

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

**Submitted by Isaure Triby, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the
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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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