierre Nora’s *lieux de mémoire* actually share the compensatory sensibility that acknowledges a loss of national or communal identity but trusts in our ability to make up for it. The lieux de mémoire in Nora compensate for the loss of the *milieux de mémoire*, as musealization compensates for the loss of lived tradition in Lübbe.<sup>76</sup>

Huyssen gives a new perspective on Nora’s work in today’s society. We give cultural importance to parts of our common memory because we actually lack a definite sense of identity, just as we create more museums to make up for cultural traditions that we have lost and do not practise anymore (in Lübbe’s case). This perspective seems to echo Alsace’s current issues of identity, which is all the more reason to go back to the possible source of these problems, as is one of the aims of this thesis (stated at the beginning of this Introduction). At the basis of identity, the fundamental problem of memory is its intrinsic lack of fixity: ‘Memory is always transitory, notoriously unreliable, and haunted by forgetting – in short, human and social. As public memory it is subject to change: political, generational, individual.’<sup>77</sup> One can argue that it is because memory is ultimately subjective that we are in need of fixed spatial representations – such as monuments, museums and memorials and the discourses that go with it, discussing the representative value of spaces within a certain time. Strasbourg’s imperial architecture ‘makes up’, to use Huyssen’s words, for the lost war, while travel-guides confirm common identification with a specific image of what is Alsatian (cf. Chapters Three and Two, respectively).

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<sup>75</sup> Andreas Huyssen, ‘Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia,’ *Public Culture*, 12 (2000), 21-38; here: p. 22.

<sup>76</sup> Huyssen, ‘Present Pasts,’ p. 33. The topic of the resurgence of museums in recent years is approached in more detail but more specifically in a German context in: Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (New York; London: Routledge, 1995).

<sup>77</sup> Huyssen, ‘Present Pasts,’ p. 38.

These various approaches to cultural identity and memory, in relation to the Alsatian context I focus on, highlight a number of key concepts, most importantly that notions of cultural identity unify people through their common identification to these relatively abstract concepts of 'nation' or 'culture'. Indeed, as Pierre Nora says: 'C'est que la Nation elle-même est tout entière une représentation.'<sup>78</sup> Nora adds that the nation is: 'Ni un régime, ni une politique, ni une doctrine, ni une culture, mais le cadre de toutes leurs expressions, une forme pure, la formule immuable et changeante de notre communauté sociale comme d'ailleurs de toutes les communautés sociales modernes.'<sup>79</sup> From this definition, Alsace itself can arguably be seen as a nation for its people. According to him, it is at once an immutable and evolving concept that actually encompasses many means of expressions through a single complex form. Amongst the many considerations as to the role of cultural identity within the Alsatian context, the continuous assessment and re-assessment of spaces, be they real, in form of descriptions or drawings, constitutes a strong sense of awareness of belonging at times, when a sense of cultural identity is at stake. All case studies, which will be discussed in the following chapters, have in common that they build upon a notion of what is Alsatian that is 'already there'; these spaces afford no new inventions, but a link between the location itself and the history that determines its representation. The specific timeframe combined with the case studies chosen for this thesis will thus give clues to answer the fundamental question of identity that is still problematic today for Alsatians and will help with identifying the source of the problem in the process.

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<sup>78</sup> Nora, 'Présentation', I, 571.

<sup>79</sup> Nora, 'Présentation', I, 571-572.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Setting the Scene:

#### Strasbourg and Alsace from 1871 to the 1920s

For the history and identity of Alsace, Strasbourg's particular situation can easily be emphasised: it is the region's powerful capital, and its role in history can be seen as one of the main reasons for the region's attractiveness to both Germany and France. Furthermore, the city's geographical position on the Rhine and at a crossroads between different countries was the root of its successful economy and preferential status as a 'Free City' (*ville libre*) as early as 1262.<sup>80</sup> Strasbourg has always crystallised Alsatian *particularismes*: be it in terms of religious beliefs or linguistics, economy, its border position, and a strong regional identity.

Both Catholicism and Protestantism have played an exemplary role in the city's history across the centuries; changing alliances impacted upon the use of language and Strasbourg is, time and again, a case in point when it comes to the relationship between the use of French, German, and the Alsatian dialects.<sup>81</sup> Strasbourg stands out as a cultural city: it is the home of both national and regional theatres, as well as of the *Opéra du Rhin*, several museums, the *Conservatoire National* for music, and a national school for arts. Its University was built in the heart of the city (contrary to most universities in France), whose architecture reflects the multiple influences of history. Furthermore, in terms of politics, Strasbourg could be seen as a left-wing city in a conservative region, and its international resonance is achieved through its role as one of the official capitals of Europe, even though this only holds true for the latter part of the twentieth century. Strasbourg can therefore serve as a case study about Alsatian identity: it is both a case in its own right and representative of Alsatian concerns in general. The focus of my argument is on

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<sup>80</sup> What is now the Alsatian region was first part of the Holy Roman Empire, and its capital became an Imperial Free City in 1262. Alsace fell to France in 1648 as part of the Westphalia treaties, while Strasbourg kept its Imperial Free City status until the agreement with Louis XIV in 1681. It granted political, administrative and religious freedoms to Strasbourg that have lasted until the present day. See: Georges Livet and Francis Rapp (eds), *Histoire de Strasbourg* (Toulouse: Privat, 1987), pp. 87-223.

<sup>81</sup> On the long-term link between language and identity in Alsace, see: Bernard Trouillet, *Das Elsass – Grenzland in Europa: Sprachen und Identitäten im Wandel* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1997).

Strasbourg within the Alsatian context; as such the city will act as a focal point for regional issues.

This chapter also focuses on the period following the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, whose resulting annexation of Alsace by the newly unified Germany was unexpected and shocking for the overconfident French authorities (and people, convinced of victory by an omnipresent propagandistic rhetoric), still boastful from Napoleon's previous victories. Germany's easy and quick victory was to shame and influence French nationalists for years to come, yearning for the day of their *revanche* against the neighbouring nation. This French defeat, in turn, marked the Alsatian population, particularly in the region's capital, which had undergone a traumatising siege during the War.<sup>82</sup>

The Germans' policies were, at first, fairly restrictive and domineering in Alsace, but throughout the following years the federal authorities gradually gave more autonomy to their *Reichsland*,<sup>83</sup> without stopping their political and cultural assimilation policies to transform Alsacians into full-fledged Germans and erase the lasting French influence in the region. Consequently, the population progressively accepted their situation and enjoyed an increased acceptance of their regional particularities (*particularismes*) by the *Reich*. However, the years leading to the First World War decreased the Alsacians' freedoms, so they started having high expectations for a return to France. These, in turn, led to disillusionment after the War (*malaise alsacien*), when the French authorities resumed the assimilation efforts started by the Germans and tried to erase Alsatian *particularismes*, which created a political crisis and revived the popularity of *autonomistes*. The latter demanded more independence and autonomy for the region, which already enjoyed a special status in the *Reich* (and France before that), inherited from its dual French and Germanic past.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Evidence of a political Alsatian opposition to the annexation of 1871 can be seen in the *Protestation de Bordeaux* on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 1871, when the Alsacians sent a delegation of their representatives to the German Parliament, who were all in favour of a return to France. However, that act of protestation was mostly symbolic, and their demands were not accepted by the German authorities, and not even supported by the French. Cf. Philippe Dollinger (ed.), *Histoire de l'Alsace*, new edn (Toulouse: Privat, 2001; first publ. 1970), pp. 435-436.

<sup>83</sup> This increased leniency from the German authorities started in 1874, when the Alsacians were granted the right to be represented in the *Reichstag*, in the name of equality with the Germans. Cf. Dollinger (ed.), p. 440.

<sup>84</sup> Marc Lienhard, p. 31.



Politics were generally divided along religious (Catholics and Protestants), linguistics (German, French and dialect-speaking people) and geographic (Northern versus Southern Alsace, as well as cities' versus villages' people, and Strasbourg versus surrounding hinterland) lines in the region,<sup>85</sup> and three main parties reigned supreme: the Liberals, the Centre, and the Social-Democrats.<sup>86</sup> These divisions were also reflected in the local press. However, most of the Alsatians' foremost loyalty belonged to their region and they were protective of the special status they had gained through several centuries, which granted them particular religious, linguistic and administrative powers and which, added to their traditions, were understood as parts of their culture and identity.

Despite the short-lived Communist Revolution of November 1918, which proclaimed the 'Republic' of Alsace, but which was brutally repressed by the French troops, the Alsatian *mouvements autonomistes* never gained enough support from the population to have a strong political influence, though, one exception being the end of the 1920s.<sup>87</sup> In fact, it can be said that the movements tended to be statements that Alsatians wanted their *particularismes* to be acknowledged by the authorities. One can argue that the general acceptance of the regional *particularismes* amongst the population is linked to Alsace's role in history, a concept still firmly anchored in Alsatian minds.

This chapter will thus provide a framework of crucial developments affecting the city and its region between 1871 and predominantly the 1920s, within which to explore how regional identities were formed, imposed, or contested in response to historical circumstances. The chapter aims to identify periods of particular tension and how these in turn triggered cultural reflections and affirmations. For this purpose, it will begin with a background on the 1870-71 War and its consequences on Alsace (including propaganda discourses), followed by the affirmation of identity by means of culture, and finally a framework of cultural and political developments, comparing French and German aims for the region.

## 1.1. The Franco-Prussian War, Propaganda and Assimilation

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<sup>85</sup> Elizabeth Vlossak, *Marianne or Germania? Nationalizing Women in Alsace, 1870-1946* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 24.

<sup>86</sup> Marc Lienhard, *Histoire (et aléas) de l'identité alsacienne* (Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue, 2011), p. 30.

<sup>87</sup> Dollinger (ed.), pp. 473-475.

One of the common themes throughout this chapter and, on a larger scale, this thesis is propaganda and what it entails for identity.<sup>88</sup> This sub-chapter partly highlights underlying issues concerning Alsace in various propaganda settings encountered in this and further chapters. However, propaganda is not to be understood here in the sense as we so often read it in view of 1933,<sup>89</sup> but as a focused attempt to create a bias towards a country by forcing traditional links. The sub-chapter will thus begin with a brief framework defining propaganda and its application in the Alsatian context, with an example from the French perspective. The rest of this sub-chapter will focus on some of the consequences of the 1870-71 War in Alsace, namely the German attempts to 're-Germanise' the region and their mixed reception amongst the Alsatian population.

Periods of conflicts or political upheavals are potentially beneficial for propaganda, since as Richard S. Lambert states, 'the essence of propaganda is that it should influence persons to do or to think things, which they would not do or think if left to themselves.'<sup>90</sup> The act of persuasion, which always 'involves deceit' at its heart, as Jeremy Hawthorn argues,<sup>91</sup> also contributes to the identification of certain ideas. As for Jacques Ellul, he identifies two types of propaganda: one to incite protest against regimes, and one to encourage support of a system.<sup>92</sup> In the case of Alsace what is at stake is not a battle of ideologies, but the interests of two conflicting nations on the one hand and the desire to strengthen a regional outlook that is neither the one nor the other on the other hand. Of interest is, therefore, the implicit propaganda that subscribes to an Alsatian cause; not political pamphlets and newspaper arguments, but

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<sup>88</sup> On propaganda, see, for example: Lindley Fraser, *Propaganda* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957). Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973; first publ. by Alfred A. Knopf, 1965). Jeremy Hawthorn (ed.), *Propaganda, Persuasion and Polemic* (London: Edward Arnold, 1987). Brett Silverstein, 'Toward a Science of Propaganda', *Political Psychology*, 8 (1987), 49-59. Tobias Ursprung, 'The Use and Effect of Political Propaganda in Democracies', *Public Choice*, 78 (1994), 259-282. Gerald Diesener and Rainer Gries, *Propaganda in Deutschland: zur Geschichte der politischen Massenbeeinflussung im 20. Jahrhundert* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1996). Michael J. Sproule, 'Authorship and Origins of the Seven Propaganda Devices: A Research Note', *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 4 (2001), 135-143. Thymian Bussemer, *Propaganda: Konzepte und Theorien* (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2005).

<sup>89</sup> See, for example, a 1938 pamphlet that offered contemporaries ways of detecting propaganda in political discourses and media with six 'earmarks of propaganda' to identify. Cf. Marjorie Van de Water, 'Propaganda', *The Science News-Letter*, vol. 34, 15 (1938), 234-235; here p. 234.

<sup>90</sup> Richard S. Lambert, *Propaganda* (London; New York: T. Nelson and Sons, 1944), p. 9.

<sup>91</sup> Hawthorn (ed.), p. vii.

<sup>92</sup> Silverstein, p. 49, citing J. Ellul (1973).

these activities that become fully integrated into daily life, such as, for example, issues of language, discourses in papers, and manifestations of power with the help of architecture. Propaganda was used for Alsace, by both France and Germany, in a persuasive way of promoting kinship with the two respective nations, and, if done successfully, would have played on the Alsatians' attachment to their region and *particularismes*, the latter carrying several collective memories.<sup>93</sup>

A good example of the possible efficiency of propaganda is *Antigermanisme*. It had been a part of French patriotism throughout history, but after the defeat of 1871, and the strong feeling of 'revenge' that resulted from it among the French population, that sentiment was intensified in official discourses and imagery, emphasising the metaphor of Alsace 'crying'<sup>94</sup> for her lost '*Mère-Patrie*', and resulting in '*antiboche*.' The Germans were described as violent criminals, namely through the works of the Alsatian cartoonist Hansi (as the chapter on caricature will show), a description that justified the need to take arms to defend their 'stolen' region. After the First World War, France had to 'coax' Alsatians back, and for a short period the Government tried to appear accommodating; but it did not last long and the Alsatians swiftly started to miss some aspects of their German annexation, such as a less centralised power and more freedoms for local councils. Thus, suspicions towards Alsatians were to arise among the French population. They were called '*Boches de l'Est*' by their countrymen as soon as 1918. Even Poincaré later exclaimed: 'Deux millions de morts français... et l'Alsace toujours boche!'<sup>95</sup> That hostile environment was supported by official measures to 'counteract' the German influence in Alsace, and Alsatians were eventually forced into officially rejecting their German origins to prove their French patriotism. Thus, it could be said that Alsace 'artificially' became '*antiboche*' after 1918.

Meanwhile, German propaganda in the Reich continuously underlined Alsace's 'natural belonging' to Germany, which made the annexation of Alsace a necessity, answered by the successful War with France in 1870. This sentiment

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<sup>93</sup> Jean-Marie Mayeur, 'Une mémoire-frontière: L'Alsace,' in Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997; first publ. 1984), I, 1157.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Laurence Turetti, *Quand la France pleurait l'Alsace-Lorraine: Les 'provinces perdues' aux sources du patriotisme républicain, 1870-1914* (Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue, 2008).

<sup>95</sup> Bernard Wittmann, *L'antigermanisme en France et en Alsace: Des origines à nos jours* (Haguenu: Editions Nord Alsace, 2007), I, 316.

was rife at the beginning of the twentieth century, focusing on history to support this claim, and also regretting France's bad influence on Alsatian minds, arguing that the War had been the result of French arrogance.<sup>96</sup> It is worth noting that while German authors were, arguably, generally less vindictive in their tone than French ones, this changed after the defeat of 1918 and the consequences of the Versailles Treaty in Germany. By 1933, when the National Socialists seized power in Germany, tensions in France and Germany became eventually far more explicit.<sup>97</sup>

However, the Second World War carries its own set of important issues that will not be included in this study of Alsatian identity. The focus of this sub-chapter will thus return to the post-War period of 1871 onwards, in order to examine its consequences for the Alsatians in more detail. As mentioned before, through several changes of nationality, Alsace encountered different policies of assimilation from its governing countries. The implications were considerable, as Irmgard Grünewald states:

Der viermalige Staatsangehörigkeitswechsel zwischen 1871 und 1945 bewirkte nicht nur politische, soziale und wirtschaftliche Umstrukturierungen in Elsass-Lothringen selbst, sondern stellte entweder Frankreich oder Deutschland nach einem verlorenen Krieg vor das Problem der Integration einer weit über 100000 Menschen zählenden Gruppe von Immigranten.<sup>98</sup>

After the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71, and the subsequent annexation of Alsace into the Prussian Empire, around 50,000 Alsatians – mainly among the upper classes – left the region for France, and thousands of German immigrants (mainly civil servants, but also soldiers and entrepreneurs) were brought to Alsace to offset these departures, which arguably aided the Germanisation process in the region.<sup>99</sup> This number was to grow exponentially in the following years and, in 1910, three in ten of Strasbourg's inhabitants

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<sup>96</sup> Emil von Borries, *Geschichte der Stadt Straßburg* (Strasbourg: Trübner, 1909), p. 322.

<sup>97</sup> Regarding Alsace after 1933 and during the Second World War, see: Pierre Rigoulot, *L'Alsace-Lorraine pendant la guerre 1939-1945*, Que Sais-Je? (Paris: PUF, 1998). Dollinger (ed.), pp. 479-499. Marc Lienhard, pp. 86-88. François Roth, *Alsace-Lorraine: Histoire d'un "pays perdu": de 1870 à nos jours* (Nancy: Editions Place Stanislas, 2010), pp. 165-187. Alfred Wahl and Jean-Claude Richez, *La vie quotidienne en Alsace entre France et Allemagne, 1850-1950* (Paris: Hachette, 1993), pp. 251-254.

<sup>98</sup> Irmgard Grünewald, *Die Elsass-Lothringer im Reich 1918-1933: Ihre Organisationen zwischen Integration und 'Kampf um die Seele der Heimat'* (Frankfurt a. M.: Lang, 1984), p. 1.

<sup>99</sup> Dollinger (ed.), p. 439.

originated from Germany.<sup>100</sup> Strasbourg became the capital of the *Reichsland*, a province including Alsace and Moselle, a part of the French Lorraine region that was also annexed.<sup>101</sup> Despite some reticence from the other federal lands, which expected economic competition from the new *Reichsland*, the German authorities decided to make the city, thanks to its geographical position as a border province, a prime example of the German power in the Rhine region. Strasbourg was to be inhabited by German troops and consequently needed to be strengthened, in terms of economy and military power. This included changing its architecture to reflect the German hold on the region, as well as the Empire's power, through massive and at times ostentatious buildings that 'spoke for themselves.' At the time the annexation seemed to be justified by the fact that Strasbourg had been historically part of German territories for a longer period than it had been part of France. The controversial, and more than anything else, highly political annexation, will thus be the starting point of this study. It is, nevertheless, worth bearing in mind that by that time Strasbourg (and Alsace) – compared to national capitals like Paris, Berlin, or London – had achieved its status without an added sense of drama, because it had held its position as a free city with a degree of continuity. This special role in history is still part of what could be considered the cultural memory of Strasbourg, shaping the sense of identity of its population. This includes, for example, a strong awareness for medieval literary traditions, the city's reputation of tolerance during the Reformation and the importance of its printing press at that point, and the memory of Goethe's visit.<sup>102</sup>

The first task for the Germans after 1871 was to build the trust of the population, suffering from war traumas and the loss of their French affiliation. They also had to rebuild the actual city, partly destroyed by war battles in its midst. From this

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<sup>100</sup> Jean-Louis Gyss (ed.), *Strasbourg, Urbanisme et Architecture: Des origines à nos jours* (Strasbourg; Thionville: Oberlin / Gérard Klopp / Difal, 1996), p. 89.

<sup>101</sup> The Lorraine *région* is still a substitute for the Moselle *département* in official texts in France and Germany, except on its own territory and in Alsace. Moselle also seems to share many similarities with Alsace, in terms of culture and dialect, maybe more than with its affiliated *région*. After the First World War, Strasbourg became the capital of the *région Alsace-Lorraine* (1918-1940), which puts a further emphasis on the exclusion of Moselle from most official texts (to the understandable consternation of the *Mosellans*).

<sup>102</sup> Strasbourg, as a Free City at a crossroads between countries and with a renown University, attracted many important thinkers from different parts of Europe. It also inspired many authors, namely Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), who studied at the University for just one year (from 1770 to 1771) but kept a lasting memory of the city. He also met various Alsatians that marked him, such as Frédérique Brion, who he fell in love with, to the eternal pride of Alsatians.

point onwards, Strasbourg was to be expanded, fortified, and vastly modernised by the German authorities in charge of the region. The architecture reflects this German influence, particularly the district centred on the *Kaiserplatz* (now *Place de la République*) and its *Kaiserpalast* (now *Palais du Rhin*), built for the German Emperor (although Wilhelm I later nicknamed it the ‘elephant cage’).<sup>103</sup> Chapter Three will focus on one of the most remarkable and controversial buildings of the time, the *Kaiserpalast*. Together with its inauguration, it is a prime example of the ambition to impact upon identity by means of redesigning a particular location to captivate local perceptions and the sense of belonging. In line with that Palace, and facing it, stands the University, linking governing power and education in the same architectural style. Imposing architecture as a statement, while keeping the functional aspect, is an important part of effective propaganda; architecture communicates the power of those in charge.<sup>104</sup>

The University is a representative project reflecting the efforts of the German authorities to assimilate the population of an annexed province, but – in line with difficulties more and less successful propaganda may pose – with conflicting results because of a fundamental misunderstanding among the different parties. The Palace of the *Reichsuniversität* was finished in 1883 and inaugurated in 1884<sup>105</sup> (although the University was officially created in 1872).<sup>106</sup> Its style is influenced by the Italian Renaissance, and boasts a 125 meters long front decorated with statues of important European thinkers and scientists (see image 1). They are mostly German apart from Calvin, who is set among other Evangelical reformers. Other representations include the scientists, such as Kopernikus, Paracelsus and von Haller, who all have immediate links with the contemporary German culture.<sup>107</sup> Also noticeable is the presence of two eminent figures of the medieval University of Strasbourg

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<sup>103</sup> Livet and Rapp (eds), p. 341.

<sup>104</sup> This pattern of construction – German political power shown through the commissioned architecture – can, for example, also be found in Metz. Its main train station (built from 1905 to 1908 by the Berlin architect Jürgen Kröger) is a mix of neo-Roman and Baroque, and a good example of the architectural influence of the German Empire on the city. In Strasbourg, examples include the *Lycée international*, an impressive mix of styles leaning towards Baroque and reminiscent of the castles from the Bavaria region in Germany.

<sup>105</sup> Klaus Nohlen, *Construire une capitale: Strasbourg impérial de 1870 à 1918* (Strasbourg: Société Savante d'Alsace, 1997), p. 200.

<sup>106</sup> Nohlen, p. 189.

<sup>107</sup> Nohlen, p. 199.

among these statues, Johannes (Jean) Sturm (see image 2) and Spener.<sup>108</sup> This, then, reflects the German speaking countries as a whole from medieval times onwards. This architecture aimed to impress and inspire at the same time and, more importantly, it highlighted lines of cultural, religious and educational traditions.

The University unified all the pre-existing Faculties and was meant to be 'state-of-the-art' in the field of sciences, endowed with substantial funds from the *Deutsche Kaiserreich*.



1. The University Palace's front (left). 2. The far-left side of the University's front (right).<sup>109</sup> © Isaure Triby

The project was entrusted to a nobleman from the Bade region and used to the academic circles, Minister von Roggenbach.<sup>110</sup> His aim for the University of Strasbourg (then called *Kaiser Wilhelm Universität*) was to Germanise the intellectual life, in order to lessen and erase the French influence in this field, which would affect a fundamental part of society and identity. To this end, he relied on both the tradition of Protestant universities and the *Ancien Régime*. By emphasising the role of Protestantism, the Germans aimed to lessen the power of Catholicism in the region, so that Alsace could eventually be seen as more representative of Prussian history while at the same time this ensured that traditional hierarchies could be broken up. As a result, five Faculties were created: Protestant theology, medicine, law, political sciences (meant to train the next generation of civil servants), and philosophy. A few Alsatian professors

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<sup>108</sup> Jean/Johannes Sturm (1507-1589) was a Protestant educator, who founded the *Gymnase Jean-Sturm* in Strasbourg (in 1538), which later led to the creation of the University of Strasbourg. Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705) was an Alsatian theologian, taught at the University of Strasbourg, who founded Pietism.

<sup>109</sup> Both photographs were taken on the 6<sup>th</sup> July 2011. All photographs in this chapter, unless stated otherwise, are by the author of this thesis.

<sup>110</sup> Franz von Roggenbach (1825-1907) hired a few Alsatian professors himself, and offered high salaries and good equipment to foster the University's reputation in the Empire and Eastern Europe. Cf. Nohlen, pp. 190-191.

were hired for the less controversial subjects, theology and medicine. The staff were relatively young, highly educated in sciences (but less in humanities), with a strong patriotic spirit and a positivist conception of sciences and progress.<sup>111</sup>

However, the Alsatian population initially rejected this University and its nationalist German mission. It was mainly the authorities' disregard for immediate Alsatian economic needs<sup>112</sup> and the Catholic majority of Strasbourg (60%)<sup>113</sup> that became an issue. In particular the German professors were considered as representative of a general disregard of the regional reality. Alsatian students at the University were a minority in the 1880s (30%), and even though their numbers increased in the 1890s (up to 50%), they mostly came from the Francophile bourgeoisie and were not interested in involving themselves in university life for a long time; they refused, for example, to be involved in German student societies. One notable exception is Albert Schweitzer, who did not come from a bourgeois background (his father was a parish priest in a small Alsatian village) and had a positive opinion of the University at the time, after he became one of its students in theology and philosophy in 1893: 'Strasbourg University was then at the height of its reputation. Unhampered by tradition, teachers and students alike strove to realize the ideal of a modern University. There were hardly any professors of advanced age on the teaching staff. A fresh breeze of youthfulness penetrated everywhere.'<sup>114</sup> He also felt that the teaching he received in Strasbourg was more progressive and interesting than the one he received a few years later in Paris's Sorbonne University, showing that the Germans' ambition for Strasbourg's University had arguably succeeded, at least for a few years.<sup>115</sup> Remarkably, a similar sense of admiration can be traced in Friedrich Lienhard's autobiography of 1918. While he speaks fondly of the distinctiveness of the dialect that is 'ohne Innewerden irgendwelches Standesunterschiedes' and

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<sup>111</sup> Livet and Rapp (eds), p. 383.

<sup>112</sup> Because Alsace was a relatively recently modernised region that was still adapting to its new official status (namely for Strasbourg as capital of the *Reichsland*) the Alsatian society, it was felt, did not need more educated people, but more artisans and regular civil servants. Furthermore the majority of the population did not have the financial means to go to university.

<sup>113</sup> For all statistics, see: Livet and Rapp (eds), p. 384.

<sup>114</sup> Albert Schweitzer, *Aus meinem Leben und Denken / My Life and Thought: An Autobiography* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1933; original German publ.: Leipzig: Felix Meine, 1933), p. 16. See also: Mayeur, in Nora (ed.), I, 1157.

<sup>115</sup> Schweitzer, p. 28. Although the fact that theology was more developed in Strasbourg than in Paris might have been one of the reasons for his preference too.



intrinsically calm,<sup>116</sup> the memory of German efficiency is, from the then child's perspective, positively overwhelming. Lienhard recalls the troops of 1871, when 'Tag und Nacht, Nacht und Tag in großartiger Ordnung der endlose Heereszug der Deutschen an uns erstaunten Elsässern vorüber [rollte].'<sup>117</sup> The German efficiency might have been ruthless, but it did not fail to impress.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the University encountered financial problems and, faced with the threat of closure, the German authorities decided to advocate a better adaptation to regional *particularismes*, and created a Faculty of Catholic Theology in 1902.<sup>118</sup> This new position attracted more Alsatian students (still Francophile and Catholic, for the most part), but with the loss of the patriotic argument the University became comparatively less attractive to the German students. The University thus lost its prestigious position in the German Empire and acquired a provincial status, which the Alsatians themselves greatly benefited from. The local Government managed to acquire for the University, in 1908, more Alsatian professors and the creation of a chair of Regional History to be exclusively entrusted to an Alsatian professor, even though the University's German professors protested strongly against that decision.<sup>119</sup> The student body evolved in a parallel way, with an increasing number of openly Francophile students between 1905 and 1914, as well as more Catholics. These students were also more interested in law and humanities (rather than sciences), reflecting an Alsatian tradition, and even some German students started to become more open to Alsace's dual culture, both German and Alsatian at that point.<sup>120</sup>

With these changes, at last, and not least thanks to the University Library – the *Universitäts- und Landes-Bibliothek* (now *Bibliothèque Nationale Universitaire de Strasbourg*), created in 1872 – the University of Strasbourg could be seen as a success with the local population that could access higher education. The Library, despite a lot of its manuscripts being destroyed during the war, still held a very important and remarkable collection, which added significantly to the

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<sup>116</sup> Friedrich Lienhard, *Jugendjahre: Erinnerungen*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (Stuttgart: Greiner & Pfeiffer, 1918), p. 2.

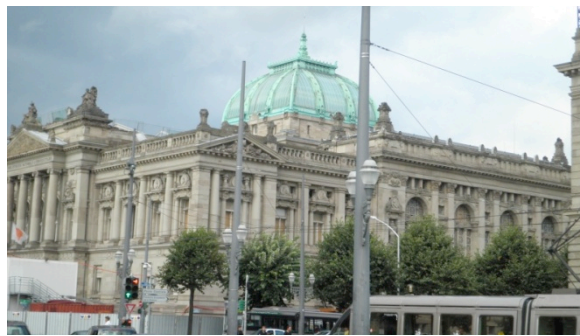
<sup>117</sup> Friedrich Lienhard, p. 21.

<sup>118</sup> Livet and Rapp (eds), p. 385.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Livet and Rapp (eds), pp. 385-386.

University's prestige and reputation.<sup>121</sup> Thus, one can argue that the Alsatians finally accepted the University when it became 'theirs', reflecting their own culture and needs, even though the University's only official language remained German. The Alsatians' rejection of Germany had been aimed at a period when the University reflected the German culture exclusively, even though Alsace benefited from the modernisation of the province by the German Empire. The University could also be seen as a model example of the Germans' high expectations for the region with a strategic position in Europe. The development was clearly meant to reflect the region's position as a leading economic and intellectual area in Central Europe, even though one can argue that the mission's success was not as complete as it was expected to be, since the Germanisation process that was supposed to accompany it was clearly incomplete amongst Alsatians.



3. The University Library (*BNU*), undergoing renovations (09/08/11). © Isaure Triby

The example of the University of Strasbourg highlights the Germans' overall approach and the challenges they faced. In 1909, Emil von Borries (1859-1922), a German teacher and historian in Alsace, published a survey of the city's history that illuminates in its tenth and final chapter the sentiments of the time. He stresses the region's independence as beneficial and specifically German: '[...] Das eine steht jedenfalls fest, daß das Reichsland sich einer Selbständigkeit in der Regelung seiner Angelegenheiten erfreut, wie es sie weder als Ganzes noch in seinen Teilen vor 1870 genossen hat.'<sup>122</sup> Borries, after stating this development, proceeds to explain the importance of the city's expansion and the new building work; the study does, in fact, include numerous

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<sup>121</sup> I will discuss further issues related to the University Library in my third chapter, devoted to Imperial architecture.

<sup>122</sup> Borries, p. 297.

full-page illustrations of these achievements, which function as 'proof'. But, looking back, he concedes:

Mit diesen Ersatzbauten und Ausbesserungen war wohl der äußerliche Schaden [des Krieges] geheilt; weit schwieriger war aber die Aufgabe, die Wunden, die Trennung von dem lieb gewordenen Vaterlande [Frankreich] riß, zu heilen, die Stadt für die materiellen und geistigen Verluste, die sie erlitt, zu entschädigen und sie in die neuen Verhältnisse möglichst schmerzlos hinüberzuleiten.<sup>123</sup>

Borries considers the main problem to be of a cultural nature. He bemoans the lack of the German language and feels that 'Straßburger Dialekt allein' opposed the omnipresent French language. The dialect is, in fact, described as 'anspruchsloses Naturkind' in contrast to the 'ausgebildeten Vertreterin alter Kultur.'<sup>124</sup> Most indicative, however, is Borries's conclusion. He states, regarding the French influence after 1871, that eventually the stance of 'protestation et abstention' changed to 'protestation et action.'<sup>125</sup> Nevertheless, and in acknowledgement of the challenges, he confirms:

Der französische Einschlag in der elsässischen and im besonderen der Straßburger Kultur wird freilich nicht verschwinden, er wird sie dauernd von der rechtsrheinischen unterscheiden; aber darum wird sie doch keine 'Mischkultur', sondern eine, allerdings besonders gefärbte, deutsche Kultur sein; denn alle die Kräfte, die zu französischer Zeit französisierend wirkten, die Universität, die Beamtenschaft, die Garnison, wirken jetzt im deutschen Sinne. [...] Im gleichen Sinne wirkt die starke Einwanderung aus allen Teilen des Reichs [...]. Auch die literarischen Regungen der einheimischen Bevölkerung führten von dem Französischen ab [...].<sup>126</sup>

Borries praises the achievements of the dramatic productions that, he argues, strengthened German sentiments. His empathic conclusion points, while his approach is otherwise quite measured, at an all too rosy picture of German harmony: 'So tritt Straßburg [...] wieder in den herrlichen Kranz der deutschen Städte ein [...] die bei aller Verschiedenheit untereinander, die gewaltige

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<sup>123</sup> Borries, p. 304.

<sup>124</sup> Borries, p. 320.

<sup>125</sup> Borries, p. 322.

<sup>126</sup> Borries, p. 323.

Harmonie der deutschen Kultur zum machtvollsten Ausdruck bringen.<sup>127</sup> While not adverse to the French culture, Borries celebrates a 're-Germanisation' that allows for a kind of 'home-coming' that will prove, he alludes, nothing but beneficial for Strasbourg and Alsace. Friedrich Lienhard meanwhile comments more critically in his 'Vorwort' of 1918 that his book has to be read as a 'Gruß aus dem so viel umstrittenen, so viel entehrten und leider, auch von Deutschen, so viel verkannten Elsaß.'<sup>128</sup> While he seeks an acknowledgement of what is Alsatian, Borries considers the growing closeness to Germany as a confirmation of a true identity.

## 1.2. Writing Alsatian Identity

Such contemporary comments are representative and exemplary in terms of the number of comments that accompanied the Alsatian question from 1871 onwards, in newspapers, novels, debates and autobiographies to name but a few. These examples of written (and sometimes literary) works dealing with Alsatian identity will be my next focus, with the aim to highlight popular narratives of Alsatian identity. They consist of history books, picture books (which will be analysed in Chapter Four as well), and autobiographies, and focus mostly on the 1910s, although the latter part of the references was published at later dates. They have in common their link to the debate on Alsatian identity found in everyday life, usually choosing the side of France or Germany, but all sharing an Alsatian perspective (even though, admittedly, not all the authors come from Alsace).

After the First World War and the return of Alsace and Moselle to France, the French Government exploited the remaining Francophile feelings to promote their policies for a swift and smooth return of Alsace to its 'Motherland' (*Mère-Patrie*). This kind of propaganda and its impact on a particular vocabulary can also be seen in the majority of history books dating back to this period, such as *L'Alsace-Lorraine et L'Empire Allemand (1871-1911)*, by Robert Baldy, published in 1912.<sup>129</sup> Baldy, a French barrister for the *Cour d'appel de*

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<sup>127</sup> Borries, p. 324.

<sup>128</sup> Friedrich Lienhard, p. v(?).

<sup>129</sup> Robert Baldy, *L'Alsace-Lorraine et l'Empire Allemand, 1871-1911* (Paris; Nancy: Berger-Levrault, 1912).

*Montpellier*, includes at times passionate pleas for the return of 'Alsace-Lorraine' to France, thereby justifying the upcoming World War I:

Après deux siècles d'attente et de préparation, les Alsaciens et les Lorrains ainsi appelés à vivre les heures les plus fiévreuses de notre histoire, se sentaient aussi volontiers, aussi fièrement français que les habitants des autres provinces de notre pays. Que pouvaient-ils regretter d'un passé nébuleux et lointain ceux qui participaient à la gloire mondiale de la France, à son rayonnement et à sa prépondérance?<sup>130</sup>

This reflects French patriotism, which is supposedly felt very strongly by Alsacians themselves, and can be compared to the description of the 'violent' and 'forced' annexation by the Germans: 'L'annexion violente et contre sa volonté d'un pays arrivé au degré de civilisation de l'Alsace-Lorraine ne pouvait se faire sans heurts ni violences.'<sup>131</sup> Another example of the French perspective can be found in the Francophile Alsatian Rodolphe Reuss's *Histoire d'Alsace*.<sup>132</sup> This book was first published before the First World War, but was republished many times due to its popularity in France. The tone of the different prefaces (from 1912, 1916 and 1918) changes dramatically in terms of patriotic rhetoric. One of the reasons is that the author lost his three sons to the war in 1918. The tone that was supposed to be 'impartial' becomes much more biased in the revised version with a new chapter on the war. The anti-German and pro-French narrative is affirmed: France is now described as 'mère patrie' and 'l'union patriotique'<sup>133</sup> as opposed to 'l'agression perfide de l'Allemagne.'<sup>134</sup>

The success of this propaganda was limited in Alsace, mainly since the French repeated their predecessors' mistakes in terms of an enforced assimilation. However, some Alsatian writers and artists still showed their support of French patriotism in their works. As Chapter Four on Hansi and his caricatures will show, he confirms in his drawings the implicit Francophile nature of presumably typical locations in Alsace. Two *bandes-dessinées* from the 1910s written by Alsatian 'Nett' (whose real name was Antoinette Meyer) and illustrator 'Lisbeth'

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<sup>130</sup> Baldy, p. 10.

<sup>131</sup> Baldy, p. 11.

<sup>132</sup> Rodolphe Reuss, *Histoire d'Alsace* (Paris: Boivin, 1918; 1934). Reuss (1841-1924) was an Alsatian professor from Strasbourg, deeply involved in the refurbishment of the University Library.

<sup>133</sup> Reuss, p. 345.

<sup>134</sup> Reuss, p. x.

are reminiscent of the works of Hansi, but while the latter used autobiographical elements to emphasise his 'Alsatianism', Nett uses fiction that employs expressions often used by French propaganda but in a simple manner, to appeal to a younger audience. To achieve this, her protagonists are also children or animals. In *Histoire de deux petits Alsaciens pendant la guerre*,<sup>135</sup> she recounts the adventures of Lissele and Seppele Müller (their names are typical for Alsace), two Alsatian children that are unfortunate enough to live 'sous la domination prussienne'.<sup>136</sup> They are always dressed in the traditional Alsatian costumes, in contrast to their French friends, Louise and Robert, and their German counterparts, who are quite reminiscent of Hansi's caricatures of Germans: thin, with round glasses and rather ridiculous clothes, one boy even wearing the pointed Prussian helmet (see image 4). These different trends are used throughout the book to identify people who are Alsatian, German or French (the latter being always rather elegantly dressed). The vocabulary used is obviously pro-French and anti-German, with observations such as: '[...] La France victorieuse va venir bientôt les délivrer de l'odieux joug des Boches,'<sup>137</sup> and 'les vilains soldats du Kaiser.'<sup>138</sup> The war context gives a specific connotation to the text, and France is associated with victory. Meanwhile the prejudices against Germans are liberally used. They are described as mean, malevolent, arrogant and people who steal the Alsaticans' possessions, whereas the French are kind, courageous and generous. The drawings also support French patriotism by including the colours of the French flag (blue, white, red) on every page, leading to the eventual and expected victory of France over Germany.

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<sup>135</sup> Antoinette Meyer (a.k.a. Nett), *Histoire de deux petits Alsaciens pendant la guerre*, illustrated by Lisbeth (Paris; Nancy: Berger-Levrault, [1915(?)]).

<sup>136</sup> Meyer and Lisbeth, *Histoire de deux petits Alsaciens pendant la guerre*, p. 3.

<sup>137</sup> Meyer and Lisbeth, *ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>138</sup> Meyer and Lisbeth, *Histoire de deux petits Alsaciens pendant la guerre*, p. 6.



4. From left to right: Lissele and Seppele, Louise and Robert, and the German children in their village.<sup>139</sup> © Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire de Strasbourg, M.34.490.

In her other children's book, *Klack Cigogne d'Alsace*,<sup>140</sup> Nett tells the tale of a young and patriotic stork, an animal symbolic of France in Alsace. The book follows the development of this stork, who fell from his nest and was raised by an Alsatian family, and later learned that his parents had been killed by 'Prussians', described as 'barbares, vilaines gens'.<sup>141</sup> After this revelation, Klack vows to avenge his parents and ends up being a war hero, awarded a military medal by the French Army for his services to France during the First World War. The rhetoric used is again heavily patriotic and anti-German, including the theme of revenge against the 'Prussian invaders' dear to the French nationalists at the time. Even though the Prussian Empire had become the German Empire in 1871, the 'Prussiens' were the preferred enemies amongst French and Alsatian patriots, still seen as controlling Germany and less similar to the Alsatians than the Southern 'Schwaben'.<sup>142</sup> These publications would undoubtedly influence children's perceptions and hamper them in the long-term. They also show how political and national tensions became integral to daily life.

Other popular picture books include an anonymous booklet<sup>143</sup> written by an Alsatian in French, German and Alsatian. Each page tells a joke typical of Alsatian humour (the mix of languages being part of it) and illustrated by a

<sup>139</sup> Meyer and Lisbeth, *ibid.*, pp. 3, 4.

<sup>140</sup> Antoinette Meyer (a.k.a. Nett), *Klack, cigogne d'Alsace*, illustrated by Lisbeth (Paris; Nancy: Berger-Levrault, [n.d.]).

<sup>141</sup> Meyer and Lisbeth, *Klack, cigogne d'Alsace*, p. 9 (for both citations).

<sup>142</sup> Cf. Chapter Four.

<sup>143</sup> [No author], 'Petites images strasbourgeoises de l'année néfaste 1870, griffonnées par un vieux Meiselocker,' *Images du Musée Alsacien à Strasbourg* ([Paris]: [n. pub.], [1906]).

comical drawing. Most of the jokes mock the Germans and use the usual stereotypes popular in Alsace and France at the time, but the booklet also appears to be 'authentically' Alsatian instead of a product of French propaganda. A typical example could be the French lesson with a German tutor:

La leçon de français.

L'élève: "Fräulein, soll man aussprechen, peu ta peu, oder peu za peu?"

Fräulein: "Nach Belieben, mein Kind, les teu se disent mais peu za peu est plusse douzà l'oreille."<sup>144</sup>

The German teacher is not qualified for her job, since she makes a basic mistake in French due to her strong accent. This sketch is typical of the whole book, in which the author seems to endeavour to make fun of all the difficulties that the Alsatians encounter in their daily life with Germans. The audience targeted is Alsatian, since they are able to appreciate the mix of languages and the comical situations depicted, and one can argue that Alsatians as 'insiders' are identified here in their opposition to the Germans living among them and who are effectively defined as outsiders. The Alsatians' humour seems to work best with the chosen targets of their jokes: the Germans living alongside them. This example too serves as a case in point that propaganda became omnipresent in Alsatian life and while it would, to a degree, contribute to an awareness of all things Alsatian, it also confirms the particular importance of belonging in terms of alliances.

Finally, some Alsatians did not necessarily identify with the French propaganda discourses either, and, having lived most of their lives as Germans, naturally felt more German than French. Again, one example is Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965). In his autobiography<sup>145</sup> he does not use any striking bias, although his inclination towards Germany rather than France can be traced on the first page of his book. When he mentions his father in the context of the First World War, it is comparable to Lienhard who details his father's relationship with the invading German Army. Schweitzer reminds his readers that Alsatian civilians died because of the French Army during the war: "[...] He looked after his parish during the war under the fire of the French guns which swept the valley from the heights of the Vosges mountains, making victims of many a house and many an

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<sup>144</sup> 'Petites images strasbourgeoises de l'année néfaste 1870,' p. 20.

<sup>145</sup> Schweitzer, *Aus meinem Leben und Denken*.



inhabitant of Günsbach.<sup>146</sup> However, even though he later talks about more negative consequences, namely when his village is destroyed or when he and his wife are held in Internment Camps in the South of France (including one exclusively for Alsatians), true to his pacifist convictions he never appears to resent France for this treatment. Instead, he describes local complications:

After the Armistice, under the terms of which Alsace passed from German rule to French, I had for a time to carry on the services at S. Nicholas' by myself. Mr. Gerold, who on account of his anti-German utterances had been removed from his post by the German administration, had not yet been reappointed by the French, and Mr. Ernst, the successor to Mr. Knittel, had been compelled to resign because he was not sufficiently well disposed to the French.<sup>147</sup>

Schweitzer's identification with his German side may stem from his preferred language: the Alsatian dialect, a Germanic language. Indeed, Schweitzer does not believe in true bilingualism, in which no language spoken takes precedence over the other. For him, there is always a language with which one is more at ease:

It is true that ever since my childhood I have spoken French as freely as German; but I never feel French to be my mother-tongue, although in my letters to my parents I always used French, because that was customary in the family. German is my mother-tongue, because the Alsatian dialect, which is my native language, is Germanic.<sup>148</sup>

The question of identity is closely linked to the question of language. Autobiographies are particularly noteworthy in this respect in that well-known authors may write in the name of more general perceptions by the wider population. While descriptions remain individual and have to be read in the context of a particular life, the author aligns or distances himself from a region due to such choices. Furthermore, autobiographies recount an event from a specific personal perspective, thereby re-appropriating history that might be seen as interesting since it is distinct or it highlights a shared experience. In the case of Alsace there are historical key developments that centre on the national

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<sup>146</sup> Schweitzer, p. 11.

<sup>147</sup> Schweitzer, pp. 212-213.

<sup>148</sup> Schweitzer, p. 78.

affiliations and will unavoidably be easily recognised by a local reader whose interest is bound to be triggered by the known core narrative: the Alsatian plight from 1871 onwards.<sup>149</sup>

Accordingly, Jean-Paul Sartre's *Les mots*<sup>150</sup> singles out a reference to the author's childhood with his grandfather, Charles Schweitzer, whose nephew was Albert Schweitzer. Sartre's grandfather was a strong presence in his early life and he recounts repeating his grandfather's pro-French and anti-German prejudices without really understanding their significance at the time: 'Il y a de vrais méchants: les Prussiens, qui nous ont pris l'Alsace-Lorraine et toutes nos horloges, sauf la pendule de marbre noir qui orne la cheminée de mon grand-père et qui fut offerte, justement, par un groupe d'élèves allemands; on se demande où ils l'ont volée.'<sup>151</sup> At times the child stays impervious to propagandistic ideas, such as the ones found amongst the stereotyped characters created by Hansi: 'On m'achète les livres de Hansi, on m'en fait voir les images: je n'éprouve aucune antipathie pour ces gros hommes en sucre rose qui ressemblent si fort à mes oncles alsaciens.'<sup>152</sup> Because his grandfather is susceptible to starting an angry and patriotic tirade each time he visits his family in German Alsace, Sartre's grandmother wonders why he still goes there: 'L'Alsace ne lui vaut rien; il ne devrait pas y retourner si souvent.' And the child secretly agrees with her, because he himself feels forced to hate the Germans to please his grandfather: 'Je déteste les Allemands, parbleu, mais sans conviction.'<sup>153</sup> Sartre (1905-1980) reflects the specific use of humour to mock Germans when they visit their family in Alsace, their own way of rebelling against them.<sup>154</sup> The observation bridges a gap between Sartre's development and a specific daily situation that would easily be recognised by contemporaries and illustrates the Alsatian issue at the time. Family relations aside, other figures too impact upon minds that can still be formed. Arsène Lupin thus encourages French children to feel the nationalistic need for revenge after

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<sup>149</sup> On autobiographical writing see: Carolyn Barros, *Autobiography: Narrative of Transformation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998). James Olney, *Memory & Narrative: The Weave of Life-Writing* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998). Laura Marcus, *Auto/biographical Discourses: Criticism, Theory, Practice* (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 1994).

<sup>150</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Les mots* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964).

<sup>151</sup> Sartre, p. 32.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Sartre, p. 33.

<sup>154</sup> Sartre, p. 34.

Alsace and Lorraine were 'stolen' by Germany in 1871: 'L'agressivité nationale et l'esprit de revanche faisaient de tous les enfants des vengeurs.'<sup>155</sup> And Sartre concludes that these influences in his childhood also had an impact on his own personality and identity: 'Matérialiste convaincu, mon idéalisme épique compensera jusqu'à ma mort un affront que je n'ai pas subi, une honte dont je n'ai pas souffert, la perte de deux provinces qui nous sont revenues depuis longtemps.'<sup>156</sup> Here the author talks for a whole generation of French men and women who were marked by the propaganda discourses of an era.

The surrealist Maxime Alexandre (1899-1976) describes in his autobiography<sup>157</sup> the impact that the Franco-Prussian War had on his childhood. He talks about his father's perception, as an Alsatian Jew, that France was less anti-Semitic than Germany, which prompted the family to emigrate after 1871.<sup>158</sup> At the time, Alexandre did not really understand the seriousness of their situation, until his mother was denounced by their own neighbour when they came back to live in Strasbourg. He refers to the propaganda used in the press in Alsace at the time, and which newspaper the Alsatians knew to read if they wanted real news about the situation in France during the First World War.<sup>159</sup> Of interest here is his first encounter with Jean Arp in Zurich in that humour is considered as a means of identification:

L'Alsacien, ce méridional isolé au milieu des brumes badoises, lorraines et vosgiennes, buveur de vin et expansif dans ses paroles et dans ses gestes, est facile à reconnaître, du moins pour un autre Alsacien; aussi l'ai-je immédiatement reconnu. La particularité d'Arp, bien alsacienne, était l'humour. Le trait chez lui était frappant. Qu'est-ce que l'humour? La pudeur du cœur, d'un cœur généreux. Rien de commun avec l'ironie, celle-ci étant un pur produit du cerveau.<sup>160</sup>

Their first bond is to be Alsatian. Both of them are inspired by Strasbourg's iconic cathedral. And they are familiar with the conflict between the French and German language, which became a particular issue for the generations that

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<sup>155</sup> Sartre, p. 97.

<sup>156</sup> Sartre, p. 98.

<sup>157</sup> Maxime Alexandre, *Mémoires d'un surréaliste* (Paris: La Jeune Parque, 1968).

<sup>158</sup> Alexandre, p. 9.

<sup>159</sup> Alexandre, p. 13.

<sup>160</sup> Alexandre, p. 18.

experienced the frequent changes of Alsatian affiliations.<sup>161</sup> Insecurities that are linked to the use of the French language were also known to René Schickele (1883-1940), whose works became famous in Germany but never in France, because he did not dare to write in French for a long time. In *Le Retour*,<sup>162</sup> first published in 1938 in French, he explains this conflict and invents a dialogue between himself and two alter egos to defend his wish to write in French; one is very critical and rather cynical, anti-German and convinced that Schickele should not even try to write in French and keep the language he knows best. The other one is more diplomatic and benevolent, a kind of voice of reason:

- N'essaie pas, conclut Langue-de-Feu. Même moi, ton ennemi le plus intime, j'en ferais une maladie de te voir tomber dans l'abjection... Tourne ta prière en allemand, comme d'ordinaire et va te coucher.

- Pourtant, objectai-je, mes prières, je les faisais en français.

- Il y a longtemps de cela, mon vieux. Là-haut [...] on a pris l'habitude de t'entendre parler allemand. Si tu changes de langue, on ne te reconnaîtra pas... Alors, puisqu'il en est ainsi des dieux, qu'espères-tu des hommes?<sup>163</sup>

Schickele describes his happy childhood in Alsace with his French-speaking mother. Strasbourg's cathedral bells act like a lullaby and he associates them with her. He also tackles the question of Alsations that, like him, had to go to the South of France during the war and had trouble integrating into society, victims of prejudices against Alsations, seen as not completely patriotic towards France because of their history with Germany. As an Alsatian, Schickele is familiar with the shared issues people encountered, namely living in a border region. Autobiographies point at the shared conflicts of the time, which were to turn worse in the course of the First World War. They highlight the importance of key-features in reaction to both France and Germany, and the distinctiveness of Alsatian identity.

### 1.3. From *Réveil Alsacien* to *Malaise Alsacien*: The Entrenchment of Sentiments?

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<sup>161</sup> Alexandre, p. 17.

<sup>162</sup> René Schickele, *Le Retour: Souvenirs inédits* (Strasbourg: BF, 2010; first publ. in *Les œuvres libres*, 102, 1938).

<sup>163</sup> Schickele, p. 21.

Alsatian recruits to the German Army appeared to lack patriotism and their belonging to the enemy nation attracted the suspicions of the German commanding officers, who eventually transferred them to the Russian front. Furthermore, on their return to France in 1918, the Alsatian soldiers received the same wary treatment from French authorities. As for the civilians, they endured the same conditions, being seen as *Franzosenköpfe* in Germany and *sales boches* (a pejorative term usually meant for Germans) in France.<sup>164</sup> Then, more than ever before, identity seemed to be determined by the clear association with either of the two countries, instead of potentially distinctive Alsatian features.

In fact, the Alsatian population was subjected to a military dictatorship during the war. The consequence was more defined resentment against Germany and an increase of French patriotism. One example of typical wartime insensitivities could be seen in the close supervision of Alsatian teachers, who had directives to teach patriotic songs and victorious German battles to their pupils.<sup>165</sup> The German authorities also encouraged the denunciation of perceived lack of loyalty to Germany from Alsatian teachers. The war weighed heavily in inspectors' regular evaluations. However, when unable to adapt entirely to French society and economy (because of language, religion, and identity), in the after-war period Alsations were also swiftly disillusioned with France.

The comparison between two periods during which the region belonged to different countries is particularly interesting. It shows that, contrary to what was broadcast in France at the time as part of the official anti-German propaganda following military defeats, the Alsatian population benefited from the German annexation, in some ways more than they gained from the *réunification* with France later on. It is worth noting the similarities between the two 'conquering' and opposing nations in their official attitudes and policies concerning the annexed region, and the negative results that they had on the Alsatian population's kinship to either nation.

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<sup>164</sup> Bernard Vogler, *Histoire de l'Alsace* (Rennes: Editions Ouest-France, 2002), p. 48.

<sup>165</sup> Stephen L. Harp, *Learning to Be Loyal: Primary Schooling as Nation Building in Alsace and Lorraine, 1850-1940* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1998), p. 171.

Before the First World War, Alsace, and Strasbourg in particular, had gone through what is called an 'Alsatian awakening' (*réveil alsacien*).<sup>166</sup> Like the University of Strasbourg and the development of the University Library, the artistic life too had been renewed by the German Government. Thus, the city gained several music festivals, theatres, cinemas, but also numerous music teachers and painters.<sup>167</sup> The *Musée des Beaux-Arts*, destroyed during the war, was rebuilt in 1913 with a collection including Alsatian and German paintings from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as well as Dutch and Flemish paintings from the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. This development strengthened the intellectual life in general. One particular example is the role of the *Société pour la Conservation des Monuments Historiques*, an Alsatian society, which even managed to publish all its articles in French until 1891. From then on, the general use of the German language was imposed by the authorities.<sup>168</sup> Furthermore, several literary or scientific journals were supported by the University and the Government, such as the *Gazette médicale* for medicine (in French), and the literary association's *Gesellschaft für elsässische Literatur* (1911), presided over by Strasbourg's mayor Schwander and the Library's director, Wolfram. The number of local newspapers (in German) published in Strasbourg, but read also in the rest of Alsace, increased. Several of these were in favour of Alsatian autonomy.<sup>169</sup> After the law limiting the freedom of press was abolished in 1902, several Alsatian newspapers were created, such as *Elsässer Journal*, by Auguste Schneegans (1835-1898), an influential and autonomist newspaper that began to focus on regional concerns. However, the more neutral *Straßburger Neueste Nachrichten*, created in 1877, with articles from foreign newspapers or local associations and a lot of advertising, kept its position as the most read newspaper in Alsace.<sup>170</sup> Newspapers and periodicals are interesting for questions of identity, since they offer 'a window into the beliefs, opinions, and perceptions of different groups of

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<sup>166</sup> Livet and Rapp (eds), p. 393. Dollinger (ed.), p. 449.

<sup>167</sup> In 1913, the city had one hundred music teachers, eighteen singing teachers, forty-nine art painters, seven engravers, and eighteen piano tuners. Cf. Livet and Rapp (eds), p. 449.

<sup>168</sup> Société pour la Conservation des Monuments Historiques d'Alsace (official website) <<http://www.monuments-alsace.com>> [accessed on 18/01/12].

<sup>169</sup> Dollinger (ed.), pp. 473-475.

<sup>170</sup> When Alsace became French again, the newspaper's name was translated to *Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace* (often abbreviated to *DNA*), and it is still the most widely read regional newspaper in Alsace today. Further information about some of these periodicals can be found in: Claude Lorentz, *La Presse alsacienne du XXe siècle: Répertoire des journaux parus depuis 1918* (Strasbourg: BNU, 1997).

people in the past, as well as their receptiveness to certain events and ideologies.<sup>171</sup> Accordingly, they will come to the fore in the discussion in some of the following chapters. Furthermore, their large variety in Alsace, particularly in Strasbourg, allowed for a broader perspective of Alsatian society's developments at the time.

During that *Réveil*, literature and theatre provided evidence of the duality and vitality of Alsatian identity. The literature published in Alsace towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century was essentially separated into two categories. One participated in German literary life, such as the literary society *Alsabund*, created in 1893 by poet Christian Schmitt. The other supported 'Alsatian identity'. Among the latter, a chasm was formed by the departure of several authors to France, but a new generation appeared around 1900 with the periodical of the *Stürmer* movement, linked to the School of Munich, but formed by Alsatian authors writing in either German or the Alsatian dialect. Their motivation was mostly artistic, but some of its members, such as writer René Schickelé and the Matthis brothers (who wrote poetry in the Alsatian dialect), were undeniably marked by Alsace's dual identity.<sup>172</sup>

The *Théâtre de la ville de Strasbourg* was founded in 1873, but encountered the disapproval and disinterest of the Alsatian population until 1889. This was true in particular in view of its German repertoire, and therefore probably because of its lack of consideration for Alsatian tastes and culture. This changed with the appointment of the new director, Karl Krükl,<sup>173</sup> who added some French classical plays such as by Molière to its repertoire. The *Théâtre Alsacien* was created in 1898, and its immediate success was down to its supporting authors, such as Gustave Stoskopf (1869-1944). Stoskopf was influenced by French *vaudeville*, and his prudent satire of the German Regime became popular. Remarkably, these works were allowed by the authorities,

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<sup>171</sup> Vlossak, p. 69.

<sup>172</sup> Further information about these authors can be found in: Áine McGillicuddy, *René Schickele and Alsace: Cultural Identity between the Borders*, Cultural Identity Studies, 11 (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2011). Bernard Vogler, *Histoire culturelle de l'Alsace: Du Moyen Âge à nos jours, les très riches heures d'une région frontrière*, La bibliothèque alsacienne (Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue / DNA, 1993), pp. 372-373.

<sup>173</sup> Krükl was born in 1874. He was interested in Alsatian literature and theatre – as his main work suggests: Karl Krükl, *Leben und Werk des elsässischen Schriftstellers Anton von Klein. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Aufklärung in der Pfalz* (Strasbourg: Oleire, 1901). One can assume that he was more in tune with Alsatian artistic needs.

probably because the satire was light-hearted and the main interest was in Alsatian life in the countryside. Stoskopf also played an important part in the Alsatian artistic life with his participation in the influential *Société des Amis des Arts* at the beginning of the twentieth century. Even though he was mostly popular for his plays, he was also a painter, a poet, a storyteller, a journalist, a comical author, and above all a man devoted to his region. His popular plays in the regional dialect allowed him to be seen as the 'Molière alsacien' in Alsace, but he also gained national reputation with his architectural works.<sup>174</sup> The *Théâtre Alsacien de Strasbourg* ('Elsässisches Theater Straßburg') was part of a pre-existing Alsatian tradition concerning theatre societies performing plays written in Alsatian dialects. The *Théâtre Alsacien de Strasbourg's* particularity was its conscious function of identification to a sort of 'alsacianité',<sup>175</sup> namely through the use and defence of the dialect. All in all it is obvious that the initiatives carried out by individuals and their organisations were crucial for the pursuit of regional interests and characteristics, the public reaction providing a useful indication as to needs, hopes and desires at certain times. The role of individuals will feature strongly in the following chapters in as much as they either set examples or afforded a distance, thereby reinforcing affiliations and adding to an understanding of distinctive features.

The *Kaiserreich* sought to highlight the tradition and contemporary achievements of Alsatian culture to stress the 'natural' links between the country and its region. One particular angle was the aforementioned Alsatian dialect that enjoyed dramatic and poetic popularity in the late nineteenth century. The *Elsässische Theater* in Strasbourg (1898) was followed by openings in Mulhouse and Colmar, with Mulhouse even boasting *Die Mittheilunge üs'm Elsasser Theater Milhüse*. Otto Hubert concludes, therefore, in the propagandistic language of the time: 'Wir aber erkennen in dieser Bestrebung ein deutliches Merkmal dafür, daß die deutschümliche Strömung in zunehmender Breite aus der Tiefe der elsässischen Volksseele an die

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<sup>174</sup> His name was given to a primary school and a street in the Neuhof district, a working-class suburb of Strasbourg. Further information about this author can be found in: Dominique Huck, *Le 'théâtre alsacien de Strasbourg' et la production dramaturgique de ses fondateurs, 1898-1914* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005). Vogler, *Histoire culturelle de l'Alsace*, pp. 342-345.

<sup>175</sup> Jeanne Benay and Jean-Marc Leveratto (eds), *Culture et histoire des spectacles en Alsace et en Lorraine: De l'annexion à la décentralisation, 1871-1946* (Bern: Peter Lang, Editions scientifiques européennes, 2005), p. 198.



Oberfläche emporsteigt.<sup>176</sup> Hubert exploits the history and recent developments of Alsatian literary history to emphatically conclude that the region's character, helped by the Germans, was to be well and truly German in due course. Cultural identity, then, is something that can be consciously fostered and propagated, provided it is built on (at times assumed) traditions:

Wenn wir nun sehen, daß zu allen Zeiten Männer, denen das deutsche Herzblut voll durch die Adern strömte, unser nationales Kleinod, die gemeinsame Muttersprache, im Elsass gehegt und gehütet und Volksgeist wie Geschichte ihrer Heimat mit dem Glanze der Poesie verklärt haben, dass im Elsass solch ein unerschöpflicher und unversiegbarer Born deutschen Lebens quillt, daß Sage und Überlieferung, daß alles, was echt und groß in der Geschichte, auf deutsche Wurzeln zurückweist, daß Hunderte von Denkmälern an eine deutsche Vergangenheit mahnen, wenn wir feststellen können, daß alle Hebel des französischen Buraukratismus im Bunde mit Napoleonischen Erinnerungen, dem deutschen Sprachgebiete auch nur den Raum einer Wegstunde streitig zu machen, nicht vermocht haben, wenn deutsche Dichtung und deutscher Gesang so liebevolle Pflege finden, mit einem Worte: wenn das deutsche Herzblut im Elsass so mächtig pulsiert, – dann wird es auch zweifellos gelingen, mit linder, aber fester Hand die schillernde fremde Tünche gänzlich zu tilgen und die kostbare Grundschrift in alter Reinheit und Herrlichkeit wieder ans Licht zu stellen.<sup>177</sup>

Hubert argues that the Alsatian literature and traditions stem from German roots found in the 'blood' of Alsatians. This strong image of the blood roots are reminiscent of the Motherland argument favoured by patriots, which is emphasised by the affectionate connotation that Hubert includes in his theory to persuade (instead of force) the Alsatians to embrace their 'Germanity'. However, the cultural life, more in tune with its Alsatian *particularismes*, was slowed down when the First World War broke out.

Although the Germans had tried to foster 'cultural roots', the War was followed by high expectations towards the French Government in the region, because French propaganda had been efficient. The sense of kinship and belonging to

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<sup>176</sup> Otto Hubert, *Zur Geschichte des Deutschtums im Elsass: Eine litterarhistorische Studie* (Landsberg a. d. Warthe: Dermietzel & Schmidt, 1904), p. 32.

<sup>177</sup> Hubert, p. 32.

France became important again amongst the Alsatian population, who now remembered that their region had been taken against their will in 1870-71.<sup>178</sup> The French could only be seen as saviours who were going to set the situation right, particularly when the Alsatians had been promised that their local traditions would be kept upon the *réunification*.<sup>179</sup> The subsequent disillusionment was unexpected for the Alsatian population, who had trouble adapting to France after forty-eight years of being (more and less) German.

Despite some efforts from the German Government to keep the Alsace-Lorraine province, when the region became part of France again in November 1918, there was a triumphant welcome for the French troops and a patriotic enthusiasm, which could be summarised in the words of French President Poincaré<sup>180</sup> at his arrival in Alsace on the 9<sup>th</sup> December: 'Messieurs, le plébiscite est fait. L'Alsace s'est jetée en pleurant de joie au cou de la mère retrouvée.'<sup>181</sup> The Francophile and patriotic nature of Alsace towards its 'Motherland' (*Mère-Patrie*, a term regularly used by French propaganda, and easily imprinted in Alsatian minds) was emphasised and used in many official texts in subsequent years, its aim being the assimilation of Alsatians at the cost of their regional *particularismes*.

After a failure at administering the region directly from the State, the control of Alsace-Lorraine was given to the region's authorities in Strasbourg in March 1919, and from that point onwards the different political parties and politicians expressed either autonomous or assimilating positions, a dual attitude that was reflected within the Alsatian population.<sup>182</sup> That situation came to a conclusion in the 1929 local elections, when the Communist party allied itself with the autonomist *Volksfront*, supporting the idea that the Alsatian people were 'oppressed' by the French Government, to counter the power of the Christian Democrat party UPR (*Union Populaire et Républicaine*).<sup>183</sup> The party 'defending the *Heimat*' thus won Strasbourg's town council, coinciding with the rise of the

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<sup>178</sup> Dollinger (ed.), pp. 435-436.

<sup>179</sup> Harp, p. 183.

<sup>180</sup> Poincaré and French Prime Minister Clémenceau were popular in France at the time, particularly the latter, for his strong patriotism. France's rather revengeful attitude in the context of the Versailles Treaty is today seen as a contributing factor to the eventual fall of the Weimar Republic.

<sup>181</sup> Livet and Rapp (eds), p. 407.

<sup>182</sup> Dollinger (ed.), pp. 470-471.

<sup>183</sup> Dollinger (ed.), pp. 475-476.

*Volksfront* in the rest of the region. This party had been created at the beginning of the 1920s and promptly gained popularity. Its official aim was the defence of Alsace's religious particularities against national policies,<sup>184</sup> and later on of Alsace's bilingualism, unifying all the local autonomist movements into one.

After the *réunification*, a political and social unease (*malaise*) increased in Alsace, partly originating from economic problems encountered in Germany. Indeed, after the Versailles Peace Treaty of 1919 and the feeling of a 'shameful peace'<sup>185</sup> that it instigated in Germany, the expensive reparations demanded by the Allies (many of which were demanded by French Prime Minister Clémenceau, then *Président du Conseil*) heavily weighed on the economy of the defeated country, and created an inflation that increased to hyperinflation.<sup>186</sup> However, having been part of the German territory for forty-eight years, and therefore also part of its economy, the Alsatian economy depended on the German market, and subsequently faced considerable upheaval. The economical advantage that had been incorporated in the Versailles Treaty was nullified by the crisis in Germany, and Alsatian products ceased to be competitive. Finally a temporary customs status was created, allowing the trade of products from 'Alsace-Lorraine' in Germany.<sup>187</sup>

Reconsidering the more recent history, Karl Stählin, in 1920, detailed in his study *Geschichte Elsass-Lothringens*, the numerous tensions that had characterised the French, German and Alsatian relationships until 1914. Acknowledging other studies, administrative decisions and the press of the time, he sees a perpetual lure of French culture:

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<sup>184</sup> Alsace managed, in the period of various annexations, to keep its special status concerning religion, with the rules of Napoleon's Concordat still prevailing. Religion was still a fundamental part of Alsatian society, and played a big role in local elections. The freedom of faith was respected, as long as Church and State remained separate. Thus, the catechism was still permitted in schools, as long as children could request a certificate of exemption from it if they so wished. Alsace's particular situation concerning religions also attracted many Jewish families from Eastern Europe, some of them fleeing the National Socialist rule in the 1930s.

<sup>185</sup> Niall Ferguson, 'The German Inter-war Economy: Political Choice versus Economic Determinism', in Mary Fulbrook (ed.), *German History since 1800* (London: Arnold, 1997), pp. 258-278, 259.

<sup>186</sup> After World War I and in particular as a result of the Versailles Treaty, Germany faced four years of political and economical unrest. It was not until the end of the hyperinflation in 1924 that this disposition would be settled and the country was to experience a more prosperous period until the Wall Street Crash in October 1929.

<sup>187</sup> Livet and Rapp (eds), p. 422.

Da standen auf der Minusseite [für Deutschland] der katholische Klerus mit Schule und Presse, die Pensionats- und Klostererziehung der Töchter, der persönliche Verkehr mit der Verwandtschaft in Frankreich, die enorme Anziehungskraft der Pariser Zivilisation, die traditionellen Sympathien, die stille Bewunderung auch der breiten Massen für sie und die französische Sprache, selbst wenn man sie gar nicht verstand, die überlegene formale Anmut auch der romanischen Geisteskultur, während unsere eigenen köstlichen Schatzkammern obendrein von der großen materialistischen Woge überschwemmt und verborgen waren.<sup>188</sup>

The economic advantages that the Germans brought did not outweigh such problems, or that of migration. Stählin counters the attraction of France with failures on behalf of Prussia, ultimately treating Alsace as a decisive factor in Imperial politics. In view of developments in 1914 and 1918, Stählin concludes, somewhat embittered:

Und es läßt sich nun einmal nicht leugnen, daß Frankreich, obwohl ihm die Bewohner [des Elsaß] zu allen Zeiten im Grunde gleichgültig waren und nur die Rheingrenze sein Ziel, diese Entführung in den Augen der Elsaß-Lothringer selbst so gut gelungen war, dass sie ungeachtet ihrer zumeist deutschen Abstammung und Vergangenheit das alte Mutterland 1871 zurückstießen und sich nichts Besseres kannten, als Franzosen zu bleiben. Es läßt sich ferner die für Deutschland beschämende Tatsache nicht aus der Welt schaffen, daß uns der Ablauf des letzten Jahrhunderts diese volle Rechtfertigung der Wiedernahme [...] noch nicht erbracht hatte, daß dies erst durch die Vollendung des Germanisationsprozesses geschehen wäre.<sup>189</sup>

In view of the lost war, the assessment of the past seems to indicate a failure on the Germans' part, and the events of 1918 are interpreted as a logical consequence.

After the War, the Rhine axis was favoured through the strengthening of Strasbourg's port, permitting national and international trade. Alsace had its own regional banks, and even though some of them were taken over by national banks, some, such as the *Crédit Mutuel* and *Caisse d'épargne*, managed to keep their autonomous positions. They even developed in other

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<sup>188</sup> Karl Stählin, *Geschichte Elsass-Lothringens* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1920), p. 267.

<sup>189</sup> Stählin, p. 276.

countries along the Rhine, such as Germany, Switzerland and Luxembourg, between 1919 and 1926. Thus, Alsatian banks managed to overcome the German financial crisis in the 1920s.<sup>190</sup>

The disillusion and unease that nevertheless spread in Alsace also stemmed from the attitude of the French authorities, which could be qualified as arrogant in the way that they treated the local population, particularly the local German population and the Alsatian civil servants. After the First World War, 110,000 German people were summarily expelled from Alsace, most of whom had lived in the province for generations:

Der bereits Ende des Jahres 1918 gegründete Hilfsbund hatte sich die soziale und wirtschaftliche Eingliederung der Vertriebenen und ihre Entschädigung sowie die Pflege der elsass-lothringischen Kultur zur Aufgabe gestellt. [...] Zwar bemühte sich die Organisation durch andere Ziele, etwa als Kultur- und Heimatverein [in Deutschland] eine neue Existenzberechtigung zu schaffen, die jedoch die Tendenz zur Auflösung nicht verlangsamten konnten. [...] [Auch] die Existenz der Alt-Elsass-Lothringischen Vereinigung war gefährdet, die man sehr wahrscheinlich nach 1933 nur dadurch am Leben erhalten konnte, dass man sie mit dem Hilfsbund zum 'Bund der Elsass-Lothringer im Reich' zusammen schloss.<sup>191</sup>

The Alsatian population itself was classified and separated into four categories, depending on their parents' nationality and their '*degré de bochitude*',<sup>192</sup> and committees were created – without being supported by any legal decree – to purge the region of any civil servant or official of German origin. A few pro-French Alsatians, like the Abbé Wetterlé, actively supported these measures, interested in making all 'German elements' leave Alsace, so that it could become truly French.<sup>193</sup> Furthermore, the French authorities intended to ban German completely from schools, in accordance with their assimilation policies. The majority of the Alsatian population did not even speak French and the

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<sup>190</sup> Vogler, *Histoire de l'Alsace*, p. 50.

<sup>191</sup> Grünewald, pp. 185, 187, 189.

<sup>192</sup> Four categories A, B, C, D existed. A was for *Alsaciens-Lorrains* with Alsatian parents and grandparents, automatically reinstated. B was for *Alsaciens-Lorrains* whose father or mother had foreign origins (if those were German origins, the person was put under house arrest). C was for *Alsaciens-Lorrains* whose father and mother came from French allies or neutral countries during the war. Finally, D was for people whose father and mother were German, Austrian, Hungarian, or from other peoples of Central Europe origins; they were all deported from Alsace. See: Wittmann, I, 318-319.

<sup>193</sup> Vlossak, p. 211-212.

schoolteachers were badly prepared for this move.<sup>194</sup> Some of them were replaced by French teachers with what was observed as a patronising attitude towards 'provincial children', undereducated, as it appeared, in French language and culture. This attitude reflected that of the French authorities, ignoring regional traditions despite their earlier promises, as well as the majority of the Alsatian population's request for a French and German *bilinguisme*.<sup>195</sup> Hansi's images of Alsatian life have to be understood in this context. His agenda was the promotion of the French cause, which clearly afforded popularisation. By deciding to favour assimilation over *particularisme*, the French Government made the same mistake as their German predecessors and emphasised division instead of the unification. The Alsatians did not understand initially that being French would mean that they would have to stop being Alsatian. Nevertheless, the annexation of 1918 was less an issue than the one in 1871.

Eventually, German was accepted again in laws of 1920 and 1927, because the French Government could not ignore the fact that only a minority of the Alsatian population still spoke the French language. However, it was only accepted as a foreign language that was meant to disappear completely after a few years, and Alsatian itself was perceived as a disdained dialect.<sup>196</sup> The consequence of such actions was an accrued social segregation between a bilingual and educated elite and its poorer and Alsatian-speaking counterparts, a phenomenon endured by several generations of Alsatians. In fact, by the outbreak of the Second World War, when Alsace was annexed by Germany again, many Alsatians still did not speak 'proper' French. Indeed, the Alsatian dialect only became accepted as a regional language in 1999,<sup>197</sup> when France changed its policies concerning regional *particularismes*.

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<sup>194</sup> Dollinger (ed.), p. 472.

<sup>195</sup> Cf. *ibid.* The chasm that it created between the Alsatians and the French can still be seen today in the generally accepted Alsatian expression 'Français de l'intérieur', designating French people who do not come from Alsace.

<sup>196</sup> Vogler, *Histoire de l'Alsace*, p. 50. France's policies concerning languages had a long tradition of rejecting dialects in favour of the national language (in accordance with the general policy of *centralisme* prevalent in the country), and the situation only started to change at the end of the twentieth century, when the distinction was made between dialects and regional languages, the latter gaining more importance and official representation. The change could be said to have occurred when the notion of patrimony (heritage), including cultural particularities, appeared as a fundamental part of the nation.

<sup>197</sup> Although there were already laws in 1951 and 1975 to permit the teaching of dialects in France, the regional languages were only seen as part of the national patrimony in 1995, and the twenty-four regional languages were officially listed in 1999. This change is probably a result of growing 'Europeanisation', compared with nationalism in times of war. It is also interesting to

Bernard Trouillet describes the long-term problem of linguistic politics in Alsace between 1870/71 and 1918 as one that questioned whether 'die Sprachgrenze mit der politischen Grenze eins wäre.'<sup>198</sup> While the Germans saw language as a sign of nationality, the French replaced this notion with 'la patrie, c'est ce qu'on aime.' The interests of the Alsatians themselves were left aside. Accordingly, the Germans saw their task to transform the Alsatians as a cultural challenge. Regarding the time just before the outbreak of the First World War, Trouillet concludes:

Zunehmend wurde der Einfluß von nationalistischen, pangermanistischen, militaristischen Kreisen angeprangert, die der Entwicklung eines elsässischen und lothringischen Partikularismus entgegenstanden. Auch der Widerstand gegen eine forcierte Germanisierung, vor allem eine Germanisierung preußischen Zuschnitts wird lauter und nimmt zum Teil polemische, karikierende und antideutsche Züge an. Die Ungeschicklichkeit mancher Angehöriger der Verwaltung und des Militärs beim Umgang mit der einheimischen Bevölkerung sowie das Verhalten der Elsaß-Lothringen nicht immer wohlgesonnenen deutschen Presse trugen dazu bei (Graffenstadener Vorfall, Zabern-Affäre). Nach Baechler zeugte die Haltung der Elsaß-Lothringer bei der Mobilmachung 1914 von 'einer resignierten Loyalität ohne Begeisterung.'<sup>199</sup>

Thus, the more the Alsatian *particularismes* were ignored and the Germanisation enforced, the more the Alsatians resisted the assimilation attempts, protecting their regional identity when it was threatened. The variety of measures managed to bring German to the fore, and with it a distinct

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note that Alsatian is classified into the category 'les langues régionales d'Alsace et des pays mosellans,' which shows that the language is different depending on the areas referred to, and the language from Moselle is similar to the one spoken in Alsace, not in Lorraine. Cf. Jacques Leclerc, 'La politique des langues régionales et minoritaires en France' <[http://www.tlfq.ulaval.ca/axl/europe/france-3politik\\_minorites.htm](http://www.tlfq.ulaval.ca/axl/europe/france-3politik_minorites.htm)> [accessed on 18/01/12].

<sup>198</sup> Trouillet, p. 86.

<sup>199</sup> Trouillet, p. 89. In linguistic terms this meant: 'Die zwischen 1870 und 1918 verfolgte Sprachpolitik hatte ein doppeltes Gesicht. [...] Die überwältigende Mehrheit, die Deutschsprachigen, wurde kompromisslos zur Einsprachigkeit gebracht. [...] Einige Daten zum Re-Germanisierungsprozess: 1871/72 wurde Deutsch zur einzigen Verwaltungs – und Gerichtssprache, 1872 wurde der Französischunterricht völlig abgeschafft (mit Ausnahme der vor 1871 eingeschulten Kinder). 1874 wurde Deutsch in den frankophonen Gemeinden eingeführt, von 1881 an mussten die Debatten im elsässischen Landesausschuß und im Generalrat Lothringens auf Deutsch stattfinden. 1887 (nach den 'Protest'–Wahlen) folgte die Eindeutschung der Vereinssatzungen, Unternehmensbezeichnungen sowie des Personenstandes. Allmählich entwickelten sich aber auch neue Formen der kulturellen Eigenständigkeit gegenüber dem Reich, z.B. bei der Wahrung des Dialekts. 1911 erhielt das Elsaß ein Regionalparlament und einen semi-autonomen Status. Die Elsässer und Lothringen betonten zunehmend ihre kulturelle Spezifität.' Cf. Trouillet, p. 91.

aversion against any attempts at bilingualism. The general perception was that to further the French language meant to water down the sense of being German. Culturally, the failure was, nevertheless, obvious. Trouillet states:

Selbst J. Rossé, der 1936 das vierbändige Werk 'Das Elsass von 1870-1932' im Auftrag der Freunde des verstorbenen Abbé Xaver Haegy, des Heimatkämpfers elsässischer Eigenständigkeit, herausgab, mußte zugeben: "Es ist dem Deutschen Reich nicht gelungen, das geistige Antlitz des Elsaß zu einem rein deutschen zu formen. Die Eigenart des Elsaß war zu stark, und die außenpolitischen Zustände, die diese Eigenart beschützten, zu mächtig, als daß der Plan der deutschen Kulturpioniere hätte verwirklicht werden können."<sup>200</sup>

Apart from the very tangible linguistic issues, the post-war misconceptions between France and Alsace were predictable: the mutual sense of 'belonging' did not outweigh the fact that Alsace had begun to enjoy a certain level of autonomy. This collided with the idea of French supremacy that had meanwhile developed.

Hardly surprisingly, post-war, the French language was to carry symbolic importance in reclaiming Alsace. Although schools had been a particular target, according to Trouillet, the effect was nevertheless limited:

Faßt man die Situation in der Zwischenkriegszeit zusammen, so kann man einen doch beträchtlichen Widerstand gegen die Französisierung feststellen, den Theo Wolff zum einen auf die noch nicht perfekte Verfremdungstechnik des Staates zurückführt, dem es nicht gelang, den sozialen Status des Hochdeutschen ganz abzubauen [...] zum anderen auf die geringe Möglichkeit des Staates, auf die Kinder im frühesten Alter (also durch Vorschulerziehung) einzuwirken.<sup>201</sup>

Wolff's use of the strong concept of 'Verfremdungstechnik des Staates' shows the harsh methods that the French authorities were prepared to use for a complete assimilation of the Alsatians, even though the process was not successful amongst the resisting local population. Indoctrination from a young

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<sup>200</sup> Trouillet, p. 108 [referring to: J. Rossé and others (eds), *Das Elsass von 1870-1932* (Colmar: Alsatia, 1936-1938), vol. 3, 21, 25].

<sup>201</sup> Trouillet, p. 119. Theo Wolff, 'Zum Schwund der deutschen Mundarten in Elsass-Lothringen', *Cahiers du bilinguisme – Land un Sproch*, 3 (1988), 10.



age through the education system was another possibility that was considered. In 1940, the National Socialists were to pretend they had learned from the mistakes of the German ruling classes between 1870-71 and 1918, while in reality their anti-French sentiments were to re-iterate in more radical terms the arguments of the past.

The literary life was weakened by the linguistic assimilation advocated by the French Government, and even though the three languages remained, after the First World War, German literature survived in difficult conditions and with fewer authors. Alsatian authors and artists were increasingly torn between the two cultures. They were pressurised to choose one or the other by zealous French authorities, who were prompt to see separatist ideas in any request towards more autonomy for the region.<sup>202</sup> The Alsatians' patriotism towards France was constantly doubted by the Government, particularly because of their frequent demands for recognition of their regional *particularismes*.<sup>203</sup> In this context, the rise to power of National Socialism in Germany in the 1930s was seen as a bad omen in Alsace, well before the rest of France noticed anything. The previous War had had bad economic consequences for the region, and now the possibility of another war between France and Germany weighed heavily on the Alsatians' morale, particularly with Hitler's deliberately confusing messages about Alsace during the year preceding the beginning of the Second World War, a war that would bring more upheaval to the region.<sup>204</sup>

Throughout the formative years of German and French occupations, following the War of 1870-71 and the various crises that ensued, the notion of being 'Alsatian' remained strong. It profited from clearly defined space, which was, amidst changes, debates, polemics, decrees and regulations, negotiated as 'specific' time and again: be it in form of new buildings in the centre of

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<sup>202</sup> Vogler, *Histoire de l'Alsace*, p. 50.

<sup>203</sup> In this context of *désamour* and incomprehension between France and Alsace, a few French figures – often having links with Alsace – published what could be described as 'comprehensive studies' of the Alsatian case, trying to navigate the debate from a more neutral perspective to remediate the situation. See for example: Frantz Adam, "*Voyons..., de quoi s'agit-il...?*" (Foch.) *La question d'Alsace exposée aux anciens combattants* (Paris: Amédée Legrand, 1932). Georges Roux, *Divorce de l'Alsace?*, Mises au point, 7<sup>th</sup> edn. (Paris: Gallimard, 1929). Roux's study is particularly well argued, and his stance is notable by the fact that he manages to criticise and empathise with both sides fairly equitably. He also shows a remarkable understanding of the Alsatian 'character' and *particularismes* (without being Alsatian himself).

<sup>204</sup> Dollinger (ed.), pp. 476, 479.

Strasbourg, in seemingly harmless caricatures in the press and children's books, and in travel-guides. These 'Alsatian locations' were of general interest. The following chapters focus on three case studies that highlight such 'negotiable' spaces. They aim to show their impetus for a sense of identity in times of transition. Considering this historical and topical context of Alsatian developments they too are examples that 'collective memory is not an essential, fixed quantity, and expression of the innate, primal loyalties of blood and soil. Identity instead is a social construct, constantly evolving in response to the concerns of each historical moment.'<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> David Allen Harvey, *Constructing Class and Nationality in Alsace, 1830-1945* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2001), p. 211.

## CHAPTER TWO

### **Defining Strasbourg and Alsace: Tourist Guides for Insiders and Outsiders**

The focus of this chapter is on tourist guides, considering both visitors to the region as well as the impact such guides have on the actual inhabitants. The rationale behind this focus is the assumption that travel-guides – as opposed to travel literature<sup>206</sup> – represent a condensed projection of a perceived identity to the ‘outside world’, and in some instances reinforce self-perceptions at the same time. This is particularly relevant since tourist guides are associated, in the first instance, with a degree of neutrality in terms of approach. When Charles Forsdick states about travel literature: ‘It is a commonplace to note that the travel narrative implicitly and yet invariably reveals more about the traveller’s home culture than that of the culture travelled through,’<sup>207</sup> it can at the same time be assumed that the selection that a seemingly neutral body provides to guide the visitor through unknown territory is also motivated by a certain agenda. Forsdick adds: ‘In the Western travel narrative this often results from the travellers’ transformation of elsewhere into a screen onto which their own individual or collective dilemmas are projected.’<sup>208</sup> In the more ‘practical’ travel-guides, this perception is also true, particularly in the case of Alsace, which reflects contrasting influences in terms of culture and identity at different points in time. To provide a rounded picture my sources vary between German, Alsatian and French guides, all of which offer their own perspective of the place as a whole and what it stands for.

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<sup>206</sup> Fähnders, Plath and Zahn state about the ambiguous and complex term travel literature / Reiseliteratur: ‘In der Literaturwissenschaft lassen sich zwei Pole ausmachen, an denen Reiseliteratur angesiedelt wird: Eine eher allgemeinere Bestimmung schlägt der “Reiseliteratur” gleichermaßen faktuale und fiktionale Textsorten zu, versteht darunter Reiseführer und Reisehandbücher, wissenschaftliche und populärwissenschaftliche Reiseschriften, Reisetagebücher, Berichte und Beschreibungen in Zeitschriften wie Tageszeitungen, Reiseromane und Erzählungen, in denen Reisen zum Thema werden, Protagonisten sich auf Reisen begeben oder von diesen erzählen. Dagegen präferiert jener Begriff des Reiseberichts, dem es um eine engere Definition geht, das Faktuale einer Tatsachenwiedergabe und setzt die Beschreibung einer realen Reise als Bedingung.’ Cf. Walter Fähnders, Nils Plath and Inka Zahn, ‘Einleitung’, in Walter Fähnders, Nils Plath, Hendrik Weber and Inka Zahn (eds), *Berlin, Paris, Moskau. Reiseliteratur und die Metropolen* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2005), here p. 14.

<sup>207</sup> Charles Forsdick, *Travel in the Twentieth-Century French and Francophone Cultures: The Persistence of Diversity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 203.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

Travel-guides are a 'nineteenth-century sub-genre of travel literature, which encouraged tourists to follow a particular itinerary and to prioritise certain sites over others.'<sup>209</sup> In spite of a recurrent 'aspect' of objectivity, they always retain a more or less important part of subjectivity. Like caricatures in newspapers and official architecture, travel-guides are embedded in people's daily life. However, even the search for authenticity is based on images that bear a certain readership in mind. A particular take on a reality that is an amalgamation of history and related sights, landscapes and references to 'typical' characteristics make travel-guides on second sight one way or the other distinctive, in terms of both regions and historical periods.

Kuehn and Smethurst argue that 'In many ways, travel writing has always been about [...] utopia: a world beyond the horizon brought into the familiarity of language.'<sup>210</sup> It is indeed the 'utopian Alsace' with its very own identity that is at stake here, all the more so, since the main recipients – the French and the Germans – of the literature were meant to perceive Alsace as part of their own history and heritage. Alsace was, even in the most factual approach, promoted by both occupying powers, who aimed to show how the region was integral to both nations while, at the same time, the Alsatians' self perception was enhanced by the written elaboration (and exploration) of their region, its beauty and the manifestations of tradition.

The travel-guides in question were all published in Alsace under either German or French rule. Normally they were written by Alsatians or authors living in Alsace. Since they did not only address the (foreign) visitor but – as most regional travel-guides – the interested Alsatian too, they implicitly aimed to perpetuate presumed Alsatian ideals of regional identity, but they were also tools of propaganda discourses, generally rather subtly introduced into the general information. The main forum for such considerations is the introduction to each of these travel-guides, which will therefore experience particular scrutiny here – together with an analysis of representations of Strasbourg.

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<sup>209</sup> Sinéad Furlong, "'[Paris] s'offre à vos regards et vous sollicite": Pleasure in the Parks – Women, Travel Guides, and Nineteenth-Century Paris', in Jane Conroy (ed.), *Cross-Cultural Travel* (New York; Oxford: Peter Lang, 2003), p. 240.

<sup>210</sup> Julia Kuehn and Paul Smethurst (eds), *Travel Writing, Form, and Empire: The Poetics and Politics of Mobility* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 229.

Sights themselves do, of course, not change a lot – but what does is the context into which they have been embedded.

Therefore I shall argue that travel-guides support a narrative that seeks to present an Alsatian identity with a French or German bias at its core. It is of particular interest that the (re)assessment of places in the course of Alsatian history provides for a continuous adaptation that ingrains locations as timeless, a matter of the past or promising future relevance.

Accordingly I have decided to focus primarily on a select corpus of Alsatian guides, dating from 1886 (during the *Reichsland* period) to 1922 (in the interwar period shortly after the First World War), to compare the string of French and German views on Alsace in specific periods, from an insider's perspective (the Alsatian *Club Vosgien/Vogesenclub*). The main focus lies on the 1922 French guide, because it is a representative example of pro-French rhetoric, as well as Alsatian 'sentimentalism' to add 'authenticity' to the official message. As the basis for the 1922 travel-guide, I will also consider the works of Curt Mündel, who mirrors the at times positive bonds between Alsace and Germany. The reverse chronology of the first sub-chapter serves to highlight the relevance (and amount) of the various guides' contents as regards my argument. The second sub-chapter follows a similar non-chronological pattern that focuses on travel-guides advertising Alsace, published in the French and German capitals. This sub-chapter works comparatively with the first, but now with an outsider's perspective. Other examples of promotional literature about Alsace will then be brought into consideration (in the third sub-chapter) to broaden my argument where applicable. Besides the differing perspectives, what is at stake here regarding identity is to find out what makes up the 'essence' of Alsace, as advertised in the travel literature under scrutiny.

## 2.1. Curt Mündel, the *Club Vosgien*, and the Alsatian Travel-Guides

Curt Mündel (1853-1906) was a bookseller and the honorary president of the *Vogesenclub*. He was born in Germany but studied and then lived in Strasbourg, where he became the associate of the local publisher Ch. Trübner

(later on Heitz & Mündel).<sup>211</sup> Between 1871 and the Second World War the travel-guide that could arguably be considered to sum up the essence of Strasbourg and its surrounding areas was the one written by Curt Mündel. In fact, his guide was so important that the French editors, after 1918, translated it and simply embellished the introduction. That is why Curt Mündel (and implicitly his numerous collaborators) will be a focal point throughout this chapter, and I will aim to highlight how his works influenced most of the other travel-guides that were published in Alsace at the time, thereby lending them a degree of authenticity of which Alsatians must have been aware.

Travel-guides are supposed to give answers to a number of practical considerations and are therefore designed for a variety of readers. At the end of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, travelling was still a relatively novel pastime and one that attracted some specific groups such as hikers and the first city-dwellers.<sup>212</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century hiking was popular in Germany, and encouraged by the Government for its healthy properties. Groups such as the semi-political *Wandervogel*<sup>213</sup> were to get involved. In this respect it is hardly surprising that when the *Reichsland* was created the question of a hiking society was posed in Alsace. The *Club Vosgien* – then named *Vogesenclub* – was established in Saverne in 1872, facilitated by the development of the all-important railway networks in the region.<sup>214</sup> It was originally aimed at German tourists as well as Alsatians who might rediscover the beauties and history of Alsace.<sup>215</sup> The travel-guides published by the *Club*

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<sup>211</sup> Édouard Sitzmann, *Dictionnaire de biographie des hommes célèbres de l'Alsace: depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu'à nos jours*, 2 vols (Rixheim: F. Sutter, 1910), II (1910), 347.

<sup>212</sup> On the history of tourism see: Rüdiger Hachtmann, *Tourismus- Geschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007). Marc Boyer, *Histoire générale du tourisme du XVIIe au XXe siècle* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005). Marc Boyer, *Ailleurs: Histoire et Sociologie du Tourisme* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2011). Olivier Lazzarotti, *Tourisme et Patrimoine: Histoires, Lieux, Acteurs, Enjeux* (Paris: Belin, 2011). Gilbert Sigaux, *Histoire du Tourisme* (Lausanne: Rencontre, 1965). Nicola J. Watson (ed.), *Literary Tourism and Nineteenth-Century Culture* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

<sup>213</sup> For more information about this association, see its official websites <<http://www.wandervogel.de/>> and <<http://www.wvdb.de/>> [accessed on 06/12/11]. See also: Ulrich Herrmann (ed.), „Mit uns zieht die neue Zeit“ – *Der Wandervogel in der deutsche Jugendbewegung* (Munich: Juventa, 2006). Walter Laqueur, *Young Germany: A History of the German Youth Movement* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1984). Otto Neuloh and Wilhelm Zilius, *Die Wandervögel* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982). Peter D. Stachura, *The German Youth Movement, 1900-1945: An Interpretative and Documentary History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981).

<sup>214</sup> La montagne vosgienne, 'Le Club Vosgien' <<http://als.vogesen-rando.net/Montagne/Club.htm>> [accessed on 12/10/11].

<sup>215</sup> Fédération du Club Vosgien <<http://www.club-vosgien.eu/lafederation/index.html#bv000005>> [accessed on 12/10/11].

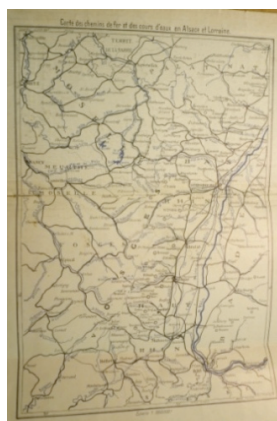
*Vosgien* were thus generally written by Alsatians or people living in Alsace to emphasise the feeling of identification for its local readers – a tradition still fully embedded in *Club Vosgien* publications today.<sup>216</sup> The reception was not always positive, particularly among Alsatians with nationalistic feelings for France who did not appreciate being mixed up with Germans, such as caricaturist Hansi, who took pleasure in mocking German hikers in his works who, he felt, invaded spaces in which they did not belong.

The travel-guide *Les Vosges et l'Alsace: Guide du touriste édité sous le patronage du Club Vosgien* was published in two tomes, but edited in identical formats.<sup>217</sup> The first tome covers the Northern and middle parts of the Vosges and Alsace (*Les Vosges septentrionales / moyennes*), while the second one covers the Southern parts (*Les Vosges méridionales*). Both books are relatively small and portable, and both have a hard cover with golden lettering on the front, and a similar first page. They have very few illustrations, among which are some coloured and monochrome maps: in the first tome, one at the beginning of the book highlights the railways and rivers in Alsace-Lorraine, while the second is a map of the city of Strasbourg, and the third a road map of Strasbourg and its position within Alsace. In the second tome, the city depicted is Colmar (capital of Haut-Rhin). This is of interest since the lack of images does, of course, respond to a time when written depictions were still more valid, but it is also an indication that the guides sought to enforce some engagement with the details in the text. It is also noticeable that the images used in both guides are rather technical in nature, even though the text insists on 'picturesque' and 'pretty' aspects of Alsace.

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<sup>216</sup> Cf. Jean Braun and Lucien Sittler, *Guide des Vosges: Edité sous le patronage du Club Vosgien*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Ingersheim: Société Alsacienne d'Expansion Photographique, 1974). Jean Braun, *Guide des Vosges* (Strasbourg: Club Vosgien, 1981). Club Vosgien (ed.), *Guide du Club Vosgien 3/4: Alsace Centrale et Hautes Vosges*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Strasbourg: Fédération du Club Vosgien, 2010).

<sup>217</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace: Guide du touriste édité sous le patronage du Club Vosgien*, 2 vols (Strasbourg; Paris: Istra, 1922).



1. First-page and a map from the first tome of the 1922 *Guide du touriste*.<sup>218</sup> © Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire de Strasbourg, M.121.752 / M.129.755.

The preface explicitly recognises the German origins of this travel-guide, previously and commonly known by its original author's name 'Mündel'<sup>219</sup> (mentioned previously), but it also emphasises the (positive) differences in comparison to its predecessors. The French point of view is underlined emphatically when the war is mentioned: 'La victoire de nos armées, le sacrifice sublime et joyeusement consenti de nos enfants.'<sup>220</sup> The style is from the perspective of an Alsatian and thus displays enthusiasm about the region (in keeping with its marketing aim), but it addresses the French (including Alsatians) as well as foreigners:

Le Guide qui paraît sera donc utile aux promeneurs du pays, il sera indispensable aux étrangers désireux de connaître les beautés de l'Alsace et des Vosges, beautés si réelles, qu'après avoir visité les autres régions du monde, on revoit avec un plaisir toujours nouveau, fait de calme, de fraîcheur, de variété, notre pays si cher.<sup>221</sup>

The origins and loyalties of the author of the preface are made obvious through the expression 'notre pays si cher' that targets fellow Alsatians, playing on sentimentalism, while the region is praised for its many qualities, namely its beauty (the latter being emphasised by repetition).

The 'Avertissement de l'éditeur' explains in more detail the (German) origins of the guide and the *Club Vosgien*. The most subjective part refers to the

<sup>218</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*. All photographs in this chapter, unless stated otherwise, are by the author of this thesis.

<sup>219</sup> Sitzmann, II, 347.

<sup>220</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p. 3.

<sup>221</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p. 4.



aforementioned First World War: 'La guerre a changé bien des choses dans les Vosges, elle y a accumulé les ruines, elle y a multiplié les souvenirs émouvants, elle y a ouvert des routes et des chemins nouveaux. D'autre part, bien des notices historiques, éparses dans le *Mündel*, ne sont plus admissibles aujourd'hui.'<sup>222</sup> The changes that the war triggered are seen as problematic by the editor of the French version, mostly when mentioning historical details. However, the war has also brought some concrete changes to the landscape, since new paths have been created and new roads and railways built to supply and move the troops and people. The editor announces that even though the guide cannot be officially called 'Mündel' anymore, because of the war, its name will affectionately stay among readers used to it.<sup>223</sup> This reference confirms a certain tradition in the use of the guide that is noteworthy: the Alsace presented has been considered a fair representation for some time and it is now adapted in response to new circumstances. The editor acknowledges the work of the first German author, in spite of possible censorship of all German references, but also underlines the long history of the German travel-guide with its Alsatian users. So Mündel seems to not only have marked the history of Alsace at the time, but to have also been included in the 'collective memory' necessary for the shaping of a common identity, as supported by Pierre Nora.<sup>224</sup> Additionally, it can be argued, in this instance, that identity and disapproval are about nationality (as a whole), but not necessarily about the individual himself, towards whom there might even be some admiration. This notice from the French editor also mentions the different people involved in writing and translating this travel-guide over the years, with a focus on the French versions. They were apparently translated and extended by Alsatian academics, and the last edition was the work of Jean-Paul Schaechtelin and Ernest Gérock, both employed by the University Library of Strasbourg (*BNUS*).

The introduction is remarkably long and detailed, and describes, quite conventionally, the particularities of Alsace – geographically, geologically, climatically, etc. – with a few punctual subjective notes (although the footnotes regularly refer to German sources), as the following examples will suggest. First of all, when discussing the name of one of Alsace's regions, this edition's

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<sup>222</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>223</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p. 6.

<sup>224</sup> Cf. Pierre Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, 3 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1997; first publ. 1984). See also the Introduction to this thesis for an explanation of this concept.

authors dismiss the names given in French and German as too vague, preferring the local appellation *Wasgenwald*, ‘un mot du terroir’ – its local reference giving it a more authentic air.<sup>225</sup> When Alsatian mineralogy is taken up, the authors’ tone becomes more enthusiastic when describing the local characteristics: Alsatian sandstones found in the region and in its architecture,<sup>226</sup> including Strasbourg’s cathedral, which is later described as the ‘joyau de la ville’ (jewel of the city).<sup>227</sup>

While the overall account of the ‘Aperçu historique’<sup>228</sup> appears straightforward and represents a narrative one would expect, some references insist on the French rather than German origins, a process generally used for propagandistic purposes and in an attempt to signal a shift. Thus, even during Roman times the Germanic influence on the region is lessened (though not completely negated) in the text in favour of the Gallic one, but the ‘race alsacienne’ prevails despite the different waves of immigration in Alsatian history: ‘[...] Elles ont toujours abouti à une assimilation à la race alsacienne, prouvant par là-même la vitalité de celle-ci, résultat ancien de la fusion du fonds gaulois avec un certain élément germanique.’<sup>229</sup> For the authors, even the more prominent Alsatian individuals who became influential in the course of the German Empire maintain the local particularity inherited from their Latin origins: ‘[...] Ses penseurs, ses artistes, ses littérateurs à titres divers ont été parmi les esprits dirigeants du monde germanique, où ils ont fait grande figure sans s’y fonder complètement, gardant toujours, pour autant qu’ils étaient du terroir, une physionomie à part, dans laquelle l’influence latine a eu une part caractéristique.’<sup>230</sup> This is in keeping with the propagandistic message of the

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<sup>225</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l’Alsace*, p. 2\* (all pages of the ‘Introduction générale’ are followed by an asterisk to differentiate them from the rest of the guide). It is interesting to note that ‘terroir’ in French has the connotation of something coming from the countryside and from an old tradition. It is generally associated with local food products.

<sup>226</sup> See for example: ‘Les grès trisiaques, dont la résistance aux intempéries et la gamme de couleurs allant du blanc par toutes les nuances du gris, au rouge vif et au jaune pâle imprime à toutes les constructions du pays un cachet unique par la netteté des lignes et des arêtes, par la couleur vive et gaie, l’absence de végétations cryptogamiques qui rongent et défigurent souvent les édifices en pierres de nature plutôt calcaire.’ Cf. Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l’Alsace*, p. 15\*. Another example of propagandistic rhetoric concerning pp. 16\*-17\*: While discussing economic matters related to the minerals found in Alsace, the author underlines the positive financial impact of the region’s return to France – particularly in comparison with the economical situation under German rule.

<sup>227</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l’Alsace*, p. 9.

<sup>228</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l’Alsace*, p. 22\* onwards until p. 27\*.

<sup>229</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l’Alsace*, p. 23\*.

<sup>230</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l’Alsace*, p. 24\*.

travel-guide's authors, embedding Alsatian culture and identity, despite their Germanic roots, in a Latin – and by extension French culture. The French characteristics found in Alsatians are implicitly said to strengthen their potential, and allowed them to be among the elite of the German world when Alsace was a part of it.

The region's position at a crossroads of countries and cultures is underlined and is meant to explain the independent and autonomous character of Alsace, thereby reinforcing its individuality, which in this case is treated as a characteristic that does not jeopardise the above link with France:

Le jeu changeant de la politique, les nécessités nées de tant d'ambitions enchevêtrées, et la situation géographique de ce pays riche et ouvert à toutes les influences du reste du monde civilisé d'alors: de France, des Pays-Bas, d'Italie, etc. conservèrent à l'Alsace ce caractère essentiel: d'une région où aucun pouvoir central et dominant ne put parvenir à se former ou à s'implanter.<sup>231</sup>

There is a noticeable lack of anything German among the influences quoted, but the mention of a central power is more ambiguous. If this is indeed a veiled criticism of France, then it would show that Alsatian identification comes before the French one – a potentially effective acknowledgement of the region. With such discourses, Alsatian hikers could be encouraged to feel pride in their distinctive heritage when they explored the countryside and visited historically important ruins or picturesque villages. This is in keeping with Jean-Marie Mayeur's concept of 'mémoire-frontière'.<sup>232</sup> The region's collective memory is intrinsically connected to its geographical position and reflects the recurring power struggles for its national affiliation.

This kind of message can be traced throughout the chapter. The authors of the edition admit to some French faults – only to highlight in the next sentence the fundamental ideals inherited from the French Revolution: '[...] Au moment de la Révolution, l'Alsace avait pris conscience d'une sorte d'unité; qu'une conception d'un intérêt provincial s'alliant à un idéal patriotique supérieur était

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<sup>231</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p. 24\*.

<sup>232</sup> Cf. Jean-Marie Mayeur, 'Une mémoire-frontière: L'Alsace,' in Nora (ed.), I, 1147-1168. See also the Introduction to this thesis for a more detailed explanation of this concept.

entrée dans la mentalité de la grande majorité du peuple alsacien.<sup>233</sup> There is general agreement in publications about Alsatian history that the Revolution's values (*liberté, égalité, fraternité*) are indeed among the main reasons for the endurance of French patriotism in Alsace after the eighteenth century, even under German rule. Alsations had been captivated by the idea of liberty in particular, probably because Alsace had conserved some freedoms over the centuries (and Strasbourg itself was a free city during the Middle Ages).<sup>234</sup> The liberal institutions inherited from France had changed the Alsatian political life, and the population was not going to let go of their social benefits. Even the language issue – highlighted by the Germans (Alsations spoke more German than French at the time) – was not to be confused with the question of nationality in (most) Alsatian minds.<sup>235</sup>

Germany's role in Alsace is more often associated in this guide with negative consequences. The propagandistic 'patrie' is associated with France to strengthen a patriotic sentiment in the readers,<sup>236</sup> and the tone loses any neutrality when the war of 1870-71 and its consequences for Alsace are mentioned. Here Germany takes on the role of the villain:

L'Alsace-Lorraine a été la cause directe et la raison véritable de la décadence de l'Allemagne, que son orgueil a incité à tout sacrifier pour tenter de conserver finalement, après la chute de tant d'autres ambitions, cette position qui lui permettait de menacer l'Europe entière. On ne songe d'ailleurs pas à nier ce que l'administration allemande a fait pour le bien matériel du pays, mais de là à oublier ce que la politique allemande a accumulé de méfaits et de crimes, en Alsace et ailleurs, il y a loin, et cet espace ne sera jamais franchi.<sup>237</sup>

The rhetorical device is similar to the one used previously for France, but reversed. Anything positive that could have been gained from Germany is negated by its faults and the resentment on behalf of the writers is obvious. Interestingly, the 'Aperçu historique' ends with a reference to the contemporary

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<sup>233</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p. 26\*.

<sup>234</sup> Marc Lienhard, *Histoire (et aléas) de l'identité alsacienne* (Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue, 2011), p. 29.

<sup>235</sup> Bernard Vogler, *Histoire culturelle de l'Alsace: Du Moyen Age à nos jours, les très riches heures d'une région frontalière*, La bibliothèque alsacienne (Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue / DNA, 1993), p. 274.

<sup>236</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p. 26\*.

<sup>237</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p. 27\*.

linguistic problems in Alsace: after forty-seven years under German rule, many Alsatians can no longer speak French in 1922. In this edition the matter is considered in a hopeful tone, though, which underlines the fact that the Alsatians used to speak and understand the French language easily in the eighteenth century.<sup>238</sup>

The next part concerns archaeology and the arts in Alsace, and this edition's writers insist on the cross-cultural aspect of Alsatian arts, with a strong sense of individualism and seemingly no roots stemming from easily identifiable groups with a common origin.<sup>239</sup> This appears to be a good occasion to praise the uniqueness of Strasbourg's cathedral as a cultural centrepiece – yet another way of boosting regional pride among Alsatian readers and advertising Alsace to foreigners, and without controversy too: 'La cathédrale de Strasbourg représente donc un véritable musée de l'art roman, ogival et gothique,'<sup>240</sup> '[...] la cathédrale de Strasbourg, qui est en tout un phénomène exceptionnel et unique,'<sup>241</sup> for example. As a whole, the description of the evolution of architecture and craftsmanship in the region highlights the picturesque and down to earth aspect of Alsace, particularly in the small villages.<sup>242</sup> This may well trigger regional pride but it is of limited importance in view of cultural identity, which is bound to reach further and affords historical foundations. What is noteworthy, though, is the unifying impetus of the cathedral: its uncontroversial nature makes it an agreeable, universal and still highly representative symbol of Alsace. Furthermore, the writers do defend the idea of a specific 'Alsatian art', arguing that the various Alsatian artists throughout the ages have always sought inspiration in the region itself: 'On verra que dans toutes les branches, l'Alsace a possédé et produit, à toutes les époques, des artistes de mérite, qui ont cherché les sources de leur inspiration et de leurs

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<sup>238</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p. 27\*.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p. 28\*.

<sup>241</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p. 29\*.

<sup>242</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, pp. 30\*-32\*. For a contemporary account of the artistic history of Alsace, see: Hans Haug, 'Les richesses artistiques de l'Alsace. Rapide orientation du touriste,' *Alsace Automobile* (Strasbourg: [n. pub.], 1931). The author was a curator for Strasbourg's museums. His account is enthusiastic about Alsatian art, which is described as a synthesis between French and German arts, with a 'charming' (*attachant*) aspect. He promotes Alsace with a focus on Strasbourg, because of its many museums and its history as regional capital. With reference to Strasbourg's arts see also: Henri Welschinger, *Strasbourg, Les Villes d'Art célèbres* (Paris: H. Laurens, 1908). Welschinger's perspective is rather biased, his account being an enthusiastic and nostalgic praise of the Alsatian capital, with propagandistic undertones, presumably since he was no longer able to live in Alsace.

aspirations dans le pays même, au point que sous plus d'un rapport, on peut à bon droit parler d'un art alsacien.<sup>243</sup>

The introduction ends with an account of Alsatian dialects, mainly underlining the fact that they are more than just dialects and should be recognised as regional languages. Despite the fact that they have obvious roots in Germanic dialects, the authors still manage to find a few older *patois* with Roman origins.<sup>244</sup> This appears as a rather far-fetched attempt at more propagandistic messages, as these *patois* are parts of a distinct minority. The Alemannic roots are later acknowledged, although they are also denigrated by the writers in a fairly vindictive footnote (fairly reminiscent of Hansi's rhetoric):

Le régime prusso-allemand a imposé son langage fortement teinté de parlers du Nord de l'Allemagne dont la tonalité est tout à fait différente des dialectes de nos régions. C'est un des principaux moyens dont la soi-disant germanisation a cherché à tirer parti pour dénaturer l'esprit public et abattre le particularisme chez les Alsaciens.<sup>245</sup>

These comments on the Alsatian spirit and *particularismes* being 'killed' by 'so-called Germanisation' appear rather ironic when they are set within the historical context of the book and the post-First World War period of *malaise alsacien* in Alsace. However, as this guide was published in Alsace and targeted an Alsatian as well as French audience, a regional rhetoric was included into the propaganda to appease any potential distrust left from the war and to appeal to a wider audience.<sup>246</sup> Furthermore, the reference to Prussia associated with the dialects of Northern Germany points to the true 'enemies' of Alsace, implicitly linking the region to the Southern German states, relatively closer in terms of language and culture to Alsace. This reference is arguably

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<sup>243</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p. 32\*. The term *pays* (country) has a strong regional connotation, as well as a countryside type of quality like the word *terroir* mentioned earlier. This gives the author a kind of regional authenticity.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p. 33\*.

<sup>246</sup> This propagandistic pattern can be found in other travel-guides about Alsace under French rule, even after the Second World War. See: J. Gardeil, *Guide touristique rapide de Strasbourg* (Strasbourg: Edition des Dernières Nouvelles de Strasbourg, 1946). This travel-guide was not published by the *Club Vosgien*, and does not seem to take Mündel's guides as its basis. The author is pro-French and anti-German in his introduction, namely when he mentions the period of 1870-1918; the year 1870 is, for example, named 'Année Terrible' (p. 15), an expression reminiscent of others (related to the same year) found in a few publications. See also: [No Author], 'Petites images strasbourgeoises de l'année néfaste 1870, griffonnées par un vieux Meiseloeker,' *Images du Musée Alsacien à Strasbourg* ([Paris]: [n. pub.], [1906]).

aimed at 'insiders', Alsatians, who would understand the message, and not made too explicit in order not to hurt the French nationalists' sensibilities. If successful, it should foster a sense of identification against a common enemy.

The next part of the 1922 *Guide du touriste* lists the various itineraries offered to travellers and hikers, and includes a small excerpt summarising the history of the *Club Vosgien* and its aims. The travel-guide itself is strongly linked to the Club, which is in turn advertised, confirming the status of the guide as a marketing tool, both for the region and hiking association. Furthermore, it is not only a marketing tool for the Club that published it but also for Alsace, and it has an educational role as well, as one of the admitted goals of the *Club Vosgien* is to foster general knowledge of the region among the French as well as Alsatians: '[...] Cette Association [...] a pour but de faciliter les voyages et les excursions dans les Vosges et dans la partie alsacienne du Jura, ainsi que de répandre la connaissance générale du pays.'<sup>247</sup>

The tour through Alsace starts with Strasbourg and an unfolding map of the city. It is worth noting that this part of the guide has been updated to a lesser degree; the actual selection proves comparatively timeless. The map is coloured, with official buildings and monuments highlighted in black (including those built by the Germans) and tramways indicated in red. The names of some streets and buildings have been translated into French (the *Kaiserplatz* becoming *Place de la République*, for example).



2. Map of Strasbourg from the first tome of the 1922 *Guide du touriste*.<sup>248</sup> © Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire de Strasbourg, M.121.752 / M.129.755.

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<sup>247</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p. 43\*. Furthermore, the headquarters of the Club Vosgien are said to be located in Strasbourg, the region's capital, giving it a more official status.

<sup>248</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p. 46\*.

The description of Strasbourg begins with an uncontroversial list of all buildings of interest as well as the to-be-expected practical information relating to them, such as restaurants, hotels, libraries, museums, post offices, etc. This is followed by a brief *Historique* of the city,<sup>249</sup> a partial rhetoric becoming more obvious the more recent the history presented is, and completely omitting the German period between 1871 and 1918. A neglect that turns the impact on the region to a footnote in history:

La guerre malheureuse de 1870-71 débuta par le siège et le bombardement de Strasbourg dont les moyens de défense n'étaient pas à la hauteur des circonstances. En six semaines, du 15 août au 27 septembre, la ville fut en grande partie détruite, sans raison, par un conquérant froidement barbare, qui avait cru pouvoir l'emporter par voie d'intimidation. Elle ne devait revenir à la France que le 21 novembre 1918. La guerre cette fois n'avait pas approché de ses murs.<sup>250</sup>

The geographical (and architectural) description of the city is designed from the perspective of a traveller, punctuated by historical passages when monuments of interest are mentioned. The text is taken in parts from the original German version but translated and updated, and the rhetoric is more objective than for the historical parts. Criticisms adopt a rather local stance: 'La gare centrale [...] a été construite de 1878 à 1883 en un style fort lourd', '[...] la rue nouvellement percée du 22-Novembre, bordée de bâtisses lourdes et peu intéressantes',<sup>251</sup> for example. Any Alsatian personalities mentioned – be it in form of statues or street names – are enthusiastically acknowledged when they relate to the French periods of Alsatian history, like Kléber's statue, which, it would appear, symbolised in itself French ideals under German rule: '[...] La statue [...] a joué un rôle éminent dans l'histoire de Strasbourg sous la domination allemande où elle symbolisait l'idée française', 'la statue de Kléber, pavoisée aux couleurs nationales dès le lendemain de l'armistice, a représenté dans toutes les entrées triomphales du retour à la patrie, du Président de la République, du gouvernement (Poincaré et Clémenceau, 11 décembre 1918), des maréchaux, et tant d'autres, Strasbourg et l'Alsace.'<sup>252</sup> Here the writers underline again the bond between France and Alsace, by recalling the feelings of exhilaration felt by

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<sup>249</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>250</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p. 5.

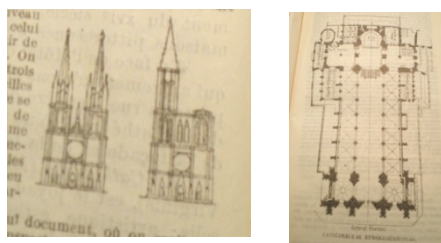
<sup>251</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p. 7, for both quotations

<sup>252</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p. 8, for both quotations.



the Alsatian population at key moments of patriotic fervour, trying to reignite feelings of identification in the Alsatian readers – and reminding French readers that Alsatisans are also patriots (another effect of the *malaise alsacien* being the rejection of Alsatisans by French people, particularly in Paris).

The description and history of the cathedral<sup>253</sup> are detailed and even boast a couple of the very few illustrations found in the guide (see image 3). The tone is emphatic in its praise of the monument. The cathedral acts as a cultural centre-point that belongs to a ‘safe’ past, a history that everybody can agree on and that does not afford any particular updating or shifting. As such it does not challenge a long-term sense of identity that is, in contrast to recent events, uncontroversial and is in fact rather agreeable to all parties involved.



3. Illustrations for the cathedral of Strasbourg found in the 1922 *Guide du touriste*.<sup>254</sup> © Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire de Strasbourg, M.121.752 / M.129.755.

The description continues, completing a virtual tour of the city, starting with the older city (*vieille ville*) and mentioning its ‘picturesque’ Alsatian houses, and its various churches and monuments (some including a few short patriotic accounts of political events that happened before and after the ‘*désannexion*’<sup>255</sup>). This edition’s writers do seem to take more interest in the aesthetical aspect of the buildings that they depict, favouring ‘picturesque’, ‘pretty’ or ‘*curieuse*’<sup>256</sup> looking houses and churches over the city’s museums, including the Alsatian museum. Whatever the term employed to describe it, though, readers living in Strasbourg at the time could feel pride in having their

<sup>253</sup> For further information about the cathedral (from a German perspective), see for instance: Frédéric Hartweg, ‘Das Straßburger Münster’, in Etienne François and Hagen Schulze (eds), *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*, vol. 3 (Munich: C.H.Beck, 2003; first publ. 2001), pp. 408-421. Additionally, this book works as an equivalent of Pierre Nora’s *Lieux de mémoire* for Germany.

<sup>254</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l’Alsace*, pp. 10, 13.

<sup>255</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l’Alsace*, p. 25. This page presents one paragraph written in smaller script that might denote a quotation, although there is no reference mentioned in a footnote to ascertain if the author includes excerpts from older versions of the guide or another book altogether. Such paragraphs usually mention historical aspects and can be found throughout the text. The Alsatian readers contemporary to the guide’s publication may have been able to recognise the sources because of their affinity with the ‘Mündel’, though.

<sup>256</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l’Alsace*, p. 19.

house or neighbourhood mentioned as worthy of interest. This approach also shows remarkable restraint in the propagandistic rhetoric praising French and Alsatian aspects. So, even though the travel-guide can be seen as a vehicle to promote a Francophile message in its updated introduction, it progressively becomes a 'normal' and more neutral travel-guide afterwards, probably not to repel any prospective readers. This also shows that certain 'facts' are not negotiable and therefore allow for unproblematic associations, while the historical framework, just like in history books, establishes shifts and reinterpretations that impact upon the perception of cultural identity. This also stresses the importance of agreeable spaces in a region that experienced numerous historical changes. This is an instance that confirms Pierre Nora's aforementioned exploration of the concept of a collective memory that takes part in the creation of a shared identity, namely here concerning landscapes. While there is, according to him, 'un archétype de paysage national, celui de la "douce France"',<sup>257</sup> one can reason that there is, comparatively, an archetypal Alsatian landscape (including urban spaces) that maintains a positive image for Alsatian identity, devoid of controversial considerations linked to national affiliation.

The new city (*ville neuve*), the part built by the Germans around the *Place de la République* (previous *Kaiserplatz*), also merits attention (see Chapter Three for more detail on this *Place*). The *Palais du Rhin* (previous *Kaiserpalast*) is unsurprisingly described in derogative terms: '[...] Edifice lourd et massif imitant certains palais italiens de l'époque de la Renaissance.'<sup>258</sup> However, other buildings around it do not trigger any anti-German rhetoric and even though the ensemble is mentioned in passing, the writers appreciate some qualities, namely the homogeneous, balanced and overall monumental impression it leaves on observers, which are in keeping with the status of political capital that Strasbourg used to have in the *Reichsland*:

Encadré de bâtiments présentant une appréciable variété de formes accentuée encore par ceux qui s'y adjoignent de l'autre côté du canal, cet ensemble néanmoins homogène, dont les masses se trouvent très heureusement disposées, ouvert sur des perspectives profondes, avec

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<sup>257</sup> Nora, *Les lieux de mémoire*, I, 574.

<sup>258</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p. 23.

beaucoup de verdure et la cathédrale à l'arrière-plan, a un cachet monumental indéniable. Il convient de ne pas s'attarder trop aux détails, mais de considérer qu'on a devant soi une œuvre représentative de toute une époque de l'histoire de Strasbourg et de l'Alsace, alors que Strasbourg offrait certains caractères, au moins extérieurs, d'une capitale politique.<sup>259</sup>

Even though this praise does not compare with that of the French heritage in Strasbourg, its presence has to be underlined as practically the only reference to the then recent past of Alsace as German territory. It is also noteworthy for its acknowledgement of Strasbourg's importance and individuality in the region as capital, especially when taking into account the writers' apparent fondness for 'picturesque' elements of Alsatian architecture, which tend to reduce the region's and city's image to a type of folkloric myth that might be more popular in Paris (including Alsatian emigrants) than in Alsace itself. One might also deduct from the treatment of this part of the city that it was by now an integral part of the cityscape.

Regarding excursions, the emphasis is put primarily on the beauty of the landscape, like the 'vue magnifique sur les Vosges, depuis Ste-Odile jusque vers Saverne, sur le bassin de Westhoffen entre le Scharrach et les Vosges, véritable jardin d'arbres fruitiers et de vignes, et sur toute la plaine du Rhin (la cathédrale de Strasbourg juste en face).<sup>260</sup> This small extract manages to include several Alsatian landmarks, like the Vosges, Ste-Odile's Mount, the vineyards, the Rhine and Strasbourg's cathedral – all of them parts of Alsace's patrimony. The image of Alsace as a garden is also part of a common metaphor for the region and dates back to the French king Louis XIV.<sup>261</sup> The longevity of the comparison speaks for itself and effectively places Strasbourg as part of a Garden of Eden. There remain, thus, some uncontroversial concepts that reinforce Alsatian identity in a positive manner and encourage a consensus within the local population as well as outside the region's borders.

While different railway options from Strasbourg are offered, this edition's writers refer to an infamous event of the big commune of Illkirch-Graffenstaden that

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<sup>259</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p. 24.

<sup>260</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p. 34.

<sup>261</sup> André Lichtenberger, *En Alsace*, Les Beaux voyages (Vincennes: Les Arts graphiques, 1912), p. 13. Odratzheim (text) and Charles Spindler (illustrations), *L'Alsace pittoresque* (Strasbourg: Imprimerie alsacienne, 1912), p. 4.

brings up a negative past under German rule: '[...] Connue aussi par ses démêlés avec le gouvernement allemand en 1912 (Affaire de Graffenstaden).'<sup>262</sup> Even though the reference is brief, the readers' curiosity is probably piqued, and they might look for more information on this topic – if they are not already aware of these events. This could well be the reaction that the authors of this guide meant to induce in their readers under the guise of factuality. They thus subtly advertised an event that became part of a collective memory for Alsatians at the time, representing the failure of the Germanisation process in the region.

Another interesting passage concerns the small village of Truchtersheim: 'Centre de tout le Kochersberg, dont les beaux et riches villages représentent le type classique de la race et de la culture alsaciennes, et où les coutumes et costumes se sont particulièrement maintenus jusqu'à présent.'<sup>263</sup> The Kochersberg region will be mentioned in more detail later on, but one can already question why the writers think that this part of Alsace is so symbolic of the Alsatian 'race' and 'culture', particularly when one considers the arguments given: the beauty of its villages, where people still wear the traditional Alsatian costumes. It strongly resembles folklore in lieu of culture but it is indeed representative of the stereotypical and 'picturesque' way that Alsace is portrayed time and again (and which is a trademark of many travel-guides).<sup>264</sup> It could be assumed that this kind of portrayal might well have been favoured by Alsatians exiled in Paris after the Franco-Prussian war, who had not lived in Alsace for many years.<sup>265</sup> The memories they had of their region were thus kept active and influenced by their feelings of nostalgia. This instance confirms Nora's aforementioned exploration of memory, since the *lieux de mémoire* are precisely '[...] là où la mémoire travaille.'<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p. 38. This *Affaire* will be explained in Chapter Four of this thesis.

<sup>263</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p. 41.

<sup>264</sup> For further information on the 'picturesque' aspect of tourism, see: Sinéad Furlong, "'[Paris] s'offre à vos regards et vous sollicite": Pleasure in the Parks – Women, Travel Guides, and Nineteenth-Century Paris', in Jane Conroy (ed.), *Cross-Cultural Travel* (New York; Oxford: Peter Lang, 2003), pp. 239-250. Marc Boyer, *Histoire générale du tourisme du XVIe au XXIe siècle* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005).

<sup>265</sup> These Alsatians could have chosen not to become German after the 1870-71 war and moved to France, or could have been Alsatians who openly opposed the German authorities and escaped jail in Alsace – like Hansi or Zislin. This would render them particularly nostalgic of their region until they could return to Alsace after the 1914-18 War.

<sup>266</sup> Nora, 'Présentation', I, 17-18.

It is all the more interesting, then, that the city of Colmar is given attention particularly in terms of its architecture, a mixture between an ancient but well-preserved past and a more recent one.<sup>267</sup> The prison is mentioned because many Alsatians opposing the German government were held there: '[...] La maison d'arrêt départementale, tristement célèbre dans l'histoire de ces dernières années, avant et pendant la guerre, alors que tant de victimes du régime allemand y ont été enfermées et maltraitées.'<sup>268</sup> This passage is amongst those that contain a distinctly anti-German rhetoric, however this is alongside the 'picturesque' buildings from ancient times, including churches, and works from regional artists (like Martin Schongauer); a juxtaposition that strengthens the sense of belonging in that it combines both the sense of politics of identity and drama, and that of tradition. In a similar fashion, Mulhouse's *Société Industrielle* (founded in 1825)<sup>269</sup> is praised as a 'monument' for Alsatian 'science' and 'spirit', a reflection that one could expect more in favour of Alsace's capital but is remarkable for a city with no major administrative function in the region: 'Ses Bulletins et autres publications sont un monument incomparable de la science et de l'esprit alsaciens.'<sup>270</sup> A travel-guide has to aim for a fair overall treatment but it is noteworthy that the region represents the same degree if not a stronger presence of this 'esprit alsacien' than its capital, which appears compromised.

The 'Cités ouvrières'<sup>271</sup> were an ensemble of accommodation created for workers from the local factories, and while their specific architecture is for once not described as 'picturesque' or 'pretty' (terms that do not seem to characterise Mulhouse well), their typically industrial aspect is advertised: '[...] L'ensemble est imposant et caractéristique, et mérite une visite.'<sup>272</sup> However, not all the workers still lived in the city in 1922, and the ones who lived outside had to commute by train, which earned them a local nickname: 'Des trains spéciaux

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<sup>267</sup> For example: 'Un des principaux charmes de Colmar consiste précisément dans la juxtaposition de sa partie ancienne si pittoresque, d'une originalité si accentuée, et de sa partie moderne, avec l'allure générale du calme et de la tranquillité dont on y peut jouir. Les constructions du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle y abondent, certaines remontent même au XIV<sup>e</sup>, et l'ensemble a remarquablement conservé le caractère de l'époque ancienne, alors que Colmar était un véritable État quasi souverain.' Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p. 56.

<sup>268</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p.56. Such figures include caricaturists Hansi and Zislin.

<sup>269</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p. 65.

<sup>270</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p. 66.

<sup>271</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p. 67.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

que la bonhomie un peu narquoise du pays appelle: *Spatzenzüge* = les trains des moineaux, les transportent le matin et le soir.<sup>273</sup> This passage is worth noting for the writers refer here to the Alsatian characteristic of humour – in particular ‘good-natured mocking’. This so-called Alsatian humour has historically been linked with Alsatian theatre and is now the subject of numerous publications.<sup>274</sup> This is one of the writers’ few concrete examples of what could be referred to as the ‘Alsatian spirit’, a concept that they otherwise praise often enough throughout the travel-guide. This process reveals what is considered as Alsatian identity in this edition, or at least a sense of common identification among Alsatisans through their particular humour. These presumably common traits among Alsatisans that identify them as purely Alsatian are highlighted to appeal to the regional audience and foster a sense of kinship with the guide and its authors, as well as give an ‘authentic’ touch to this volume that might appeal to the visitor.<sup>275</sup>

A comparison with a German travel-guide printed in 1887 outlines how propaganda discourses may differ depending on which country’s perspective is used to describe and advertise Alsace. The 1887 travel-guide was published locally in Strasbourg, though, in five small volumes, each focused on one specific particularity of travelling in Alsace, and written by the then regionally renowned Curt Mündel.<sup>276</sup> The introduction stresses, as ever, the beauty of Alsace (‘eigenthümlichen Reiz’, ‘malerische Kaiserstuhl’<sup>277</sup>) that German travellers have to (re)discover, which also appeals to prospective local readers, and the region’s more recent architecture: ‘Zahlreich sind die historischen

<sup>273</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l’Alsace*, p. 67.

<sup>274</sup> For Alsatian humour, see for example: Léon Daul and Paul Muhlheim, *Stämmdisch: Petit Bréviaire de l’Humour Alsacien* ([Triel-sur-Seine(?): Midgard, 2006). Raymond Matzen, *Le Savoir-rire alsacien* (Barr: Le Verger, 2004). Béatrice and Freddy Sarg, *Nouveau Manuel d’Humour Alsacien* (Barr: Le Verger, 2002).

<sup>275</sup> The writers add to this sense of authenticity by recommending to visit train stations, since they give the readers a good opportunity to observe the good qualities of workers from Mulhouse: ‘Non moins que la visite des quartiers ouvriers, celle des gares aux heures de ces trains permettra de faire maintes observations sur les bonnes qualités des ouvriers mulhousiens, et sur les autres aussi.’ Cf. Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l’Alsace*, p. 67. What is interesting in this rather anthropological observation is the ambiguous end of the sentence, which could either mean that the workers from Mulhouse have good ‘and other’ qualities, or that the tourists can also observe ‘other’ workers – maybe from Germany – and compare them to the ‘good’ local workers. Either way, this statement about the local workers is nowadays part of the general image of Alsatian workers in France.

<sup>276</sup> Whose first name is also written *Kurt* in the *Dictionnaire de biographie des hommes célèbres de l’Alsace*, although the latter’s reliability is admittedly debatable. Cf. Sitzmann, II, 347.

<sup>277</sup> Curt Mündel, *Streifzüge und Rastorte im Reichslande und den angrenzenden Gebieten*, 5 vols (Strasbourg: J. H. Ed. Heitz [Heitz & Mündel], 1887-1907), I: *Die Straßenbahn Straßburg-Markolsheim nebst Ausflügen in den Kaiserstuhl* (1887), 6.

Erinnerungen, die sich an die Gegend knüpfen, von der Römerzeit an, durch das Mittelalter, die Reformation, den dreissigjährigen Krieg bis in unsere Zeiten.<sup>278</sup> Furthermore, the author insists on the fact that thanks to the new tramway and railway systems in Strasbourg, Alsace is effectively linked to Germany and can be travelled and visited very easily. The point of this argument is to show Alsatians that even though they first opposed the annexation, Germany has brought them progress and modernisation that they can enjoy in their everyday life, a step towards an improved infrastructure. One can also decipher the implicit comparison with France, which did not bring the same modernisation to the region when it was a part of its territory.

In 1886 Curt Mündel had published the *Guide du touriste dans les Vosges*, which was re-edited multiple times and became his central work.<sup>279</sup> In fact, he became of such eminent importance as a writer about Alsace and its exploration that his work appealed to both locals and foreigners. It is this role that makes Mündel particularly interesting. First, since he appears to touch a nerve among Alsatians who did not take issue with the fact that he was German. Second, that his reference work remained important even when Alsace was associated with France. He seems to personify the idea of the 'insider/outsider', also referred to as the identity 'attribuée/postulée' by Marc Lienhard.<sup>280</sup>

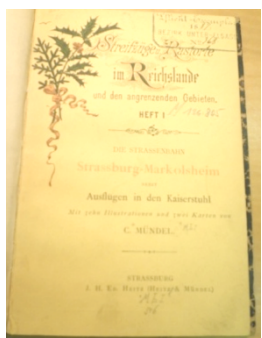
In the 1887 guide Mündel stressed all the works created by local artisans in Strasbourg and Alsace by name, emphasising his knowledge of and attachment to the region. In keeping with the German tradition of travel literature about Alsace, the emphasis is on 'pretty' illustrations (see image 4), particularly in comparison to the much less 'aesthetically' illustrated French guide.

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<sup>278</sup> Mündel, *Streifzüge und Rastorte im Reichslande*, I, 6.

<sup>279</sup> Sitzmann, II, 347. The *Club Vosgien* was closely linked to Mündel's name and its members erected a memorial stone in Soultz immediately after his death and a Tower Mündel (eighteen meters high) was built on the *Panoramafelsen*, near Ste-Odile, and inaugurated in 1909. The entry for 'Kurt Mündel' in this dictionary of famous Alsatian men is flattering to him and his works, which shows that he was probably 'adopted' by Alsatians even though he was not born in Alsace.

<sup>280</sup> Lienhard, pp. 16-17. See also the Introduction of this thesis.



4. First-page (on the left) and an example of illustration (on the right) found in Mündel's *Streifzüge und Rastorte im Reichslande* (1887).<sup>281</sup> © Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire de Strasbourg, M.126.805.

Curt Mündel's 1886 guide<sup>282</sup> focuses on practical aspects of travelling. The volume boasts several maps (sometimes coloured) and diagrams, as its first aim was to be as informative as possible about the Vosges region, including many cities and villages of Alsace but also parts of Lorraine (French and German) and Jura. The preface is split into four parts – one for each edition, the third one including French parts of Lorraine for the first time – in which Mündel acknowledges all the contributors to this travel-guide since it was first published.<sup>283</sup> Mündel's guide is exceptionally complete, since he collected contributions from all over Alsace and its surroundings, from locals – academics or not – who wrote articles about their own cities or towns or villages. This travel-guide can be seen as a collective work, and a good reflection of the region with all its particularities. It is thus easier to deduce the reasons why this guide became so popular among Alsatians.<sup>284</sup> Some of his quotations support the idea that both France and Germany were keen on underlining Alsace's belonging to each of them.

Referring to the problem of language in Alsace, Mündel shows that the French authorities were desperate to turn the region French as quickly as possible in the nineteenth century: '[...] Franciser, à tout prix le plus vite possible,'<sup>285</sup> but he also underlines with considerable emphasis the determination of the German

<sup>281</sup> Mündel, *Streifzüge und Rastorte im Reichslande*, I, 13.

<sup>282</sup> Curt Mündel, *Die Vogesen: Ein Handbuch für Touristen auf Grundlage von Schrickers Vogesenführer*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn (Strasbourg: Karl J. Trübner, 1886).

<sup>283</sup> His guide is based on *In die Vogesen von Dr. Aug. Schricker* (1873) as well as works by Professor Dr. Julius Euting, President of the *Vogesenclub*. Schricker was probably among the first to write travel-guides about the Vosges region, and he wrote other articles for the Club.

<sup>284</sup> Mündel also seems interested in showing the many artistic and literary riches of Alsace (including architecture), since he focuses on famous local artists and writers in his introduction. The guide is obviously the work of an academic, since Mündel uses quotations, references, footnotes, and even offers a small bibliography at the beginning of the book.

<sup>285</sup> Mündel, *Die Vogesen*, p. 9.



authorities to keep the region in 1870: '[...] Daß diese Stadt und dies Land, so Gott will, deutsch bleiben werde.'<sup>286</sup> In his chapter about Strasbourg, Mündel keeps his 'academic' devices and his tone is uncontroversial.<sup>287</sup> Although he does not go into much detail on the *Kaiserplatz*, Mündel gives a detailed description of the new University's history and function, as well as the dates of all the recent renovations done to the city after 1871, which implicitly highlights the positive role of the Germans. This could reflect the fact that the *Vogesclub* did not have political aims and if it wanted not to be disbanded by the authorities it could not be too overtly critical of the government.<sup>288</sup>

## 2.2. Further Examples of Travel Literature

Aiming to give a broader perspective to the concept of tourist guides promoting Alsace, this sub-chapter focuses on a few examples of travel-guides that were published in a timeframe similar to the *Club Vosgien's* and Curt Mündel's guides, but on a national scale. As before, the focus is on a 1922 French guide, which is of particular interest because it comes from a collection that remains to this day a staple of tourism literature in France, *Les Guides Bleus*. It thus targets a wide audience that is not necessarily Alsatian. The German guides chosen are also comparative examples to the travel-guides chosen in the previous sub-chapter. However, even if these guides were not published locally, they still tried to give – through the description of architecture, landscapes, and customs – characteristics of what is essentially Alsatian. Furthermore, their dates of publication (not long after defining wars, for the first two and main guides) probably had an influence on their contents and propagandistic messages.

The 1922 version of the *Guides Bleus*<sup>289</sup> boasts a bibliography (including works from Curt Mündel, as well as Hansi, Zislin, and other Alsatian scholars and

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<sup>286</sup> Mündel, *Die Vogesen*, p. 15.

<sup>287</sup> His tour of the city is relatively quick, enhancing, the buildings or places of interest in bold, such as the cathedral (which boasts a long and detailed description), *Schloss (Palais des Rohans)*, *Broglie Platz*, *Stadthaus*, *Theatre*, *Kaiserpalast*, or *Kleber Platz*, as well as the various districts, including 'das kleine Frankreich'. Cf. Mündel, *Die Vogesen*, p. 41.

<sup>288</sup> The guide's first aim is to make people discover the whole Vosges through walking, and as such its rather impressive collection of destinations can be seen as quite representative of Alsace and its surroundings. It is probably one of the main reasons why this travel guide became a staple in Alsatian lives.

<sup>289</sup> Marcel Monmarché and Pierre Sixemonts (eds), *Vosges, Lorraine, Alsace*, *Les Guides Bleus* (Paris: Hachette, 1922).

authors).<sup>290</sup> However, any routes offered begin in Paris. The preface does mention that the editors collected various contributions from the regions concerned, a process reminiscent of Mündel's 1886 travel-guide. They state that a good travel-guide 'ne peut être que l'œuvre commune de nombreuses bonnes volontés.'<sup>291</sup> In the same preface references are made to the war, since the editors wish, in a manner not dissimilar to the one in the 1874 German guide (that succeeds this one), to devote a whole guide to what they call 'nos chères provinces reconquises,' and they announce that they will describe the First World War and the 'Champs de bataille' that one can see the traces of in the region.<sup>292</sup> They point at the return of stability to the region. It is a special feature of the *Guides Bleus* series that the editors tried to include prestigious collaborators to give the guides a certain *cachet*. In this edition, the general introduction was written by Auerbach, the 'éminent doyen de la Faculté des Lettres de Nancy,' with help from P. Deffontaines, 'membre de la Fondation Thiers, et l'un des jeunes géographes les plus distingués de l'école de Jean Brunhes qui a créé la "géographie humaine".'<sup>293</sup>

One might expect the text to be fairly factual in a 'serious' publication, but the tone is subjective, particularly in the introductory parts. The 'Aperçu géographique' thus contains a small section about the 'peuple alsacien' that mentions the Alsatians' singularity, but also emphasises the belonging and attachment of Alsace to France, which even the years under German rule have not diminished: 'Le peuple alsacien a gardé son originalité que ni son attachement à la France, ni son assujettissement à l'Allemagne n'ont pu oblitérer', 'la germanisation qui se trahit par le dialecte, par le type aussi, n'a jamais conquis les âmes, et depuis leur réunion à la France, les Alsaciens, sans devenir welches, sont devenus français.'<sup>294</sup> The author underlines that it was France that gave Alsace its unity in the seventeenth century, thus highlighting the beneficial influence of France on the region, which is described as 'jardin de l'Europe', 'terre de bénédiction', or 'paradis' – no superlative is left out here.<sup>295</sup>

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<sup>290</sup> The authors also use footnotes and quotations, and quite a few maps and diagrams as support, boasting the official patronage of some of the main travel associations in France at the time: the *Touring Club de France*, *Office National de Tourisme*, and *Club Alpin Français*.

<sup>291</sup> Monmarché and Sixemonts, p. VI.

<sup>292</sup> Monmarché and Sixemonts, p. V, for all quotations in this sentence.

<sup>293</sup> Monmarché and Sixemonts, p. VI.

<sup>294</sup> Monmarché and Sixemonts, p. XXXVI, for both quotations.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*, for all quotations in this sentence.

This does not necessarily mean that the author is targeting an Alsatian audience, but could simply be part of the efforts on behalf of the French authorities to make Alsace appear in a more positive way in the eyes of the French population during the post-war period. The informative passages about elements of everyday life in Alsace actually suggest that they are new to the readers, who are thus most probably not Alsatians. This is, then, also a strong indication that tourism can be understood in way of ‘colonisation’.

The emphasis is on the rural life and picturesque aspects of Alsace. However, the author concludes his ‘Aperçu géographique’ with a reminder of the power of Alsatians industries, helped by the region’s favourable position in Europe. He underlines the need for France to protect and support the region against ‘toutes les puissances rivales de l’extérieur’ – which points at Germany.<sup>296</sup> As for the ‘Aperçu historique’, its most propagandistic (but brief) part concerns the war of 1870-71, as expected in such a context, in a manner similar to other French travel-guides of that period.<sup>297</sup> In the section concerning Strasbourg (supplemented with a few coloured maps), which is – in contrast to other travel-guides – not placed at the beginning, the author describes the city with an emphasis on the picturesque parts from the old city dating from before 1870, compared to the more recent parts marking the ‘goût spécial allemand’ for large avenues and ‘édifices publics aux proportions monumentales’ – a comment which must refer to the buildings of the *ex-Kaiserplatz*.<sup>298</sup> In the historical references the author underlines Strasbourg’s attachment to France in clear terms: ‘[...] Depuis cette époque, Strasbourg s’était fortement rattaché à la grande nationalité française avec un patriotisme dont il donna en toute occasion des preuves énergiques, à l’heure des désastres comme à l’époque des victoires.’<sup>299</sup> He gives a fairly dramatised and detailed account of the war of 1870 and the siege of Strasbourg, which echoes the then-recent First World War and sympathises with the Alsatians’ hardships.<sup>300</sup> The memory of the drama of the War of 1870-71 must have struck a chord with Alsatians like Hansi too.

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<sup>296</sup> Monmarché and Sixemonts p. XXXIX.

<sup>297</sup> Monmarché and Sixemonts, p. XLVI.

<sup>298</sup> Monmarché and Sixemonts, p. 275.

<sup>299</sup> Monmarché and Sixemonts, p. 278.

<sup>300</sup> As a whole, the buildings and places worth visiting are generally the same as the ones given in other travel-guides, with an overall focus on Alsatian or French buildings (rather than German ones), using the same pattern of the ‘tour of the city’.

In comparison, a German guide published in Berlin in 1874,<sup>301</sup> only three years after the end of the Franco-Prussian War, has a fairly similar pronounced political undertone but is written from the German perspective. The author uses a distinctly propagandistic rhetoric in the *Vorwort* to emphasise the belonging of Alsace to Germany, with words such as ‘wiedergewonnen’ (implying a rightful return) or ‘Vaterland’.<sup>302</sup> The author also insists on ‘die Naturschönheiten des Elsass, namentlich der Vogesen’<sup>303</sup> to appeal to a probably mostly German readership not familiar with the then new *Reichsland* that preoccupied people at the time.<sup>304</sup> The information given to prospective travellers is detailed and practical, obviously aimed at people who do not know the region yet, so there is no need to underline Alsatian *particularismes* as in the French guide. The war is so recent that the currency is still mostly the French *Franc*, although German tourists do not need to be able to speak French to communicate with the local people: ‘Deutsch wird überall gesprochen, und selbst in den Districten französischer Zunge dürfte heutigen Tages kein Tourist mit der deutschen Sprache in Verlegenheit kommen.’<sup>305</sup>

In the introductory parts, the author mentions the religions practised in Alsace and the number of people born in France or born in the *Reichsland*<sup>306</sup> – characteristics not mentioned in the other travel-guides and to be understood in reference to the post-war situation when a degree of sensitivities had to be acknowledged. The historical overview is partisan, with a detailed and propagandistic description of the German roots of Alsace, starting with a rather dramatic and telling entry: ‘Hier ist die Wiege der deutschen Geschichte.’<sup>307</sup> This is noteworthy given that earlier in the text the region’s depiction is

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<sup>301</sup> H. T. Luks, *Elsaß-Lothringen. Praktischer Wegweiser*, Griebens Reise-Bibliothek Nr. 77 (Berlin: Albert Goldschmidt, 1874).

<sup>302</sup> Luks, pp. iii-iv.

<sup>303</sup> Luks, p. iii.

<sup>304</sup> The war of 1870-71 and the question of the *Reichsland* was a major issue for the public and politicians in Berlin. See for example: Paul Wentzcke, *Der Deutschen Einheit Schicksalsland: Elsaß-Lothringen und das Reich im Neunzehnten and Zwanzigsten Jahrhundert* (München: Drei Masken Verlag, 1921). Roland Oberlé, *L’Alsace au temps du Reichsland: 1871-1914, Les Alsatiques* ([n.p.]: A.D.M., [n.d.]). Stefan Fisch, ‘Das Elsass im deutschen Kaiserreich (1870/71-1918)’, in Michael Erbe (ed.), *Das Elsass. Historische Landschaft im Wandel der Zeit* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2002), pp. 123-146. Max Rehm, *Reichsland Elsass-Lothringen: Regierung und Verwaltung 1871 bis 1918* (Bad Neustadt a. d. Saale: Pfaehler, 1991). Statistisches Bureau des Ministeriums (ed.), *Das Reichsland Elsaß-Lothringen, part 1-2 (1901)* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2010; first publ. 1901).

<sup>305</sup> Luks, p. 20.

<sup>306</sup> Luks, p. 10.

<sup>307</sup> Luks, p. 14.

characterised by being distinctively different.<sup>308</sup> History plays the role of marking distinction: 'Alle Uebel und schrecklichen Misshandlungen, welche Deutschland von 1660-1814 ertragen musste, sind zum grossen Theile durch die Hingabe von Deutschlands eigentlicher Pforte, durch die Abtretung des Elsass an Frankreich verschuldet.'<sup>309</sup> Alsace is here treated as a gateway into Germany, although there is no consideration of the actual importance of two different parts affording a link the region might provide. The term 'Abretung' is remarkable since it implies that Alsace was originally given up with insufficient consideration – and implicitly it is now high time to make amends. And indeed, the introduction ends with an acknowledgement of the price of war: the destructions caused by the siege and bombardments, although the author insists on the necessity of these sacrifices, or Alsace may not have come back to Germany. In this respect the guide turns into a political pamphlet under the guise of information. In fact, it is effective propaganda: the Empire has generously begun to reconstruct its *Reichsland*.<sup>310</sup> The traveller to Alsace is reminded of the important political framework that his visit encompasses and that he enters a region second to none. This highlights the importance of introductions to travel-guides in that they represent an overall philosophy that guides the exploration of the region's more controversial segments, striking a precarious balance between Alsace and France and Germany respectively.

Another consequence of the particular political context is the emphasis, even in the description of Strasbourg, on the effects of the war on the city's architecture: the first places worth visiting are the various military forts.<sup>311</sup> The tour of the city is done relatively quickly, since the most typical German architecture found nowadays in Strasbourg had not been built yet. Contrary to other guides, in this publication the author is also interested in Lorraine and fluidly includes it in his description, even though this region has a strong French influence. Indeed, he praises the surroundings of Nancy as boasting the 'prettiest' and 'friendliest' cities in France: '[...] Und zählt zu den schönsten, freundlichsten Städten Frankreichs.'<sup>312</sup> However, throughout the guide the emphasis is put on military

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<sup>308</sup> The author also feels that Germany should never have lost Alsace in the seventeenth century, which is supposedly the reason for all of its later 'sufferings' under the French and remedied with great endurance on behalf of the Germans.

<sup>309</sup> Luks, p. 18.

<sup>310</sup> Luks, p. 20.

<sup>311</sup> Luks, pp. 37-38.

<sup>312</sup> Luks, p. 58.

acts and architecture instead of aesthetic matters, which is in keeping with what can arguably be called 'Schlachfeldertourismus' (*Battlefield Tourism*)<sup>313</sup> that governs over beauty. Instead, presumed patterns of identity and belonging, albeit in transit, are stressed.

Comparatively, the 1907-08 edition of the previous German travel-guide<sup>314</sup> shows little interest in terms of identity and propaganda discourses. It is no longer focused on military architecture like its predecessor. Its description of Strasbourg and other Alsatian cities and villages stays mostly neutral and its author seems more interested in official buildings and churches than in picturesque houses. The German perspective is noticeable through the focus on German history or architecture. For example, the consequences of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 are the expansion and increased power of Strasbourg under German rule,<sup>315</sup> and the first element of interest in the city's train station are the monumental paintings inside the central entrance hall portraying the entrance of Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa in Hagenau in 1164 on one side and the visit of Kaiser Wilhelm I in Strasbourg in 1877 on the other side.<sup>316</sup> These frescoes are, of course, reminders of Alsace's belonging to Germany. The latter is also underlined in the praise of the cathedral, 'eines der herrlichsten gotischen Bauwerke aus älterer Zeit in Deutschland.'<sup>317</sup>

The selection reinforces the importance of art and architecture in view of its origins. It is hardly surprising that the role of Strasbourg as a major university city is highlighted and the description of the University building and system is more detailed than in the 1874 edition, since the new building was a creation of the Germans and part of an effort to make Strasbourg's University one of the most prestigious ones in the Empire. Interestingly, this German guide covers all the Vosges, including the cities and villages that are located in French territory. The author remarks that if visitors behave nicely and respect the locals' particularities, even 'Northern Germans' can be treated well by the Alsatians: 'Bei bescheidenem Auftreten und Schonung der Eigentümlichkeiten der

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<sup>313</sup> Hachtmann, pp. 57-59.

<sup>314</sup> Heinrich Schiebel, *Die Vogesen, Straßburg, Metz und die Schlachtfelder*, Griebens Reiseführer, 77, 6<sup>th</sup>edn (Berlin: Albert Goldschmidt, 1907-1908).

<sup>315</sup> Schiebel, p. 4.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid.

<sup>317</sup> Schiebel, p. 5.

Landesbewohner wird auch der Norddeutsche Aufmerksamkeit, Freundlichkeit, ja auch persönliches Wohlwollen der Wirtsleute und mitunter gute Verpflegung bei mäßigeren Preisen erfahren.<sup>318</sup> Here, referring to a popular cliché in travel writing, the author exemplifies the fact that Germans coming from regions further away from Alsace or from the capital are seen in a more negative light by the population – perpetuating stereotypes that at the same time challenge mutual respect and a sense of difference. This is of interest, since it alludes to a juxtaposition between the region and the majority of Germany.

The 1913 version of this German travel-guide is very similar to its 1907-08 edition, even though the author appears to be different.<sup>319</sup> Only a few passages are added to the previous edition, including a positive introduction to Strasbourg's description:

Es wird wohl kein Fremder versäumen, dieser uralten und doch neuen deutschen Stadt einen Besuch abzustatten, das stolze Münster, das schönste Denkmal altdeutscher Bauweise, zu besichtigen, um so mehr, als Straßburg zugleich der beste Ausgangspunkt für die Vogesen ist. Die Stadt spiegelt die Hauptepochen seiner glanzvollen Geschichte in seiner Bauart wider. Das frühe Mittelalter, in dem Straßburg als freie Reichsstadt zu hoher Blüte gelangte, zeigt sich in den alten Kirchen, vor allem im weltberühmten Münster, die französische Herrschaft prägt sich in den Bauten am Broglieplatz und im Schlosse, der Residenz der früheren Kirchenfürsten, aus, während die neueste, die deutsche Kaiserzeit, sich in dem Kaiserpalast, der Universität und vielen Staatsbauten auf dem erweiterten Stadtgebiete verkörpert.<sup>320</sup>

Here the author manages to promote the city as an important capital, welcoming and with noteworthy architecture, and even though the French influence is acknowledged, the German one is predominant, with roots in both the uncontroversial medieval and the more difficult recent history – a perfect

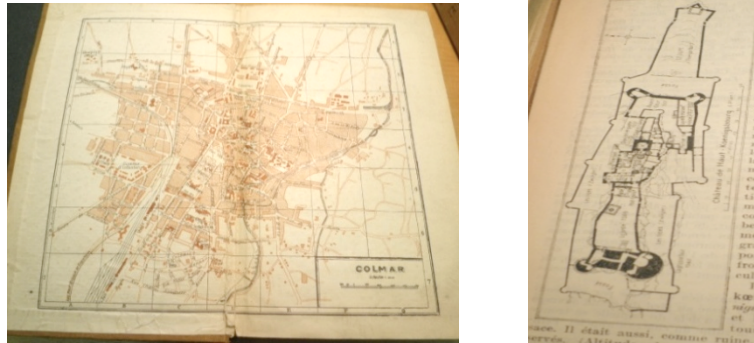
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<sup>318</sup> Schiebel, p. 19.

<sup>319</sup> Adolf Schumacher, *Die Vogesen, Straßburg, Metz und die Schlachtfelder*, Griebens Reiseführer, 77, 8<sup>th</sup>edn (Berlin: Albert Goldschmidt, 1913).

<sup>320</sup> Schumacher, p. 8. For other German travel-guides of the same period on the region, see: Karl Emil Franzos, *Aus den Vogesen. Reise- und Kulturbilder*, Deutsche Fahrten (Stuttgart; Berlin: J.G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger, 1905). Fritz Groeber, *Die Vogesen* (Bielefeld; Leipzig: Velhagen & Klasing, 1912).

example for the latter being the new German district around the *Kaiserplatz*.<sup>321</sup> This reminder of Alsace's German roots and belonging through its capital resonates in a particular way in 1913, only one year before the beginning of the First World War. While German policies were becoming stricter in Alsace at the time, the guide's overtones are more 'seductive' and inclusive (through praise and compliments) to strengthen the bonds between Germany and its *Reichsland*.



5. A map of Colmar and an illustration for the Haut-Koenigsbourg castle from the second tome of the 1922 *Guide du touriste*.<sup>322</sup> © Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire de Strasbourg, M.121.752 / M.129.755.

### 2.3. Promotional Literature about Alsace

Besides the practical travel-guides, there are also other types of literature aimed at promoting the region by identifying a 'true' Alsace – with more subjective means. These publications were particularly developed during the pre- and post-First World War period, written by Alsatians, insiders – exiled or not – sharing their views on Alsatian characteristics, often tinted by a patriotic nostalgia that influenced their visions of Alsace. The following examples are representative of that trend.

*Notre Alsace, Notre Lorraine*<sup>323</sup> was published in 1919 in Paris and is representative of the French propaganda omnipresent in Alsace during the *malaise alsacien*. Indeed, its editor is the Abbé Wetterlé, the friend of Hansi and famously 'anti-boche' and pro-French. This booklet focuses on a description of

<sup>321</sup> Strasbourg is also offered as the 'best starting point' to visit the Vosges region, which makes it a major destination for tourists interested in travelling to Alsace. This sort of promotional discourse is clearly part of an effort to develop tourism in the region. This sense of regional difference or *particularisme* with which Alsatians can identify underlines a pattern similar to the one used in the 1922 French guide.

<sup>322</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l'Alsace*, p. 500.

<sup>323</sup> Abbé Wetterlé and Carlos Fischer (eds), 'Petites villes alsaciennes', *Notre Alsace, Notre Lorraine*, 15 (Paris: L'Édition française illustrée, 1919).



some 'petites villes alsaciennes.' The aim is to advertise Alsace to French people who did not know this region well after the war, but the author also appeals to Alsatian readers by complimenting the region profusely and underlining what makes it Alsatian – as opposed to what is German, the 'Boches' being consistently criticised and ridiculed. A good example of the author's rhetorical pattern can be found at the beginning of the booklet, when he compares Alsatian and German houses and how to spot the differences between them. The half-timbered Alsatian houses are described in detail and provide a carefully evoked sense of home: 'Les bonnes maisons alsaciennes du temps jadis vous réconfortent, heureusement, de leur compagnie', 'les fameuses maisons à pans de bois, grande spécialité de notre province, sont des alphabets en pierre et en chêne.'<sup>324</sup> They supposedly reflect the Alsatian character in their style: 'Elles sont riantes d'aspect, d'un style simple et franc. Tout y respire, [...] cet art populaire qui est conforme au caractère de la nation. L'Alsacien trahit jusque dans son architecture favorite son esprit de sociabilité et son bonheur de vivre.'<sup>325</sup> In comparison, the German houses are described in brief: 'Et, naturellement aussi, ce sont elles, ces maisons boches, que l'on voit d'abord, les misérables! Elles vous surprennent par une sorte d'attaque brusquée. Elles vous crèvent les yeux. Atrocités allemandes!'<sup>326</sup> If the houses reflect the character of their owners, then the Germans are seen as violent and deceitful. The booklet is illustrated with picturesque photographs and drawings, which emphasise the overall sense of nostalgia for an idealised Alsace. This image of Alsace is in keeping with the French propaganda at the time, and Hansi's drawings (cf. Chapter Four).

A further French publication, *En Alsace* (published in 1912),<sup>327</sup> aims to remind its readers of the link between France and the lost province in a fairly creative way.<sup>328</sup> It includes a long chapter on Strasbourg, since the author places the

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<sup>324</sup> Wetterlé and Fischer, p. 225, for both quotations.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid.

<sup>327</sup> André Lichtenberger, *En Alsace*, Les Beaux voyages (Vincennes: Les Arts graphiques, 1912). For another picturesque and fairly nostalgic – but short – description of Alsace, see also: Annales Politiques et Littéraires (ed.), *Les Provinces de France décrites par leurs grands hommes* (Paris: [n. pub.], 1903). This publication is more propagandistic, namely because Alsace and Lorraine are considered as French in its pages, even though it was published in 1903, when Alsace was still German.

<sup>328</sup> Lichtenberger, p. 5. The text aims at describing some aspects of the Alsatian culture and region in an entertaining way. The book is written like a storybook, so the style is very different from the more practical travel-guides.

city above all else in Alsace: 'En Alsace il y a Colmar et Mulhouse. Colmar est exquise; Mulhouse pleine d'activité. Mais au dessus d'elles il y a Strasbourg.'<sup>329</sup> Even though the city has changed a lot in the last decades under German rule, the author advances that the heart of the city is still the same and its architecture still reflects its history, and here too a strong sense of nostalgia for a picturesque Alsace is omnipresent (and highlighted by watercolour illustrations). The author assumes a dual identity like one of his examples, Oberlin<sup>330</sup>: 'Je suis Germain et Français tout ensemble.'<sup>331</sup> His message is thus different in its approach from Wetterlé's, since he acknowledges Alsace's dual identity and focuses on its capital to illustrate his point, even though he also mentions the picturesque villages and landscapes, which seem to be generally accepted as representative of the 'authentic' Alsace.

*L'Alsace pittoresque*, published in 1912 in Strasbourg,<sup>332</sup> is similar in its impetus. Both the author and illustrator are Alsatian.<sup>333</sup> The 'caractère alsacien,' is characterised as 'accueillant, bienveillant' in Alsatian men, whose 'droiture d'esprit' is emphasised, as well as their 'malice', 'cuisine' and 'bon vin'.<sup>334</sup> The Alsatian gastronomy and humour are once again distinctive qualities of the Alsatian character. Women are praised for their 'grâce', 'enjouement' and 'gentillesse'.<sup>335</sup> Even though he appears to subscribe to such clichés, according to the author, the Alsatian character is complex, with a few common qualities inherited from both Germany and France. The latter are the ones mentioned earlier, as well as the characteristic Alsatian accent – which has a 'terroir' or

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<sup>329</sup> Lichtenberger, p. 22.

<sup>330</sup> Johann-Friedrich Oberlin (1740-1826) was an Alsatian Protestant minister who actively supported and helped social progress in his region during most of his life.

<sup>331</sup> Lichtenberger, p. 28. The author's nostalgia can probably be explained by the fact that he possibly left Alsace for France when it became part of Germany in 1871, and is thus 'homesick'. This could also explain why he has an idealised vision of Alsace: he has not lived there in a long time and bases his image of the region on his own souvenirs. The choice of Oberlin is quite representative of the author's non-propagandistic, neutral approach, since Oberlin himself proclaimed his own dual identity, with no bias for either side.

<sup>332</sup> Odratzheim (text) and Charles Spindler (illustrations), *L'Alsace pittoresque* (Strasbourg: Imprimerie alsacienne, 1912).

<sup>333</sup> This is made obvious by their continuous use of the second person of the plural form when talking about Alsace and Alsacians. Although the author of the texts, 'Odratzheim', is hard to find and could simply refer to the Alsatian commune of the same name (as an alias), Charles Spindler, the illustrator, is a rather famous artist in Alsace. For more information about the latter, see: Les Amis de la Léonardsau et du Cercle de Saint Léonard, 'Charles Spindler (1865-1938)' <[http://www.cerclesaintleonard.com/page.php?url=fiche\\_02](http://www.cerclesaintleonard.com/page.php?url=fiche_02)> [accessed on 30/11/11]. Alsace-Culture, 'Avec Charles Spindler découvre l'Alsace et sa culture' <<http://www.alsace-culture.com/artiste-charles-spindler-101.html>> [accessed on 30/11/11].

<sup>334</sup> Odratzheim and Spindler, p. 6, for all quotations in this sentence.

<sup>335</sup> Ibid., for all quotations in this sentence.

rustic quality – and while the Alsatian woman is a good ‘maîtresse de maison’ and ‘mère de famille’, the Alsations are independent and have ‘une grande soif de liberté et de particularisme’ inherited from the time that Strasbourg and other Alsatian cities were free cities or when Strasbourg had its special status in the Holy German Empire.<sup>336</sup> An additional interest in wars seems to stem from Alsace’s long history as a ‘champ de bataille des nations’,<sup>337</sup> which must have resonated with inhabitants of the region in way of recognition.

The author describes the specificity of Alsatian architecture for tourists, but he is clearly more interested in old-fashioned and rustic houses found more commonly in the countryside. He shows a certain nostalgia for ‘archaïsme’, which he prefers to the modern buildings; he praises the ‘aspect romantique et pittoresque’ of several villages that are also characterised by their fortifications.<sup>338</sup> Furthermore, even though they seem to be a favourite topic among travel-guides, he advances that religious buildings do not have any ‘caractère [...] propre à l’Alsace’ – besides Strasbourg’s cathedral, whose ‘silhouette’ is ‘unique au monde’<sup>339</sup> – however what is ‘unique à l’Alsace’ is the ‘profusion’ of primitive ruins and ‘châteaux féodaux’ that litter the landscape and are mentioned in every travel-guides about the region.<sup>340</sup> He mentions the traditional costume as being one of the main elements of what constitutes ‘le pittoresque, l’original, le particularisme, l’individualisme d’une contrée’<sup>341</sup> and gives a lengthy – and enthusiastic – description of the various Alsatian costumes. The ‘nœud alsacien’ that is popularly used to represent the Alsatian costume has become ‘dans toutes les représentations allégoriques le symbole de l’Alsace’<sup>342</sup> and stems from the Kochersberg region, said to be the region most representative of all matters Alsatian in the 1922 *Guide du touriste*.<sup>343</sup> In this region, close to the capital, the women’s costume is the most ‘riche et brillant’, and the author particularly encourages tourists to visit Geispolsheim during the ‘jour de la Fête-Dieu’ to witness ‘une partie de l’âme alsacienne’.<sup>344</sup> The author is also emphatically enthusiastic about Alsatian cooking, which,

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<sup>336</sup> Odratzheim and Spindler, p. 6, for all quotations in this sentence.

<sup>337</sup> Odratzheim and Spindler, p. 7.

<sup>338</sup> Odratzheim and Spindler, pp. 9-11.

<sup>339</sup> Odratzheim and Spindler, p. 11, for the previous quotation too.

<sup>340</sup> Odratzheim and Spindler, p. 12.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid.

<sup>342</sup> Odratzheim and Spindler, p. 14, for both quotations in this sentence.

<sup>343</sup> Club Vosgien (ed.), *Les Vosges et l’Alsace*, p. 41.

<sup>344</sup> Odratzheim and Spindler, p. 14, for all quotations in this sentence.

according to him, is a mix of traditional cooking from the South of Germany and the 'raffinements' and 'délicatesse' of French *cuisine*.<sup>345</sup> Once again, Alsace seems to gather together the best of each culture.

In this chapter I have aimed to decipher in what ways travel-guides can promote Alsace and a sense of Alsatian identity. The guides written by Curt Mündel try to represent the different aspects of Alsace and show its beauty. The 1874 German guide depicts Alsace as a battleground. The 1922 French guide depicts Alsace as an object of propaganda for France but with an Alsatian perspective. All of these sources attempt to capture the essence of what is Alsatian or, more precisely, what is authentic in their own terms; however, as Forsdick argues, they are also reflections of their authors' own cultures and ideas.<sup>346</sup> These guides were by their very nature promotional tools and targeted specific audiences who were subject to the political changes. They were consequently confronted with audiences in the region and beyond.

A number of aspects underline, thanks to their repetitive use, what is arguably characteristic of Alsace, although the search for authenticity is presumably more the visitor's than the inhabitants' ambition. Strikingly, true Alsace is to be found, not necessarily within the city, except for the cathedral which is unaffected by history, but in the surroundings of Strasbourg and beyond. Historical continuity provides a bridge, both for German and French allegiances, while the distinctiveness is highlighted in terms of specific trademarks such as picturesque buildings and a sense of humour. Alsatian identity, as promoted by the variety of guides, is one that seeks to oppose the reality of change. Wars are treated as a necessity to return to what is perceived the 'original status quo.' The need to cater for a variety of audiences is therefore bound by the confirmation of clichés on the one hand, and by the particular historical narrative on the other. Although all guides seem to be affirmative, Alsatian identity is – these presumed characteristics and symptoms aside – elusive in that it is everything at once: German, French, Alsatian, medieval and modern. However, it would appear that throughout the time under discussion there is a clear sense, among the French, the Germans and the Alsatians themselves,

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<sup>345</sup> Odratzheim and Spindler, p. 16, for both quotations in this sentence.

<sup>346</sup> Cf. Forsdick, p. 203.

that, in spite of history, select places offer the 'essence' of what is Alsatian come what may. At the same time it becomes clear that these travel-guides also worked hard to show the French and the Germans that Alsace was to be understood as an intrinsic part of their own histories. The need for such claims, then, speaks for itself: from the outside Alsace is so distinctive that it affords in depth exploration.

## CHAPTER THREE

### **The Reinforcement of Identity: Imperial Architecture and its Inauguration**

This chapter explores the impact and importance of architecture and particular events on the cultural identity of Alsations. Both architecture and events will be understood as low key but nevertheless propagandistic manifestations of power structures, which affirm the presence of an occupying power. Additionally, they are, more and less subtly, a response to what is perceived as representative for cultural identity, thereby aligning a regional status quo with a national cause. Importantly, the visual aspect of events and architecture will be accompanied by the narrative that was developed in the local Alsatian press – a contemporary commentary that not only reflects public opinions (to a certain extent) but also a particular vocabulary that betrays issues of identity.

In the case of Alsace, one may wonder whether the ‘fragmentation’ (as argued by Jonathan Friedman)<sup>347</sup> is not only experienced between national and regional levels, but also between the regional capital, Strasbourg, and the rest of Alsace, since the region’s history is felt most strongly in the city – not least because it is there that it was at times consciously shaped. After all, the *Kaiserreich* was, all other motivations aside, predominantly interested in the benefits associated with the regional capital. Importantly, in contrast to Friedman’s observations, in the case of Alsace in general and Strasbourg in particular, France and Germany sought to counter any sense of fragmentation with an attempt to strengthen particular aspects of the perceived regional identity.

For this purpose this chapter will begin with a focus on a particular building in Strasbourg and its celebratory inauguration, the combination of both making the example more poignant. The *Kaiserpalast* and the visit on behalf of the German *Kaiser* exemplify the success and the limitations that the highly visual performance of power can have, but at the same time ingraining the building into the cityscape and therewith an Alsatian identity for good. This process is

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<sup>347</sup> Jonathan Friedman, *Cultural Identity & Global Process* (London; Thousand Oaks; New Delhi: SAGE, 1994), p. 86. See also the Introduction of this thesis.

reminiscent of the one described by Pierre Nora for the 'légitimation de la République' (the latter being replaced here by the German Empire): 'Faire pénétrer ce message dans les masses par une mobilisation intégratrice' ensured by 'la politique délibérée des fêtes, des commémorations, des monuments civiques et des gestes symboliques.'<sup>348</sup> Here the official celebration takes the form of the inauguration by the Emperor. This chapter will then proceed to discuss further examples that illuminate the eminent role of architecture as a contributing and, most importantly, visible factor of strengthening local and national links. Imperial architecture in Strasbourg can thus highlight 'the use made by nations, cities, and religions [...] of spectacular architecture [...], not only as signifiers of economic, political and cultural power, but also of national, corporate and both individual as well as collective identities.'<sup>349</sup> Contrary to caricatures, which will be discussed in Chapter Four, these effects are long-term and it is the very visibility that preoccupied the audience at the time.<sup>350</sup>

### 3.1. The Imperial Palace (*Kaiserpalast*) and *Kaisertage in Straßburg*

I have chosen to focus on the response and relaying of the events surrounding the *Kaiserpalast* in the local press, in particular the *Elsässer Journal* and *Affiches de Strasbourg*, for a number of reasons. Since I am looking for a sense of what Alsatian identity is in this thesis, in terms of media a local reflection has been preferred here. These two newspapers favour regionalism in their approach, focusing on Alsatian matters (even though they include news from Germany, France, and the rest of the world too), with special sections for 'Alsace-Lorraine' and local news subjects, but without the radicalism of autonomists or separatists.<sup>351</sup> Both are bilingual; all their articles are written in

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<sup>348</sup> Pierre Nora, 'Présentation,' in Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997; first publ. 1984), I, 571, for all quotations in this sentence.

<sup>349</sup> Anthony D. King, *Spaces of Global Cultures: Architecture, Urbanism, Identity* (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 3.

<sup>350</sup> Issues of architecture connected to identity are further explored in: Paul Jones, *The Sociology of Architecture: Constructing Identities* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011). Peter Herrle and Erik Wegerhoff (eds), *Architecture and Identity* (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2009). John V. Maciuka, *Before the Bauhaus: Architecture, Politics, and the German State, 1890-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). Lawrence J. Vale, *Architecture, Power and National Identity* (London; New York: Routledge, 2008; first publ. 1992).

<sup>351</sup> Jean-Pierre Kintz mentions this distinction about Alsatian politics in: Claude Lorentz, *La Presse Alsacienne du XXe siècle: Répertoire des journaux parus depuis 1918* (Strasbourg: BNU, 1997), p. III.

French and German, which carried a fairly political connotation at the time and in that context. Furthermore, even though it is rather difficult to estimate the size of their readership in search of sources representative of the Alsatian population's opinions, their longevity can be seen as evidence of a considerable popularity amongst Alsations. Both were published in Strasbourg until the same year, the *Elsässer Journal* from 1873 to 1904, and the *Affiches*, impressively, from 1818 to 1904. What is more, when compared to other contemporary newspapers, they had considerably more 'material' in their pages, during a time when local newspapers seemed to be used mostly for advertising means, such as the popular *Straßburger Neueste Nachrichten / Les Dernières Nouvelles de Strasbourg* (which still exists to this day, but with more content now). There were also pro-Government newspapers, such as the strictly German *Straßburger Bote: Wochenblatt für Elsaß-Lothringen* and *Straßburger Post*, notoriously opposed to the autonomists<sup>352</sup> and serving as propaganda tools for the authorities.<sup>353</sup> The latter's use is limited in conveying evidence of a common Alsatian identity, though.

After the destructions of the 1870-71 war, Strasbourg had to be rebuilt in several places and the German authorities decided to use this occasion to fortify, enlarge and modernise the city, through the compensatory damages received from France after the War.<sup>354</sup> Their endeavour was, in part, aimed at underlining the population as belonging to the Empire, replacing any reference to France with an imposing architectural style that would emphasise the power of the Empire and Emperor.<sup>355</sup> The new outline of the city (*Neustadt*) was decided in 1878, with a central part called *Kaiserplatz* and gathering together

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<sup>352</sup> See, for example, Zislin's opinion about it, in: Henri Zislin, *Sourires d'Alsace* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1919), p. 181.

<sup>353</sup> As such, they gave long, detailed and respectful accounts of the *Kaiser's* visit in the *Reichsland*. The *Straßburger Post*, for example, devoted most of its issues during the *Kaisertage in Straßburg* to reports of all the festivities. Cf. *Straßburger Post*, 20 August 1889, 21 August 1889, 22 August 1889, 23 August 1889.

<sup>354</sup> Jean-Louis Gyss (ed.), *Strasbourg, Urbanisme et Architecture: Des origines à nos jours* (Strasbourg; Thionville: Oberlin / Gérard Klopp / Difal, 1996), p. 91.

<sup>355</sup> Regarding French architecture, see: Pierre Lavedan, *French Architecture* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1956; original French ed.: Larousse, 1944). Robin Middleton (ed.), *The Beaux-Arts and Nineteenth Century French Architecture* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1984; first publ. 1982). Further information on the French architecture in Strasbourg can also be found in: Georges Foessel and others, *Strasbourg: Panorama monumental et architectural des origines à 1914* (Strasbourg: G4J, 2003). Jean-Pierre Kintz (ed.), *Revue d'Alsace*, 131 (2005), Special Issue: 'Monuments et paysages d'Alsace entre France et Allemagne'. Henri Welschinger, *Strasbourg, Les Villes d'Art célèbres* (Paris: H. Laurens, 1908).



the main official buildings.<sup>356</sup> The centrepiece of this development was supposed to be a palace devoted to the Emperor, the *Kaiserpalast*, which would face the Palace of the *Reichsuniversität* at the opposite end of a large avenue, symbolically linking power and education. I have already discussed the University in the introductory chapter in the context of cultural manifestations of power after the war, and will now study its counterpart, the *Kaiserpalast*, from which stemmed many controversies.

The Emperor did not visit the new *Reichsland* until May 1877 to put, one might argue, a distance between himself and the war in the Alsatians' minds. The war of 1870-71 had indeed ended with a very destructive siege of Strasbourg, which left, predictably, a negative sentiment within the Alsatian population. By visiting the city after the reconstructions had been carried out by the German authorities, the Emperor hoped that the Alsatians would feel less vindictive against their new ruler, and that the modernisation and rebuilding of the region would reflect favourably the Germans' considerable efforts for the local population's comfort. According to Klaus Nohlen, his objectives for his first trip to Strasbourg were to 'réconcilier les cœurs', 'bien disposer les esprits à l'ordre nouveau,' which would eventually contribute to 'resserrer et [...] revigorer les liens'<sup>357</sup> between the local population and the Empire. During his stay, the *Kaiser* lived in private apartments in a refurbished administrative building. After he made his first official request for 'une résidence digne et à usage exclusif'<sup>358</sup> in 1873, it became the *Statthalter's* residence. The *Kaiser's* visit highlights a further important consideration: it is the regional capital that claims representational attention, less so the countryside.

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<sup>356</sup> Cf. [No author], 'L'ancien Palais impérial: Toute une partie de notre histoire', *Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace*, 9 October 1964, p. 35.

<sup>357</sup> Sources from 1878 and 1877, respectively, cited in: Klaus Nohlen, *Construire une capitale: Strasbourg impérial de 1870 à 1918* (Strasbourg: Société Savante d'Alsace, 1997), p. 45, for all quotations in this sentence. Professor Klaus Nohlen (born in 1945) first published this study as his doctoral thesis in 1982, under the title *Baupolitik im Reichsland Elsass-Lothringen 1871-1918*. Its translation and publication in 1997 by the *Société Savante d'Alsace* in the collection 'Recherches et documents' (tome 56) was partly financed by the State (*Ministère de la Culture*) and the Region. At the time of its first publication it was arguably the only study on Strasbourg's Imperial architecture of such a scale, and it remains one of the most important studies on the topic.

<sup>358</sup> Cited from an 1873 letter, in: Nohlen, p. 45.

The first official references to an Imperial Palace date from 1880 and refer to the economic and political issues linked to the city's expansion.<sup>359</sup> Since the local population considered any German administration in the same way, with no real distinction between the *Land* and the Empire, the city's interests reflected the Empire's prestige. It was thus primordial to implant new public buildings in the strategically important Strasbourg. Financial gains could also be sustained from encouraging the exploitation of lands acquired in the agglomeration, but the authorities mainly insisted on the political importance, namely:

[...] Daß für den Kaiser in Süddeutschland, inmitten einer überwiegend katholischen Bevölkerung an des Reiches Grenze in den wiedergewonnenen alten deutschen Landen eine Residenz errichtet wird als Symbol und Ausdruck einerseits des den Süden und den Norden und die christlichen Kirchen gleichmäßig umfassenden nationalen Gedankens; andererseits des unbeugsamen Willens, an dem Besitzstand des Reichslandes nicht rühren zu lassen.<sup>360</sup>

The aims were therefore clearly defined: to use architecture for political means, as a symbol of national unity and rejection of any protest against the legitimacy of Alsace as part of the German Empire (with a typical reference to a shared historical past – and thus seemingly more legitimate than the one shared with France). The *Statthalter* Edwin von Manteuffel<sup>361</sup> supported this approach and insisted on these intentions to be pursued:

La réalisation de ce projet exercera la plus grande et la plus durable influence sur l'opinion de la majorité de la population, et sera perçue par elle comme le signe univoque que les Allemands ne partiront plus jamais.

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<sup>359</sup> Cf. Nohlen, p. 46.

<sup>360</sup> Théodore Rieger, Denis Durand de Bousigen and Klaus Nohlen, *Strasbourg Architecture 1871-1918* (Obernai: Le Verger, 1991), p. 11; here quoting, then-'Chef der Justizverwaltung und Staatssekretär für Elsaß-Lothringen', Maximilian von Puttkamer.

<sup>361</sup> Baron Edwin von Manteuffel (1809-1885) had a long and successful career in the Imperial Army. Having the respect of *Kaiser* Wilhelm I, he could have succeeded Bismarck as Chancellor, but instead the latter offered him a position at the head of the new *Reichsland* in 1879. As *Reichsstatthalter*, he was more subtle and less radical than his predecessors about his 'Germanisation' mission, to appeal to the local population. However, he still faced some opposition in Alsace, namely among the higher class and because of religious issues. See: K. H. Keck, *Das Leben des Generalfeldmarschalls Edwin v. Manteuffel* (Bielefeld and Leipzig: [n. pub.], 1890). Bernhard von Poten, 'Manteuffel, Edwin Freiherr von', in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, 52 (1906), pp. 176–186.

Quand cette conviction se sera enracinée, l'essentiel aura été fait pour l'adhésion du pays.<sup>362</sup>

The building of an Imperial Palace was thus supposed to ingrain the proof of the Empire's past, present and future power and the fact that the Germans were 'there to stay'. The Alsatians, meanwhile, were still hoping for a return to France.

Manteuffel would use a similar argument to justify the costs of such a monument to the Parliament. It would, he felt, be a good way of putting a stop to the erroneous belief among the majority of the local population that the annexation was only temporary – as explained in French newspapers, consequently limiting the number of people openly supporting Germany in the region:

Il est d'une importance politique capitale de montrer au *Reichsland* que l'Empire allemand n'est pas prêt à restituer l'Alsace-Lorraine à la France et ainsi la construction d'une résidence impériale scelle, pour ainsi dire, définitivement le rattachement du *Reichsland* à l'Allemagne. La difficulté réside dans le fait que la population autochtone, en majorité, n'y croit pas encore, ce qui empêche l'accroissement du nombre des partisans de l'Allemagne. Ceux-ci craignent d'être compromis au cas où le Pays d'Empire retournerait à la France, comme le leur font croire les journaux français. Il est peu de choses qui, dans ce pays, impressionneraient et conforteraient davantage qu'un verdict du *Reichstag*, le sentiment que ce qui est acquis l'est définitivement: l'Empereur allemand doit avoir une résidence impériale en Pays d'Empire.<sup>363</sup>

These political arguments were not written in the final draft of the project as a measure of 'discretion',<sup>364</sup> and the construction was finally approved in 1881. The costs, however, were still a subject of dispute among the German authorities, who wanted to give financial responsibilities to the *Land* at least partly if not completely. That proposition was refused by the Delegation of Alsace-Lorraine. In the end, the decision was adjourned, although the practical aspects were the main concerns taken into consideration, that is, over the

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<sup>362</sup> Cited (and translated) from an 1881 source, in: Nohlen, p. 47.

<sup>363</sup> Cited (and translated) from an 1881 letter, in: Nohlen, pp. 47-48.

<sup>364</sup> Cited from another 1881 letter, in: Nohlen, p. 48.

potentially polemical political ones. After further internal discussions, the project was eventually accepted, with a strict budget of 2,660,000 Marks charged entirely to the Empire – so no one from the *Reichsland* took any part in it anymore.<sup>365</sup>

In January 1883, the plans of the building were printed in a few specialist German publications, such as *Centralblatt der Bauverwaltung* and *Deutsche Bauzeitung*, as well as in the more widely read *Straßburger Wochenblatt*, which led to the first public, predominantly aesthetic criticisms.<sup>366</sup> The Renaissance forms were considered ‘heavy’ and ‘severe’ and the architectural style was also debated in the *Reichstag* in Berlin. One member of Parliament, August Reichensperger,<sup>367</sup> found the building lacking ‘German style’ (which he considered to be Gothic) and ‘kein würdiger Repräsentant des Deutschtums’<sup>368</sup> (*germanité*). He stresses what to his mind is meant to be the true purpose of the building, with a particular emphasis on the value of traditional building styles:

[...] Der Bau soll ein Palast des deutschen Kaisers werden, er soll in Straßburg den deutschen Geist, den deutschen Kunstgenius versinnbildlichen, so weit das überhaupt ein Kunstwerk der Art vermag. Er soll nach Frankreich zu erkennen geben, daß der (*sic*) Elsaß wieder deutsch geworden ist und deutsch bleiben soll. [...] [Mit Verweis auf die] herrlichen Bauwerke, [welche] unsere deutschen Vorfahren zur Bewunderung noch der heutigen Welt errichtet haben. [...]

He then criticises the design as a ‘Gemisch von antikisirenden und renaissancisirenden Elementen.’<sup>369</sup> Reichensperger links the German style to an Alsatian architectural tradition and further emphasises the propagandistic value of such buildings in the *Reichsland*, which is not conveyed appropriately in the *Kaiserpalast*’s Neo-Renaissance style. Therefore even in the *Kaiserreich*

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<sup>365</sup> Cf. Nohlen, p. 52 (for the few previous sentences in this paragraph too).

<sup>366</sup> Ibid.

<sup>367</sup> August Reichensperger (1808-1895) was a member of the *Reichstag* who founded in 1852 the Catholic group, which became the Centre Party in 1861 (co-founded with his brother, Peter Reichensperger), and he became one of the party’s main orators. He also published numerous works on art and architecture. See: Michael J. Lewis, *August Reichensperger: The Politics of the German Gothic Revival* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993).

<sup>368</sup> Niels Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum: Das öffentliche Bauwesen in Elsass-Lothringen, 1871-1918* (Saarbrücken: Institut für Landeskunde im Saarland, 2000), p. 72.

<sup>369</sup> Ibid.

the future Imperial Palace's style was criticised. That did not bear well for a highly prestigious project.

The result of these dissensions concerning the Palace added to several problems on the building site, and its construction was often delayed and progress was slow. The latter was regularly referred to in the local press, be it governmental or regional publications. Regional publications were more inclined to express subjective opinions that could be said to reflect a larger part of the local population. One such example can be found in the *Straßburger Wochenblatt* (published in both German and French) in 1885, where it is stated: 'Ajoutons qu'on est fort étonné de ne trouver aucun artiste habitant Strasbourg parmi les sculpteurs chargés des travaux décoratifs du palais impérial.'<sup>370</sup> This kind of remark shows that the Alsatians were at least moderately interested in identifying themselves with the new edifice. Every Alsatian company employed for the construction of the Palace was mentioned and advertised in the local press, probably as much for regional pride as to check that the Government did involve local people in the project.<sup>371</sup> One such example is this emphatic extract following a formal report on the Palace:

Ajoutons à ce propos que c'est la maison Schiliz-Magnus, de Strasbourg, dont l'admirable étalage de Noël contient en ce moment tant de merveilles, qui a fourni les vases d'ornement pour les salons du palais impérial et les garnitures de toilette, notamment pour les appartements impériaux. On ne pouvait s'adresser mieux pour avoir des objets de goût et de réelle valeur artistique.<sup>372</sup>

Furthermore, the Emperor himself appeared to perceive the Palace as not entirely agreeable to his tastes, likening it to a 'train station' and therefore functional in its ambitions and appearance. He visited the construction site in 1886.<sup>373</sup> His revulsion was shared by his son Prince Friedrich III. When the latter became Emperor, he ordered the *Statthalter* to transform the Palace into a museum while equipping the Saverne Castle for his visits to the *Land*.<sup>374</sup> The proposition was rejected by the Empire's Chancellor, and the new Emperor

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<sup>370</sup> *Straßburger Wochenblatt / Affiches de Strasbourg*, 5 September 1885.

<sup>371</sup> Cf. Nohlen, p. 63.

<sup>372</sup> *Affiches de Strasbourg*, 26 December 1888.

<sup>373</sup> *Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace*, 9 October 1964, p. 35.

<sup>374</sup> Cf. Nohlen, pp. 61, 240.

accepted the Palace 'provisionally'.<sup>375</sup> The Alsatian population seemed to be aware of at least some echoes of the Emperors' distaste of their own Palace, but it is difficult to establish to what degree. The negative opinions about the Palace slowed down the process of identification.



1. Picture of the *Kaiserpalast* in 1889, from *Deutsche Kaiser und Könige in Straßburg*.<sup>376</sup> © Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire de Strasbourg, M.8.935.

In spite of an article published in the *Deutsche Bauzeitung* in January 1889 criticising the *Kaiserpalast* harshly, the inauguration of the 'première résidence impériale du nouvel Empire, implantée dans la capitale du nouveau Pays d'Empire' was eventually planned in high pomp during the *Kaisertage in Straßburg* in August 1889.<sup>377</sup> These festivities were particularly important for the image of the Empire in the region, since they marked the inauguration of the first official residence of the *Kaiser* in the *Reichsland*, and thus served as an occasion for the population to show, or so it was hoped, their support of the Empire. For that reason, the city was heavily decorated and the population was urged to do the same with their own houses through an official message from the municipality and signed by Mayor Otto Back<sup>378</sup> – effectively providing a close link between one building, its inauguration and the whole of the population:

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<sup>375</sup> Cited from an 1888 letter, in: Nohlen, p. 63.

<sup>376</sup> Hermann Ludwig von Jan, *Deutsche Kaiser und Könige in Straßburg* (Strasbourg: Fischbach G, 1889), p. 214. All photographs in this chapter, unless stated otherwise, were taken by the author of this thesis.

<sup>377</sup> Cited in: Nohlen, p. 63.

<sup>378</sup> Karl August Albert Otto Back (1834–1917) was a fairly liberal German politician, who was appointed mayor of Strasbourg in 1886 (until 1907), after several years in high administrative positions in the city (since 1872). In 1910 he became the curator of the University of Strasbourg, and from 1911 until his death in 1917 he was President of the First House of the *Landtag* of Alsace-Lorraine. See: Tanja Baensch, "Un petit Berlin"?: *Die Neugründung der Straßburger Gemäldesammlung durch Wilhelm Bode im zeitgenössischen Kontext; Ein Beitrag zur Museumspolitik im deutschen Kaiserreich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), pp. 104-105.

II. MM. der Kaiser und die Kaiserin werden am Dienstag, den 20. d. M., Nachmittags 4 ½ Uhr, in unserer Stadt eintreffen und bei der Einfahrt folgende Straßen und Plätze berühren: Bahnhofplatz, Küssstraße, Alt-St.-Peterplatz, Alter Weinmarkt, Am Hohen Steg, Meisengasse, Broglieplatz, Theaterbrücke, Kaiserplatz. Während der Anwesenheit Ihrer Majestäten werden die öffentlichen Gebäude beflaggt und geschmückt sein. Indem ich meinen Mitbürgern hiervon Kenntniss gebe, lade ich dieselben zugleich ergebenst ein, auch ihre Häuser festlich zu schmücken. Straßburg, den 17. August 1889. Der Bürgermeister: Back.<sup>379</sup>

Temporary triumphal arches as well as Venetian struts were erected in key places where the Imperial couple's procession would pass, while official buildings still under construction were carefully hidden and the rest were decorated with garlands plaited by prisoners at the Departmental Prison.<sup>380</sup> Flags from around the Empire and also from other countries – such as Switzerland, Belgium and the United States – hung from windows, and escutcheons adorned many houses.<sup>381</sup> The colours of the Empire were everywhere, as well as official signs, such as 'Seid willkommen in Straßburg!' or 'Heil dem Kaiserpaar!' addressed the Imperial couple.<sup>382</sup> The local newspapers wrote numerous articles about the event, printing the travel-schedule on a regular basis, therewith increasing a sense of urgency and anticipation, but also ingraining the *Kaiserpalast* in people's mind as an integral part of the rebuilt city.

The importance of such festivities cannot be underrated. In 'Das Fest', Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink states:

Im Gegensatz zum Alltag sind Feste Ausnahmesituationen: Zelebrierungen des Erinnerungswerten, des Memorablen; Situationen des Überschwangs,

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<sup>379</sup> 'LL. MM. l'empereur et l'impératrice arriveront le mardi 20 de ce mois, à 4 heures et demie de l'après-midi, en notre ville et suivront, en voiture, les rues et places ci-après: place de la Gare, rue Küss, place Saint-Pierre-le-Vieux, rue du Vieux-Marché-aux-Vins, rue de la Haute-Montée, place Broglie, place du Théâtre, place Impériale. Durant le séjour de Leurs Majestés en notre ville, les édifices publics seront ornés et pavoisés. En portant cet avis à la connaissance de mes concitoyens, je les invite à pavaiser également leurs maisons. Strasbourg, le 17 août 1889. Le maire, BACK.' In: *Elsässer Journal und Niederrheinischer Kurier / Journal d'Alsace et Courrier du Bas-Rhin*, 18 August, 1889. This newspaper was bilingual, so the announcement was written in both German and French in its pages.

<sup>380</sup> Cf. *Affiches de Strasbourg*, 17 August 1889.

<sup>381</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*; *Elsässer Journal*, 21 August 1889.

<sup>382</sup> *Elsässer Journal*, 20 August 1889.

der überschäumenden Freude [...]. Feste und Feiern schaffen zugleich Gemeinschaft: sie bilden Gruppen bewußt sein, fördern das Gemeinschaftsgefühl, zementieren kollektive Identität.<sup>383</sup>

Lüsebrink highlights the importance of the particular iconography usually associated with festivities. It is all the more effective if the reminder is permanent and allows for both public and private associations. Furthermore it is important to consider a certain novelty character such festivities would have held even in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The celebration of the French Revolution had ever since 1790 developed a particular, highly disciplined rhetoric of the Fatherland that was adopted across Europe. As such, the festive inauguration builds upon a new pattern that was recognised as elementary for the wider establishment of the new national states, and it supported the instilment of a sense of identity that served the long-term memory. It is worth noting the festive mood that Hansi depicts in some of his images (cf. Chapter Four). Decades later, festive events as well as their perpetuation in the media mark the wider public's inclusion and suggest an element of agreement, but also a sense of occasion.

The actual *Kaisertage in Straßburg* were described minutely and in depth. Most papers seemed to be influenced by the general enthusiasm. Even the more regionalist *Elsässer Journal* related the events positively. They all seemed to agree on the all important visual impact of the grand festivities organised by the city council. They also took notice of the acclamations from the population for the Imperial couple, seemingly very amiable and gracious with their hosts and the local people. However, the crowds described in the newspapers were not necessarily truly representative of Alsatians, since many visitors from all over the Empire as well as from other countries or the Alsatian countryside came to Strasbourg for the occasion:

Hier, dès 8 heures du matin, le mouvement des étrangers était extraordinaire, les hôtels et auberges étaient envahis et tous les trains amenaient des centaines d'étrangers, des sociétés venant pour former la haie sur le passage des souverains, sans compter les gens de la

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<sup>383</sup> Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, 'Das Fest', in: Heinz-Gerhard Haupt (ed.), *Orte des Alltags* (Munich: Beck, 1993), pp. 202–210; here p. 202. See also: L. Rüstow, H.-J. Lüsebrink and D. Grass (eds), *Nationale und regionale Gedenk-, Fest- und Feiertage in Deutschland und Frankreich. Ein Beitrag zu einer anthropologischen Landeskunde* (Ludwigsburg: [n. pub.], 1991).



campagne qui affluaient de tous les villages environnants. Dès 1 heure de l'après-midi une foule innombrable s'est dirigée vers la place de la Gare et vers la place Impériale; on s'était massé dans les rues par lesquelles devaient passer Leurs Majestés impériales et leur suite.<sup>384</sup>

Tourism had begun to play an important commercial role by that time, and the *Elsässer Journal* proudly took note of the number of foreign tourists who had admired and visited the city park, the *Orangerie*, and the cathedral. Despite the favourable remarks about the Imperial couple throughout these reports, it can be argued that this newspaper's main interest lies in the promotion of Alsace, rather than sincere devotion to the Empire. It does participate in the propaganda discourses, though, consciously or not.

On the day that the Imperial couple arrived in the city, however, the focus was almost entirely on them. The local representatives were dressed in ceremonial regalia:

Le canon tonne, les cloches sonnent à toute volée et l'empereur descend de son wagon. Les traits de l'empereur sont moins juvéniles qu'il y a trois ans, alors qu'il avait accompagné son aïeul, feu l'empereur Guillaume 1er, aux grandes manœuvres. Sa moustache blonde se détache sur le hâle d'un visage martial. C'est avec une bienveillance souriante qu'il salue les hauts fonctionnaires qui l'attendent, d'abord le Statthalter avec lequel il s'entretient affectueusement, puis le commandant du corps d'armée, le secrétaire d'Etat et le maire, en donnant, de ci et de là, à quelques officiers et aux fils du Statthalter de vigoureuses poignées de main.<sup>385</sup>

The physical description allows again for an association with Hansi's caricatures of German soldiers (cf. Chapter Four), particularly because of the blonde moustache and the military uniform. Yet, contrary to Hansi's allusions, the Emperor's attitude is described as benevolent. The article overall depicts him as a charismatic sovereign, avoiding possible descriptions of negative physical traits (compensated by his charisma as a military leader, regardless). The journalists seem to have shared the crowd's enthusiastic feelings. Even more so with the presence of the Empress, who – if newspaper reports are to be believed – charmed everyone that she met during her first ever stay in

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<sup>384</sup> *Affiches de Strasbourg*, 21 August 1889.

<sup>385</sup> *Elsässer Journal*, 22 August 1889.

Strasbourg: 'A Strasbourg, on ne connaissait l'impératrice que par les photographies, mais celles-ci ne l'ont pas flattée. L'impératrice est jolie, élancée et gracieuse, et une grande bonté est peinte sur ses traits.'<sup>386</sup> This enthusiasm was confirmed when the Imperial procession left the train station for the *Kaiserplatz* under acclamations from the population amassed in the streets for the event:

C'est au milieu des acclamations enthousiastes de l'immense foule qui couvrait la place de la Gare que le cortège s'est mis en marche, pour suivre l'itinéraire donné dans notre dernier numéro; dans toutes les rues le concours de la population était énorme et les fenêtres étaient garnies de spectateurs qui ont accueilli les souverains sur tout le parcours par de vives acclamations.<sup>387</sup>

Such behaviour is reminiscent of people's conduct with celebrities and important figures – forsaking personal convictions for mass worshipping – but this case reveals a conflict with one's own identity, which clearly goes through a process of adaptation. Even Alsatians who were against the Empire were probably participating in the praise of the Emperor, who encouraged such behaviour through regular thanks and praise to his hosts on behalf of the welcoming population. In terms of propaganda, then, and on first glance, the inauguration was a major success that left its mark in Strasbourg and Alsace's calendar of historical events, confirming the sense of 'politisches Volksfest' that Lüsebrink describes.<sup>388</sup>

On the *Kaiserplatz*, two platforms had been built to accommodate elderly mayors from all over Alsace on one of them, and about 400 young girls wearing traditional Alsatian costumes from their parts of the region on the other.<sup>389</sup> The latter were appreciated by journalists from the *Elsässer Journal* on photographs of the event, who praised the beauty of their regional costumes, thereby reinforcing a sense of identity on a level that was acceptable for Alsatians and Germans alike. The students from the University were also present, wearing traditional costumes too and representing their societies, as well as the pupils

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<sup>386</sup> Ibid.

<sup>387</sup> *Affiches de Strasbourg*, 21 August 1889.

<sup>388</sup> Lüsebrink, p. 206.

<sup>389</sup> Cf. *Elsässer Journal*, 22 August 1889.

from different schools, who later had lectures about the meaning of the Imperial couple's visit to the city of Strasbourg.<sup>390</sup> These different categories of people symbolically represented all classes of the local population, and could be said to have mirrored the power of the Emperor over the people in the region, with all its population present to acclaim him and his wife in the regional capital. Furthermore, the *Kaiserpalast* as a functional building thereby became fully embedded within the cityscape. The festive day, then, as part of the Alsatian historical calendar was to go hand in hand with the building itself.

The Emperor had a reception at the *Kaiserpalast* with all the local authorities and senior civil servants, only interrupted when the cheers of the crowd outside brought the Imperial couple to the balcony to acknowledge their supporters. This reception was also the occasion for the Emperor to thank the mayor for his city's reception and praise, a fact that was dutifully published in local newspapers:

Pendant la présentation des autorités au palais impérial Leurs Majestés ont dit gracieusement aux représentants de la municipalité qu'Elles étaient touchées de la réception aussi cordiale que grandiose que la population de Strasbourg leur a faite. L'empereur, parlant en son nom et en celui de l'impératrice, a chargé spécialement M. Back, maire, de porter les remerciements de l'empereur à la connaissance de la population.<sup>391</sup>

This would certainly gain the approval of his subjects in Alsace, if his wife did not manage that feat on her own with her acclaimed presence: 'Gracieuse, naturelle et simple, la jeune souveraine produit un effet des plus sympathiques.'<sup>392</sup> It is worth taking note of this dual role: the Emperor himself representing military might and power while his wife was concerned with the rather spiritual matters, even if the terms of description tend to reflect media conventions then (and now).

In the evening, the festivities went on with a torch-lit procession from the different regiments present in the city, a military band accompanying the procession on the *Kaiserplatz*, and playing some of the Emperor's favourite compositions. After that, Bengal lights illuminated the *Platz* and the crowd

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<sup>390</sup> Cf. *Elsässer Journal*, 25 August 1889.

<sup>391</sup> *Elsässer Journal*, 22 August 1889.

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.*

lingered until late into the night to enjoy it.<sup>393</sup> The importance of light at the time can hardly be overestimated, contributing to the well-orchestrated sense of festivities and the symbolic value in terms of times ahead, after a telling presence of the military during the day.

The next day, the Emperor went to review his troops on the outskirts of Strasbourg, and then paraded in the city's streets to return to the Palace, to reaffirm his bond with the Alsatian people.<sup>394</sup> His wife, meanwhile, visited a variety of representative places in Strasbourg. She started with the University installed by the Empire, and the students later told the press that the Empress had 'pris d'assaut tous nos cœurs' and the student committee even put up a sign at the University afterwards to renew their vows of 'fidélité inébranlable à l'empereur et à l'Empire.'<sup>395</sup> This emphasised the success of the Empire's communication campaign – so to speak – and ensured that the positive messages about the *Kaiserin* would spread among the *Reichsland* through the relaying German and French media. The Empress went to the park of the *Orangerie*, and then to a hospice created by an Alsatian in the Robertsau district.<sup>396</sup> The Imperial couple would therefore follow a routine in their pre-arranged roles (military commander for the *Kaiser* and gracious benefactor for his wife), to make a lasting, all encompassing impression on the population, and associate their names with Alsatian landmarks.

In the evening, both attended a dinner offered by the *Statthalter*, followed by a reception from the municipality, which the Emperor – shrewdly – did not fail to acknowledge as such, endearing himself to the local authorities as well as the people in attendance. The *Place Broglie*, in front of the city hall, was illuminated by 500 coloured light bulbs and a few Bengal lights, as were other public buildings and famous houses of the city. The population was seemingly kept in wonder of the illuminations' splendour until late into the night – and this on more than one occasion.<sup>397</sup>

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<sup>393</sup> Ibid.

<sup>394</sup> Cf. *Elsässer Journal*, 22 August 1889.

<sup>395</sup> *Elsässer Journal*, 25 August 1889, for both quotations in this sentence.

<sup>396</sup> Cf. *Affiches de Strasbourg*, 24 August 1889.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid. (for both previous sentences too).

While on the following day the *Kaiser* maintained his role of benevolent but powerful military figure, his wife associated herself with religious institutions, and demonstrated the ‘gracieuseté’ that made her even more popular with her people and the media.<sup>398</sup> She first visited and admired the cathedral (see image 2), considered as a primary proof of architectural continuation and tradition between Germany and Alsace (cf. Chapters Two and Four), even though Hansi himself praised its inspiring beauty profusely: ‘Les maisons, les palais, les églises même dépassent à peine l’horizon, mais s’élevant très haut, dominant tout comme une œuvre d’essence divine et merveilleuse jaillit la flèche audacieuse et svelte.’<sup>399</sup> She then proceeded to St. Thomas church,<sup>400</sup> which houses the baroque mausoleum of the Marshal of Saxe – another figurative link with the Empire.



2. The Gothic cathedral of Strasbourg’s easily identifiable silhouette (09/08/11). © Isaure Triby

After that, she visited several religious institutions and charities, the latter including a French Catholic charity.<sup>401</sup> One can assume that this was planned as an association of the popular French institution with the German Empire. All of these establishments were in proximity of each other in the city centre’s *Vieille Ville*, its historical and cultural heart. Furthermore, her visits within the city do, in fact, encompass quite a number of institutions, thereby marking a thorough approach to the city. As for the Emperor, he visited the forts Kronprinz

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<sup>398</sup> Ibid.

<sup>399</sup> Hansi (Jean-Jacques Waltz), *L’Alsace*, Les Beaux Pays (Grenoble: B. Arthaud, 1936), p. 167.

<sup>400</sup> St. Thomas Protestant church’s current buildings date from the sixteenth century, while the church was first built in the ninth century.

<sup>401</sup> Cf. *Affiches de Strasbourg*, 24 August 1889 (for both previous sentences too).

and Grand-duc-de-Bade in Mittelhausbergen. In the evening, the Imperial couple hosted a grand gala dinner at the *Kaiserpalast* for 150 guests. Again, the Emperor and his wife dressed to be sure to make a lasting impression on their guests. He insisted on drinking only Alsatian wine, namely Riesling from Wolxheim,<sup>402</sup> and toasted several guests during the evening, until during dessert he praised the *Reichsland*: 'Je lève mon verre et je bois à la prospérité de mes fidèles provinces d'Empire.'<sup>403</sup>

This complex itinerary, which addressed administrative functions, reinforced perceived cultural links, and played upon traditions with a clear distinction between 'hearts and minds.' It was a major achievement in terms of propaganda, if not necessarily to promote links with the *Reich* then at least in terms of self-perceptions of the people of Strasbourg as Alsations.

The finale of the *Kaisertage* took place on the *Kaiserplatz*, when more than 1000 singers of all ages performed the *Kaisermarsch* by Richard Wagner, joined by eighty-four societies representing about 6000 people carrying coloured lanterns. Mayor Back cheered the Imperial couple, echoed by the crowd in front of the Palace, and simultaneously Bengal lights started, while fireworks and mortar shots illuminated the sky. According to the local newspapers, the population was enchanted by this display: 'Le spectacle est réellement grandiose et des cris d'admiration éclatent de toutes parts...'<sup>404</sup> It ended with all the societies parading in front of the Imperial couple on their balcony, cheering them, and the sovereigns left the next morning for Metz. In essence, this was a several day spectacle that effectively demonstrated German power while integrating Alsations, and in particular the people of Strasbourg, in the process in view of their own role during the festivities, the locations visited and the one inaugurated.

Before leaving, the city's mayor offered a representative book to the Imperial couple, the *Straßburger Kaiserbuch, Deutsche Kaiser und Könige in Straßburg*, written by Herman Ludwig van Jan a little while before the inauguration of the Palace. It described the relationship of former German Emperors with

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<sup>402</sup> Cf. *Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace*, 9 October 1964, p. 35. Supposedly, someone in his entourage told him that Napoléon 1er favoured this wine, but Napoléon himself had been advised on that matter by Alsatian General Rapp.

<sup>403</sup> *Affiches de Strasbourg*, 24 August 1889.

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid.* (for previous sentences in this paragraph too).

Strasbourg through history, including a few pages on Strasbourg before and after 1870, with extracts from some of the previous Emperor's speeches. Local newspapers advertised the book, which had been published in an Alsatian printing shop. However, the book was obviously meant to underline the German take on local history and thus the belonging of Alsace to the German Empire.<sup>405</sup> Arguably, a book is the written confirmation of links established during the celebratory days, and, as the first few pages show, the style emulates that of medieval manuscripts. Indeed, medieval times represent the least controversial ones in view of the relationship between Alsace and the *Reichsland*. The need to seek refuge in uncontroversial past epochs shows that the war was still an issue and not all problems were resolved between the Alsatians and their German rulers. Yet, it could also seek to imply new, positive beginnings on the basis of past traditions and in respect of a celebration that intended to be a turning point in terms of German presence in Strasbourg and the Alsatians' awareness of the constellation.



3. First pages of the *Kaiserbuch*.<sup>406</sup> © Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire de Strasbourg, M.8.935.

A few days after the *Kaisertage*, the *Statthalter* published with pomp in several newspapers the message that the *Kaiser* had sent him about his stay in the

<sup>405</sup> Cf. *Elsässer Journal*, 25 August 1889. *Affiches de Strasbourg*, 28 August 1889 (for previous sentences in this paragraph too).

<sup>406</sup> H. Ludwig von Jan, pp. 1, 3(?).

*Reichsland*, adding that the Emperor had made a donation of 3000 Marks to the poor of Strasbourg:

Der Empfang, welcher Ihrer Majestät der Kaiserin, Meiner Gemahlin, und Mir bei Unserem Besuche der Reichslande Elsass-Lothringen bereitet worden, ist ein so glänzender gewesen, dass er Unsere Erwartungen weit übertroffen hat. Der reiche Schmuck, in welchem insbesondere die Städte Straßburg und Metz prangten, [...] die Huldigungen, welche Uns, wo auch immer Wir erschienen, aus allen Schichten der Bevölkerung jubelnd entgegengebracht wurden, haben Ihre Majestät die Kaiserin, Meine Gemahlin, und mich nicht nur mit Freude und Befriedigung erfüllt sondern auch in uns die Überzeugung befestigt, dass diese ursprünglich deutschen Landestheile von einem biedern und einsichtsvollen Volke bewohnt werden, welches je länger, je fester an das Deutsche Vaterland sich wieder anschließen wird. In diesem wohlthuenden Gefühle können Ihre Majestät die Kaiserin und Ich nicht aus den Reichslanden scheiden, ohne ihrer Bevölkerung für die Uns erwiesenen Aufmerksamkeiten Unseren herzlichsten Dank auszusprechen. Ich beauftrage Sie, diesen Erlaß zu veröffentlichen. Metz, den 23. August 1889. Wilhelm, J. R.<sup>407</sup>

Through this emphatic message, the *Kaiser* reasserted his role as benevolent sovereign, as well as the legitimacy of Alsace as part of the German Empire. The latter was validated, according to his statement, by the Alsatians, thanks to their enthusiastic reception. The surprise that the Emperor implies in view of the positive visit serves two purposes. It confirms his implicit praise of the Alsatians' loyalty and skill in designing such an event. It is also a backhanded acknowledgement that the preceding years had not been without strain. The encouragement, though, to take the visit as a marker of new beginnings in the light of traditions is obvious.

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<sup>407</sup> 'La réception qui nous a été faite, à l'impératrice, mon épouse, ainsi qu'à moi-même, pendant notre séjour en Alsace-Lorraine, a été tellement brillante qu'elle a surpassé toute notre attente. La décoration magnifique des villes de Strasbourg et de Metz, les fêtes qui avaient été organisées pour nous rendre aussi agréable que possible le séjour dans ces deux cités, les hommages qui nous ont été rendus par la population partout où nous nous sommes montrés, ont non seulement rempli de joie et de satisfaction S. M. l'impératrice, mon épouse, et moi-même, mais ils ont aussi servi à nous convaincre que ces pays, allemands d'origine, sont habités par une population brave et intelligente qui s'attachera de nouveau de plus en plus à la patrie allemande. Dans ce sentiment bienfaisant, il nous est impossible, à S. M. l'impératrice et à moi, de quitter ces pays d'Empire sans remercier, de la façon la plus cordiale, sa population des attentions qu'elle nous a montrées. Je vous charge de publier ce rescrit. Metz, le 23 août. GUILLAUME, I. R.' In: *Elsässer Journal*, 27 August 1889. The Emperor's message appeared in both French and German in this newspaper.



The Emperor later granted official decorations to several local figures for their work on these festivities, such as Strasbourg's mayor, Back, and also Kuntz, the city's head gardener, in charge of the *Orangerie* – admired by the Empress – and the *Kaiserpalast's* gardens.<sup>408</sup> The *Kaiser* publicly expressed his satisfaction with the 'calm and polite' attitude of Strasbourg's population, 'qui n'oppose jamais de résistance à un ordre juste et donné avec bienveillance.'<sup>409</sup> Once again, his praise of the Alsatians is accompanied by a subtle reference to his own qualities as an Emperor, emphasising a bond that had been a centrepiece of the whole undertaking, veering between an assertion of German power on the one hand and a memorable Alsatian spectacle on the other hand.

The imposing architecture of the *Kaiserpalast* and the grand festivities of the *Kaisertage in Straßburg* presented a challenge. Rather than a link between the Empire and the Alsatian population, it was made between the Emperor and his wife. Furthermore, instead of Alsace as a whole, the focus was mostly on the region's capital. Strasbourg began to encompass the political links more than the rest of the region. It could be argued that in terms of cultural identity the German Government's mission of assimilation to the *Reichsland* had benefited from a focused and realistic approach. To underline this point, German newspapers echoed this opinion in their reiteration of the Imperial couple's stay in the *Reichsland*, even quoted (and translated) by the more regionalist *Elsässer Journal*, probably enjoying any promotion for the region:

Le voyage de notre auguste couple impérial en Alsace-Lorraine a été considéré dès l'abord, même en dehors des limites de l'Empire allemand, comme un événement d'une grande portée. En effet, pour la première fois depuis l'avènement de l'empereur-roi Guillaume II, le souverain et le peuple étaient appelés à faire connaissance dans ce pays reconquis.

Les ovations que la population du Reichsland a faites à l'auguste couple de souverains ont, d'après des relations concordantes, surpassé par la pompe extérieure et par la cordialité toutes les attentes. Et des témoins irrécusables ont établi qu'aucune espèce de pression n'aurait été de loin pas à même de provoquer des manifestations comme celles qu'on nous rapporte de Strasbourg et de Metz. [...]

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<sup>408</sup> Cf. *Elsässer Journal*, 24 August 1889.

<sup>409</sup> *Ibid.* (for both quotations in this sentence).

On ne saurait douter que la première et la plus forte impression que l'empereur Guillaume a eue de la population accourue pour saluer le souverain est celle de sentiments réellement allemands et sincèrement légaux. [...] Et quant à la vieille ville d'Empire, qui a repris son droit d'être une citadelle du germanisme sur la route du pays *welche* (*Welschland*), elle a conquis entièrement le coeur de l'Empereur: "Je puis dire, ainsi s'est exprimée Sa Majesté, que je m'y sens chez moi."

[...] La puissance et le caractère élevé de l'Empire allemand se sont manifestés aux yeux des populations dans la personne de l'empereur et l'impression profonde qui en est résultée restera inoubliable. [...] <sup>410</sup>

Once again, this exalted (and subjective) report underlines the enthusiasm of the local population's welcome to the *Kaiser*, seen as an obvious piece of evidence that Alsace-Lorraine truly belongs to Germany, as history seems to prove. What is more, the journalist insists on the spontaneity of such a welcome, which proves, according to him, the sincere attachment of the Alsatians to the Empire and to a sense of being German evidently to be found inherently in the city of Strasbourg. Home for Alsace has to be the Empire, just as the Emperor himself feels 'at home' in Alsace. The *Kaiser* is seen as an embodiment of the power and 'character' of the Empire that would leave a lasting impression on the local population.

Even though reports about the Emperor's stay in Strasbourg carefully – and knowingly – avoided mentioning his opinion of the *Kaiserpalast* itself, a few German newspapers, cited in the local press, explicitly included the political meaning of such a building in the *Reichsland's* capital:

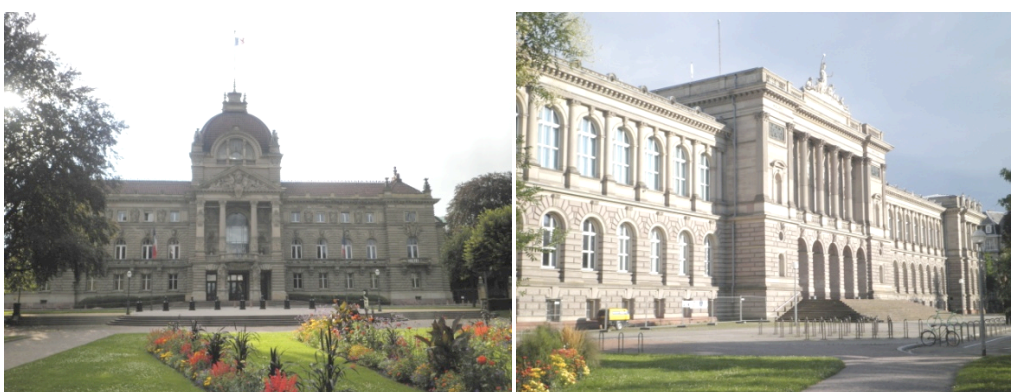
Avec l'Université et le Palais Impérial [...] se dressent deux nouveaux symboles de l'histoire allemande, témoins et témoignages d'une nouvelle et grande ère. Dans Strasbourg reconquise, l'Allemagne a élevé le plus prestigieux palais à la science et la première résidence impériale du nouvel Empire. Et si aujourd'hui, sur la coupole du Palais Impérial, flotte pour la première fois l'étendard impérial au-dessus des têtes de l'Empereur

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<sup>410</sup> Article from the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, cited in: *Elsässer Journal*, 27 August 1889 (and translated in French in the latter, like all its other articles).

Guillaume et de son épouse révéree, il s'agit d'un moment historique partagé par l'Allemagne tout entière.<sup>411</sup>

The inauguration of the *Kaiserpalast* by the *Kaiser* was indeed an important event for Germany, not only Alsace, and it echoed the previous construction of the University Palace in style (see image 4). The *Kaiserpalast* was more ostentatious, though, since it was meant as a residence to the highest representative in the Empire. However, after the excitement of the *Kaisertage* died down, the reports on the Palace became centred on its appearance, which would become an object of polemics in the following decades. However, as its long-term fate will show, even negative debates can contribute to a sense of ownership.



4. The *Kaiserpalast* (left) and the University Palace (right) on 09/08/11. © Isaure Triby

The Emperor's dislike of the Palace was most probably one of the reasons that encouraged criticisms of it, and it certainly started a pugnacious myth in Strasbourg that the *Kaiser* only resided in his Palace once, during its inauguration. It is true that he sometimes chose to stay in the *Statthalter's* apartments for visits to the *Reichsland*, but records prove that he also used the *Kaiserpalast* close to ten times after its construction.<sup>412</sup> Still, in terms of identity, this was yet another reason for the local population to identify with the sovereign, and legitimise their own dislike of the building. That fact stresses once more the difference in perception of the person and the Palace. While in the long-term the Palace is there to stay and will be associated with the *Kaiser*, in the short-term the *Kaiser* embodies, as a person, a more acceptable concept

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<sup>411</sup> Article from the *Elsaß-Lothringische Landeszeitung*, 20 August 1889, cited in: Nohlen, pp. 63-64.

<sup>412</sup> Cf. Nohlen, pp. 94/244. Foessel, p. 337. *Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace*, 9 October 1964, p. 35. This last reference shows that the myth is still believed by some Alsatians today.

as a benevolent ruler seemingly sharing some of the average people's views. The Alsatians – particularly those living in Strasbourg – could easily have an opinion concerning this matter, since the Palace and its garden were open to the public, for a fee, when the Emperor was not residing in it or when it was not used by the *Statthalter* for receptions with eminent representatives of society.<sup>413</sup>

Propagandistic communication devices were thus used on a large scale, and echoed in local newspapers, in order to create a stronger bond between the *Kaiser* and the Alsatians, subtly reaffirming through his person the belonging of the region in the Empire.

### 3.2. The *Kaiserpalast's* Legacy

Nowadays one can argue that the *Kaiserpalast* has become the centrepiece of discourses that in reality address wider issues related to its heritage and origins. Once rejected by them, the Palace seems to have crystallised the identity issues felt by the Alsatians through time. In order to underline the strength and longevity of its legacy, here I will give an overview of the various polemics that the Palace has engendered in more recent years.

To have a better idea of its impact on the wider public, it is fair to, at first, recall the fact that sentiments about Germany were often focused on the Palace. Ironically, the Palace's unwelcome exterior made it eventually more (in)famous, and Alsatians discussed it in letters addressed to local newspapers. One such letter, attacking it as a 'verunglückte Produkt amtlicher Regierungsarchitektur,'<sup>414</sup> prompted a reaction from Karl Statsmann, who claimed that despite its 'ungainliness' the Palace could also manage to look impressive – at night. Otherwise he criticised the *Kaiserpalast* as not befitting for a princely residence: 'Wir können – und das ist eine vielverbreitete Ansicht – den Gedanken nicht los werden, daß die Architektur die eines Nutzbaues, oder eines Bahnhofbaues, aber nicht die eines Fürstenschlosses sei.' He concluded that the Palace was, regrettably, not comparable to the cathedral: 'Gewiß hätten

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<sup>413</sup> Cf. Nohlen, *ibid.*; Foessel, *ibid.*

<sup>414</sup> Cited from a 1906 article, in: Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, p. 84.

wir gern einen würdigen Kaiserpalast, auf den unser einziges (*sic*) Münster nicht bedauernd herabsieht.<sup>415</sup>

In 1916 Alphonse Schneegans (autonomist, journalist and politician, creator of the *Journal d'Alsace*)<sup>416</sup> pushed the criticism further and claimed that the building had a negative influence on the local population, opposed to the German administration, but that it was not the only case of negativity caused by bad artistic representations.<sup>417</sup> In comparison, he praised some older, more traditional buildings in Strasbourg and even the French *Palais Rohan* as 'joyaux de l'architecture'.<sup>418</sup> Because, he argued, the Alsatians would compare old and new styles, with a preference for older architectures, Schneegans recommended to 'ne pas rompre le lien entre l'âme du peuple, le pays et ses traditions, et à ne pas plaquer sur l'image urbaine des aspects étrangers dont la valeur artistique ne saurait soutenir la comparaison avec les œuvres du passé.'<sup>419</sup> In this way he protected an Alsatian cultural identity against foreign influences that could undermine it, highlighting in the process the strong political impact of architecture on a local population.

The *Kaiserpalast* served as a military hospital during the First World War. In 1919 the first floor was allocated to the *Compagnie de Navigation Rhénane* that gave it its current name, *Palais du Rhin*. It actually also refers to some statues and decorative figures from Germanic mythology still found on the building's front and inside it. During the Second World War and after the renewed annexation, the National Socialists claimed the Palace and settled their *Kommandantur* in it.<sup>420</sup> Unsurprisingly, Hansi added his own criticism of the Palace to the debate in 1936: '[...] Les Allemands y ont construit un palais pour l'empereur, qui rappelle, avec ses deux bonshommes juchés sur le toit, ces pièces montées que l'on sert aux noces de province.'<sup>421</sup> Ironically, his dismissive thoughts on the subject may have been more similar to the *Kaiser's* than Hansi would have liked.

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<sup>415</sup> Article written by Karl Statsmann and published in the *Straßburger Post*, 6 February 1906 (for both previous sentences too).

<sup>416</sup> Cf. Philippe Dollinger (ed.), *Histoire de l'Alsace*, new edn (Toulouse: Privat, 2001; first publ. 1970), pp. 440-441.

<sup>417</sup> Cf. Nohlen, p. 97, citing an article from 1916 published in *Die Bauwelt*.

<sup>418</sup> Cited from a 1916 article, in: Nohlen, p. 98.

<sup>419</sup> Cited from a 1916 article, in: Nohlen, pp. 97-98.

<sup>420</sup> Cf. Nohlen, p. 95 (for all previous sentences in this paragraph too).

<sup>421</sup> Hansi, *L'Alsace*, p. 190.

In 1957, Strasbourg's authorities debated again the future of the Palace if new administrative buildings were created, and in the end it was 'saved' thanks to the reasoning of the city councillor Robert Heitz in an article published in *Saisons d'Alsace* and in parts in the *Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace*:

[...] Parmi les monuments qui lui sont contemporains, le Palais du Rhin est loin de posséder le monopole de la laideur. Le Palais de Longchamp à Marseille, la basilique de Lyon-Fourvières, et la cathédrale de Marseille, les gares parisiennes de Lyon et d'Orsay, le Grand Palais des Champs-Élysées, d'innombrables autres églises, gares et hôtels de ville sont ses dignes émules en mauvais goût. [...] Si vraiment la construction d'une nouvelle préfecture est indispensable, il me paraît peu glorieux de bricoler et de rafistoler. Le régime allemand a vu grand. Dans les limites de l'esthétique de son temps, il a fait de son mieux. Ayons le courage de voir aussi grand que lui.<sup>422</sup>

Interestingly, Heitz prefers to keep the Palace to retain the architectural harmony of the *Kaiserplatz* (which had been renamed *Place de la République* by the French authorities after the First World War), even though he seems to share some of his contemporaries' preference for modern buildings, sometimes to the detriment of older buildings. In recent years the idea of historical heritage in France has prospered, which led the *Palais du Rhin* to be registered on the *Inventaire supplémentaire des Monuments historiques* in 1978 (like Metz's central station that dates back to the same period of 1871-1918).<sup>423</sup> The debate was finally closed on its possible demolition, with a last veiled criticism by the French architect in charge of the *Inventaire*: 'Le Palais du Rhin de style néo-Renaissance – en dépit d'une lourdeur qui n'est pas de notre goût – est un des plus remarquables exemples du style historicisant en vogue en Allemagne à la fin du XIXe siècle.'<sup>424</sup> He also added that the *Palais du Rhin* is a 'témoin d'une architecture étrangère et d'une histoire qui fut douloureuse',<sup>425</sup> alluding to the difficulties of this specific context of annexation for the region.

After the war, the political perspective of a particular historical context played a fairly big part in the appreciation of architectural works. The French authorities

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<sup>422</sup> *Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace*, 8 May 1957.

<sup>423</sup> Cf. Nohlen, p. 96.

<sup>424</sup> Cited from a 1976 letter, in: Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, p. 85.

<sup>425</sup> *Ibid.*

often tried to undermine and criticise such buildings at all costs, because they were representative of German politics and created lasting proof of the bond that Germany shared with Alsace.<sup>426</sup> Despite these continuous attacks throughout its history, and after two wars, the *Kaiserpalast* is still standing and has become part of Strasbourg's heritage and its topography – like other historical monuments that 'rendent manifestes des épisodes du passé commun, illustrent des valeurs, font mémoire de personnages ou de moments jugés importants.'<sup>427</sup>

### 3.3. Further Afield

This sub-chapter traces the history of the architectural development of Strasbourg by the Germans after the annexation of 1871. It studies other examples of Imperial architecture, besides the *Kaiserpalast*, and aims to show how architecture was used by the German authorities to underline the shared history linking Alsace to Germany, as well as to modernise Strasbourg and make it representative of the *Reichsland* in the Empire. Consequently, Strasbourg holds a singular position in the region, while being typical of the Alsatian cultural identity at the same time.

When the city of Strasbourg was restructured after the Franco-Prussian War, the idea of a new centre – metaphorically equalling the 'heart' of the city – was part of the project. The centre's construction was started in 1878, following the first visit of the Emperor in 1877, but only inaugurated in 1884. Before that, Strasbourg's central train station was opened in 1883. It was followed by the buildings making up the *Kaiserplatz*, such as the *Kaiserpalast* in 1889, then the building for the *Reichsland's* delegation (*Landesausschuss*) in 1892, and the University Library in 1895. In the street linking the *Kaiserplatz* to the University Palace, the Central Post Office was inaugurated in 1899, and the Protestant church of St. Paul was built for German garrisons stationed in the *Reichsland* in 1892, modelled on St. Elisabeth church in Marburg-an-der-Lahn,<sup>428</sup> thereby allowing for a link with traditional German architecture. The *Kaiserplatz* was finalised with ministerial buildings started in 1902 (see image 5). All these

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<sup>426</sup> Cf. Nohlen, p. 98.

<sup>427</sup> Catherine Bertho Lavenir, 'Strasbourg, un guide à la main (1863-1930)', *Revue d'Alsace*, 131 (2005), p. 221.

<sup>428</sup> Cf. Foessel, p. 354.

buildings, apart from the train station, were components of a new ‘German’ district that was not particularly popular with the local population because it was associated with the Empire and less in keeping with the local architecture, either Gothic (particularly in the Old City surrounding the cathedral) or Neoclassic, following the French tradition.<sup>429</sup> Only the Post Office and the church were Gothic in style, and better accepted by the Alsatians. Arguably, they did benefit from daily use.<sup>430</sup> Apart from the latter two buildings, they were also all inspired by Renaissance architecture, with massive dimensions and figurative references to German history and the Empire, and they are all well preserved. This makes them particularly interesting as architectural testimonies from a specific period of the history of Alsace.



5. One of the ministerial buildings – and current Prefecture on 09/08/11. © Isaure Triby

The University of Strasbourg, the first important Imperial project in the region, was created in 1872 with very ambitious aims concerning its representation of the Empire in Europe. Consequently, its architecture had to underline its intellectual rather than political goals, as described by François Loyer for the French Ministry of Culture in 1989: ‘Par son inspiration italienne et renaissance, le nouveau projet apparaît comme beaucoup plus intellectuel que politique et il fait preuve d’une très grande prudence vis-à-vis des aspects nationalistes de l’iconographie.’<sup>431</sup> However, because of its position as first Imperial project in a newly conquered region it was also met with high expectations, and sometimes fierce criticisms from the population and some local journalists who did not want to lower the standards of architecture in ‘their’ city. The patriotic *Journal d’Alsace*, for example, produced an article so critical that the architect was

<sup>429</sup> Cf. Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, p. 350.

<sup>430</sup> Cf. Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, p. 351.

<sup>431</sup> Cited from a 1989 letter, in: Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, p. 351.



forced to publicly respond. The article concluded on a derisive and dismissive statement about the supposed prestige that the building had to give the region: '[...] Bref, un ensemble disgracieux, sans style, de mauvais goût, sans aucune noblesse, un quelque chose qui n'a de nom dans aucun manuel d'architecture. Et c'est cela qui devrait devenir le joyau de la capitale de l'Alsace-Lorraine!...' <sup>432</sup> After such local opposition in the early years of the *Reichsland*, the diplomatic reservations concerning the architecture's national significance were not taken into account again by the German authorities responsible for the *Kaiserpalast*, but both buildings were excellent representations of the appropriation of Alsace by the German Empire, boasting a symbolically rich iconography that added to the homogeneity of the urban ensemble embodied by the *Kaiserplatz*.



6. Strasbourg's train station's front on the 26/06/12. © Isaure Triby

The new train station (see image 6, showing how the front looks today) was a necessity in a border city that needed better communication with the rest of the Empire – for garrisons too. It was also the first building representative of Strasbourg's status as the capital of the *Reichsland*, a role that needed to be embodied by its modernisation and what can be termed 'Germanisation'. <sup>433</sup> The building, whose construction started as early as 1878, and was inaugurated by the *Statthalter* in 1883, <sup>434</sup> flanked a large square lit by two gigantic electricity-fuelled street lamps, a fact that was perceived as a luxury by the local

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<sup>432</sup> *Elsässer Journal*, 2 April, 1878. However, the *Journal* was not as harsh in its various (quite detailed) reports about the building's inauguration, in 1884. See, for example: *Elsässer Journal*, 26 October 1884, 28 October 1884, 29 October 1884, 30 October 1884.

<sup>433</sup> The length of railway lines grew in *Elsass-Lothringen* between 1873 and 1918 from 1017 to 1970 kilometres. The *Deutsche Reichsbahn* took pride in this development and published bilingual postcards to advocate the network. Cf. Alfred Gottwaldt, *Deutsche Reichsbahn. Kulturgeschichte und Technik* (Stuttgart: Transpress, 2007), pp. 16-17.

<sup>434</sup> The event was announced and reported in all local newspapers, often during several days in order to give a detailed account of all the festivities. See, for example: *Straßburger Bote*, 11 August 1883; *Elsässer Journal*, 17 August 1883; *Straßburger Post*, 14 August 1883; *Affiches de Strasbourg*, 15 August 1883.

population.<sup>435</sup> The Renaissance style was embellished with stained glass windows and references to Alsace-Lorraine, as well as frescoes inside the central entrance hall – no longer visible today – that portrayed the entrance of Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa in Hagenau in 1164 on one side and the visit of *Kaiser* Wilhelm I in Strasbourg in 1877 on the other side.<sup>436</sup> With ‘dem Mittelalter und der Gegenwart entnommenen bedeutsamen Vorgänge[n] aus der elsässischen Geschichte,’<sup>437</sup> the link between Alsace and the German Empire was thus symbolically made in a highly frequented place, effectively combining a legendary *Kaiser* with a contemporary representative. Despite such a blatant sign of Germanisation, the regular use of such an infrastructure in everyday life must have made an impact on Alsatians, who could hardly ignore the benefits of the extended station. As part of a daily routine and thanks to the fact that the station strengthened the city’s links with the outside world, integration into the cityscape and therewith ultimately its characteristic make-up was certainly less controversial than the *Kaiserpalast* – even though the style was programmatic.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1874, the Reich’s Constitution came into effect in the *Reichsland*, and its Delegation was elected, with only consultative powers. Despite that, it was decided to build permanent headquarters in Strasbourg, so that the delegates and the local population would be visible as full members of the Empire.<sup>438</sup> However, many political battles followed in the *Reichstag* to decide on a budget for a construction that some members of the German Parliament saw as premature for an institution with a still largely uncertain future. The Central Government had to gradually appease these worries before being able to compromise on a budget and a project. New laws, in May 1881, also inflamed the debate and jeopardised the construction plan because members of the Delegation were refused parliamentary immunity, and French was outright forbidden as the working language.<sup>439</sup>

The competition for the plans had attracted many architects from Germany and the *Reichsland*, despite the low monetary prize. The press assumed that

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<sup>435</sup> Cf. Foessel, p. 312.

<sup>436</sup> Ibid. For an illustration of these frescoes, see: Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, p. 114.

<sup>437</sup> Cited from an 1883 article published in the *Centralblatt der Bauverwaltung*, in: Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, p. 115.

<sup>438</sup> Cf. Nohlen, p. 101.

<sup>439</sup> Cf. Nohlen, pp. 110-111.

competitors were attracted to the particular situation in Alsace and the patriotic stakes that such a project represented: '[...] Chacun éprouve en quelque sorte un besoin intérieur d'apporter à cette terre allemande longtemps perdue des preuves d'un sentiment vivant d'appartenance à la même souche, de prendre part à ses soucis, ses désirs et ses aspirations, et de contribuer ainsi, chacun pour sa part, à la reconquête du pays.'<sup>440</sup> Despite such assertions, the Government instigated a compromise that satisfied even the more regionalist opinions, who saw this event as a victory for the region and its identity:

Pour importantes que puissent être ces considérations matérielles, elles ont été bien moins déterminantes que les raisons politiques dans la décision des députés, vendredi dernier [...]. Elle a été à la fois une protestation, une affirmation et une promesse; une protestation contre les agissements de ceux qui aimeraient bien nous partager entre nos voisins; une affirmation, celle de notre désir de conserver notre personnalité en tant qu'Alsatiens-Lorrains, et une promesse, celle d'œuvrer loyalement et consciencieusement pour le bien être de ce petit pays, dont nous ne souhaiterions pas voir le nom rayé de la carte d'Europe.<sup>441</sup>

The construction of a modest temporary building started in 1882 on the *Kaiserplatz*, which was eventually destroyed. The permanent building for the *Landesausschuß* (see image 7) was finished in 1892.<sup>442</sup> Contrary to the *Kaiserpalast*, as some delegates chose to remind the public, the *Landesausschuß* building used mainly local materials and firms for its construction.<sup>443</sup> During the First World War, it served as a military hospital, and when Alsace became part of centralised France again it lost its parliamentary use for one as residence of the *Conservatoire de Musique*.<sup>444</sup> It is now used by the *TNS*, the prestigious National Theatre located in Strasbourg – a new use that also demanded significant modifications in the internal architecture and layout of the building.

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<sup>440</sup> Cited from an 1886 article published in the *Centralblatt der Bauverwaltung*, in: Nohlen, pp. 115-116.

<sup>441</sup> *Elsässer Journal*, 28 February 1888.

<sup>442</sup> The inauguration was, once again, announced and later reported in local newspapers. See, for example: *Straßburger Bote*, 3 September 1892, 24 December 1892.

<sup>443</sup> Cf. Nohlen, p. 115.

<sup>444</sup> Cf. Nohlen, p. 130.



7. The permanent building for the Delegation, now housing Strasbourg's TNS, on the 09/08/11. © Isaure Triby

Before a building was created for it, the possibility that the *Reichsland's* Delegation could be settled in the *Château des Rohans* had come up, to avoid more costs. However, at the time, that building already housed the extensive collection of Strasbourg's libraries. The *Château* was founded after the original residence, the old Dominicans' church, had been destroyed in the course of the bombardments of 1870. The collection had then been destroyed with the church, and it was considered a hard blow for the Alsatians to have lost their cultural heritage. An eyewitness account states: 'Es ist kein Schmerz tiefer gefühlt worden in der belagerten Stadt, als der um dieses Heiligthum der Kunst und Wissenschaft, keine Wunde hat so bitteres Weh zurückgelassen in den Herzen der Elsässer, wie die in jener Nacht geschlagene.'<sup>445</sup> The cultural loss spurred a surge of generosity, not only in the Empire but also around the world, so that the library could be refurbished to its original splendour. This impulse started in the *Reich* through a patriotic public call for book donations across its territory. This call was made on the 30<sup>th</sup> October 1870 by forty-nine 'eminent German personalities' before the war's official end:

Certes, si nous nous employons à procurer à la ville dont le souvenir est lié aux noms des Gottfried, Erwin, Twinger, Tauler, Gutenberg, Geiler, Brant, Fischart, Oberlin, Schoepflin, Schweighaeuser, Herder, Goethe une compensation pour ce qu'elle a perdu de plus précieux, cela signifie seulement notre gratitude à l'égard des mânes de ces hommes; cela signifie semer de la prospérité pour l'avenir. Ce qui faisait autrefois la fierté de la Bibliothèque strasbourgeoise, les manuscrits et éditions rares, nous sommes incapables de le remplacer: mais si nous unissons nos forces, nous pourrons au moins poser les fondations d'un trésor de l'esprit qui

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<sup>445</sup> Cited from S. Hausmann, *Die Kaiserliche Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, Festschrift zur Einweihung des neuen Bibliotheksgebäudes* (Strasbourg, 1895), in: Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, pp. 93-94.

dans cette ville, séparée de nous pendant près de deux siècles, saura, de la façon la plus efficace, conférer à la science allemande et à la culture allemande un prestige nouveau et, par là, les rétablir dans leur ancienne prospérité.<sup>446</sup>

The often-used link with great German thinkers who had resided in Strasbourg throughout its history emphasised the bond of the whole region to Germany, legitimising the reunification. The intellectual 'treasure' that this effort would bring back to the city would also be reflected on Germany's prestige. The aim of Germanisation – before the region was even officially yielded to the Empire – was proof of the Germans' confidence over the outcome of the war with France, and the message was enthusiastically followed by German universities and bookshops, a fact which did not go unnoticed by a part of the Alsatian population who realised the political nature of such donations.<sup>447</sup> A precedent was set by the Emperor himself, who had 4000 volumes donated from his personal library.<sup>448</sup> Thus, when the University of Strasbourg was created in 1872, the Library was back to its original stock of 200,000 volumes, which became too much for the elegant but unsuitable *Palais Rohan*.<sup>449</sup>



8. The Library undergoing renovations on 09/08/11. © Isaure Triby

After several years of parliamentary discussions concerning costs for a new construction, the building was finally designed in 1889 by the same architects used for the Delegation's building, Hartel and Neckelmann, and the Delegation asked that the companies used for the construction works come mainly from Alsace or Lorraine.<sup>450</sup> The official inauguration took place on the 29<sup>th</sup> November

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<sup>446</sup> Cited (and translated) from Hausmann (1895), in: Nohlen, p. 259.

<sup>447</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>448</sup> Cf. Nohlen, p. 133.

<sup>449</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>450</sup> Cf. Foessel, p. 340.

1895,<sup>451</sup> with the *Statthalter* deeming that ‘la Bibliothèque devait être à jamais la fierté de notre Université, une bénédiction pour notre pays, un haut-lieu de la science allemande.’<sup>452</sup> Despite these patriotic statements, the building’s various decorations referred not only to German writers, but also – to a lesser degree – to international ones, including Molière, Calderon and Shakespeare.<sup>453</sup> Its architectural style had many similarities with the neighbouring *Landesausschuß* and mirrored the general style of the *Kaiserplatz*’s buildings, including the ministerial ones that were completed in later years. Objectives were reached by the German authorities, since Library users had better working conditions, the many donations proved the general belief in a stable future for the region, and the central piece of the policy for Strasbourg’s extension, the *Kaiserplatz*, was one step closer to being completed.<sup>454</sup> Even though it was internally modernised, the Library’s architecture (see image 8) also remained unchanged for the most parts throughout its history and was the only one in France to use the designation *Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire* because of its specific origins.<sup>455</sup> Its collection has kept growing over the years and it is now the second largest in France after Paris.



9. Two views of the Gothic Central Post Office’s fronts from opposite sides. The photo on the left shows the main entrance’s side (09/08/11). © Isaure Tribay

Before its completion in the early twentieth century with the ministerial buildings, the *Kaiserplatz* also had an extension added in the form of the Central Post Office (see image 9) in a street extending diagonally from it. The Imperial Postal

<sup>451</sup> It was announced and commented in local newspapers. See, for example: *Elsässer Journal*, 28 November 1895, 29 November 1895, 30 November 1895; *Straßburger Post*, 30 November 1895; *Straßburger Tageblatt* (official publication), 30 November 1895; *Straßburger Neueste Nachrichten*, 28 November 1895, 30 November 1895.

<sup>452</sup> Cited (and translated) from an 1895 letter, in: Nohlen, p. 137.

<sup>453</sup> Cf. Foessel, p. 340.

<sup>454</sup> Cf. Nohlen, p. 155.

<sup>455</sup> Cf. Foessel, p. 341.

Service played a unifying role in the German Empire after the foundation of the Second Reich in 1871. The federal *Lands* on the borders of the Empire, such as Alsace-Lorraine, were targeted specifically. The Postal Service was meant to help establish a more emotional level of unification with Germany through the assimilation of annexed regions.<sup>456</sup> Strasbourg, with its famous cathedral and its picturesque centre, was considered by the Germans as the 'wunderschöne Stadt',<sup>457</sup> and the new district built around the *Kaiserplatz* was supposed to symbolise its new status as capital of the *Reichsland*. Such efforts were also reflected in travel-guides in years to come (cf. Chapter Two). The modernisation of the city by the German authorities saw a notable increase of internal traffic, and the decision to create a new building for the supervision of postal services in the region was decided at the end of the 1880s. Even though its position in the new administrative district was locally criticised for being too far from the city centre, the project was continued and accepted by the Emperor.<sup>458</sup> The first plans were designed by Skjold Neckelmann, in the same Renaissance and monumental style used for his other creations on the *Kaiserplatz*, but the result was too grandiose and risked overshadowing the latter's central piece and direct reference to the Emperor: the *Kaiserpalast*.<sup>459</sup> In the end, the Gothic style – less controversial or imposing but still representing Germany – and an outlying position from the *Kaiserplatz* were chosen to remedy the problem, as the *Generalpostmeister* Heinrich von Stephan justified in the following terms in 1899:

Namentlich mußte darauf Rücksicht genommen werden, die am Kaiser-Platz errichteten öffentlichen Gebäude in ihrer Wirkung nicht zu beeinträchtigen, aber auch das neu zu erbauende Reichs-Postgebäude gehörig zur Geltung kommen zu lassen. Dies kann nur erreicht werden, wenn ein Wechsel in dem Stil eintritt. In Anbetracht der Größe und räumlichen Ausdehnung des Postgebäudes würde bei Beibehaltung des (...) Renaissancestils, welcher eine andere Massenvertheilung bedingt, die

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<sup>456</sup> Cf. Niels Wilcken, 'Les Hôtels des Postes de Strasbourg et de Metz, exemples de l'architecture allemande dans le *Reichsland*', *Diligence d'Alsace*, 55 (1996), p. 19.

<sup>457</sup> Cited in: Jean-Marie Mayeur, 'Une mémoire-frontière: L'Alsace,' in Nora (ed.), I, 1149.

<sup>458</sup> Cf. Wilcken, 'Les Hôtels des Postes de Strasbourg et de Metz', p. 20 (for the previous sentence as well).

<sup>459</sup> Cf. Wilcken, 'Les Hôtels des Postes de Strasbourg et de Metz', pp. 20-21. Nohlen, p. 201.

sich dadurch ergebende Wucht der Architektur die bestehenden Gebäude erdrücken und dieselben in ihrer Wirkung beeinträchtigen.<sup>460</sup>

Despite the architectural competition with the cathedral, the new project cost less than the first proposal and the building was noteworthy thanks to its significantly different style in its urban context, and it echoed the local historical environment. The Gothic style was supposedly a reference to the first Golden Age of the city in the thirteenth century, 'als jahraus, jahrein der deutsche Kaiser im Elsaß [weilte]' and 'wo Gottfried von Straßburg der erste deutsche Dichter und Erwin von Steinbach der erste deutsche Baumeister war.'<sup>461</sup> After a second Golden Age in the Humanist period, Strasbourg was believed to undergo a third thriving period, thanks to the new German domination – and the ensuing literature, as reflected in guidebooks, studies and newspaper articles. Niels Wilcken, citing an article from 1900, mentions a 'dritte[n] Blütezeit unter der neuen deutschen Herrschaft.'<sup>462</sup> Such beliefs did not only serve the Germans' purpose, it also stressed a sense of pride and long-term tradition in the region and, more importantly, its capital. The Germanic quality of the Gothic style is generally accepted, and rare are the exceptions, such as Hansi, faithful to his habit of dismissing anything German in Alsace: '[...] Ils ont construit aussi un colossal Hôtel des Postes en un approximatif style gothique, sous le prétexte saugrenu de le mettre en harmonie avec la cathédrale.'<sup>463</sup>

Prestigious German figures were still used by German propaganda to link Alsace with the Empire, and specifically its Gothic architecture, found in several parts of the city, such as its churches and easily recognisable cathedral, the latter being a landmark of Alsatian identification and culture. The most famous example is probably Goethe, very appreciated in the region (particularly because of his relationship with the Alsatian Frédérique Brion), whose statue overlooks the *Place de l'Université* and who was an admirer of the cathedral's 'German' style: 'En 1771, un visiteur admiratif, le jeune Goethe, y découvre un exemple de l'art gothique et allemand', élevé dans les temps vraiment

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<sup>460</sup> Cited from an 1895 letter, in: Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, p. 154.

<sup>461</sup> Cited from a 1900 article published in the *Centralblatt der Bauverwaltung*, in: Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, p. 154 (for both quotations in the sentence).

<sup>462</sup> Ibid.

<sup>463</sup> Hansi, *L'Alsace*, p. 190.



allemands, par un maître dont le nom dit les origines allemandes.<sup>464</sup> The Gothic style was also often used at the time for Post offices around the Empire in cities that maintained a medieval style, such as Köln and Brunswick.<sup>465</sup> The project was enthusiastically approved by the Emperor, who was usually actively involved in all the main architectural projects in the *Reichsland*. The construction process started in April 1896 and the new Central Post Office was inaugurated on the 12<sup>th</sup> November 1899.<sup>466</sup> Statues of the various German Emperors, again linking Barbarossa and Wilhelm II, had been added to the front of the building to justify the new political order in the region and emphasise the continuation from Ancient to New German Empire for Alsace. However, they were seen as symbols of the German domination in 1918 and were beheaded during an August night of that year – then becoming a tourist attraction in Strasbourg.<sup>467</sup> The main streets that the building was situated in, the *Königsstraße* and *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Straße* (leading to the University Palace), were renamed in a symbolic fashion after the First World War by the French authorities, respectively *Avenue de la Marseillaise* (after the French national anthem) and *Avenue de la Liberté*.<sup>468</sup> In parallel, the *Kaiserplatz* was renamed *Place de la République* in an obvious attempt of re-appropriation and re-identification for the Alsatian population and, arguably more important, the French affiliation.

Contrary to other Imperial buildings, which did not communicate on an urban plane with the Old City, the neo-Gothic Post Office referred to the latter, through its architecture and orientation towards the more populated city centre. The building thus seemed to play the role of intermediary between the old centre of Alsatians and the opposite new German district. It echoed new architectural tendencies that began in the 1890s, which tried to adapt to a local style already present and appreciated by the native population, while distancing itself from the Renaissance style used in the previous official buildings.<sup>469</sup> The political claims expected in the *Reichsland's* capital seemed to be lessened, in that

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<sup>464</sup> Mayeur, in Nora (ed.), I, 1149.

<sup>465</sup> Cf. Nohlen, p. 201.

<sup>466</sup> The *Straßburger Bote* did a special issue with illustrations to celebrate the event. Cf. *Straßburger Bote*, 11 November 1899. It was also mentioned in several issues of the *Elsässer Journal*. See, for example: *Elsässer Journal*, 10 November 1899, 12 November 1899.

<sup>467</sup> Cf. Wilcken, 'Les Hôtels des Postes de Strasbourg et de Metz', pp. 24, 26. See an illustration in: Gyss (ed.), p. 87.

<sup>468</sup> Cf. Wilcken, *Architektur im Grenzraum*, p. 156.

<sup>469</sup> Cf. Wilcken, 'Les Hôtels des Postes de Strasbourg et de Metz', p. 25.

case, to answer local expectations in a building meant for the people as well as the Empire.

Contrary to the Moselle region, seen as Francophone and Catholic, Alsace was considered by the German authorities as undeniably Germanic. That fact was underlined through continuous references to a shared history found in the numerous written contributions of the time as well as in the new architecture. The construction work started right after the annexation to modernise Strasbourg and had the goal of making it into a more representative capital for the *Reichsland*, but also aimed to show how 'neglected' the city had been by French authorities in comparison. The historicism of the colossal Renaissance style used for the official buildings of the *Kaiserplatz* was wrapped in nationalism, but had been used in Napoleon III's France before that period, drawing parallels between the two countries exhibiting their power. Its previous use meant that the formal style was not completely foreign to Alsatian observers, and the cultural relations to France endured in the region. In this respect, and because the style chosen was too ostentatious and less in keeping with the picturesque city centre, the assimilation arguably failed to garner the local population's approval, although the fact that the various buildings were kept even after the return to France made them finally accepted by Alsations as part of a familiar urban landscape.

The costly and important constructions and renovations also proved that the Empire had high expectations for Strasbourg as a prestigious regional capital: 'Cette soif de prestige prévalut en Alsace-Lorraine dans toute son ampleur. Le langage formel, orienté dans les bâtiments officiels vers l'effet de prestige, n'était certes pas une exigence inscrite en toutes lettres dans chacun des programmes de construction, mais allait de soi, visant à exprimer la prospérité et le développement culturel.'<sup>470</sup> Some projects were criticised and rejected by the local population, such as the renovation and re-appropriation of the Haut-Koenigsbourg's castle by the German Kaiser. These projects and buildings were 'porteurs d'une mémoire qui renvoie aux siècles où l'Alsace était liée aux destinées du monde germanique' and 'visent à rendre vie à ces souvenirs du Moyen Âge.'<sup>471</sup> However, the buildings that were most criticised at the time of

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<sup>470</sup> Cited (and translated) in: Nohlen, p. 210.

<sup>471</sup> Mayeur, in Nora (ed.), I, 1157, for both quotations in this sentence.

their construction are now re-evaluated and restored because the idea of a cultural heritage that has to be preserved as part of a common memory and history is today predominant. This phenomenon confirms the theory that people tend to accept ancient buildings rather than recent ones and that the real problem comes from the notion of refusing change – be it material, political or otherwise. In this sense, the German architectural ambitions and the creation of notable landmarks was no doubt a highly visible, but more importantly: a long-term investment into a sense of both regional and national pride. The city's modernisation to promote a German centre, but at the same time a very Alsatian location, utilised tradition on the one hand, contemporary debates on the other. The printed press was an important conduit to air concerns and agreement, thereby, in way of debates, making the process more integral to Strasbourg.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Alsace in Popular Caricatures

Caricatures are satires that mock people or situations with the help of the exaggerated portrayal of (predominantly physical) characteristics. Originally a form of entertainment, caricatures are mostly used to make a serious social and/or political point— while retaining the entertainment value. Honoré Daumier is usually seen as the most important caricaturist in French history; his satirical drawings in newspapers in the nineteenth century started the French tradition – which, one could argue, is part of the French *esprit critique*. In Germany caricatures also appeared primarily during periods of political unrest, such as during the *Vormärz* in the 1830s and 1840s. Satirical newspapers and periodicals then were forced to circumnavigate censorship.<sup>472</sup> One of the figures who was popularly portrayed was *Deutscher Michel* – symbolising the German people’s lack of rebellion against the authorities in the nineteenth century, and opposed to the more authoritative and powerful *Germania*, an allegory of the German nation. The *Deutsche Michel* did not only become popular in Germany but turned into a figure that was easily recognised throughout Europe.

Caricatures are useful sources, since they are dependent on the social and political context of their times, depicting formative (as well as some very local) events, and mocking political figures through apparently simple means at particular points in time. Their message can usually be interpreted if the historical context and the newspaper’s perspective are known. Indeed, the caricatures are in most cases in accordance with the editors’ political views, particularly for satirical publications. They showcase extremes – as does the reader’s immediate reaction that is either agreement or disagreement. Their value as a source for Alsatian identity rests in the fact that they highlight, like snapshots, popular issues, which are described in an emotional and controversial manner.<sup>473</sup>

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<sup>472</sup> Cf. Mary Fulbrook (ed.), *German History since 1800* (London: Arnold, 1997), p. 98.

<sup>473</sup> Cf. Yvonne Vitt, *Zur Bedeutung der Karikatur als Pressemedium in der öffentlichen Meinung des 19. Jahrhunderts am Beispiel der Annexion Elsass-Lothringens im Deutsch-Französischen Krieg 1870-71* (Siegen: Grin, 2002).

In nineteenth century Alsace, several newspapers were created after the annexation into the Prussian Empire, including some satirical periodicals and autonomy-oriented newspapers.<sup>474</sup> The latter included caricatures, often on the front pages, as a means to acquire a wider audience through humour. Their prime targets were government officials – local and national. After Alsace returned to France after the First World War, the satires and caricatures continued against government officials, particularly amongst *autonomistes* publications, whose demands were not accepted by the authorities and were also exacerbated by the post-war *malaise* in Alsace following strict assimilation policies. Caricatures included allegorical figures embodying Alsace, France or Germany as well as political or common characters with whom the people could identify.

Caricatures highlight certain themes – among them the contentious issue of Alsatian identity. This chapter therefore analyses caricatures with the aim to identify which features are most prominent, be they individual representatives, thematic aspects or considerations of folklore. At the core of the following deliberations is Hansi (Jean-Jacques Waltz), whose readily recognisable style had a long-term impact on the depiction of presumably typical features of Alsatian folklore. While Hansi is preoccupied with the French ‘homeland’, his drawings portray what he perceives as genuinely Alsatian matters. His propagandistic approach will be contextualised with the help of examples from one of his contemporaries, Henri Zislin. The chapter will progress with a thematic trajectory, from Hansi’s popular, predominantly anti-German work to Zislin’s more nuanced, realistic work, a trajectory that goes against the historical development. The distinctive Alsatian typology of landscapes, people and history will also be set against the treatment of a highly political space – in Germany and France – from the 1920s and then 1930s onwards.

#### 4.1. Shaping Identity: The Example of Jean-Jacques Waltz (Hansi)

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<sup>474</sup> Arguably, Zislin’s publications, namely *Dur’s Elsass*, could be affiliated to the Alsatian autonomists, although that statement would probably only hold true for the pre-First World War period. Autonomists had to be fairly subtle in their messages to the population under German Rule, and after the War they had to face the propaganda of pro-French, anti-autonomist publications. Furthermore, in Alsace at that time autonomists had to be understood as Alsatians yearning for more autonomy because of their *particularismes*, but they were not separatists.

Jean-Jacques Waltz (1873-1951), who came to fame as Hansi,<sup>475</sup> was very attached to his hometown Colmar throughout his life, and the city does feature regularly in his works. His strong dislike of the German Empire started at a young age, when he had trouble adapting to the German rule in school – and his teachers were the first subjects of his caricatures.<sup>476</sup> Waltz's family remained attached to French culture and he cultivated his French patriotism. He started his career painting postcards,<sup>477</sup> and might have remained uninvolved if the political and social context in Alsace – generated by the antagonism between France and Germany – had not provoked him to react against the new government in his own style. Consequently, he would become famous for incorporating satirical details against Germans into his seemingly innocent and picturesque drawings of Alsatian life, several examples of which can be found in this chapter.

Waltz's contribution to Alsatian identity through his many works can be argued for in relation to the long and short-term impact of his images, which shape the perception of Alsace inside and outside the region, and the fact that he is a well-known figure even today. The popularity of his work can thus be understood as evidence of local identity. The initial focus of this chapter on the post-war volume *L'Alsace heureuse* is based on the fact that Hansi is in this period (1919) an established artist and author. It is also interesting that he chooses to address children in this book (as in many of his other books), but with a highly propagandistic rhetoric – also found in his images, which draw the lines even sharper. *L'Alsace heureuse* will be argued as a highpoint in his career.

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<sup>475</sup> The name Hansi supposedly comes from a contraction of his two first names in German, Hans and Jacob (the J being pronounced like the French I in German). Cf. Michel Loetscher and Yannick Scheibling, *Hansi: Une vie pour l'Alsace* (Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue, 2006), p. 8. Further information about Hansi can also be found in: Benoît Bruant, *Hansi, l'artiste tendre et rebelle* (Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue / DNA, 2008). Georges Bischoff, 'Faut-il brûler Hansi? Enquête sur un artiste "politiquement incorrect",' *Les Saisons d'Alsace*, 2 (1999), 22-44. Georges Bischoff, 'Encore Hansi!', *Saisons d'Alsace*, 52 (2012), 92-94. Michèle Meyer, *L'Alsace dans tous ses objets* (Paris: Hoëbeke, 1998), pp. 90-91. Detmar Klein, 'Becoming Alsatian: Anti-German and pro-French cultural propaganda in Alsace, 1898-1914', in Barbara Kelly (ed.), *French Music, Culture and National Identity, 1870-1939* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2008), pp. 215-233.

<sup>476</sup> Cf. Loetscher and Scheibling, p. 7.

<sup>477</sup> Musée Hansi <<http://www.alsace-route-des-vins.com/NewVersion/index.cfm/fuseaction/AutrePage.Home/ID/53/Language/fr.cfm>> [accessed on 14/10/10].

Before the start of the First World War, Jean-Jacques Waltz had fled to France, where he was welcomed and acclaimed by the nationalists as a French hero fighting the German Empire with the help of his works.<sup>478</sup> From then onwards, he would actively participate – with the help of books, posters and caricatures in newspapers – in French propaganda, continuously mocking the Germans and stressing Alsace's need to go back to the *Mère-Patrie*.<sup>479</sup> After the war, with the region's return to France, the Alsatians, as outlined in the historical overview, had high hopes and expectations towards this idealised country, which during the time of annexation, on behalf of the German Empire, had increasingly grown. Alsatians were soon disillusioned by the French government's treatment of their region, enacting strict assimilation policies that aimed at erasing any regional *particularisme*.<sup>480</sup> In that context, the celebration of the first anniversary of the end of the war and the French victory in 1919 was not met with as much enthusiasm in Alsace as expected by the authorities, and Hansi – who had enjoyed a peak of popularity in 1918 when coming back to Alsace after serving in the French Army during the war<sup>481</sup> – decided to offer his talents to the cause by writing and illustrating a book, *L'Alsace heureuse*.<sup>482</sup> The resulting volume is characterised by explicit French patriotism and anti-German rhetoric that builds upon the pre-war propaganda.

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<sup>478</sup> Cf. Loetscher and Scheibling, pp. 50-52.

<sup>479</sup> He worked at the French Ministry of War, starting from November 1915, creating propagandistic operations aimed at undermining the German troops' morale. Cf. Loetscher and Scheibling, pp. 68-69.

<sup>480</sup> Cf. Loetscher and Scheibling, p. 92.

<sup>481</sup> Cf. Loetscher and Scheibling, p. 85.

<sup>482</sup> Hansi (Jean-Jacques Waltz), *L'Alsace heureuse: Le grand bonheur du pays d'Alsace raconté aux petits enfants par l'oncle Hansi* (Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue, 2006; first publ. 1919). All further references in the analysis will be based on this book, unless otherwise stated.



1. The Frontispice of *L'Alsace heureuse* by Hansi.<sup>483</sup> © Musée HANSI

Like many of his publications since 1909, Hansi delivers his message to Alsatian children, as announced by its title: *L'Alsace heureuse: Le grand Bonheur du pays d'Alsace raconté aux petits enfants par l'Oncle Hansi*.<sup>484</sup> Children were his preferred audience because he enjoyed his 're-educative' mission to teach them what he perceived as the 'true' story of Alsace, as opposed to the one taught by the Germans in Alsatian schools, which Hansi still remembered and resented from his own childhood. He also felt close to children, who embodied the future generation of Alsations who might finally – and did – become French again, and whom he depicted in his works through

<sup>483</sup> Hansi, *L'Alsace heureuse*, p. 7. All photographs in this chapter, unless stated otherwise, are by the author of this thesis.

<sup>484</sup> Bruant explains how 'oncle' came to be natural, because Waltz never married but both his brother and sister had children – making him an uncle but not a father. Cf. Bruand, *Hansi*, p. 107. See also: Loetscher and Scheibling, p. 36.



his careful observation of their games and attitudes. His drawings also appealed to the children themselves by their simple style and colourful details.<sup>485</sup> The colourful frontispiece of the book (see image 1) speaks for itself: its fairy tale appeal and the attention to detail are considerable and initially distract from the true implications of the volume.

The positive bias towards France is made explicit through his choice of words, the tone being emphasised by the illustration on the book's cover (see image 2), representing Hansi himself (easily recognisable for his audience thanks to his tall form and black costume and felt hat – associated with artists at the time – as well as his characteristic bow tie) helping children dressed in traditional Alsatian costumes decorate the cover of the book with various garlands and lanterns sporting the colours of the French flag, thereby bridging the different Alsatian generations. The little girls' traditional headgear boosts the revolutionary cockade that Hansi added to all such drawings during and after the war to symbolise Alsace's belonging to France, and a young boy carries the French flag while Hansi holds a garland circling the message 'Vive la France.' In the background, a couple of German hikers – at the time readily identified by the green clothes, big backpacks, *Alpenstock* and round glasses that Hansi used to portray German members of the *Club Vosgien* – are apparently fleeing Alsace with their luggage, now that it has returned to France, embodying the enforced exile of the German population from Alsace after the First World War.<sup>486</sup> Their welcome exodus is shown as a feeble process – this is not a force, it would seem, to be reckoned with and the real strength is represented in the cheerful celebration.

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<sup>485</sup> Cf. Loetscher and Scheibling, p. 83. Furthermore, his drawings can arguably be seen as part of an educative mission resulting in the spelling-out of apparently self-evident truths. This mission continues today in various '... expliqué aux enfants' volumes.

<sup>486</sup> Waltz saw a lot of German hikers during his walks through the Alsatian countryside, searching for inspiration for his landscape paintings, and considered those over-equipped and organised tourists as colonisers desperate for comfort, embodying the expansionist ideals of the *Ligue pangermaniste*. Cf. Loetscher and Scheibling, pp. 33, 75.



2. The cover of *L'Alsace heureuse* by Hansi. © Musée HANSI

The book's full title also introduces Hansi as the storyteller and 'teacher' for Alsatian children – offering an alternative to the German school system that had been obscuring any reference to France. Hansi embarked on this mission in 1912 in his book *L'Histoire d'Alsace racontée aux petits enfants d'Alsace et de France par l'Oncle Hansi*, which revisited Alsace's history through French eyes and a decidedly anti-German perspective.<sup>487</sup> This book is also mentioned at the beginning of *L'Alsace heureuse's* narrative, linking the hopeful expectations of 1912 with the situation of 1919, one year after the return to France. Two drawings emphasise the 1912 context: the first one portrays Strasbourg's cathedral – often used in Alsatian caricatures (and iconography) to embody Alsace as a whole because of its easily identifiable single spire and its importance.<sup>488</sup> It is shown with a rainbow using the French flag's colours as a symbol of the Alsatians' hopes. The second one shows a landscape, representing an Alsatian village in the shadows of thunderous clouds with the caption 'Avant l'orage' that is an obvious reference to the upcoming war. The book's introduction is full of then popular pejorative terms to describe the

<sup>487</sup> Cf. Loetscher and Scheibling, p. 35.

<sup>488</sup> Cf. Meyer, pp. 16-17. See image 2 on p. 117 of this thesis for an illustration of the cathedral's singularity.

Germans: 'nos maîtres d'alors', 'Schwobs', 'Boches', 'vilain bonhomme', 'fourbe', 'méchant', 'cruel',<sup>489</sup> underlining their perceived cruelty and brutality, as well as the censorship that Germans used against Hansi and other 'defenders' of French culture: 'Je ne pouvais pas en dire plus long, car le gendarme eût été trop content de pouvoir venir me chercher tout de suite' (p. 9). A comparatively positive and similarly exaggerated vocabulary is then used to describe the context of an 'Alsace libre' with the repetition of the keywords 'joie' and 'bonheur'. The vocabulary that Hansi uses is fairly typical of the nationalistic and *revancharde* propaganda that abounded in France before the First World War, and it would have been similarly recognisable to other pro-French Alsatians at the time.

The title page (p. 3) uses some of the same decorative elements as the cover, namely tricolour garlands and lanterns, as well as two children – a girl and a boy – in traditional Alsatian costumes bearing the revolutionary cockade, but this time they are carrying bouquets of tricolour flowers and are set over an exaggeratedly cheerful landscape – or one might argue: dreamscape – including flowers, robins and butterflies on grassy fields, but also two storks – official symbols of Alsace introduced by French propaganda<sup>490</sup> – and Strasbourg's cathedral in the background, boasting two prominent French flags. A subtitle explains: 'Avec quelques images tristes et beaucoup d'images gaies,' prefiguring the aforementioned dual tone favoured in the book – pro-French and anti-German. The following page (p. 5) follows the same pattern and acts as a dedication to the children of the French soldiers who died in the war: 'Ce livre est dédié aux enfants de ceux qui ont donné leur vie pour le salut de la France et la libération de l'Alsace et de la Lorraine,' thereby highlighting a debt towards France. An Alsatian girl in the same characteristic attire as before is shown laying a wreath with a tricolour ribbon on the grave of an anonymous French soldier, symbolised by a wooden cross, topped by a French helmet from the First World War. The landscape is similar to the one on the title page, minus the

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<sup>489</sup> All the terms quoted here come from p. 9 of *L'Alsace heureuse* (Hansi).

<sup>490</sup> Before it was considered as a patriotic symbol (France's messenger), sent away from Strasbourg's rooftops by the Prussian bombing of 1870, the stork was rarely represented in Alsatian iconography, apart from its role as a wader looking for reptiles to eat in the humid areas of the Rhine Valley. Cf. Musées de la Ville de Strasbourg (ed.), *Le Musée Alsacien de Strasbourg*, texts by Malou Schneider (Strasbourg: Éditions des Musées de la Ville de Strasbourg, 2006), p. 74. Further information about the stork figure in Alsace can be found in: Meyer, pp. 76-77. The stork is probably one of the most remarkable examples of a propaganda tool becoming ingrained in popular, seemingly innocent markers of a region.

animals, and including fir trees and what is probably the castle of the Haut-Koenigsbourg<sup>491</sup> in the background, as well as Strasbourg's cathedral. The setting is one of the hilly parts of Alsace, and the sunset is a clear reference to a chapter coming to an end. Both pages together show stereotypically picturesque and perfect landscapes, following Hansi's tendency to demonstrate his strong attachment to the region, with characters taken out of Alsatian folklore. This too is typical of Hansi's most identifiable works and approach that became ingrained in his contemporaries' perceptions of an idyllic and peaceful Alsace that was precariously set between two opposing nations: here, Hansi recaptures the illusive ideal.

The *Frontispice* (see image 1) then demonstrates Hansi's talent as a draughtsman and his excessive use of ornamental patterns, inspired by Alsatian folklore, such as decorative pieces of furniture or earthenware, which encourage regional values. The drawing is also a good representation of Hansi's habit of trying to tell a story through his images, since this particular image is meant to be understood as an illustration taken from a famous fairytale, *Sleeping Beauty*, in Charles Perrault's version.<sup>492</sup> The story would be immediately recognised by any child, even though this might not be the case for all of the symbolic details added to the scene. The fairytale's title is given, as well as the part of the original text which is illustrated, but the princess wears a traditional Alsatian dress and headgear, and she is awoken by a French soldier, rendering the aforementioned sentence: 'Est-ce vous, mon Prince? [...] Vous vous êtes bien fait attendre' particularly relevant in the context of Alsace waiting forty-seven years until France 'liberated' her from Germany. The image is circled by roses, in accordance with the original tale, and the medieval castle where the story unfolds is heavily decorated. Some significant details can be observed in the room: several sculptures of Germans that are easily associated with gargoyles are set on pillars, following Hansi's characteristic depiction of Germans with a moustache, round glasses and not much hair. A small statue of *Sainte Odile*, the patron saint of Alsace, is standing above the princess's bed. A portrait of Saint George slaying the dragon is painted in the top right corner of

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<sup>491</sup> The castle of the Haut-Koenigsbourg was renovated and Germanised by the Germans for propagandistic purposes, and inaugurated by Kaiser Wilhelm I in 1908 to represent the Germans' power over Alsace. Cf. Loetscher and Scheibling, p. 48.

<sup>492</sup> For obviously patriotic reasons, Hansi prefers using the French version of the popular fairy tale, from 1697, rather than the more recent German one (1812) from the Grimm brothers.

the picture, a metaphor for France's victory over Germany (here) – both patron saints refer to Alsace's Christian tradition that is strongly ingrained into its culture. Cockerels are carved into the princess's bed – a symbol of France, and two storks holding a pretzel – another iconic symbol of Alsace – and the Alsatian blazon are painted over the castle's window. The recurring and anachronistic representation of Strasbourg's cathedral, which can be seen in the far background through the window, completes the overall connoted fairytale effect with a political undercurrent. This drawing also serves its purpose as a means to underline Hansi's endeavour as storyteller of the French 'liberation' of Alsace at the end of the First World War, as well as the tale of the 'ordeal' that the Alsatians went through before that date as an annexed province of the German Empire. All of this is part of an attempt to teach and entertain – but a no less propagandistic process aimed at French, particularly Alsatian, children. Clearly, though, with the return to France the fairy tale has come true.

The main narrative concerns itself with the 'ordeal' that the Alsatians had to endure during the years preceding the war. Hansi often uses the word *pangermanisme* as an amalgamation to criticise all Germans, but beyond its original meaning as a political movement aimed at unifying all the German-speaking countries and regions,<sup>493</sup> he refers to the far-right party created at the end of the nineteenth century that defended, according to its programme, the *Volkstum* (= *esprit de la race*) which was to influence Adolf Hitler's war-time propaganda.<sup>494</sup> Hansi then describes his *pangermaniste* enemies in the text as discussing Alsace's fate, wishing no less than to reduce to slavery the Alsatian people who hamper the 'natural progression' of their 'domination over the world': '[...] Les Boches nous ont prouvé qu'ils ne reculaient devant aucun crime, et que l'idée de réduire à l'esclavage un peuple qui gênait la domination du "Peuple de seigneurs de la terre" leur paraissait chose toute naturelle.' (p. 10). Alsace keeps being described as a victim in his rhetoric. He illustrates his point with a portrait of the 'Président de la Ligue Pangermanique en 1913'

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<sup>493</sup> Further information about *pangermanisme* can be found in: Michel Korinman, *Deutschland über alles. Le pangermanisme 1890-1945* (Paris: Fayard, 1999). See also: Mary Fulbrook, *A Concise History of Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). Mary Fulbrook (ed.), *Fontana History of Germany, 1918-1990: The Divided Nation* (London: Harper Collins, 1991). Fulbrook (ed.), *German History since 1800*.

<sup>494</sup> Cf. Bruant, *Hansi*, pp. 92-95.

representing a man in a stern black outfit, with white hair and a huge moustache and a fairly big beard, as well as the typical round glasses – since for Hansi all Germans are short-sighted (an interpretation that might, beyond national stereotypes, well invite political connotations too). From his perspective, this could be a physical expression of their perceived blindness to Alsatian needs, even while living in Alsace – their only interest being themselves, since they appear to feel superior to other people. The man stands at a desk with a large beer mug beside him – yet another cliché that Germans are drunkards overindulging in beer, not even wine that is typically associated with Alsace. This hypothesis seems to be confirmed by the unhealthy ruddy complexion of the German. The entertainment and propaganda thus work predominantly with the help of stereotypes that mirror more general perceptions and are therefore readily assimilated. The amusement of the readership goes hand in hand with their (further) polarisation.

Hansi's opinion that the Germans do not understand Alsatian needs and treat the local population badly when they visit Alsace is supported by the mention of the 'Affaire de Saverne',<sup>495</sup> which took place in 1913 and increased the chasm between the Alsatian population and the Germans in Alsace.<sup>496</sup> At that time, the German lieutenant Graf von Forstner insulted Alsatians by encouraging a German soldier to kill some local *Wackes* with the help of a monetary reward (among other things). This provocation fostered the outrage of the Alsatians, who protested the treatment strongly – forcing the German Army to protect the lieutenant against the locals. Hansi supported the *Wackes* with his caricatures, but the German Justice system (as well as all levels of the governing power) took the lieutenant's side, which Hansi uses as proof, in his narrative, that the German government cannot be trusted and only seeks war: '[...] Alors il apparut que le gouvernement de l'Empire allemand était entre les mains de quelques hobereaux; nous savions que ces hobereaux désiraient la guerre de toute leur âme de reîtres, et ils n'ont pas tardé à déchaîner l'effroyable carnage.' (p. 10). It

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<sup>495</sup> In November 1913, a young and inexperienced lieutenant, von Forstner, stationed in Saverne, insulted several Alsatian recruits (calling them 'Wackes' and deserving to die), the Foreign Legion, and the French flag. It sparked off social and political unrest in the region and was echoed strongly by the *Elsässer Journal*. The latter demanded the *Statthalter's* departure, accusing him of doing nothing to take care of the situation. The German courts favoured the lieutenant's side in this case, which increased the local sentiment that Germany did not care about Alsatian needs. Cf. Philippe Dollinger (ed.), *Histoire de l'Alsace*, new edn (Toulouse: Privat, 2001; first publ. 1970), pp. 457–458.

<sup>496</sup> Cf. Loetscher and Scheibling, p. 52.

is interesting to note that Hansi is the narrator but uses the pronoun 'we' when talking about Alsatians, never distancing himself from his subject. He supports the polemical and propagandistic perspective that the fault for starting the traumatic First World War rests entirely with the German Empire. He finishes the paragraph with the description of the patriotic behaviour of the Alsatians from the '99e régiment de Saverne', who refused to fight against French soldiers during the war and forced their officers to surrender. In this text, their rebellion is seen as a direct retribution against the Germans' attitude during the 'Affaire de Saverne.'

Another caricature about the 'Affaire de Saverne' (p. 11) showing the severity of the German soldiers and their perceived lack of humour is emphasised by the caption 'Verboten zu lächeln / Défense absolue de rigoler,' which also implies that, comparatively, Alsace stands for a good sense of humour and happiness while playing on yet another cliché in terms of mindless Prussian discipline. Hansi then talks about the pre-war tensions among German authorities. Throughout these pages Hansi describes his own 'ordeal' at the hands of the 'Boches' to denounce the injustice of their *pangermaniste* laws and systems – amalgamating his plight with that of the whole of Alsace at the time. The caricatures are then illustrations for particular points in the text, with explanatory captions and stereotyped Germans, reminiscent of the *bande-dessinée* genre. The German civilians look ridiculous with their round glasses, red noses, seal-like moustaches and *faméliques* (emaciated) looks – the latter they usually lose when living in Alsace, gaining weight from the rich Alsatian *cuisine* (p. 12). The German soldiers look pompous and brutish, with overly straight postures and low-browed, unsmiling square faces, sometimes glancing contemptuously at the Alsatian children in traditional attire, carrying a pretzel as a last folkloric touch (p. 15). The contempt of the children is highly evocative. It is obvious that the Germans spoil the perfect landscape of Alsace – which would clearly improve without their presence.

The drawings recounting Hansi's days in prison are aimed at adding a more naturalistic influence to his art to convey this experience, which must have been particularly traumatising for a man used to comfort and tranquillity. It can certainly be said that the experience must have accrued his dislike and caustic treatment of Germans – the soldiers in particular, who are regularly represented

as ruthless and crude brutes. For example, one of his prison drawings (p. 19) displays the rather simple scene of a German warder – fat, with a thick moustache, red nose and square face – guarding a heavily locked prison cell, but Hansi has purposely added a long and propagandistic caption encouraging the readers to look at its symbolic significance: we have to imagine a ‘small and very sad Alsatian girl’ inside this cell, acting as an allegory of the regime under which the region had to live from 1871 to 1918 – a life seemingly deprived of any liberties.

The adjacent page (p. 18, see image 3) shows a caricature that is not a direct illustration of one of the details of the text, but rather the representation of Hansi’s stereotypes about German soldiers: three pictures depict a German soldier at three different points in history, and three different captions that were used in Alsace to describe the Germans at these times in turn. The soldiers always share the exact same physical characteristics, which summarise Hansi’s stereotypes as regards their portrayal: square face, round red nose, huge blond moustache, unsmiling mouth, beady eyes under a heavy brow – brutish and unintelligent. The first soldier wears the blue uniform and spiky helmet of 1871 and is called a ‘Prussien’ – Alsace had just been annexed so this by then already highly evocative term in Germany would speak for itself in this context; the second one wears the green uniform of 1912 and is called a ‘Schwob’ – Alsace is German then, which is reflected by the – pejorative – word of the neighbouring region: Alsace is geographically positioned next to Baden and Württemberg. The third soldier wears the khaki and brown uniform of 1917, used during the First World War, and is called a ‘Boche’ – the pejorative slang term most often used in French propaganda of that time. Hansi’s message is rather straightforward: despite Alsace’s change of nationalities during a period of several years, the German soldiers are always seen negatively by the local population, and that reputation does not change through time – one could even say that these images show a real worsening of that reputation. What is more: this highlights implicitly all Germans – those disliked anyway, those to be assumed to be militaristic and, perhaps worse, the neighbouring ‘Schwabens’ which in turn suffered their own conflicts with the Prussians.





3. A typical depiction of German soldiers at different periods by Hansi.<sup>497</sup> © Musée HANSI

The narrative continues with the escape of Hansi from Alsace to France, to avoid a long prison sentence, and his subsequent enlistment in the French Army when the war begins in 1914. Hansi explains that it had always been his dream since he was a child in German Alsace to one day be part of the French Army; so the drawings he uses for this part are littered with patriotic ornaments painted in the three colours of the French flag – blue, white and red. The image representing Waltz smiling and posing in his uniform (p. 21) does not seem to convey the atmosphere and horrors of the war briefly alluded to in the next pictures and paragraphs (pp. 22-24), but the end of the war is soon reached so that Hansi can depict the positive images of post-war celebrations in Alsace, which are the main subject (and reason) of his book. The actual celebrations are seemingly on a par with celebrating Alsace, and this again is the celebration of the togetherness of Alsace and France. In anticipation of the arrival of the French troops in Alsace, Hansi describes the French flags being taken out of their cupboards and other hiding places, or made from clothes – stressing a sense of hidden continuity. The illustrations convey the feeling of longing for France from the Alsatian population of 1918 (p. 24): spider webs cover the flag due to forty-eight years spent in the cupboard (but at least they have been preserved!), and Alsatian girls are calmly sewing new French flags while a little boy waits patiently to hang one flag on a pole. The domestic scene is typical of Hansi's portrayal of Alsatian folklore: the pretty children (with fairly similar faces) in traditional costumes, sitting on no less than the typical heart-carved wooden chairs. The identification process is immediate and highlighted by the patriotic decorative patterns on either side of the image, including recurring tricolour flags, cockades and garlands.

<sup>497</sup> Hansi, *L'Alsace heureuse*, p. 18.

The other part of Hansi's Alsatian folklore lies in his depiction of Alsatian landscapes, usually populated with children in traditional clothes. At the end of the war and 'liberation' of Alsace by France the lack of German characters is conspicuous in these landscapes, as well as the presence of French soldiers in uniforms, accompanied by lovely Alsatian women in traditional attire. French flags can also be found in numerous places.

Such is the case for the two pictures of 1918 Alsace (p. 25). One depicts the cathedral of Strasbourg – similar to the one at the beginning of the book and highlighting the merit of recurring motives – but boasting two French flags and a nearby stork on its nest (the latter already present in the 1912 image). The second shows a peaceful Alsatian village, possibly Waltz's hometown Colmar,<sup>498</sup> the French flags and stork also present on the local church, with a couple walking together in the foreground: an Alsatian woman with her French soldier 'hero'. The latter can be said to represent a kind of response to the pre-war French propaganda, whose iconography often included the allegory of Alsace as a pretty but rather weak woman crying for her lost lover, a brave French soldier.<sup>499</sup> Hansi's Alsatian women always seem to conform to this image in his drawings, and their beauty and delicateness serve to echo the sophisticated and stylish French women, while comparatively underlining the ugliness and lack of fashion style of their German counterparts. Zislin's women, however, are more varied and sometimes ambiguous, as will be explained in the second sub-chapter.

Waltz then returns to his own experiences, explaining the circumstances of his return to Alsace on the day of the *Armistice* in his French Army uniform,

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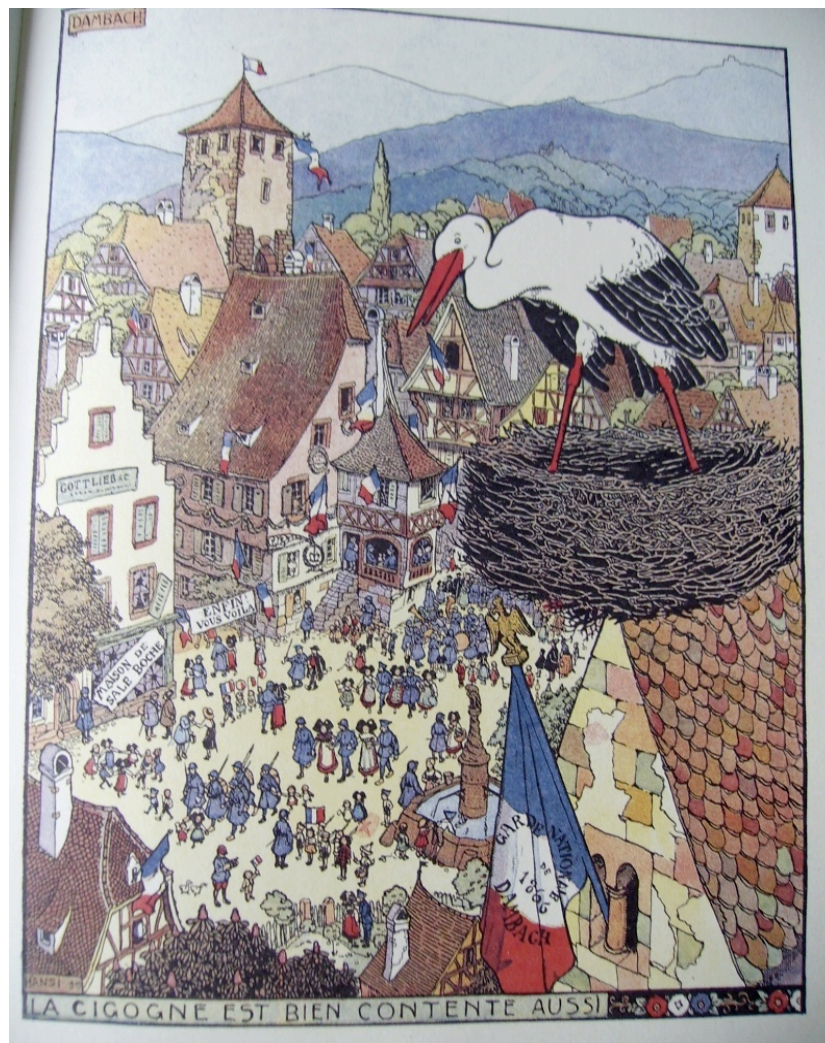
<sup>498</sup> Hansi tends to use landmarks, such as decorated buildings, cathedrals, etc., when he aims to represent an Alsatian city or town, but when villages are seen only in the background of an image representing a landscape, he does not use any easily identifiable details, and prefers to use the image of a generic village that could be seen in Alsace, or even in other French regions. Not all Alsatian places have particular and apparent landmarks like Strasbourg's cathedral, the latter being famous and recognisable by its single Gothic spire, even outside of Alsace. The 'generic' village includes a few simple houses with no particular features, apart maybe for the pointed steeple of its church – some of the German villages close to Alsace sporting more 'bulbous' steeples.

<sup>499</sup> For further information on the depiction of Alsace 'crying' for France, see the discussion about Zislin in the second sub-chapter. See also: François Roth, *Alsace-Lorraine: Histoire d'un 'pays perdu': de 1870 à nos jours* (Nancy: Editions Place Stanislas, 2010). Laurence Turetti, *Quand la France pleurait l'Alsace-Lorraine: les 'provinces perdues' aux sources du patriotisme républicain, 1870-1914* (Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue, 2008). Bernard Wittmann, *L'antigermanisme en France et en Alsace: Des origines à 1945*, vol.1 (Haguenu: Éditions Nord Alsace, 2007).

particularly his triumphant – and distinctly emotive – entrance in Colmar. The related drawings show the entrance of French troops into various Alsatian towns, starting with Ribeauvillé (pp. 26-27). The first drawing is typical of the following ones: the jubilant Alsatian crowd welcomes and cheers the troops as they arrive in the town, the houses are decorated with garlands, a multitude of French flags, and signs proclaiming ‘Vive la France’ or ‘Vive nos libérateurs,’ as well as ‘Vive Foch! A bas les Boches!’ after Maréchal Foch, who ‘liberated’ Alsace-Lorraine on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 1918 – the grudge against the Germans still present among the Alsatian population. Women in the crowd wear the traditional colourful Alsatian dresses and headgears in the form of bowties, while men wear suits and top hats. Young Alsatian girls precede the troops in folkloric farandoles and are followed by the Army’s brass band, which adds to the festive atmosphere and implies that times ahead will be good: Alsatian space has been reclaimed and any destructive forces that spoil the perfect landscape have been removed. Several signs mention the dates ‘1871–1918’ to emphasise the forty-seven years that Alsace was annexed by the German Empire. Waltz has added a separate detail of a half-timbered house – part of a collective iconography associated with Alsace in folklore. This house is a famous landmark in Ribeauvillé, as is the belfry on the adjacent picture, since Hansi liked to include them in his regional drawings and paintings, so that the local population could easily identify them, but probably also as a means to show his own knowledge of Alsace’s ‘treasures’ – which he advertises profusely. For the non-Alsatian readers who may not recognise them, Hansi has added the names of the towns he describes in each image.

Coincidentally– and in echo of some of the travel-guides studied in the second chapter of this thesis – Hansi’s use of the documentary genre in the drawings of the present book as well as in most of his works makes an effective and attractive guide to Alsace for the ‘Français de l’intérieur’ who most of the time did not know the region well after so many years in the ‘enemy’s hands’. These drawings serve as evidence that the pre-war propaganda encouraging the return of Alsace to France was useful and backed up by the Alsatian population. This kind of depiction of Alsatian post-war celebrations is repeated time and again, with people dressed in their traditional ‘Sunday clothes’ embellished with tricolour cockades, and Alsatian women accompanying French soldiers in

uniform – clearly, there are no anxieties that this might be considered as fraternisation. Hansi also takes particular care in detailing the drawing devoted to Colmar (pp. 32-33), with many landmarks and himself in his soldier's uniform accompanied by children, looking happy to be finally reunited with their 'Uncle Hansi'. It strengthens the sense of identity that the author himself is a witness of the process. This pattern of celebrations is reiterated in the text and its illustrations, which soon acquire a repetitive dimension. It becomes clear that Waltz works with a range of firmly established images – including his own story, his close link with the Alsatian history, but also the depiction of Alsace in terms of landscape, geography and history. A sense of 'togetherness' and 'easy recognition' are firmly promoted for the benefit of a perceived identity that is at no point in doubt. This works all the better, since children tend to be less mindful of such repetitions and rather enjoy the variety of details. As an immediate result Alsace is firmly put on the map as a most desirable place to be and the hardship Alsatians have experienced is, it would appear, by now ingrained into the landscape – making it all the more desirable.



4. Dambach 'liberated' by the French soldiers by Hansi.<sup>500</sup> © Musée HANSI

A noticeable difference can be found in the drawing dedicated to Dambach (p. 53, see image 4), a picturesque Alsatian village whose folkloric aspect is emphasised by a 'happy' stork in the foreground. Its particularity lies in a detail that differs from the festive and positive atmosphere shown: the window of a shop has been broken and covered with a large sign announcing 'Maison de sale Boche' – a distinct proof of the Germans' situation, forcefully exiled from Alsace by a vengeful population. This detail will be 'erased' in post-Second World War publications, too reminiscent of the treatment endured by the Jewish population under National Socialist rules.<sup>501</sup> Hansi is, after all, very cutting and political and does not shy away from racist comments about Germans. In terms of identity, there is no middle ground for him concerning the 'Boches', a perspective that contrasts with his pretty, folkloric images of Alsace. Several of Hansi's more iconic drawings – often of Alsatian children – would also be

<sup>500</sup> Hansi, *L'Alsace heureuse*, p. 53.

<sup>501</sup> Cf. Wittmann, I, 284.

censored, erasing the German characters to hide Waltz's anti-German views from a wider and international audience, since Hansi's images are often used as postcards sold to tourists in Alsace – Hansi's works have over the years become a marketable part of an Alsatian iconography. Indeed, his enduring legacy can be found on all sorts of merchandising items in Alsace, and while a decade ago the images used were restricted to folkloric drawings of Alsatian children in traditional costumes, now more and more postcards can be found in Strasbourg depicting Germans caricatured by Hansi (see images 5 and 6).



5. Hansi postcards in Strasbourg's *Librairie Kléber* on 29/12/10 (left).

6. Hansi postcards in Strasbourg's *Office du tourisme* on 06/07/12 (right).<sup>502</sup> © Isaure Triby (for both images)

The continuous use of these images for profitable purposes could be seen as surprising in a region geographically close to Germany and often visited by German tourists, but it can arguably be at least partly explained by the French authorities' repeated actions of *rapprochement* with their German counterparts – on a regional as well as national level – in recent years. This need for solid bonds – particularly during the current economical crisis in Europe – between the two countries includes an increased acceptance about an ambiguous and polemical past concerning Alsace – thus admitting that Hansi's ideas portrayed in his works reflected the anti-German French propaganda of the 1910s. One might also argue that with time moving on and the strength of the European

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<sup>502</sup> The *Librairie Kléber* is one of the main bookshops in Strasbourg and the *Office du tourisme* is situated on the *Place de la cathédrale* in Strasbourg – the most touristic place in the city, so the postcards displayed are rather easy to find and buy. The staff at the *Office du tourisme* confirmed (on 06/07/12) that they would not sell blatantly anti-German postcards, so the anti-German connotations can only be found in small details of some of the postcards displayed there. Besides Hansi merchandises, one can also note that the *Office du tourisme* in Strasbourg tends to sell more 'locally' published travel-guides or guides from German publishing houses, than French 'national' ones (like the popular *Guide du Routard*), and one stand in the store is reserved for the cathedral itself – emphasising its popularity amongst tourists.

Union, 'petty' and, most importantly, past issues such as Hansi's caricatures are not of much importance in the grand scheme of things. The marketing of Hansi's anti-German images could simply show a certain lack of understanding and sensibility on behalf of the local authorities. Even though it is generally accepted that a changing political context can, indeed, make something that was once very provocative quite acceptable – even for Hansi's primary targets in this case, the Germans.



7. Hansi's typical depiction of German civilians.<sup>503</sup> © Musée HANSI

Waltz's *antigermanisme* is shown in many images of his book, through his caricatures of Germans and the rhetoric that accompanies them. For instance, he describes the Germans' departure from Colmar (p. 47, see image 7) as a joyous occasion for the local population, booing and mocking them as they board the military truck that will send them back to the other side of the Rhine. Their narrow and sallow faces differ from the round and healthy-looking faces of the cheeky Alsatian children wearing smocks and French caps. The Germans wear glasses and Tyrolean hats, have disproportionately large feet, and carry their hiking backpacks and *Alpenstock*, standing in a queue surrounded by smiling French soldiers. This scene is disturbingly reminiscent of anti-Semitic caricatures representing the Jews' deportation.<sup>504</sup> In Hansi's image a population is also stigmatised and excluded because of its ethnic origins.<sup>505</sup> The text recounts unapologetically the Alsatian population's retribution against the Germans after the announcement of the Armistice:

<sup>503</sup> Hansi, *L'Alsace heureuse*, p. 47.

<sup>504</sup> For an example of this iconographic comparison between Germans seen by Hansi and Jews seen by Nazism, refer to: Wittmann, I, 282.

<sup>505</sup> *Ibid.*

Déjà, depuis longtemps, avant même l'arrivée des troupes françaises, les Boches les plus méchants avaient été rossés, et leurs magasins mis à sac par la population. Toutes les nuits on collait sur leurs maisons des centaines de petites étiquettes où l'on pouvait lire en toutes lettres: "Maison de sale Boche".<sup>506</sup>

Hansi seems to justify this violent treatment by the fact that the Germans targeted are the 'meanest' and deserve their fate. He also underlines the Germans' desperation to stay in Alsace, making them lower themselves to humiliating 'tactics' and behaviours to seek the Alsatian population's favour and protection – without success. In the next image (p. 48), the Germans are shown crossing at dusk a small bridge over the Rhine, with the caption 'Passage du Rhin – 1918 – Retour au pays natal.' Hansi uses the 'shadow puppets' technique (*ombres chinoises*), which dramatises the situation and exaggerates their peculiar silhouettes. Hansi regularly alludes to the fact that the Germans enjoyed life and the riches of annexed Alsace, so their exile is seen as a 'Paradis perdu' (p. 51, see image 8), depicted through their thinner figures – now that they cannot enjoy Alsatian food anymore – standing in a forlorn manner behind the barrier symbolising the border on the Rhine, and looking longingly towards Alsace. The message is made explicit through the text and caption: 'Les Boches expulsés, maigres comme des clous, viennent souvent à la barrière du Pont du Rhin contempler avec mélancolie le Paradis perdu' (p. 51). From Hansi's perspective, life in Alsace can only be better than life in Germany.

The previous drawing is seconded by another one showing the same scene in a larger frame, with a wider landscape, to encompass the whole length of 'le Pont du Rhin à Brisach,' which marks the frontier between France (Alsace) and Germany. In the foreground, a couple of Alsatian children are looking at a sign, guarded by a French soldier, proclaiming: '1789-1918. Ici commence le Pays de la Liberté' (p. 51). This picture is taken – like several others – from Hansi's previous book, *Histoire d'Alsace*, and according to him inspired someone to put a similar sign beside the actual bridge at the end of the war.<sup>507</sup> In fact, the sign

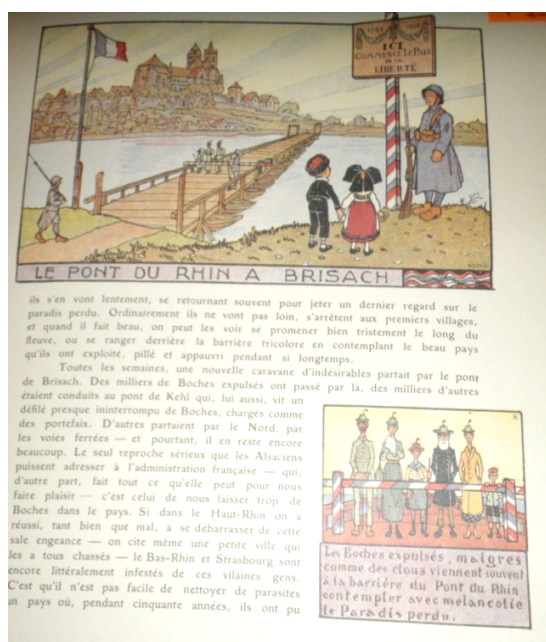
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<sup>506</sup> Hansi, *L'Alsace heureuse*, p. 46.

<sup>507</sup> IZislin also published a caricature of this bridge with the sign indicating 'Ici commence le pays de la liberté' in his periodical *Dur's Elsass* in March 1910. He referred to a time when Alsace was part of France and compared it with the current situation, under German rule and



seems to have originated from the French Revolutionaries (in the eighteenth century), which is another link with a French past and the ideals of the Republic favoured by Alsatians.<sup>508</sup> *Histoire d'Alsace* being ostensibly a children's book (although the fact that it is written in French in 1912 also effectively reduces its Alsatian readership<sup>509</sup>), Waltz mentions here that his books are read by their parents too, so his audience is larger than the targeted one, and provides a link between various Alsatian generations.<sup>510</sup> While the parents' memories are supported by Hansi's nostalgic imagery, the latter fosters the children's imagination: 'Livre pour enfants dont c'est, comme souvent, la mémoire des adultes qui fait en partie le succès.'<sup>511</sup> At the same time the reference to the parents reassures children of the 'correctness' of Hansi's story: they will, one might assume, expand on his narrative.



8. Page 51 of *L'Alsace heureuse* by Hansi. © Musée HANSI

As stated before, Alsatian children play a big part in Hansi's imagery and his characteristic way of representing them has also become part of the local folklore. Being the main readers of the book at the time of its publication, they are also the main subjects of several drawings found in *L'Alsace heureuse*. It is

without freedom. This reference to the French Revolution has thus become a stock image that both artists are using. Cf. Henri Zislin, *Sourires d'Alsace* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1919), p. 84.

<sup>508</sup> Cf. Jean-Marie Mayeur, 'Une mémoire-frontière: L'Alsace,' in Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997; first publ. 1984), I, 1154.

<sup>509</sup> Cf. Bruand, *Hansi*, p. 107.

<sup>510</sup> Further information on Hansi's *Histoire d'Alsace* can be found in: Bruand, *Hansi*, pp. 107-123.

<sup>511</sup> Pierre Nora, 'Entre Mémoire et Histoire', in Nora (ed.), I, 39.

thus interesting to analyse a selection of such images, and identify Hansi's patterns in portraying these children. The first drawing chosen for this purpose depicts three young Alsatian girls carrying presents for the French troops entering Alsace, with the caption 'Pour recevoir les Poilus'<sup>512</sup> decorated with tricolour flowers (p. 29, see image 9). The children are dressed in the traditional Alsatian costumes, using lace and colourful floral patterns, completed with the regular headgear in the form of a huge bow tie, but with the signature tricolour cockade, repeated multiple times. Each region in France, just as in many German ones, has a traditional costume, rarely worn anymore, but still to be seen in heritage museums. These costumes reflect the region's history and wealth, with more colours and rich fabrics used for the wealthiest regions, as is the case for Alsace, whose traditional costume boasts colourful decorations, lace, velvet and silk. The headgear is particularly identifiable, but can be rather cumbersome; so it was not always worn in everyday life, but rather on Sundays or for special occasions. Hansi seems to prefer including the most easily recognisable appendage (the big bow headgear) and costume, which add to the folkloric value and a mood of celebration, although originally Alsace had many types of traditional costumes and headgears, depending on location, religion and marital status. This process thus reveals a need to create a shorthand within Hansi's images rather than reflecting contemporary practices. The characteristic costume that mainly used black and red was also the one most popular among French propaganda arguably because its simplicity was easy to reproduce on patriotic postcards.<sup>513</sup>

The first girl on the left carries a bottle of Riesling – one of Alsace's famous white wines – with a champagne glass; the second, who wears a red headgear, carries a *kougelhopf*; and the third girl carries a bouquet of tricolour flowers and a basket full of fruit. These presents symbolise some of Alsace's culinary prides, the region being known – and promoted – for its traditional dishes. It is another way for Hansi to emphasise the 'treasures' found in his region, which he seems to argue was one of the main reasons for Alsace's annexation by Germany.

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<sup>512</sup> 'Poilus' is the term used in France to mention the French soldiers who participated in the First World War. It is associated with the notions of virility and bravery, and has a positive connotation.

<sup>513</sup> Further information about the traditional Alsatian costumes can be found in: Marguerite Doerflinger, *Découverte des costumes traditionnels en Alsace* (Colmar-Ingersheim: Editions S.A.E.P., 1979). Meyer, pp. 36-37. Musées de la Ville de Strasbourg (ed.), pp. 112-117.

Evidence of this argument can be found when he describes the exiled Germans 'longing' for their 'lost Paradise' in many of the drawings present in *L'Alsace heureuse* and his other works. The young girls stand on a field, with a very simple landscape drawn with pale colours, so as to keep the focus on the characters in the foreground.



9. Hansi's typical depiction of Alsatian children.<sup>514</sup> © Musée HANSI

The pattern of pretty, doll-like children in Alsatian costumes standing on a field is reiterated throughout the book, and is a recurring one on postcards of Alsace nowadays.<sup>515</sup> It is usually preferred to Hansi's more controversial works to represent Alsatian folklore. Thus, it can be found again on page 34, echoing the previous image with eight children of various ages standing patiently in front of a minimalist background – plain grass and a yellowish sky – waiting for the arrival of the French troops again. They wear their Sunday clothes too, two girls carrying tricolour bouquets and two boys waving small French flags, one of them seemingly chanting along, while another boy carries an umbrella (the last item could be part of Hansi's Alsatian folklore, since it can be found in many drawings). The caption claims proudly 'On les attend!', the enthusiastic eagerness implied in the sentence differing from the quiet and polite way the children are standing. The latter makes them look rather unnatural, a fact that is emphasised by the uniformity of their physical traits: to underline the 'prettiness' of Alsatian children, Hansi erases any individuality, and achieves the effect of a decorative frieze. The close association between a French presence and children being able to indulge in Alsatian folklore is obvious, while the Germans simply seek to benefit from such assets and lack any understanding of their true value.

<sup>514</sup> Hansi, *L'Alsace heureuse*, p. 29.

<sup>515</sup> Cf. Loetscher and Scheibling, p. 37.

However that aspect is less present in the adjacent picture, which shows the children playing in everyday clothes. This scene shows seven Alsatian children of varying ages playing as French soldiers, some of them wearing actual military caps, and one carrying a French flag (p. 35, see image 10). Their clothes are simple but colourful, and their toys are made from utensils from everyday life, some of those being linked to France too, like the box of biscuits of the famous brand *LU* – which serves here as a drum – while a coffee grinder is used as part of a small canon gun, coffee being a drink ‘typically’ associated with French culture. Geese surround the children, yet another representative bird of Alsace because of the *foie gras* and *pâté* made in the region. The town depicted in the background is Riquewihr (Hansi provides it with a Frenchified spelling: ‘Riquevihr’), which is famous for epitomising Alsace’s picturesque image, standing in the middle of vineyards, including half-timbered houses and its battlements.<sup>516</sup> The latter are drawn by Hansi to serve as landmarks for his Alsatian audience. Riquewihr is situated in the South of Alsace, in the *Haut-Rhin* department, close to Colmar and Ribeauvillé, and was probably better known by Hansi.

The children are often surrounded by nature in Hansi’s images, and the caption mimics the children’s speech: ‘Harmes sur lePaul... Drrvatte!’. Waltz seems to be aware of a latent problem in Alsace, which would become part of the causes for the *malaise alsacien*: the Alsatian population did not speak good French after forty-seven years as a German territory. The children thus make grammatical mistakes and speak with a German accent, which is rendered in a comical way in this image. This was an aspect of the Alsatian folklore at the time, and most certainly part of the stereotypes concerning Alsace in France. Hansi might well have anticipated French reactions to his otherwise glorified landscapes here and alluded to the work to be done on behalf of French authorities. Surprisingly (considering his general rejection of anything German in Alsace), Hansi does not deny this reality – probably so that Alsatian children reading the book may identify with the characters easily, but also because it justifies his role of educator to them. This is made explicit in the drawing p. 39 (see image 10), showing a French soldier teaching the language to Alsatian children in the quaint town of Châtenois. The soldier looks younger than Waltz,

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<sup>516</sup> Cf. Bruand, *Hansi*, pp. 143-144. Loetscher and Scheibling, pp. 17-21, 41, 58-63, 90-91, etc.

but belongs to the same regiment in the French Army (the *152e Régiment d'Infanterie*). Hansi also refers to this linguistic problem and its consequences in Alsace and France in his narrative, insisting on the fact that French tourists visiting Alsace should not think that people are German (he uses the term 'Boche') because they do not speak French fluently, as it is particularly painful for these 'compatriots' (p. 56).<sup>517</sup> Hansi's children are pretty, clean and well behaved, which reflects in a positive way on the region itself. The wellbeing of its children can thus be reflective of an improved state of Alsace – as perceived from Hansi's perspective – now that the Germans have left and it is French territory again. Furthermore, these Alsatian children represent most of the part of Hansi's iconography that is still used (in merchandising) and remembered today. They could thus arguably be seen as 'lieux de mémoire'<sup>518</sup> of Alsace, because they refer to a common memory of the region, from a specific period, and with which people can still identify. It is all the more important that they are usually presented in the context of their surrounding landscapes.



10. Representations of Alsatian children in *L'Alsace heureuse*.<sup>519</sup> © Musée HANSI

The narrative itself relates the arrival of French troops in Alsace and the patriotic celebrations it generated in the region, but also touches upon the

<sup>517</sup> Even today some people in France do not know that numerous cities and towns of Alsace are in France and not Germany, due to their German-sounding names that are sometimes difficult to pronounce in other French regions, including Paris. This attitude related to Alsace's origins is not accepted well in the region.

<sup>518</sup> Cf. Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, 3 vols.

<sup>519</sup> Hansi, *L'Alsace heureuse*, pp. 35 (left), 39 (right).

problem of the 'Boches' who want to stay in Alsace through different means, even helped by some 'rare' Alsatians sometimes – a reference is made implicitly to the autonomists, the French government's enemies, who are in his opinion foolishly manipulated by the Germans.<sup>520</sup> It is another occasion for Hansi to state his obvious dislike of the Germans. He refers particularly to the privileged classes, who are, according to him, the worst. In this instance, he uses an Alsatian saying of the time, and one that he encourages French people to heed too: 'Un Boche reste un Boche, même s'il est né le 14 juillet!' It is particularly telling of the Alsatian distrust of the Germans, who are, it would appear, incapable of changing, no matter the circumstances (p. 54). He also seems to favour the 'lower people', those who in his eyes suffered the most throughout the annexation, and who still cannot speak French, but who are the most deserving in his opinion. Here, the images are not always linked directly to the text, but rather appear as if Hansi had made several generic pictures of patriotic celebrations in Alsace, for instance, and they were placed fairly randomly in the book. The images illustrate the text usually when Hansi mentions particular events, such as the Germans leaving Colmar, and sometimes the images tend to be purely decorative and/or stand on their own, without need for the text itself.

In conclusion, Hansi addresses the people of France, to advise them not to be prejudiced when visiting Alsace, praising the beauty of his region and the patriotism of the Alsatians, which is seemingly intact, one year after the end of the war. His only references to some potential problems in Alsace are implied rather than explicitly mentioned, such as French tourists thinking that Alsatians are actually Germans in disguise because of their language, or when he mentions that some laws can be unfair in France as in any country. However, he ends on a hopeful albeit highly hypothetical note: if someday the French think that the Germans have finally changed for the better and have taken responsibility for their 'crimes', then they should ask the Alsatians first, who are still 'guarding' the border along the Rhine, and if the latter agree – which would be a 'miracle' according to him – then they might all hope that a new 'era' of

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<sup>520</sup> Hansi supported the Alsatian autonomists during the annexation, because of their support of Alsatian needs against the hated 'Boches'. However, once the war was over and the *malaise* had grown in Alsace, increasing the autonomists' popularity in the region, they would become his enemies, in accordance with his nationalistic sensibilities and his need for more unity between France and Alsace. Cf. Loetscher and Scheibling, pp. 92-93.

'justice' and 'fraternity' will begin, with no more wars. Here Hansi still separates – consciously or not – the Alsatians from the French, which is evidence that the identity issues are not resolved, and the regional *particularismes* remain potent.

Waltz finishes his book by echoing its opening words, for this can be read as a continuation and – happy – conclusion of his *Histoire d'Alsace*, written in 1912. Throughout *L'Alsace heureuse* he uses the 'prettiness' of the objects, people and landscapes he portrays to illustrate and tell the – rather nostalgic – story of an idealised Alsace, whose population is apparently fiercely patriotic towards France and spiteful of Germans. He praises the region he loves but also denies its German characteristics, which are not compatible with his propagandistic and prejudiced views. In his drawings – and words – German people look typically stereotyped as ridiculous and/or cruel, always self-important and incapable of changing, while the French soldiers are brave heroes acclaimed by the Alsatian population:

La lecture que fait de l'histoire de l'Alsace le dessinateur colmarien Hansi [...] oppose au pangermanisme éternel, déjà fustigé sous les traits du *Professor Knatschke*, la France révolutionnaire messagère de liberté, pays de la douceur de vivre et des valeurs traditionnelles, opposé à l'Allemagne brutale gagnée par l'industrialisme.<sup>521</sup>

His message is addressed to the children, but through them their parents are also targeted. In a complex political context, he tries to depoliticise the situation and builds upon reassuring images of Alsatian folklore to appeal to the readers, trying to encourage the identification process, but also supporting the assimilation to a friendly France at a time when *autonomistes* sympathies are growing in Alsace, and he is not at the peak of his popularity anymore. Despite his polemical works, Hansi remains an important part of Alsace's cultural history and iconography, helping to shape the regional identity with a particular focus on a 'pretty' depiction that is skilfully associated with the adoption of a standpoint of apolitical innocence.

To underline the role that Hansi played in Alsace at the beginning of the twentieth century, and give further instances of his perspective on Alsatian matters – as well as his conflicted relationship with Germans – in his works, two

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<sup>521</sup> Mayeur, in Nora (ed.), I, 1158.

of Hansi's other books will be briefly analysed. They were published before and after *L'Alsace heureuse: Le Paradis tricolore* (1918) – similar in many ways to *L'Alsace heureuse* and it can be understood as its prologue – and *Le Voyage d'Erika en Alsace française* (1921) – a continuation of Hansi's popular *Professor Knatschké* (1908). While Hansi's ideas appear fairly unchanging in his various works, the methods he uses to propagate them change slightly, because the audiences targeted vary in the following books, in parallel with the historical context.

As with *L'Alsace heureuse*, the subtitle of *Le Paradis tricolore*<sup>522</sup> is quite self-explanatory: *Petites villes et villages de l'Alsace déjà délivrée – Un peu de texte et beaucoup d'images pour les petits enfants Alliés par l'Oncle Hansi*. Once again, Hansi uses the figure of the benevolent 'uncle' who is going to teach the children of France (and its First World War Allies) about the Alsace he loves and wants people to know about. He takes again the role of guide to introduce some parts of the region, but even though the book dates from 1918, Hansi's narrative takes place in 1914, when only a small area in the very South of Alsace, close to the French *Territoire de Belfort*, had already been liberated by French troops. Hansi uses this description of an idealised country to show his 'dream' for Alsace: for it to be French again – and thus uses the documentary genre in ways which exceed its function. His tale takes the form of an imaginary walk through these villages and their adjacent countryside in his company as a soldier stationed there with his regiment. The images are closely linked to the text and heavily ornamented with tricolour patterns, but they represent Alsatian villages more than they caricature the German enemy, contrary to the more voluminous *L'Alsace heureuse*. These devices are targeted at a French audience, in particular, that are thus reminded of Alsace as an objective during the First World War, an Alsace that is idealised and portrayed as determinedly French. This is the Alsace that Hansi had to flee but that deserved to be liberated by France. The narrative is thus tinged with nostalgia for the rural landscapes that Hansi favours, and he becomes the spokesperson for all Alsatians in the promotion of their region.

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<sup>522</sup> Hansi (Jean-Jacques Waltz), *Le Paradis tricolore: Petites villes et villages de l'Alsace déjà délivrée – Un peu de texte et beaucoup d'images pour les petits enfants Alliés par l'Oncle Hansi* (Paris: H. Floury, 1918).





11. German civilians depicted by Hansi in *Le Paradis tricolore*.<sup>523</sup> © British Library Board (12812.d.49)

Probably as a means of identification for his young audience, the book begins with a short essay supposedly written by an Alsatian child about the troubles brought by war and the Germans to Alsace, and ends with a small caricature of a German soldier fleeing ahead of a French soldier. However, this childish device does not mean that children are the only readers expected by Hansi, because their parents are always targeted too. The landscapes and villages are described with as much detail in the text as in the images, and as ever Hansi includes his own experiences and feelings, to appeal to a sympathetic audience. The drawings, with their bright colours and ornamentations, are arguably reminiscent of fairytales, even though they document real places. Children are found in almost all images, as well as French soldiers – the *Poilus* fondly remembered as helping the local population, contrary to the Germans who, it is claimed, stole everything from the Alsations for themselves or for the war efforts (like the church bells, ‘réquisitionnées’ to use their metal for armament<sup>524</sup>). Once again Hansi uses a simplistic, Manichaeic rhetoric to support his vision of Germans in comparison to French people, and to validate his opinion that Alsations identify exclusively with France. Because the region described in this book is already part of French territory, the German characters are less present, although they are represented in Hansi’s stereotypical way: ‘[...] Des touristes boches, avec leurs costumes verts, leurs sacs énormes, leurs lunettes et leurs chapeaux à plume,<sup>525</sup> which is illustrated on the following pages (see image 11).

<sup>523</sup> Hansi, *Le Paradis tricolore*, pp. 25 (left), 30 (right).

<sup>524</sup> Hansi, *Le Paradis tricolore*, p. 33.

<sup>525</sup> Hansi, *Le Paradis tricolore*, p. 29.

To facilitate the identification and assimilation of his characters by the audience, in his drawings, Hansi portrays Germans depending on how he categorises them within society: the civil servants are represented with the glasses and moustaches associated with the occupying force and its bureaucrats, but they are also rather fat – to show that they benefit from being in Alsace. They are seen as greedy and exploiting the riches of the region. The tourists have the green and somewhat ridiculous clothes and attire of the hikers frequenting the Vosges mountains. The teachers are usually tall and thin, with the usual moustache and glasses, and an overly straight posture to show their rigidity and self-important manners. Finally, the soldiers are massive and stand inflexibly, with a moustache, low brow and square face, their brutish look being evocative of their presumed violent behaviour. All Germans are usually depicted as blond and unsmiling, since Hansi describes them as cruel and lacking humour.<sup>526</sup> So, even though he identifies different ‘types’ of Germans, more so than Alsatians, who are seemingly one unified community recognisable by their traditional looks, the German types are all negative and the apparent antithesis of the positive French characters.

Hansi also recalls the pleasant experience of making a couple of German civil servants (one of the four ‘types’ of Germans he particularly despises) flee their ‘villa’ with the arrival of his regiment. This event reminds the readers of his participation in the war effort but also of his unrepentantly mean-spirited intentions towards Germans. It is an occasion for him to mock the Germans’ poor taste in interior decoration and their affection for the ‘modern style’,<sup>527</sup> which is apparently not to Hansi’s liking.<sup>528</sup> It is presented in opposition to traditional Alsatian architecture witnessed in small towns and villages and which he describes in the following terms: ‘Ces maisons d’Alsace m’ont charmé de tout temps: leurs façades gaies, le dessin amusant de leurs poutrelles, leurs fenêtres toujours garnies de géraniums nous consolait un peu aux jours tristes d’autrefois.’<sup>529</sup> Once again, the derision towards German attributes serves to underline the beauty of their Alsatian counterparts. These picturesque houses in quaint villages are also part of an Alsatian folklore, making Hansi the archetypal Alsatian filled with nostalgia for his homeland, favouring the

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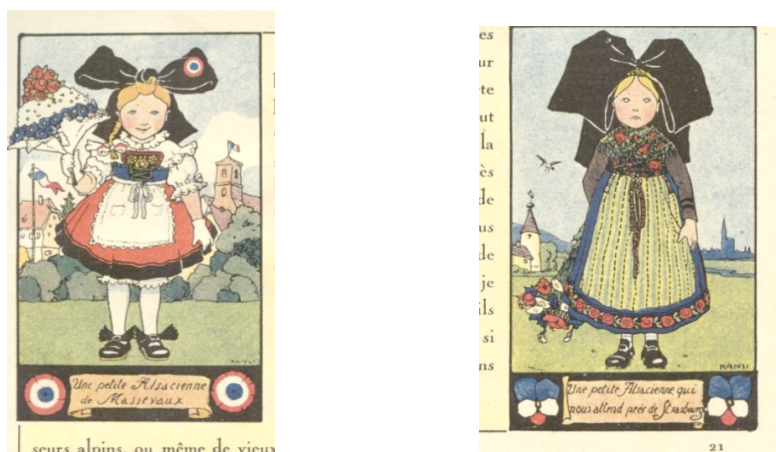
<sup>526</sup> Cf. Loetscher and Scheibling, p. 75.

<sup>527</sup> In English in the original text, p. 25 of *Le Paradis tricolore* (Hansi).

<sup>528</sup> Cf. Hansi, *Le Paradis tricolore*, p. 25.

<sup>529</sup> Hansi, *Le Paradis tricolore*, p. 10.

traditional over the modern. This nostalgia is echoed in his description of the 'new' traditional costume adopted by the children of Alsace to welcome important French people in the region: '[...] C'est d'abord une sorte de grande cravate Lavallière perchée au haut de la tête (il paraît que cela représente la coiffe alsacienne), puis une petite jupe très courte et un petit tablier de dentelle encore plus court' (p. 21, see image 12). He adds that this is the costume as the people from Paris imagine it, but quite different from the more sober but still colourful 'real' costume, as seen around Strasbourg.<sup>530</sup> This detail mirrors the fact that there are many variants of such dresses, depending on the place, the time and sometimes the religion of its wearers (Protestants wearing more sober colours than Catholics, for example).<sup>531</sup> Here he apparently addresses his French, non-Alsatian audience in a rare, slightly admonishing manner, and uses this occasion to educate them on Alsatian culture and traditions.



12. Children in Alsatian costumes depicted by Hansi in *Le Paradis tricolore*.<sup>532</sup> © British Library Board (12812.d.49)

In *Le Paradis tricolore*, Hansi uses the same narrative devices and decorative patterns and imagery as in *L'Alsace heureuse*, published the following year. The latter expands on and emphasises them since its propagandistic discourse is targeted at assimilating Alsatian people to France, while *Le Paradis tricolore*'s message is addressed particularly to the people in the rest of France, to make them discover a region practically unknown to them. It is hardly surprising that

<sup>530</sup> See also Elizabeth Vlossak's interesting argument about Alsatian women wanting to reflect the French's collective memory about their costumes, creating traditions that no longer reflect reality. Cf. Elizabeth Vlossak, *Marianne or Germania? Nationalizing Women in Alsace, 1870-1946* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 208.

<sup>531</sup> Cf. Musées de la Ville de Strasbourg (ed.), p. 113. Today's regional costume is also more similar to the traditional one from Strasbourg and its surrounding area, which is illustrated by Hansi opposite its 'Parisian' counterpart.

<sup>532</sup> Hansi, *Le Paradis tricolore*, p. 21.

Hansi's distinctive prose is again highly subjective, and relates memories from his own childhood, with the hopes and dreams of his father and, again, with his hated German teachers at school, who were a prominent and negative feature of his formative years. Hansi, as well as Zislin, 'often chose the teacher as their target because they clearly feared his role in the process of national identity formation.'<sup>533</sup> They were aware of the dangers of German propaganda included in the education of Alsatian children from an early age. These teachers are typically represented and reminiscent of his character of *Professor Knatschké* published in 1908: violently nationalistic, full of their own perceived importance and arguing that the German language is the most beautiful in the world, and far superior to French.<sup>534</sup> These characteristics are also present in the protagonist of *Le Voyage d'Erika an Alsace française*.

For this second volume, Hansi picks up the style of *Professor Knatschké* by using the perspective of the book's protagonist, Erika K., who could well be a relative of the Professor. The subtitle is once again explicit: *Compte Rendu d'une Réunion de l'Association des Alsaciens-Lorrains expulsés à M... dans le Wurtemberg; Communiqué et illustré par Hansi; Traduit par M. le Professeur de français au Lycée de Tübingen*.<sup>535</sup> The term 'expulsés' refers to a German nostalgia for Alsace that seems to mirror Hansi's usual one, but is unjustified in their case from Hansi's perspective (that Alsace belongs in France). This book is most probably targeted at a wider audience than only children, as the veiled criticism is subtler with the ironic tone used throughout. Furthermore, the format being smaller, the images are less important and the caricature is seen mostly in the text itself. The latter relates the meeting of a fictitious association of Germans deported from Alsace-Lorraine, but still pining for the region and its benefits, listening to the report from one of its members (Erika K.) after a trip to Alsace. The narrative of Erika is obviously very subjective, and is emphasised by a second narrative in the form of the supposed translator's footnotes, usually commenting on the beauty and superiority of the German language. That second narrative is sometimes underlined by a third one: Hansi himself commenting on the translator's remarks, adding to the ironic undercurrent. The

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<sup>533</sup> Detmar Klein, 'Battleground of Cultures: "Politics of Identities" and the National Question in Alsace under German Imperial Rule (1870-1914)' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, Royal Holloway, 2004; abstract in *Revue d'Alsace*, 132 (2006), 503-509), p. 77.

<sup>534</sup> Cf. Hansi, *Le Paradis tricolore*, p. 17.

<sup>535</sup> Hansi (Jean-Jacques Waltz), *Le Voyage d'Erika en Alsace française* (Paris: H. Floury, 1921).

goal is mostly to mock the Germans, but also to criticise the return of some of them to Alsace, due, he feels, to some mistakes of the French administration and the complicity of Alsatian notables. This criticism against those particular 'notables', shared by a big part of the Alsatian population after the First World War, is more explicitly stated, but with an opposing tone in one of the translator's footnotes (p. 55). It seems that Hansi too felt the effects of the *malaise alsacien* that he was actually trying to counteract in *L'Alsace heureuse*. This fact serves as evidence of a certain evolution in Hansi's opinion of Alsace, which stays his priority, just as his anti-Germanism stays constant. It can also be the result of Hansi's possible bitterness at his decreased popularity during the *malaise* due to his strong support of French propaganda.

Hansi criticises the autonomists who demand that Alsace be more independent from France, keep a separate government (embodied by an Alsatian *Statthalter* equivalent, appreciated by Erika's association – pp. 54-56) with German as one of its official languages (p. 38). For him, these people, whom he used to support, are influenced by the Germans, eager to return Alsace to Germany and trying to lower the French influence in the region, and just serve to divide Alsatians. Hansi's preoccupation is particularly relevant during the period of *malaise alsacien*, but he makes a difference between autonomists and people like his friend, the aforementioned Abbé Wetterlé, who is still patriotic and has Alsace's interests at heart. The latter is thus despised by Erika in her account (pp. 45-46), just as she despises Hansi when he appears in his own book,<sup>536</sup> recognised by Erika at the train station in Colmar while he warily observes the Germans arriving in Alsace (pp. 22, 50). Wetterlé, Hansi and Zislin embody the Alsatians who stayed suspicious of the Germans' motivations and would warn against the future consequences of such leniency before the beginning of the Second World War.

The media are targeted by Hansi too, a part of it being too neutral towards Germans (p. 39), in his opinion, just as are some priests (pp. 40-43). In a region with fairly numerous newspapers and strong religious beliefs, this message seems highly political for Hansi, who was usually less versed in politics than Zislin. However, Hansi separates Colmar and other towns and villages from the

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<sup>536</sup> Making himself appear in his own book written through another person's perspective is a device also used by Hansi in *Professor Knatschké*.

*Haut-Rhin*, which are still pro-France and anti-German, from Strasbourg, where the administration – according to him – has been infiltrated by Germans, making Alsace’s capital a more pro-German city (pp. 50, 57). This idea of the German influence on the capital is shown on the book cover (see image 13) in a small drawing showing Strasbourg’s shadowed silhouette – recognisable by its cathedral – highlighted by the sun rising on the horizon. In answer to what he perceives as a provocation from the Germans and in accordance with French propaganda’s re-appropriation of Alsace, Hansi draws the cathedral with a French flag on its recognisable spire as often as possible, thereby defeating the German claim of tradition.<sup>537</sup> In this drawing (see image 13), the sun takes the form of a stereotyped German’s head watching the city intently, his sights set on it being made obvious through his coveting expression.



13. Hansi’s cover image of *Le Voyage d’Erika en Alsace française*. © British Library Board (012331.f.89)

In the text, all of these criticisms are to be understood ironically through Erika praising these aspects, since she represents a group of people calling themselves ‘Jeunes-Alsaciens’ (p. 14) to show their attachment to the lost region which they still long for, particularly its culinary riches (pp. 24-25). Hansi shows them dancing in supposedly Alsatian costumes in a ridiculous fashion, the costumes being Germanised and inaccurate (pp. 12-15, see image 14). Through the character of Erika, Hansi targets German women as they were consistently described by Alsatian caricaturists at the time, including his friend Zislin (cf. the second sub-chapter), suffering unflattering comparisons with their Alsatian counterparts: ‘Anti-German Alsatian satire depicted German women either as overweight, poorly-dressed pedants, or as scrawny, bespectacled bluestockings. Alsatian women were distinguished from them by their physical beauty and by either their regional costume or their chic French clothing.’<sup>538</sup> His

<sup>537</sup> Cf. Mayeur, in Nora (ed.), I, 1149.

<sup>538</sup> Vlossak, pp. 37-38.

choice of ironic narrative makes his message less directly propagandistic than in the previous book, which is probably a conscious choice in a less favourable context.



14. Germans dancing in fake Alsatian costumes, depicted in *Le Voyage d'Erika* by Hansi.<sup>539</sup> © British Library Board (012331.f.89)

Hansi realised most of his polemical works at the beginning of the twentieth century, including caricatures published in newspapers. For this part of his career one man played an important role in his life: Henri Zislin, an Alsatian more politically committed than Hansi, but now less famous than his counterpart, even though he was a prolific caricaturist with a style fairly similar to Hansi's own. After publishing his watercolours of Alsatian landscapes, Hansi met Zislin at the printer Charles Bahy's shop, and supported his crusade against the region's Germanisation.<sup>540</sup> Zislin's influence would thus start Hansi's career as a caricaturist. In 1906 Waltz published *Vogesenbilder* (= *Images des Vosges*) for the first time under his pseudonym, in which he mocked some German habits and trends witnessed in Alsace.<sup>541</sup> The book was a success, acclaimed in France, but severely criticised in Germany, and – rather unwillingly – Hansi became part of the political scene. Zislin published most of the satirical periodicals in the region in the same timeframe, such as *Dur's Elsass* (which reappeared in 1919), *Die Zukunft* (in 1926), and *Dr Franc-tireur* (in 1930), and others were created by some of his *autonomistes* acquaintances, heavily influencing the visual culture in the region with their regular use of caricatures. At the time people were able to identify the various styles straight away. The drawings can be understood as a contributing factor to the creative forces that shaped the Alsatian identity when it came into question in the context of political considerations. Both caricaturists were famous opponents of the German

<sup>539</sup> Hansi, *Le Voyage d'Erika en Alsace française*, p. 13.

<sup>540</sup> Cf. Loetscher and Scheibling, p. 20.

<sup>541</sup> Cf. Loetscher and Scheibling, p. 33.

Empire in Alsace at the beginning of the twentieth century, but Zislin's fame, contrary to Hansi's, did not reach much beyond the region. His style was sharper and his humour more caustic than Hansi's 'folkloric' images, which may be the reason why Zislin died more or less forgotten, while a good number of Hansi's works became part of Alsace's cultural heritage. In terms of identity, the idealised and almost timeless Alsace favoured by Hansi had a long-term impact (although the picturesque drawings were preferred over his anti-German works) – compared to Zislin's more political and contemporary images.

After the war, and following his slight decrease in popularity, Hansi worked less as a caricaturist and more as an artist, selling watercolours again and creating images for advertisements.<sup>542</sup> He was forced to flee to Switzerland during the Second World War to avoid deportation.<sup>543</sup> Although his style influenced authors such as Tomi Ungerer (with a different perspective, though), his work as a caricaturist tends to be forgotten: the depiction of an Alsatian dreamscape with anti-German undertones hardly works after the War, when Alsace has to be seen in a wider, increasingly European context.

#### 4.2. 1871 to 1918: Winning Hearts and Minds?

If Hansi's *L'Alsace heureuse* (1919) can be understood as a culminating piece of regional propaganda, it is of interest to analyse some of the trends preceding World War I on the one hand and to consider the trends from the 1920s onwards on the other. My focus will be two-fold: the political identity of Alsace and typical features that highlight a variety of issues associated with the region, both as represented through the works of caricaturist Henri Zislin. In the following sub-chapter, I aim to show that contrary to Hansi, Zislin presents a more 'real' Alsace within the constraints of contemporary history.

During Alsace's annexation – after the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 and until the end of the First World War – several newspapers were founded in the region, including some satirical periodicals using caricatures as a means to convey critical political messages to a wider audience. One such example is

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<sup>542</sup> Cf. Loetscher and Scheibling, pp. 88-89.

<sup>543</sup> Cf. Loetscher and Scheibling, pp. 115-116.



*Dur's Elsass*,<sup>544</sup> created by Henri Zislin (1871–1958) in 1907 (and published until 1923, making it Zislin's longest running publication) in Mulhouse, his hometown. While both are located in Southern Alsace (Haut-Rhin), Mulhouse is more industrial, working-class, and probably more politically inclined than Colmar, Hansi's hometown, which arguably reflects a countryside's rather than a city's mentality. Both hometowns thus seem to reflect their respective authors' characters well. The fact that Mulhouse is also located closer to the *Territoire de Belfort*, which remained a French region at the time despite its proximity to Alsace, may have had an influence on Zislin's favour of France over Germany. Zislin was recognised in Alsace mostly for his opposition to the German government during the annexation, through his caricatures, but he also opposed Alsatian autonomists after the region fell back to France. He collaborated with Hansi in *Dur's Elsass*. Both are associated with Alsatian concerns and their works are a testimony to how caricatures can contribute to a sense of identity in terms of pictorial narratives and how, with the depiction of particular themes, they strengthen political perceptions in the region at particular times.

Henri Zislin established himself as an opponent of Prussian military rule and the German Empire. He published his first satirical newspaper, *D'r Klapperstei* (= *la pierre des bavards*) in 1903.<sup>545</sup> He was forced to cease the production for financial reasons, and a satirical pamphlet, *Das Elsass als Bundesstaat* (= *L'Alsace, état fédéré*), was then published in 1905.<sup>546</sup> The latter was considered a direct attack against the Empire by the government and Zislin was imprisoned for three days. The imprisonment made him instantly popular in Alsace, particularly among autonomists, and this was in fact just the first of several prison sentences that were to contribute to his role as a man intensely preoccupied with Alsatian issues.<sup>547</sup> He could thus be regarded as a spokesperson for the Alsatian people at the time, defending their interests and issuing complaints to the German authorities on their behalf.

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<sup>544</sup> Henri Zislin (ed.), *Dur's Elsass: politisch-satirisch Wucheblättle / A travers l'Alsace* ([St. Ludwig i. Els.]: [Zislin(?)], 1907-1923).

<sup>545</sup> Cf. Benoît Bruant, 'Impertinence à coups de plume,' *Saisons d'Alsace*, 137 (1997), 42.

<sup>546</sup> Cf. Célestin Alexandre Reboul and Henri Zislin, *Ceux d'Alsace: 1900-1914* (Paris: Charles-Lavauzelle, 1935), p. 150. Conseil Consultatif du Patrimoine Mulhousien (CCPM) <[http://www.ccpm.asso.fr/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=70&Itemid=42](http://www.ccpm.asso.fr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=70&Itemid=42)> [accessed on 14/10/10].

<sup>547</sup> Cf. Bruant, 'Impertinence à coups de plume,' 42. Reboul and Zislin, p. 152.

In 1907, when Zislin started his second satirical newspaper, *Dur's Elsass* (= *À travers l'Alsace*), he was yet again imprisoned, this time for eight months.<sup>548</sup> As a result, his determination increased and his message was emphasised in his works, which assumed a more propagandistic tone to provoke the population into demanding the return of Alsace to France, as well as to protest against the perceived economic exploitation of the region by German interests.<sup>549</sup> This uncompromising attitude allowed him to gain further popularity and support among the autonomists, who he sometimes featured – usually favourably – in his drawings, as well as a reputation as a sharp caricaturist for Alsatian interests.

In 1911 he was sentenced again to two months in prison for an article considered as 'anti-Germanic', during which time Hansi replaced him as caricaturist for *Dur's Elsass*.<sup>550</sup> Like the latter, Zislin profited from his trials with the German government, and was invited to Paris with his friend to be celebrated as heroes of French patriotism.<sup>551</sup> They would both join the French Army during the First World War to work as interpreters. After the war, Zislin continued publishing several periodicals, but joined Hansi in an 'anti-autonomists' campaign on behalf of the French government, when Alsatian autonomists gained greatly in popularity in the region during the post-war *malaise alsacien*.<sup>552</sup> Hansi felt that the autonomists were influenced by the Alsatians deported to Germany, whose actions could, he thought, only weaken Alsace and serve the Germans' interests. Zislin shared some of his views and duly supported the French propaganda. Both artists noticed the rise of nationalism and the dangers that came with it in Germany after the First World War, and when Zislin tried to advertise his concerns with the help of his works,

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<sup>548</sup> Cf. Reboul and Zislin, p. 152. Les Humoristes Alsaciens <<http://membres.multimania.fr/briegel/humour.htm#a>> [accessed on 14/10/10].

<sup>549</sup> Propaganda Postcards of the Great War <<http://www.wv1-propaganda-cards.com/index.html>> [accessed on 14/10/10].

<sup>550</sup> Cf. Loetscher and Scheibling, pp. 9, 50.

<sup>551</sup>CCPM

<[http://www.ccpm.asso.fr/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=70&Itemid=42](http://www.ccpm.asso.fr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=70&Itemid=42)> [accessed on 14/10/10].

<sup>552</sup> Wittmann, I, 336.

he was arrested and deported in 1940, when the Nazis took control and annexed Alsace again.<sup>553</sup>

Zislin's style is similar to Hansi's, but the latter always kept an innocent touch because his books were targeted primarily at children. It is personal but can also be adapted to his subject, either as a style reminiscent of the *bande-dessinée* (the drawings having a larger frame with many miniaturised characters and describing scenes as in a play), or in a more artistic – and less caricaturist – way, in order to give a more solemn atmosphere to a scene pertaining to a serious matter.<sup>554</sup> As a more 'classical' caricaturist, Zislin's 'mission' was to satirise the reality of events in Alsace. He produced a lot more caricatures than Hansi, depending on the regularity of his publications, for which he was the main and almost exclusive illustrator – except when he was in prison.

Zislin's illustrated publications were read by a relatively wide audience, since the drawings covered half of the newspapers and they were most of the time humorous. For *Dur's Elsass*, the half that was not filled with caricatures was mostly devoted to classified advertisements and a few short articles usually related to the caricatures themselves. The fact that the events mentioned were mostly local news meant that they were supposed to be understood by the Alsatian population. His caricatures depended on the news, but some themes closer to his heart can be rather easily identified, since they were generally included in several editions, and as such can help us highlight the main preoccupations of Alsatians at the time. As with Hansi, we can also identify various patterns in the way he portrays his subjects, namely the Germans and Alsatians – the former are, predictably, shown in a negative and the latter in a positive light.

To begin with, my focus will be on particular Alsatian events depicted in *Dur's Elsass*,<sup>555</sup> such as the Constitution of 1911, which carried a lot of expectations among the population in 1910 and yet led to great disappointment. The Alsatian representatives hoped for more autonomy, which was supposed to give the

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<sup>553</sup>CCPM

<[http://www.ccpm.asso.fr/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=70&Itemid=42](http://www.ccpm.asso.fr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=70&Itemid=42)> [accessed on 14/10/10].

<sup>554</sup> Interestingly, this type of drawings is usually associated with France in *Dur's Elsass*.

<sup>555</sup> All caricatures from Zislin in this chapter can be found in his periodical *Dur's Elsass*.

region a status of *Staat*, with its own Parliament.<sup>556</sup> Instead, and after many heated debates among the different parties, the *Reichsland* was given two *Chambres*, only one of whose members were elected by the Alsatian population, the other one – named by the government – still having the power to oppose any laws voted by the first *Chambre*.<sup>557</sup> This was another occasion for the Alsatians to regret their previous independence as a French territory, a fact that was not appreciated by the German authorities who had granted this new Constitution to Alsace-Lorraine. Hansi – replacing Zislin in *Dur's Elsass* while the latter was in prison because of a few of his caricatures – represented this ‘misunderstanding’ in a caricature published in December 1911 titled *La nouvelle constitution* and portraying Alsace and Lorraine as children ignoring the presents that *Germania* is offering them for Christmas, preferring to play with their old French toys instead (see image 15).



15. Hansi's depiction of the new Constitution of 1911 in *Dur's Elsass*.<sup>558</sup> © British Library Board (09226.h.32)

The caption reflects *Germania*'s disapproval of their attitude: ‘J’ai beau apporter à ces sacrés gosses les jouets les plus beaux et les plus nouveaux, demain ils joueront de nouveau avec leurs vieilles poupées.’ *Germania* is depicted as an intimidating – and rather unattractive – lady wearing a crown sporting a single feather, which can either be a reference to the Imperial Eagle, or a reference to the hat worn by the German hikers in Alsace in both Hansi's and Zislin's caricatures. She also wears a coat similar to Father Christmas's, is fat and

<sup>556</sup> Cf. Dollinger (ed.), pp. 452-455.

<sup>557</sup> Cf. Zislin, p. 141.

<sup>558</sup> Reboul and Zislin, p. 229.

ruddy-faced (possibly from anger rather than alcohol). Her presents embody the overbearing presence of Germany in Alsace: a military boat, a German soldier's helmet and sword, the Germanised castle of Haut-Koenigsbourg, and the new Constitution from which shackles are dangling, a clear symbol of the servitude expected of Alsace-Lorraine. In the foreground Alsace and Lorraine are recognisable by their traditional headgears, and look like healthy, well-fed children – which reflects on the region's disposition as a proof that it also benefited from Germany. They are playing with wooden French soldiers from the Napoleonic wars, with a doll in a regional costume and another possibly personifying Joan of Arc, as well as a doll of Napoleon himself – a figure still very popular at the time in Alsace because of the specific measures granted to the region through him, such as the Concordat of 1801. In the background stands a Christmas tree, sporting decorations including pretzels and a French flag at the top. This caricature is made in a style very similar to Zislin's, with simple lines but a good amount of detail and stereotypical figures.

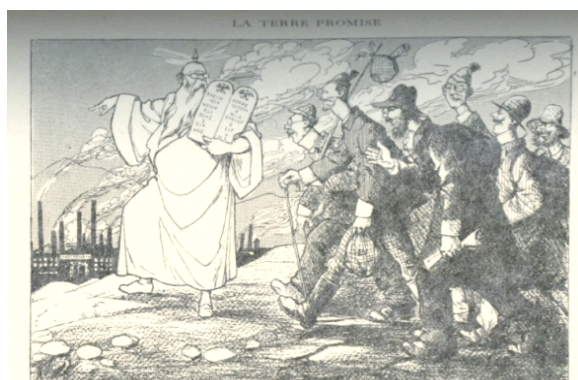
The negative reaction to the Constitution by the Alsatian population was considered a sign of hostility by the Germans. This triggered another event in April 1912 that would encounter the protests of the Alsatians. The 'Affaire de Graffenstaden' started when the *Rheinisch-westfälische Zeitung*, representing the Ruhr industries, attacked the director of the locomotive factory in Graffenstaden for his Francophile feelings. They threatened to stop any business relationships with the Alsatian factory, which would have harmed the region's economy. The repercussions affected the authorities and forced the resignation of the Alsatian director, Heyler.<sup>559</sup> This 'affaire' acted as a sign that the Germanisation process in Alsace-Lorraine was failing after the hopeful expectations of 1910-11.

It was also another occasion for Zislin to show his support for his region and the Alsatian public opinion, namely through a caricature ridiculing the Germans and their greed for Alsatian goods, in May 1912 (see image 16). A group of Germans, tall and thin, with sloping shoulders, big moustaches and round glasses, most of them wearing the typical hiker's costume, seem to be herded like sheep by a God who is pointing to them the way to the Graffenstaden factory in the background. Their mission is probably to take over the place,

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<sup>559</sup> Cf. Dollinger (ed.), pp. 456-457.

since they are carrying their luggage and the title is *La Terre promise*. There is a double meaning in the terms employed; the biblical language (Alsace associated with a sort of Eden, similarly to the image promoted in the travel-guides<sup>560</sup>), as well as the political promises as something to strive for. The figure of God is a reference to the German motto ‘Gott mit uns’ and is ‘Germanised’ as fat, with a long moustache and beard, round glasses, and the spike of a German helmet on his head. He is carrying a religious slab showing the names of ‘pan-Germanist’ newspapers involved in the ‘affaire’ and the Imperial Eagle stamp to signify the fact that they represent the Empire’s opinion. The Germans caricatured in this image are very reminiscent of Hansi’s depictions, with the exception that they seem to have more individuality – since they are each portrayed with slight differences. Their attire is clearly something Alsatian caricaturists enjoyed to focus on.



16. Zislin’s depiction of the ‘Affaire de Graffenstaden’ in May 1912.<sup>561</sup> © British Library Board (012350.g.4)

The following year, the ‘Affaire de Saverne’ caused public uproar. This event was raised several times in *Dur’s Elsass*, and presented the evolution of the Alsatian population’s reactions to the story unfolding. First came the mocking, in November 1913 (see image 17), which ignited the hostilities, with a caricature ironically titled ‘L’éméute des “wackes” à Saverne’ and showing the local population surrounding and laughing at Lieutenant von Forstner, drawn as a child accompanied by his nanny, and arrogantly telling her: ‘N’aie crainte, nounou, je ne leur ferai rien... D’ailleurs, à 10 marks par tête, ça dépasserait mes moyens; ils sont trop.’

<sup>560</sup> Cf. Chapter Two of this thesis.

<sup>561</sup> Zislin, p. 23.



17. One of Zislin's depictions of the 'Affaire de Saverne' in November 1913.<sup>562</sup> © British Library Board (012350.g.4)

Only a few of the women wear the traditional headgear, which differs from Hansi's style. The inexperience (cf. his young age) and arrogance (cf. the caption inverting the dominant/submissive roles between the population and himself) of Forstner are underlined, and he looks laughable with his military uniform and wooden toy horse.<sup>563</sup> The image would be immediately recognised by Alsatians in this context, and the humour conveyed would not be lost on Zislin's audience. However, the 'affaire' evolved in favour of the German military, and the Law sided with Forstner, which the Alsatians perceived as unfair since the insult had been issued by the lieutenant. Zislin depicted this evolution in the public opinion in a caricature titled *Comment tout finit en Allemagne* in December 1913 (see image 18).



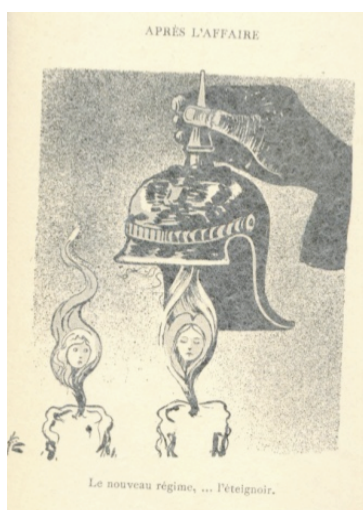
18. Another depiction of the 'Affaire de Saverne' by Zislin in December 1913.<sup>564</sup> © British Library Board (012350.g.4)

<sup>562</sup> Zislin, p. 297.

<sup>563</sup> Ibid.

<sup>564</sup> Zislin, p. 303.

On the left, an Alsatian man looks down on a miniaturised German soldier with the caption: 'L'affaire à son début. Le wackes a raison.' On the right part of the image the roles are reversed and the German soldier looks down on and kicks a miniaturised Alsatian man with the caption: 'La fin. Aux militaires le dernier mot.' Zislin tried to convey the power struggle and disillusionment felt by his fellow Alsations. This negative feeling was probably emphasised by the fact that at the beginning even the German public opinion was in favour of the Alsations in this case and demanding sanctions against the lieutenant, an attitude that changed after the judge's decision in favour of the military.<sup>565</sup> The German soldier is portrayed here as intimidating, but with the typical low-browed, square face, pointed helmet and big moustache. One last caricature shows the repercussions of the 'affaire' in February 1914, simply titled *Après l'affaire* (see image 19).



19. The aftermath of the 'Affaire de Saverne' in February 1914, by Zislin.<sup>566</sup> © British Library Board (012350.g.4)

The caption reads 'Le nouveau régime, ... l'éteignoir.' and is illustrated by an image representing the flames of two candles as Lorraine and Alsace, the latter being about to be snuffed out by a German soldier's helmet held by an anonymous hand, which can be associated with the Justice system's interference in the previous discussion. This picture symbolises the power of the Army increasing and the repression becoming harsher against the Alsations, who cannot express their opinions freely anymore. The context of the 1910s is marked by conflicts in Alsace, which echo the international diplomacy

<sup>565</sup> Cf. Zislin, p. 294.

<sup>566</sup> Zislin, p. 309.



worsening in anticipation of the First World War. The Alsatians were aware of the degrading situation before the French, and Zislin himself felt the effects of the German government endorsing a more repressive regime in Alsace, since he was soon to be sentenced for his works, and forced into exile. Alsace's plight, as shown in these caricatures, is that of a whole group and its region – there is a strong sense of what Augé, in reference to Nora, describes as 'the image of what we are no longer.'<sup>567</sup> The various affairs serve to highlight a sense of loss in Alsace, a more general sentiment that Zislin conveys.

Before France settled for a pacifist approach, which was not understood in Alsace, the relationship with Germany was not progressing well, and Alsace was 'caught in the middle', as seen in Zislin's caricature, published on the cover of the 17<sup>th</sup> September 1910 issue of *Dur's Elsass*. The picture represents France and Germany having an argument on a bridge consisting of a single plank of wood and called 'Humanité', with a smaller Alsace in the middle and an explicit caption in German and French (the periodical used Alsatian, French and German as official languages): 'Wo zwei sich streiten freut sich nicht immer... der Dritte! / La dispute des uns, ne fait pas toujours la joie des autres!' (see image 20).



20. The failing diplomacy between France and Germany, depicted by Zislin in September 1910.<sup>568</sup> © Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire de Strasbourg, M.MFL.711

<sup>567</sup> Marc Augé, *Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London; New York: Verso, 2006), p. 34.

<sup>568</sup> *Dur's Elsass*, 17 September 1910, p. 1.

Alsace is portrayed as a young girl in a traditional – but simple – costume and carrying a wicker basket with the word ‘particularisme’ at its top. She is represented as an innocent victim in this fight, a role that she is often given in caricatures of that time. Both other figures are drawn in more detail and embody the national allegories of France and Germany: *Marianne* and *Deutscher Michel*. *Marianne* first appeared during the French Revolution of 1789 and can be recognised by her Phrygian hat, but where she is usually depicted in other Alsatian caricatures of the time as beautiful and elegant – as French culture is something that the Alsatians seemingly long for – here she is a fat and ugly woman. Furthermore, even though she walks in the direction of the background sign indicating ‘progrès’, she is seen as aggressive and hostile, more so than the figure of *Deutscher Michel*, who seems to be moving back from her.

This latter representation is in keeping with the traditional depiction of a non-forceful character, who first appeared in the sixteenth century as lay-man but who became more popular in the nineteenth century as a personification of the common people in Germany.<sup>569</sup> His lethargy is symbolised by the typical nightcap he wears, and he usually is easy-going and not revolutionary, hence his moving away from *Marianne*. Zislin provides the names of the two national figures to avoid any confusion as to whom they might embody, although it is fair to say that Alsatians could easily identify them at the time. Both of them carry a bag representing their heritage in Zislin’s eyes: *Marianne* has a fashionable bag marked with the French cockerel and motto ‘Liberté, égalité, fraternité’, while *Michel* carries a backpack similar to the German hikers’ seen in other caricatures with the word ‘pangermanisme’ on it. Zislin signifies his disapproval of France’s aggressive attitude towards Germany that could have dire consequences for Alsace – i.e. Germany refusing more autonomy for the region in the new Constitution, as a vindictive reaction – through his unusual depiction of *Marianne*, but her heritage is still preferable for the region than *Michel*’s pan-Germanism. He does show that he is able to criticise France, which is something that Hansi never does outright – and which shows that they are not

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<sup>569</sup> Cf. Birgit Köhler, ‘Der deutsche Michel in der Karikatur des Vormärz’ <<http://www.bikonline.de/histo/michel.html>> [accessed on 24/11/10]. Horst Böttcher, ‘Der deutsche Michel’ <<http://www.kapitalismusfehler.de/Deutscher-Michel.html>> [accessed on 24/11/10]. Eda Sagarra, ‘The strange history of “der deutsche Michel”’ <<http://www.gfl-journal.de/1-2000/sagarra.html>> [accessed on 24/11/10].

as similar in their opinions and style as is portrayed in various studies.<sup>570</sup> This hostile context of 1910 would pave the way for the 'affaires' of 1912 and 1913. Importantly for identity, though: there is no room for Alsace here and it is crushed in between the dominant powers.

Following the First World War, Zislin returned to Alsace, after serving in the French Army as interpreter, and resumed the publication of *Dur's Elsass*. In 1919 the French authorities organised some 'cérémonies du souvenir' to celebrate the anniversary of the end of the war and return of Alsace to France, but to also try and distract Alsatians from their unmet demands. If we have previously seen how Hansi willingly participated in this propaganda, Zislin kept defending his region's interests and was much more clear-sighted than his compatriot in his depiction of these events.



En Alsace reconquise (Image de guerre) — Im zurückgewonnenen Elsass (Kriegerinnerung)

21. One of Zislin's depictions of the celebrations for the anniversary of the end of war in Alsace, organised by the French authorities in 1919.<sup>571</sup> © Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire de Strasbourg, M.MFL.711

In this caricature (see image 21), published on the 10<sup>th</sup> August 1919, Zislin uses a style that can be seen as a forerunner of the *bande-dessinée*, with miniaturised characters drawn in different scenes, each one showing another

<sup>570</sup> For example, in: Klein, 'Battleground of Cultures'.

<sup>571</sup> *Dur's Elsass*, 10 August 1919.

story as part of a whole picture, some characters even using speech 'bubbles'. The overall effect is fairly comical, even though the satire of the French people is much more subtle and softened compared to caricatures of Germans. Alsace is depicted in a familiar fashion, with picturesque half-timbered houses in a neat village with many flowers, where life seems to be quiet and happy, people enjoying the region's pleasures such as the Alsatian *kougelhopf*. French soldiers are interacting with the local population, be it for official ceremonies or personal purposes (such as courting local women). Interestingly, only the Alsatian children participating in the ceremony are dressed in the traditional costumes, which differs from Hansi's more folkloric depictions. The satire itself can be seen in some details, such as the French – given the patterns of travelling at the time probably Parisian – tourists raving about the beauty of an Alsatian pig or trying to discuss politics with a little girl. Zislin also touches upon the problem of the language, since the children in the choir sing with a Germanic accent – a problem mentioned by Hansi in some of his books. One significant difference from Hansi's style is that people are not drawn all in the same manner, which makes them identifiable as individuals. In fact, everyone is caricaturised here, Alsatians and French alike. Zislin's message can be described as relatively critical of the French policies, but another caricature published on the 20<sup>th</sup> August 1919, only ten days after the previous one, makes this criticism more explicit.

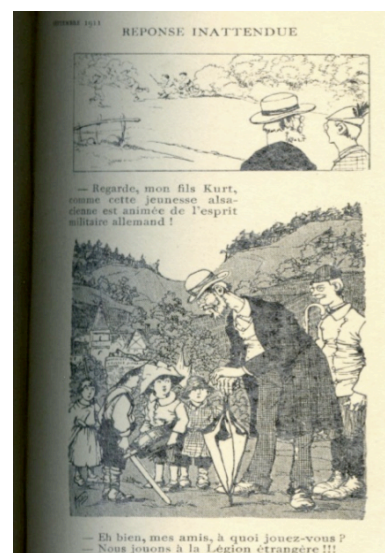
On this second caricature (see image 22), Zislin underlines one of the issues that the Alsatian population faced after the war, namely the return of German civil servants to Alsace, thanks to the French administration's clumsy handling of various policies. The title is *Désespoir / 's isch zum verzwiffl* and the picture shows a strong Alsatian woman in peasant clothes – a depiction that differs from the usual pattern of Alsace as a helpless and delicate victim – who is sweeping an old German helmet and pointing at a long line of German civil servants in the background who are marching towards the gates of Strasbourg. The caption reads in French and Alsatian: 'La voix du Haut-Rhin: Je nettoie ici de mon mieux et là bas on leur ouvre grandes les portes! De cette façon on en finira jamais. / Im Owerland: Do butze m'r un mache süfer, un dert unte krople se wieder in's Landle! Uf die Art warde m'r jo nie ferig.' Zislin seems to embrace the local perspective of the people from the Southern part of Alsace, since this

problematic situation mostly concerned the capital, Strasbourg. He shows the indignation felt by the Alsatisians when the Germans came back to the region only one year after the war, which was felt like a betrayal on behalf of France. Even though Zislin does not need to write in German anymore, he now writes in French and Alsatian, advertising his support of and identification with Alsatian needs in every situation, even when France is involved.



22. Zislin's depiction of the Alsatian indignation over the return of German civilians in Alsace in 1919.<sup>572</sup> © Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire de Strasbourg, M.MFL.711

Like Hansi but less frequently so, Zislin does include children in his caricatures – even though they are not part of his targeted audience (see image 23).



23. Zislin's depiction of Alsatian children and their interaction with the Germans.<sup>573</sup> © British Library Board (012350.g.4)

<sup>572</sup> *Dur's Elsass*, 20 August 1919.

<sup>573</sup> Zislin, pp. 73 (left), 105 (right).

These children appear with adults and as a means of passing on a political message through an 'innocent' subject. The real goal of this device is to mock the people addressing the children, in this case the Germans. In the image on the left, published in August 1908, a little Alsatian girl is corrected about her way of greeting people by a German 'hiker' and his wife: 'On ne dit pas: "Bonjour." On dit: "Guten Tag"! Nous sommes ici en Allemagne, mon enfant.' Which she answers with: 'Excusez-moi, papa m'a dit qu'envers les étrangers, je dois toujours être polie!' This plays on the fact that children state embarrassing truths, but they can be excused by their young age. Telling German tourists that they are the strangers in Alsace would probably be the secret wish of most of Zislin's audience at the time, so they could identify easily with the child in this picture. However, one can justifiably wonder about the fact that the child – like the ones in the next drawing – can speak French fluently – particularly when she seems to come from a rural and lower class background, where the vast majority of them did not speak French in Alsace at the time. Indeed, Zislin is hardly concerned with realism.

The caricature on the right, published in September 1911, uses the same narrative and illustrative devices. The German tourists see Alsatian children playing as soldiers and think that they are inspired by the 'esprit militaire allemand,' but when asked which game they are playing, the Alsatian children answer: 'Nous jouons à la Légion étrangère!!!' The *Légion étrangère* was created in France in 1831, and since it was open to men who wanted to be in the French Army, it was also an occasion for Alsations to serve France against Germany, and was thus quite popular in Alsace at the time.<sup>574</sup> Again, the Germans' arrogance is ridiculed by the 'innocence' of the Alsatian children. Like Hansi, Zislin draws children in a more natural setting and presents them as part of a lower class than the Germans portrayed, possibly to show the many farmers in the region patronised by the 'bourgeois' Germans and to allude to a degree of authenticity. However, none of the children wear traditional costumes (which are kept for special occasions only) and they do not sport the 'loveliness' generalised in Hansi's drawings, instead looking quite plain. Comparatively, the Germans are truly caricaturised. Still, Zislin seems to avoid generic figures.

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<sup>574</sup> Légion étrangère (official website) <<http://www.legion-etrangere.com/>> [accessed on 19/11/10]. See also: Douglas Porch, *La légion étrangère 1831-1962* (Paris: Fayard, 1994).

While using stereotypical patterns in his caricatures, he also gives his subjects a degree of individuality.

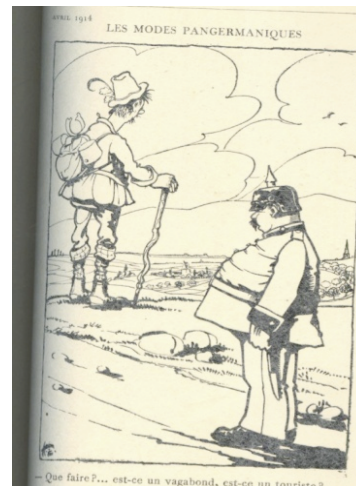
Other 'types' of Germans can be identified in Zislin's caricatures, such as the teacher, the soldier, and *Deutscher Michel*. The first one differs from Hansi's usual representation in that he is very fat (instead of tall and thin), with chubby cheeks, dark hair, no glasses and heavy shoes. He is drawn in this manner in a caricature published in November 1907 and titled *L'instituteur alsacien* – this being ironical since Zislin depicts a German teacher working in Alsace. If we compare this drawing with another one published in April 1914 (see image 24 for both caricatures), it becomes clear that Zislin makes a parallel between the German teachers and soldiers. This is emphasised by all the references to the military in the first caricature, such as the cannon in the top right corner, the paintings of battles lost by France in the background, and the child forced to dress as a German soldier while holding a sign saying 'I am Prussian' in German. The teacher keeps his gaze on the child and carries a small whip to make him behave should the need arise. The overall effect underlines the strictness of the German teachers, and refers to the petition signed by German teachers working in Alsace in 1907, asking for a pay rise because they thought that they had been particularly competent in encouraging the Alsatian youth to 'look towards the German homeland' instead of France.<sup>575</sup> This caricature and another against German soldiers, added to the fact that he had not paid the 10,000 marks deposit demanded of political newspapers for his *Dur's Elsass*, earned Zislin a further prison sentence of eight months and a fine of 100 marks in 1908.<sup>576</sup> The severity of this sentence shocked Alsatians. The news reached France, where attention was put on the Alsace issue again and Zislin became famous.<sup>577</sup>

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<sup>575</sup> Cf. Zislin, p. 6.

<sup>576</sup> Cf. Reboul and Zislin, pp. 194-195.

<sup>577</sup> Cf. Reboul and Zislin, pp. 200-201.



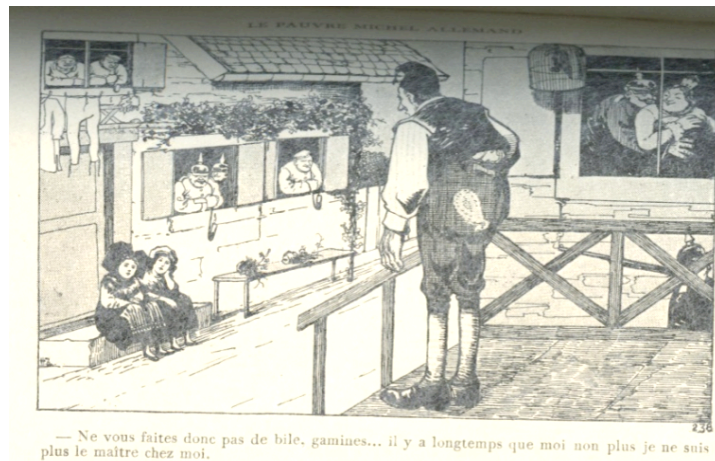
24. Different types of Germans caricaturised by Zislin: the teacher, the hiker and the soldier.<sup>578</sup> © British Library Board (012350.g.4)

Despite the violence that Zislin accuses the authorities of using against the local population, he also shows them in a manner that implies a certain level of stupidity, which does not instil fear as could be expected of the military. The second caricature titled *Les modes pangermaniques* stresses this notion in the character of the German soldier, wondering: 'Que faire?... est-ce un vagabond, est-ce un touriste?' when looking at a German tourist. The satire lies in the fact that the soldier cannot recognise if the man is a vagrant or a tourist because of his strange attire, which is at least obviously different from what the Alsations favour as clothes. Both German 'types' – hiker and soldier – are among Zislin's targets.

One last German 'type' is particularly interesting because of his lack of representation in Hansi's works and the notion his character implies: the aforementioned *Deutsche Michel*. A caricature published in January 1914 and titled *Le pauvre Michel allemand* can serve as a good illustration of the ideas that this popular German figure conveys, particularly in an Alsatian context (see image 25).

<sup>578</sup> Zislin, pp. 6 (left), 239 (right).





25. Zislin's 'Deutscher Michel' in January 1914.<sup>579</sup> © British Library Board (012350.g.4)

In this drawing *Deutscher Michel* (recognisable by Alsatians at the time, particularly thanks to his typical nightcap) addresses two young girls symbolising Alsace and Lorraine to show his sympathy for their situation, since their house is apparently occupied by German soldiers. *Michel* tells them: 'Ne vous faites donc pas de bile, gamines... il y a longtemps que moi non plus je ne suis plus maître chez moi.' The fact that he has been thrown out of his own house is emphasised by the footprint on his behind, probably made by the German soldier courting his wife *Germania* (imposing as always and wearing a specific crown) in the background. His house is identifiable by the Imperial Eagle in a cage next to its window, and he is a recurring character in Zislin's caricatures, often paired up with *Germania* as his domineering wife. This picture was drawn at the beginning of the First World War, when German troops were more present in Alsace, enforcing harsher regulations. The use of the inoffensive and sympathetic figure of *Michel* by Zislin shows his knowledge of German culture as well as his thoughtful and more open-minded attitude, compared with Hansi's unilateral thinking that always separates Alsatians from Germans. Zislin, contrary to Hansi, acknowledges thereby the difference between 'the state' and 'the people'; Alsace is placed between France and Germany as opposed to the sole association with the former.

Zislin utilised allegories of Alsace. There seems to be a consensus among Alsatian caricaturists to portray her as a beautiful young woman (apart from a few exceptions to make a point), dressed in the traditional Alsatian costume (with more or less detail but always with the typical headgear), and rather often

<sup>579</sup> Zislin, p. 47.

seen as delicate and victimised – to underline the fact that she needs to be ‘saved’ by France from the ‘cruel’ Germans.<sup>580</sup> In his article, ‘Une mémoire-frontière: L’Alsace’, Jean-Marie Mayeur underlines the region’s function as ‘mémoire symbolique’ for the French nationalists, namely through the use of this patriotic and allegorical iconography about Alsace, representing its ‘fidélité à la mère-patrie.’<sup>581</sup> As was mentioned in the first sub-chapter, Hansi seems to conform to this ideal more than Zislin in his drawings.



26. Zislin’s depiction of Alsace as an allegoric character in May 1910.<sup>582</sup> © British Library Board (012350.g.4)

In *L'éternelle fiancée* (see image 26) Alsace is shown in full traditional costume,<sup>583</sup> rejecting the German soldier (wearing a monocle as a sign of distinction) proposing to her, in favour of her lost fiancé, a French soldier, whose picture is on the table behind her. The soldier embodies the *pangermanisme* loathed by Hansi and Zislin, as evidenced by the Imperial Eagle yet again appearing ominously behind him. He seems shocked by her harsh words: ‘Plus je vous regarde et plus j’ai envie de lui rester fidèle.’ Zislin implies that despite Germany’s annexation of Alsace, the region stays attached to the French culture and heritage. Furthermore, while the frequent gendering of Alsace as a woman among French nationalists represents her as victimised, Zislin’s personification is unique in her inherent strength and determination,

<sup>580</sup> Cf. Mayeur, in Nora (ed.), I, 1163. See also: Klein, ‘Becoming Alsatian’, pp. 219-220. Vlossak, *Marianne or Germania?*, p. 191 (namely).

<sup>581</sup> Cf. Mayeur, in Nora (ed.), I, 1147-1168.

<sup>582</sup> Zislin, p. 85.

<sup>583</sup> This costume is more realistic than Hansi’s preferred depiction, simplified to be easily recognisable even outside of Alsace, in France. In comparison, Zislin’s portrayal might appeal more to an Alsatian audience – even though the headgear remains quite typical and simple.

arguably reflecting the caricaturist's Alsatian character (or at least his opinion of it). Image 22 is another example of the variety of his female Alsatian figures, whose common denominator seems to be their strength of character. Thus, Alsace is often portrayed in 'familial' relationships involving Germany, such as the daughter-in-law/mother-in-law or adopted child/new mother, but always in a negative way in which Alsace has been forced into this relationship and sometimes regrets her French fiancé.

Alsace sometimes takes a more active part in the scenes in which she is represented, and she is often helped in her endeavours by a group of specific Alsatian men. These men are political figures and friends of Zislin's, taking part in the fight for Alsace's rights in the Empire – its autonomy in particular. These 'autonomists' would usually be identifiable by Alsatians at the time, but Zislin includes their names if there is any scope for confusion. The most recognisable figure – and the one most frequently portrayed in these caricatures – is probably the aforementioned Abbé Wetterlé, an elected member of the *Reichstag* and the *Landtag*.<sup>584</sup> He owned a newspaper in which Zislin sometimes participated and stemmed from Colmar. As a priest, he is easily recognisable by his ecclesiastical black clothes in caricatures, such as the one published in November 1911, titled *Wetterlé à Paris* and captioned 'Ou le cauchemar du pangermaniste' (see image 27). As a 'pan-Germanist's nightmare' Wetterlé is shown riding a cockerel – symbolising France – atop a horrified German trying to sleep. On the German's night table are objects referring to the Empire: a candle with a snuffer in the shape of a German soldier's pointy helmet (also used in one of the caricatures of the 'Affaire de Saverne') and a beer mug sporting the face of the Emperor. In the background, the window shows a partial view of Strasbourg's cathedral. This caricature is a reaction to an article published in the *Straßburger Post* – an Alsatian newspaper supporting the Germans and therefore despised by the autonomists – criticising Wetterlé's stay in Paris, where he gave conference talks about Alsace that were enthusiastically welcomed by the French nationalists.<sup>585</sup> Wetterlé was an educated man and good orator, who could talk perfectly in French and German, one of the reasons he was high ranking among autonomists. In this picture he is a representative of Alsace in France, but also

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<sup>584</sup> On Wetterlé, see: Bruant, *Hansi*, pp. 49-50. Reboul and Zislin, pp. 154-158.

<sup>585</sup> Cf. Zislin, p. 181.

evidence that Alsatians are still attached to France and French culture. As usual in the caricatures involving Alsatian political figures, their confrontational relations with the German authorities are underlined, and Zislin is on their side (at least before the war) since he is a militant man himself and knows most of them personally.



*Ou le cauchemar du pangermaniste.*

27. Wetterlé depicted by Zislin in November 1911.<sup>586</sup> © British Library Board (012350.g.4)

Despite the similarities between his and Hansi's style, Zislin offers a diversity in his representations that Hansi lacks. While Hansi portrays life as he sees it, in generalised patterns and without delving too deeply into interpretations, Zislin considers historical dimensions and has a more developed sense of criticism and analysis than his compatriot, which could be one of the reasons why he was forgotten when Hansi remained famous. His caricatures lack the folkloric quality attached to Hansi's, they are linked to a defined and complex context. Hansi, meanwhile, offers Alsatians what they crave: a straightforward sense of belonging. While Zislin strives to show the Alsatian perspective, be it in opposition to Germany or France, he is not as Francophile as Hansi but therefore also less clear in his long-term message.

With the golden age of caricatures during the nineteenth century, the political problems become 'catalogued' in caricatures, in a similar way that Hansi and Zislin catalogue Alsatian issues in their respective works. However, Hansi is more conservative and his style is very 'formulaic', in the sense that he repeats the same formula – based on stereotypes – in his drawings. His approach is

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<sup>586</sup> Zislin, p. 181.

echoed by others, as the following instances of propagandistic images designed for Alsace exemplify.



28. Alsatian postcards from 1918 and 1919, celebrating the return to France.<sup>587</sup> © Collection Patrick HAMM, Strasbourg

Both images above (see image 28) rely on folkloric representations of Alsatian women and children wearing the traditional costume, in keeping with French stereotypes. The first one was drawn by André Galland (1886-1965), a French illustrator and caricaturist,<sup>588</sup> and symbolises the end of the war in 1918. The French soldier appearing in the children's chimney pertains to what historians called the 'éblouissement tricolore',<sup>589</sup> referring to the idealisation and exacerbation of French patriotism in the region – a practice encouraged by the government at the time. The second postcard was drawn by Charles Greiner (1868-1935), a German illustrator and lithographer who settled in Strasbourg in 1893,<sup>590</sup> and shows an emphasised version of the propagandistic message, more detailed and less subtle, since it was published in 1919, the one year anniversary of the end of the war that also marked the end of the Alsatians' illusions.<sup>591</sup> To battle these feelings and underline Alsace's belonging to France, the image is full of patriotic symbols, such as the flag, tricolour bouquet of flowers and cockade – all of those linked to the Alsatian landscape with its

<sup>587</sup> Gérard Leser and Patrick Hamm, *Fêtes d'Alsace: Les plus belles cartes postales* (Strasbourg: G4J, 2004), pp. 18 (left), 49 (right).

<sup>588</sup> Cf. Leser and Hamm, p. 99.

<sup>589</sup> Leser and Hamm, p. 18.

<sup>590</sup> Cf. Leser and Hamm, p. 100. Greiner became an honorary Alsatian after he settled in Strasbourg and had no apparent reservations about drawing patriotic postcards for France after doing the same for Germany during the years leading to the First World War.

<sup>591</sup> Cf. Mayeur, in Nora (ed.), I, 1165.

easily identifiable monuments in the background, namely the Haut-Koenigsbourg castle and Strasbourg's cathedral. These two elements and the quaint little village are all characteristic of what is expected by tourists when travelling in the region, and thus might reflect an outside perspective more than an inside one. However, French propaganda had less time to become established in Alsace, before the 1930s brought a new set of international problems.

During the First World War, propaganda had been used – by both France and Germany – to boost the troops' and locals' morale by spreading overly optimistic messages or ones mocking the enemy. Postcards were a fairly efficient device to spread propaganda.<sup>592</sup> The National Socialist's message was predictable and aimed at a new level of Germanisation (see image 29).



29. National Socialist propaganda in Alsace in 1940.<sup>593</sup> © Georges BISCHOFF

A copy of *Mon Village*, Hansi's main success, is noticeable among the French symbols swept out of Strasbourg – a fact that increased Hansi's popularity and support in the region, and made him draw an echoing response at the end of the war showing all the German 'rubbish' swept out of Alsace. Thereby Hansi showed his own propagandistic tendencies by embodying the role of an ambassador of France in Alsace once again.

Since Alsace cannot really promote nationalism – in contrast to Germany and France – Hansi's caricatures allow for a transfer from the political sphere to something that is cultural identity. Then politics are a mere vehicle. Implicitly,

<sup>592</sup> Cf. Loetscher and Scheibling, p. 67.

<sup>593</sup> Bischoff, 'Faut-il brûler Hansi?', p. 28.

Alsace is a place that is both characterised by German and French influences on the one hand, and on the other it strives to be more Alsatian by denying these very links. History, it would seem, shapes what Alsace is; in turn, though, Alsace and its reflections on cultural identity are indicative of historical developments. Nora questions the link between history and memory,<sup>594</sup> and there is indeed a striking dichotomy between Hansi's idealised and Zislin's more real places. For Alsatian identity both would come into play.

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<sup>594</sup> Cf. Nora (ed.), I, 23-43; III, 3041 (namely).

## CONCLUSION

It is an important characteristic of the Alsatian disposition that in spite of numerous upheavals and changes between 1871 and the 1920s, the notion of being 'Alsatian' remained strong throughout – despite considerable efforts by both France and Germany to 'assimilate' Alsatians.

What has become clear is that both the Germans and the French had to acknowledge regional specificities if their attempts to make Alsace part of their respective nations were to be successful. Furthermore, the issue of change in itself, and therefore the necessary adaptations, often proved problematic for the population. Within this context, travel guides reflect both change and continuity. The dramatic impact of Strasbourg's new architecture was a long-term investment for the Germans that eventually became part of a common cultural heritage, reflecting both regional and national pride. Hansi's and Zislin's caricatures rely, on the one hand, on an array of stereotypical regional assets of Alsace that display a sense of localised authenticity, while, on the other hand, they occasionally depict the reality of imprisonment and persecution in their region.

In each case study it has become evident that the French or German authorities praise select elements of the Alsatian past in order to support the region's status quo. The Germans emphasise a shared medieval past with Alsace, fostering the notion of a supposedly familiar architecture with Strasbourg as the centre of propagandistic discourses aimed at the Alsatian population. In travel guides, the picturesque villages are praised to offset the new modern city centres. Hansi, in his drawings, while acknowledging the symbolical value of the regional capital, praises the Alsatian villages, but his works confirm the more recent French presence too. Thus, in terms of propaganda and identity, two seemingly contradictory elements (the old and the new, or traditional versus modern) are mediated.

My study has shown that in all cases over time specific and selected places are adapted to new circumstances, and are thereby re-appropriated in a creative process. At times this might challenge the links between Strasbourg as a regional capital and its hinterland – Hansi discovers more 'typical' features in the little villages than in the capital. Importantly, though, travel guides,



architecture as mediated through the press, and popular caricatures appeal to a majority of the population. While potentially controversial, and as such easy to be dismissed or accepted, their long-term impact on the awareness of predominantly specific spaces in Alsatian cultural history is indicative of a sense of belonging.

Bernard Vogler, in *Histoire culturelle de l'Alsace*,<sup>595</sup> continuously underlines the double cultural and historical heritage of Alsace and thus questions whether there are multiple or just a single Alsatian identity. The architectural, touristic and propagandistic narratives that I have explored show that identities are fostered and shaped with a strong sense of the importance of space. In the end, there are at least three identities at work: one that is aligned with the French background, one that is aligned with the German background and, implicitly, a third one, a middle-ground that is, arguably, uniquely Alsatian – something that is in turn highlighted by the French and Germans to various degrees.

Alsations, if we focus on the day-to-day evidence, share a fairly complex and heteroclitic sense of identity that crystallises in Strasbourg and is related to its responses to regional history. The historical space found in the capital, particularly its old city centre, carries the common cultural memory of the whole region, as Marc Augé argues.<sup>596</sup> Nora's *lieux de mémoire* are at work here, and Alsace itself becomes one in its own right.

My case studies confirm that two periods could be said to have enriched the debate about Alsatian identity, not least because of their impact on Alsatian society. Firstly, the *réveil alsacien* at the end of the nineteenth century – a boost in the artistic life that stemmed from the more assertive position of Alsace as part of the German Empire (after a period of adaptation). Alsations, particularly in Strasbourg, felt more confident about their own identity, and artists celebrated that newfound *alsacianité*. This period of euphoria was to be followed by the *malaise alsacien* that crystallised the Alsations' disillusionment during the post-First World War period. Both the caricatures and the

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<sup>595</sup> Bernard Vogler, *Histoire culturelle de l'Alsace: Du Moyen Age à nos jours, les très riches heures d'une région frontière*, La bibliothèque alsacienne (Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue / DNA, 1993).

<sup>596</sup> Marc Augé, *Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London, New York: Verso, 2006), p. 65.

introductions to travel guides highlight the importance of these periods and the need to adapt Alsatian locations to new circumstances.

Furthermore, what becomes obvious is a close link between personal and regional narratives. Hansi emphasises what he sees as the authentic Alsatian heritage of his kinsmen: the region itself with all its long-time traditions and picturesque folklore. The obvious political connotations of his caricatures – the clear choice of France over Germany for national affiliation and cultural roots – is a mere vehicle to contribute to and manipulate a sense of cultural identity in Alsace. Similarly, the local press relayed an enthusiasm for the new city centre with a clear focus on the image of the *Kaiser* and his wife. The vocabulary used conveys a narrative of an identity in the making, not least since the inauguration turned out to be an event with a clear ‘before’ and ‘after’, and a clear location that allowed for these associations. Statements such as ‘fort étonné de ne trouver aucun artiste habitant Strasbourg parmi les sculpteurs chargés des travaux décoratifs du palais impérial,<sup>597</sup> built upon a local audience’s understanding that genuine Alsatian enterprises were lacking. However, when faced with the performance orchestrated by the German authorities for the Emperor’s visit in Strasbourg in 1889, the Alsatian population seemed to adhere to the festivities and share in the national pride broadcast by all participants for the occasion: ‘[...] dans toutes les rues le concours de la population était énorme et les fenêtres étaient garnies de spectateurs qui ont accueilli les souverains sur tout le parcours par de vives acclamations.’<sup>598</sup>

Propagandistic discourses can be found in many types of document, but the messages will always be more effective if the audience is well targeted. For travel guides, the audience is bound to be more receptive if they can identify with the author. Travel guides have to be designed either for ‘insiders’ (Alsations) or ‘outsiders’ (tourists, potentially interested Germans and French), and can be even more successful with the local audience if the author is an ‘insider’ himself. Curt Mündel was German but managed to be accepted in Alsace; his travel guides became the foundation for guides over several generations.

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<sup>597</sup> *Straßburger Wochenblatt / Affiches de Strasbourg*, 5 September 1885.

<sup>598</sup> *Affiches de Strasbourg*, 21 August 1889.

These case studies have been shown to be important and valid indicators of identity in the making. They rarely blatantly antagonise (some of the caricatures aside), but their impact on the perception of the all-important authentic places is considerable. Today, Alsatian tourist guides tend to avoid polemical subjects – if only to avoid negative repercussions from the numerous German tourists who regularly visit the region. The focus on Strasbourg as a European capital is helpful in this context. The old territorial conflicts between France and Germany now make for an exceptionally ‘rich’ history and culture. An overview of current tourist websites reveals that the traditional or ‘folkloric’ aspects are still praised and sometimes exaggerated to target a generally non-Alsatian audience that would not know much else about the region. The half-timbered houses are thus always represented on these websites, and much emphasis is put on the easily recognisable cathedral. In the *Rough Guide*, for example, the cathedral is called ‘one of the loveliest cathedrals in France,’<sup>599</sup> and the French *Guide Michelin* underlines the general praise about the cathedral and its surroundings by reminding its readers that ‘le centre historique de Strasbourg et la cathédrale Notre-Dame ont été classés par l’Unesco au Patrimoine mondial de l’humanité en 1988.’<sup>600</sup> The cathedral provides a focus that has not changed over time. As for the German district, its description still underlines the monumental aspect of its architecture, but loses the nationalistic undertones sometimes found in older tourist guides. An example of this process can be found on the official website of *Tourisme en Alsace*:

Strasbourg n’a pas usurpé sa réputation de ville cosmopolite, où de nombreuses cultures et influences cohabitent. Pour vous en convaincre, flânez du côté de la Place Broglie, où vous pourrez vous restaurer, et du quartier allemand. Les bâtiments y sont impressionnants! De style néo-classique ou « pâtissier », ils témoignent de l’époque où l’Alsace était allemande. Au printemps, prenez le temps de traverser la Place de la République, entourée d’édifices colossaux, pour admirer les magnolias en fleurs.<sup>601</sup>

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<sup>599</sup> Rough Guides (official website), ‘Strasbourg’ <<http://www.roughguides.com/travel/europe/france/alsace-and-lorraine/strasbourg.aspx>> [accessed on 30/06/12].

<sup>600</sup> Damien Gallion and Emmanuelle Souty (eds), *Alsace, Lorraine: Escapades en Forêt-Noire*, Le Guide Vert Michelin (Paris: Michelin, 2010), p. 426.

<sup>601</sup> Tourisme en Alsace, ‘Un grand week-end à Strasbourg’ <<http://www.tourisme-alsace.com/fr/idees-de-circuits/idees-de-week-end-strasbourg.html>> [accessed on 18/06/12].

Most mainstream touristic websites do not focus excessively on history, but there are exceptions, like *Visiter-Strasbourg*,<sup>602</sup> which offers an interactive and virtual tour of Strasbourg with a relatively strong emphasis on historical background, which does not minimise the German influence in the regional capital.

Hansi has influenced many authors, including Alsatian born Tomi Ungerer – who readily talks about Hansi’s influence in his works but is also critical of anti-German views. Ungerer’s work pursues European ideas and encourages Franco-German relations.<sup>603</sup> Remarkably, while for a long time Hansi’s more anti-German drawings were virtually non-existent in various merchandises, it is now possible to find ‘folkloric’ postcards with his ‘anti-Boches’ views in Strasbourg’s shops. Hansi’s heritage still seems to be embedded in regional perceptions and can now, after several decades, be shown in its entirety.

In his documentary, *Jonathan Meades on France*,<sup>604</sup> Meades argues that Strasbourg demonstrates an ‘architectural apartheid’, because its architecture is, he claims, purely German or purely French, but both styles never mix in its various districts – and the *Place de la République (ex-Kaiserplatz)* is said to be a perfect example of this theory, reflecting only one style in a delimited district. Meades certainly has a point when he mentions that the official buildings of the European Union put a stop to this architectural principle since their modernism represents ‘internationalism’. There is no distinct cultural identity in modernism and the buildings maintain a sense of neutrality for diplomatic reasons. This does mean that Strasbourg lost a part of its ‘Alsatianism’ when it became a European capital. Arguably, border regions such as Alsace are ideal in terms of promoting a ‘fourth way’. However, Alsace’s role in Europe has again highlighted the role of Strasbourg, which is thus recognised beyond its borders nowadays rather than the entire region it stands for. In the twentieth and then

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<sup>602</sup> Visiter-Strasbourg <<http://www.visiter-strasbourg.com/>> [accessed on 18/06/12].

<sup>603</sup> See, for example: Tomi Ungerer and Daniel Riot, *Europolitain* (Strasbourg: Anstett, 1998). Conseil de l’Europe (official website), ‘Dessins de Tomi Ungerer présentant son engagement pour la défense des valeurs européennes’ <[http://www.coe.int/t/f/com/dossiers/evenements/2003-02-Kastner-Ungerer/dessins\\_index.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/f/com/dossiers/evenements/2003-02-Kastner-Ungerer/dessins_index.asp)> [accessed on 30/06/12]. Thérèse Willer, *Tomi Ungerer* (Paris: L’École des loisirs, 2008). Thérèse Willer (ed.), *Musée Tomi Ungerer – Centre international de l’Illustration / La collection* (Strasbourg: Éditions des Musées de la Ville de Strasbourg, 2007).

<sup>604</sup> Jonathan Meades, *Jonathan Meades on France*, BBC4, January 2012. Episode 1 of 3: ‘Fragments of an Arbitrary Encyclopaedia’ <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b019m5yy>> [accessed on 24/01/12].

twenty-first century, identity seems to still be in the making for Alsatians, with a new, and seemingly less problematic, European affiliation to take into account.

## APPENDICES

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