The Language Question under Napoleon

Stewart McCain

War, Culture and Society, 1750-1850

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Series Editors' Preface

The century from 1750 to 1850 was a seminal period of change, not just in Europe but across the globe. The political landscape was transformed by a series of revolutions fought in the name of liberty—most notably in the Americas and France, of course, but elsewhere, too: in Holland and Geneva during the eighteenth century and across much of mainland Europe by 1848. Nor was change confined to the European world. New ideas of freedom, equality and human rights were carried to the furthest outposts of empire, to Egypt, India and the Caribbean, which saw the creation in 1801 of the first black republic in Haiti, the former French colony of Saint-Domingue. And in the early part of the nineteenth century they continued to inspire anti-colonial and liberation movements throughout Central and Latin America.

If political and social institutions were transformed by revolution in these years, so, too, was warfare. During the quarter-century of the French Revolutionary Wars, in particular, Europe was faced with the prospect of 'total' war, on a scale unprecedented before the twentieth century. Military hardware, it is true, evolved only gradually, and battles were not necessarily any bloodier than they had been during the Seven Years War. But in other ways these can legitimately be described as the first modern wars, fought by mass armies mobilized by national and patriotic propaganda, leading to the displacement of millions of people throughout Europe and beyond, as soldiers, prisoners of war, civilians and refugees. For those who lived through the period these wars would

be a formative experience that shaped the ambitions and the identities of a generation.

The aims of the series are necessarily ambitious. In its various volumes, whether single-authored monographs or themed collections, it seeks to extend the scope of more traditional historiography. It will study warfare during this formative century not just in Europe, but in the Americas, in colonial societies, and across the world. It will analyse the construction of identities and power relations by integrating the principal categories of difference, most notably class and religion, generation and gender, race and ethnicity. It will adopt a multi-faceted approach to the period, and turn to methods of political, cultural, social, military, and gender history, in order to develop a challenging and multidisciplinary analysis. Finally, it will examine elements of comparison and transfer and so tease out the complexities of regional, national and global history.

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Abbreviations

AdAM	Archives départementales des Alpes Maritimes, Nice
AdBdR	Archives départementales des Bouches du Rhône, Marseille and Aix
AdHR	Archives départementales du Haut Rhin, Colmar
AdV	Archives départementales de Vaucluse, Avignon
An	Archives nationales, Paris
BmR	Bibliothèque municipale de Rouen, Rouen
BnF	Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris
HLF	Ferdinand Brunot, Histoire de la langue française
Ms Mbt	Manuscrits Montbret
Naf	Nouvelles acquisitions françaises

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CHAPTER 1

Language, Empire, and the New Regime

At its height, the Napoleonic Empire brought more than 70 million Europeans under the French yoke, with 44 million ruled directly from Paris. Few amongst these populations spoke French. Within the historical borders of France itself, the majority used German, Flemish, Breton, Catalan, the Occitan languages of the South and the *langue d'oïl* varieties of the North in everyday life, a situation that persisted throughout the nineteenth century. They were joined by the substantial blocs of German, Italian, Dutch and Flemish speakers who inhabited the so-called *départements réunis* in the Rhineland, the Netherlands and northern Italy that were annexed directly to France. This book is about the efforts of the Napoleonic state to impose cultural homogeneity on the diverse populations within its borders. It is also, and centrally, about how these populations, or at least those elites that engaged directly with the Napoleonic state, adapted to the demands of the centre. In describing this head on collision between an Imperial project bent on cultural unity and populations distinguished by their linguistic otherness, it also provides a case study with broader historical and political import regarding the response of subject populations to state-driven linguistic imperialism.

The linguistic diversity of the French population first became an object of serious political concern, if not to say a source of full-blown moral panic, at the height of the Revolution. The French monarchy of the *Ancien régime* had concerned itself above all with the language of legal practice and administration, crucially displacing Latin from these prestigious written functions with the Villers-Cotterêts ordinance of

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1539.[1] Yet it was only during the Revolution that, as David Bell has argued, French nationalism emerged as a coherently articulated project, and the culture and language spoken by ordinary folk became significant.[2] The new political culture that emerged in 1789 held that sovereignty rested with the citizens of the French nation. It was therefore a problem that so few ordinary Frenchmen (for political rights were denied to women for the duration of the Revolution) could understand the language of the constitution and the laws drafted in their name.

Initially, the National Assembly adopted a policy of translation, and an office was established to begin the work of translating laws and decrees from French into the other languages spoken throughout the country.[3] Some members of the National Assembly favoured a more radical approach to the other languages of France. In summer 1790, the Abbé Henri Grégoire began soliciting responses to his series of 43 questions on the languages in use across France. Grégoire asked his correspondents to describe both the nature of the language spoken by the people in a given area, and whether French was used in education or in church. The questionnaire was printed in Jacques Pierre Brissot's journal, *Le Patriote Français*, and Grégoire also gathered responses from personal contacts and from regional branches of the Jacobin club.[4] This information revealed the French population's alarming ignorance of the national language, and spurred Grégoire to call for the annihilation of the so called patois—a pejorative term for the dialects and regional languages of France. For Grégoire, this project had a democratic and universalising aspect. Not only would knowledge of the French language enable all Frenchmen to participate in the political sphere, to hold office and to scrutinise law, it would also regenerate French society by banishing superstition and ignorance.[5] As Grégoire told the Convention in 1794, "it is above all the ignorance of the national idiom which holds so many individuals at a great distance from truth: however, if you do not put them in direct communication with men and books, their errors, accumulated, rooted for centuries, will be indestructible".[6]

It was foreign war and internal revolt in the West and South of France that gave urgency to this more aggressive stance on language. The Revolutionaries feared that linguistic diversity could tip easily into political disunity. German-speaking populations on the border who shared a language with the foreign enemies of the Republic appeared from Paris as a dangerous fifth column, while the Revolutionaries expected counter-revolutionary agents to manipulate

ignorant patois-speaking peasants into sedition. The vituperative rhetoric of Bertrand Barère, a member of the Committee of Public Safety, articulated precisely this brand of paranoia in a speech given to the Convention five months before Grégoire's: "Federalism and superstition speak Breton; emigration and hatred of the Republic speak German, Counter-Revolution speaks Italian and fanaticism speaks Basque. Let us smash these instruments of shame and error".[7] There followed a short-lived period of 'linguistic terrorism', during which time the Convention ended the policy of translating decrees into the regional languages of France, and required a French language teacher to be employed in every Breton-, Italian-, German-, Flemish- and Basque-speaking commune. All legal acts were also now to be written in French, a provision that engendered significant opposition in areas such as Alsace.[8]

The Napoleonic period was a less febrile context than Paris in the Year II, but linguistic unification remained an explicit aim of policy under Napoleon. The majority of such efforts were directed towards the speakers of the other standardised languages spoken within the Empire—German, Italian and Dutch—and were transparently aimed at securing French as the language of literate, elite communication. The regime sought to establish French as the official language of legal practice across the Empire, although the need to compromise with local elites frequently militated against the rigid application of the general rule. Similarly, a command of French became a requirement for those seeking to take up a number of official positions within the French state. All newly appointed foresters had to be capable of drafting their reports in French, even if those already appointed were granted repeated exemptions from this requirement.[9] French became a requisite for those seeking to take up positions teachers, even if efforts to enforce this measure proved difficult where local elites were committed to another language.

While it was the speakers of standardised languages like German and Italian that induced the greatest anxiety within the Napoleonic regime, other linguistic minorities were also considered a threat to national cohesion and thus became the target of efforts aimed at francisation. The Jewish communities of western Europe enjoyed unprecedented freedoms under Napoleon, but state protection brought with it a dirigiste religious policy. The state policed religious institutions and appointments, and, much as with the appointment of foresters, a deadline for the appointment of francophone rabbis was fixed in the

December 1806 religious statutes for the Jewish faith.[10] While the speakers of regional languages were not targeted directly by legislation from the centre, state actors at the departmental level actively pursued the linguistic reform of the populations they administered. In November 1807, the Society of Emulation, a group sponsored by the departmental administration of the Hautes-Alpes, offered a prize of 300 francs for the best dictionary of "vicious phrases or expressions, used in the department of the Hautes-Alpes, whether contrary to the French language or pronunciation, with the corrections of these same errors". The work was intended to "protect the young and the less educated against the common vices of speech".[11] The members of the Society were, in their own words, committed to the 'amelioration' of the department, and correcting the language of those they administered was the crucial first step.[12]

Napoleonic measures related to language reflected a broader discourse of 'social progress' and 'good administration' that was frequently articulated by the governing elites of France throughout the nineteenth century, not least during the Napoleonic period when the issue of the state's role in regulating and improving society was a prominent concern.[13] In the words of Michael Broers, the ideal Napoleonic administrator saw himself "in the vanguard of modernity, […] determined to impose cultural, administrative and political uniformity on French society".[14] This follows a reconsideration of the Napoleonic Empire and its wider significance for the history of modern Europe over the past thirty years. Stuart Woolf's work on Napoleon's integration of Europe reinvigorated the history of a period that perhaps had focused rather too much on the spider at the centre of the web, on the genius and failures of the Corsican on the make, rather than on the character of French state-building and imperialism.[15] Isser Woloch's work on the New Regime has demonstrated the importance of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic period in the creation of a new political culture centred on the reformed state institutions.[16] Similarly, research by historians such as Michel Brunet on northern Catalonia, Michael Broers on northern Italy, and Michael Rowe on the Rhineland has revealed the broader significance of the period for European state-building processes.[17] While all of this research is concerned with the process of state formation, the authors' shared ambition was not a simplistic account of bureaucratic rationalisation or rising state power, although, it must be granted, this is a part of the story.[18] They

demonstrate that the project of Napoleonic governance, as understood by contemporaries, was more profoundly about the modernisation of state and society, about the export of what had become an authoritarian and hierarchical French model of administration that would ensure social progress.[19]

It is in this context that we might consider the Napoleonic regime as imperial in its fullest sense. For Michael Broers, this combination of universalism and authoritarianism drove a project that amounted to nothing less than cultural imperialism in Napoleonic Italy.[20] The use of this term in relation to the Napoleonic Empire is controversial. This is, at least in part, because the sheer scale and cynicism of the Napoleonic plundering of Europe—the unabashed 'France first' politics of the Imperial system—makes it difficult at times to credit the significance of a project aimed at anything other than the extraction of material resources and projection of French power.[21] There also, however, exists a reluctance to draw parallels between Napoleonic domination in Europe and the European colonialism of the late nineteenth century. The latter, according to Stephen Englund, was buttressed by racism in a way that Napoleonic imperialism, at least explicitly, was not, and to apply terms concerned with the study of colonial contexts to the French under Napoleon is to risk a flattening of historical experience.[22]

Despite these caveats, a central plank of the argument presented in this book is that a form of linguistic imperialism was a feature of French political and social power structures during the Napoleonic period. As with Grégoire's survey of the patois during the Revolution, the Napoleonic regime's concern with remaking society is betrayed by the energy with which officials sought to describe it. Moreover, as William Max Nelson has argued, many of the 'technologies of biopolitics' employed by the Napoleonic state—the cadastre, descriptive statistics—were pioneered in a colonial context before the Revolution.[23] The dual identity of Joseph-Marie Degérando as both Napoleonic administrator and the author of a seminal text on anthropological practice for the Society of Observers of Man is a rather neat illustration of this point.[24] The historical evidence produced by these efforts form an important documentary base for this study, and even a cursory examination of the archive reveals that a strong, pro-French linguicism, an assumption that French was the foremost language of civilization, influenced the behaviour of historical actors. If linguistic imperialism is to be understood, according to Robert Phillipson, as the assertion and maintenance of the

dominance of one language and its speakers by the establishment and continuous reconstruction of structural and cultural inequalities between languages within a context of asymmetric interaction between centre and periphery, then it may appropriately be applied to the politics of language under Napoleon.[25]

Language, Nation and Society

There can be little doubt that the Napoleonic regime was concerned with the language of its population. However, one weakness of research on the history of language is that it has rarely gone beyond political discourse. We have a clear sense of how, at an elite level, language came to constitute an important element of French national identity.[26] We understand how enlightenment thinkers' fears that linguistic diversity would ferment civil discord influenced the belligerent linguistic policies adopted by the French state during the Terror.[27] Yet recent historians have turned less attention towards the evolving structures of societal bilingualism amongst the population of the French state; they have tended to ignore the transmission of attitudes towards language below the level of elite discourse, and have directed little attention towards the important question of how the multilingualism of the French territory affected the development of the French state. In short, we are left with a mode of historical analysis in which the state, or political discourse more generally, is thought to be constitutive of cultural phenomena.[28] This is particularly the case in treatments of the period focused on political culture, where the political sphere is often understood as existing outside of society and acting upon it, autonomous of social elites and their interests.[29] This is reinforced by the image of the French state as a bloc, highly centralised and hierarchical, acting on society at the behest of Paris, a vision making the size of the bureaucracy and the share of national wealth expropriated by the state central to historical analysis.[30]

State theory and the focus on political culture in historical studies have undoubtedly made space for a more nuanced understanding of historical development during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic period beyond social determinism. Yet there has generally been a growing dissatisfaction with the overemphasis on political discourse, which has led historians to orient their research to fields of social and political practice as a way of breaking with sometimes stale political narratives and reintroducing social change to historical accounts. Where historians have turned their attention to the nature of social and cultural practice, a far

more complex picture of socially and historically situated change has emerged. This is particularly true when discussing the role of the French state in the cultural construction of the modern French citizen. The rise of mass literacy, for example, cannot only be attributed to the development of the French school system, but was part of a long-term process of social and cultural change.[31] Even the schoolrooms of the Third Republic responded to a certain extent to local demands and pressures as they went about spreading national culture.[32] Historians are increasingly aware of how local institutions can mediate national trends and centralising processes, creating unique iterations of social and political formations.[33] Put simply, to understand the significance of political discourses about language during the Napoleonic period, we need to study how these politics worked themselves out in practice within Napoleonic institutions and in these institutions' relations with society.

Two closely related concepts drawn from sociolinguistics are indispensable to the historian seeking to write a history of language as practice; diglossia and standardisation. Diglossia was a term first employed in a sociological context by Charles Fergusson, who used it to refer to the systematic manner in which certain language communities characterised by bi- or multilingualism apportioned social functions amongst different and explicitly designated linguistic codes. In such language communities, it is possible to distinguish between high (H) and low (L) varieties based on the different contexts in which they are used. Generally, 'H' varieties are those used for religious worship, in educational and official or legal contexts and for 'high' culture and literature. Conversely, 'L' varieties are spoken in everyday conversations, in instructing servants and for 'folk' culture.[34] While Fergusson initially limited his use of the term to communities in which one variety was considered a dialect of the other, Joshua Fishman later expanded the definition to include all situations where a language community recognised two distinct linguistic codes and systematically employed them for different social functions.[35] The virtue of Fishman's definition for the study of the Napoleonic period is that it distinguishes between bilingualism, understood as the capacity of members of the speech community to employ both varieties, and diglossia, the systematic distinction between languages on the basis of social function.[36]

Fishman's distinction thus allows us to consider situations in which the linguistic repertoire of the language community is unevenly distributed amongst its members, where social stratification is mirrored, or even

heightened, by linguistic difference. This relates to a more generalised critique levelled by Alan Hudson at the haphazard manner in which sociolinguists have employed diglossia to describe situations that are distinct in both their genesis and sociolinguistic character. For Hudson, the central property of diglossia, as opposed to societal bilingualism, is that the 'H' variety possesses no native speakers within the linguistic community.

For this reason, situations described as genuinely diglossic by Hudson are most likely to arise in one of two scenarios: either where a society has adopted a language as an 'H' variety, that is to say it has chosen to use a very standardised artificial norm that differs substantially from the spoken vernacular; or where the spoken vernacular has changed at a greater rate than the standardised 'H' variety. In both of these situations a period of apprenticeship to achieve mastery over the prestige form becomes necessary.[37] The significance of this stipulation regarding the absence of native speakers lies in the presumed differences in communicative practice that emerge. While not willing to discard the term diglossia, Britto describes this as the distinction between use-oriented diglossia, where code selection is informed by communicative context, and user-oriented diglossia, where code selection is a function of social identity.[38] In the former, for example, the use of 'H' and 'L' varieties is generally symmetrical and reciprocal within a given context, whereas in the latter, asymmetrical communicative practices see elites using 'H' varieties to respond to lower class actors speaking in 'L'.[39]

Most of the situations within the Napoleonic Empire cannot be considered an ideal manifestation of either use- or user-oriented diglossia, but incorporate some features of both. Peter Sahlins on the Cerdagne, for example, observes that knowledge of French and Castilian became integral to the communicative repertoire of assimilated local elites, but that different communicative functions, such as petitions to the state authority or conversations with the cosmopolitan clientele found in the inn, equally determined the use of French in place of Catalan.[40] The somewhat later example of Pierre-Jakez Hélias, the bilingual Breton peasant whose biography, the Horse of Pride, is cited by Martyn Lyons, gives a similar impression: Breton was the language of the household, of his mother's old religious books, while French was the public language.[41] Communities across the Empire were characterised both by different distributions of linguistic capacity as well as different sets of linguistic practice, and this variation is crucial to any understanding of the way Napoleonic efforts to standardise linguistic practice were negotiated by individuals locally.

Such efforts must also be understood in relation to the concept of standardisation, schematised by Einar Haugen as a model of 'linguistic development'.[42] Standardisation in any sphere of activity means homogenising and generalising a given set of norms, and this is precisely the sense in which sociolinguists use the term. Haugen saw four distinct processes taking place under the heading of linguistic standardisation: (a) selection of a variety, usually that of the dominant group; (b) codification of form, whereby standard linguistic norms are laid down; (c) elaboration of function, whereby a language is adapted for a greater range of social functions; and (d) acceptance of the norm by the language community.[43] The terms adopted by Haugen are not in all respects satisfactory. The distinction between 'selection' and 'acceptance', as Anthony Lodge observes, is rather artificial, since both fundamentally amount to the recognition of a specific set of linguistic norms as the prestige variety to be employed in given communicative functions by a group of speakers.[44] Similarly, the nature of 'elaboration of function' can at times appear opaque. Haugen defined the term as a linguistic process by which a language gained the tools required for it to fulfil a given social function. However, this places the term in an ambiguous relationship with 'codification'. For example, should one consider the fixing of orthographic and semantic conventions around lexical terms required for a given function, say the practice of law, as codification or elaboration? The idea of standardisation is most useful to the historian when understood as a process involving both linguistic and social change, that is both the codification of the language through grammars, dictionaries, orthographies, and a set of attitudes, beliefs and practices relating to the language and its use.

The significance of this is threefold: firstly, that some languages are better equipped in terms of status and codification to fulfil high-status communicative functions; secondly, that standardised languages are techniques that must be learnt, making their mastery significant for the distribution of social advantage; and finally, that the partisans of a given language can seek to further the process in order to improve their own position. This process can be seen in the conflicts over language that characterised the European literary sphere before the Revolution, conflicts that illustrate an important facet of the Napoleonic period, as the expanding borders of the French state brought increased numbers of speakers of standardised languages under the authority of Paris. In France, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw tremendous efforts

on the part of French authors to bestow prestige on the national language at the expense of Latin and Italian through the creation of a prestigious writing culture.[45] The signal text in this movement was probably Du Bellay's *La deffence et illustration de la langue françoyse*, published in 1549, in which the author urged patriotic writers to develop the language of the kingdom.[46] The seventeenth-century apogee of this movement was the creation of the paradigmatic example of state-sponsored prescriptivism, the *Académie française*. Founded by Richelieu in 1635, the *Académie* was tasked with providing a grammar, dictionary, poetics and rhetoric, in the hope that doing so would enhance the prestige of French on the international stage.[47] This was not a uniquely French concern. The Académie française was itself modelled on the Florentine *Accademia della Crusca*, established in 1582, and prescriptivism in English, typified by Samuel Johnson's dictionary of 1755, exercised an influence over literate culture that was every bit as strong as in France despite the lack of state backing.[48] Such efforts would become typical of cultural nationalist movements across Europe in the nineteenth century, for whom the edition of dictionaries and grammars, and the production of literary material such as songs, plays and poetry, was always a high priority, the elaboration of the language representing a powerful way of proving the authentic existence of a nation seeking self-determination.[49]

The notion that a language should be cultivated was neither confined to the turn of the nineteenth century nor the exclusive preserve of French culture, but a widely held concern across Europe from the Renaissance onwards. It was also not the only method used to compare the relative value of languages. Commentators often looked towards the internal properties of a language in order to explain its prominence or justify its preferment.[50] In the mid-eighteenth century, word order became a particular concern. Thinkers, echoing Descartes' strictures that language should follow the natural order of thought, argued that French word order—its subject-verb-object syntax—was the clearest expression of human cognition.[51] This view was a contested one. Some writers claimed the free word order of Latin permitted the author greater expressive freedom, while partisans of German culture such as Herder pointed to the case system and syntactic inversion in their language as evidence that it could more comfortably

represent human thought, which, they claimed, was stifled by the rigidity of French grammar.[52]

All of these arguments were deployed in favour of the pre-eminence of one language or another in 1784, when the Berlin Academy announced that its prize essay competition would be on the universality of the French language. This competition is frequently cited as evidence of the overweening dominance of French as the literate lingua franca of Europe, yet the greater number of responses argued that the language was destined to be replaced by one of its rivals.[53] The prize was shared between Antoine de Rivarol, whose essay was hugely influential in the characterisation of French as the universal language of Europe, and Johann Christoph Schwab. While the former had much to say on the innate linguistic superiority of French, the latter was far more nuanced in his conclusions. Schwab explored a host of explanations for the apparent superiority of the French language, from geography and demography to economics, although he identified international politics, and the relative strength of the French nation on the continent, as the primary reason.[54] Consequently, it was entirely plausible that French could be supplanted by another language, and after rejecting Spanish for its geographical isolation, Italian for the peninsula's political fragmentation, and German for its difficulty as a second language, Schwab identified English as the most likely candidate.[55]

The various arguments in favour of a given language elaborated by scholars from the Renaissance to the Revolution were frequently made either in service of, or in reaction to, a kind of proto-nation building. The Berlin Academy itself reflected precisely these conflicts over the establishment of languages within literate culture. The ambitions of Leibniz, the first president of the Academy, to make the institution a forum for the elaboration and improvement of German reflected a more generalised desire amongst German academics to make their language one of learning.[56] Despite Leibniz' initial intentions, the position of the academy over the eighteenth century was far more ambiguous. The statutes of the Academy allowed for scientific papers in German and Latin, a decision which allowed the latter language to dominate, with German relegated to the position of the 'business' language.[57] Later in the century, Frederick the Great's hostility to German saw French displace it as the main language of the Academy. Yet the Academy did eventually come to the aid of German as Leibniz had envisioned. The death of Frederick saw calls for the return of German, which only became louder during

the Revolutionary period. This eventually saw the creation of groups to purify the German language and, in 1807, the elevation of German to the working language of a reformed Academy.[58]

The linguistic imperialism of the Napoleonic regime ensured that arguments of this type abounded within the institutions of the French state. Linguistic practice became suffused with symbolic importance, as nation building became an active concern for political elites, and spheres of linguistic practice—domains such as the Church, the classroom and the law court—were transformed and repurposed. However, if ideas about administrative reform and social improvement were prominent during the period and especially within Napoleonic institutions, to focus only on these ideological movements is to paint a misleading picture of state-directed centralisation and rationalisation.[59] Since my focus is on the role of state-building projects in the linguistic integration of the regions, this study is predominantly concerned with the way in which one particular social grouping—a group probably best designated as 'local elites' or 'local notables'—negotiated and indeed constructed the new regime of linguistic practice that emerged from the period. The term notable here does not designate the '*Grands Notables*', understood in the manner of André Tudesq as '*élites dirigeantes*'.[60] It is also intended to incorporate a somewhat broader cross-section than the 'village notables' described by Barnett Singer.[61] I designate by the term 'local notable' the members of that group of elites who filled the ranks of officialdom, from the level of the commune or municipality up to the departmental or divisional level—the mayor, justice of the peace, schoolmaster, sub-prefect, legal officials up to the level of the appeal court.

These figures were significant because they formed the backbone of the state on the ground. They were the men required to actually implement the linguistic reforms of the Napoleonic regime. This placed them at the juncture of centralising state structures and the local society on which it sought to act and makes them central to an understanding of Napoleonic cultural imperialism. They were all to a certain extent defined by their place within the institutional structures of the state, or Church in the case of the clergy, yet they all moved within local society to a greater or lesser extent. Historians such as Lynn Hunt have invoked these 'intermediaries and culture brokers' to explain the tendency towards modernisation that characterised Revolutionary politics.[62] Peter McPhee, on the other hand, has criticized the recourse to 'culture brokers' and the 'diffusion theory' of

modernisation, on the grounds that it fails to explain differences in politicisation between areas. This, he suggests, can only be done with reference to the specific social conditions of a given locality.[63] In the case of local state elites, however, the term 'culture brokers' is apt, because of the institutional structures that placed them quite explicitly in an intermediary position, and because the metaphor of brokerage is a useful one. The local knowledge became an important feature of the expertise of these figures, and so the idea of brokerage becomes a useful one. The term also points away from a vision of a top down, monolithic state imposing its will upon local society, because the linguistic practice as implemented, and argued for, by these figures often moderated the demands of the centre and reshaped the nature of state power on the ground.

At first glance, this category of local notables may appear to be a heterogeneous grouping. To take just the example of the mayor, there is a clear distinction to be drawn between the 'village' mayors, appointed by the prefect, and those mayors of settlements with a population exceeding 5000 in size, who were appointed directly by Napoleon. Moreover, the prefect-appointed mayors of smaller communes were themselves a diverse grouping.[64] These mayors were appointed hurriedly in 1799, largely by prefects unfamiliar with their departments, and as a result were predominantly recruited on the basis of their service during the Revolution. Consequently, these figures became a constant headache for the administration, notorious for their unreliability and illiteracy.[65] Yet even here, generalisations can be misleading. A substantial number of individuals who had, under the Ancien régime, filled the upper echelons of the regional administration, took up local administrative roles during the period as they retreated from public life to their family holdings during the Revolutionary decade. Over 12,000 '*administrateurs locales inférieures*'—defined by Louis Bergeron and Guy Chaussinand-Nogaret as municipal officials such as mayors—were to be found amongst the most heavily taxed 500 individuals of their respective departments indicating that they came from the higher strata of society.[66] This was probably a function of changing recruitment. Many of the mayors appointed in 1800, for example, were purged when their terms expired in 1808, and a focus on wealthier land-owning rural dwellers as well as an emphasis on the *lumières* (learning) of candidates, transformed the social profile of this office in the countryside.[67] Large numbers of mayors may have been illiterate, impoverished, or otherwise unsatisfactory

by the lights of the state, but they were not universally so, and their profile changed over the period.

The internal heterogeneity of these office-holding categories was matched by the differences that were evident between groups of office holders, especially since these groups experienced very different Revolutions. The clergy, for example, provide a striking contrast with the lower ranks of the local administration. Only 822 clergymen were to be found amidst the most heavily taxed of the Empire—a fraction of the number of local administrators—a reflection of the decimation of the wealthy higher clergy during the Revolution.[68] Yet while the clergy as a collective enjoyed less wealth than officers of the local administration, their professional formation more or less guaranteed a high degree of functional literacy and, within most of multilingual old France, a knowledge of both Latin and French. Schoolmasters, secondary school teachers, legal officials—all could be distinguished by the specific institutional structures that served to define their social functions, and these specificities will be dealt with in the relevant chapters of this study. Yet in relation to language, all of these diverse local notables occupied an intermediary position between state and local society.

The geopolitical history of the Napoleonic Empire was also a crucial part of the context in which these figures operated. This cannot be reduced to a simple distinction between 'old' France and the 'occupied' France of the *départements réunis*. Here the concept of the 'inner' and 'outer' empire developed by Michael Broers is an indispensable starting point. The Napoleonic state was able to take root in certain areas recently conquered by French arms—especially those annexed before 1808, such as parts of northern Italy and the Rhineland—while even maintaining law and order proved a challenge in the Vendée and parts of the Midi, areas incorporated, if not necessarily integrated, into the French state centuries earlier.[69] The linguistic geography of the Empire, as will become clear, was also significant, and it meshed awkwardly with the older political geographies of Europe. Some annexed territories, such as francophone Belgium, can easily be contrasted with places such as Lower Brittany or northern Catalonia, where large swathes of the population spoke no French, although here at least there was a history of French as the language of the state and of high literature. This was not something found outside the highest social strata in places otherwise apparently well integrated into the Empire such as Milan or Saarbrücken. The linguistic geography of Napoleonic France can be broadly organised into three groupings of territory. In northern France, stretching into Walloon speaking Belgium, French was well entrenched as the prestige form, and everyday linguistic exchange took place in French or in a

closely related dialect (the langues d'oïl). In most of southern France and in Britany, the French language was also used as an 'H' variety, but everyday communication, especially in lower social strata took place in regional languages (the langues d'oc or Breton). In other areas, French competed with another 'H' variety such as Italian or German. As this book will show, this tripartite linguistic division of the territory of the Empire exercised a marked influence on the functioning of the institutions of the Napoleonic state.

The study is divided broadly into two sections. In the first section, I discuss the classificatory systems available to speakers and the discursive options available to them within different contexts. The attitudes of speakers is examined primarily through the production of ethnographic data of the type the regime was famed for; the descriptive statistics orchestrated by the *Bureau de la statistique* and drafted in the departments by prefects, administrators and local scholars.[70] The first chapter is concerned with the production of knowledge about society during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic period, specifically with the tradition of descriptive statistics that emerged during the period. The administrative gaze of the officials who authored these descriptions of the territories and populations they governed served to construct social and cultural practice, including language, as an object of state action. The intention was to create a synchronic picture of society at the start of the new regime that would serve to illustrate the social progress engendered by the actions of the state.

These departmental statistics frequently cited language as an object of reform, and with the enquiry into the languages of the Empire, conducted between 1806 and 1812 by the head of the *Bureau de la statistique* Charles-Etienne Coquebert de Montbret, and his son Etienne, who was also an official at the *Bureau*, language was placed firmly under the administrative gaze. This enquiry, which emerged from the tradition of descriptive statistics, revealed the tensions implicit in the production of social knowledge. The descriptive statistics were drafted or overseen by prefects, who drew on knowledge they gleaned from their own correspondence with local administrators and tours of the department. The enquiry carried out by the Coqueberts, in contrast, preserves a series of direct exchanges between the centre and the kinds of local state notables described above from which telling divergences in the classification and status of local knowledge forms such as language emerge.

While the Coqueberts sought to understand linguistic diversity in terms of territory and space, their correspondents tended to associate different styles of speaking with place, reflecting how firmly rooted in local contexts the social imaginary of these figures was. This in turn reveals an important

distinction between types of geographical knowledge. On the one hand, administrators such as the Coqueberts were focused on territory, on geographical space as it is administered by the state.[71] In contrast to this, many of their correspondents thought in terms of a situated sense of place, of geography as something experienced and lived through the interactions of local communities. It is argued that, rather than understanding linguistic difference in relation to the proto-philological distinctions of linguistic territory drawn by the Coqueberts, they viewed language through the prism of local rivalries. That local notables, themselves often bilingual, understood their own linguistic diversity and sought to represent it to the centre reveals not only the stigma that could be attached to speakers of local dialects, but the effort to construct the local language as linguistic patrimony, as a form of local knowledge in which, as native speakers, those writing to the Coqueberts might be considered experts.

In the second part of this book I examine how language influenced the elaboration of linguistic practice within four crucial social institutions: the school, the army, the law court and the Church. In all four of these institutions, the dynamic between local and official forms of knowledge, outlined in the first half of the study, becomes centred on the question of how far practice should accommodate local culture, or, conversely, seek to impose homogeneity on local communities. An examination of school inspector reports from the Napoleonic period shows how, in keeping with educational projects elaborated during the Revolution, the schoolroom was considered a crucial site for the dissemination of the national language. However, a detailed examination of linguistic practices within classrooms reveals that those working in Napoleonic schools often mediated the pressure to use French, reflecting local attitudes and demands in the language of instruction. An examination of linguistic practices in the army, the other institution most closely associated with the dissemination of official culture, similarly shows how linguistic diversity was accommodated in practice. Regional recruitment patterns and the value placed on multilingualism by troops meant that military service did not spread the national language in a straightforward way.

The law courts of the Napoleonic Empire were also understood as a mechanism for the standardisation and homogenisation of society. The Napoleonic Empire retained a commitment to legal universalism, and, as such, a common legal procedure carried out in a common language was deemed both central to the Napoleonic project and a means by which local legal officials might be encouraged to learn French. However,

as demonstrated by the recruitment of judges and the testimony of legal officials themselves, this aim was often in conflict with the effective administration of justice. As a result, informal accommodations, and eventually official provisions, for the use of other languages were introduced.

The Church, the subject of the final chapter of this book, is generally understood as an opponent of centralising and modernising projects, cleaving to traditional cultural forms and local languages as a means to insulate the population from secularising trends. However, an examination of the Church during the Napoleonic period reveals an institution riven by exactly the same uncertainties and debates as the education and legal systems. While commentators focusing on the Third Republic have understood the Church as an essentially reactionary force, an impulse towards the regulation of cultural practice, particularly of popular religious forms, had long influenced pastoral work. The linguistic character of religious practice across France was a patchwork, in some places making use of the national language for worship alongside Latin, while regional languages dominated in other places. However, the tendency of the Church hierarchy towards social pedagogy is revealed in the seminary regulations of the Napoleonic period, which invariably sought to familiarise the next generation of priests with French. It was only with the fall of Napoleon and the re-Christianisation campaigns under the restored Bourbon monarchy that the 'mother tongue' came to be understood as a means of saving souls, and only then within the frequently controversial circles of missionaries.

The striking thing about these arguments over linguistic practice is the way in which local officials mobilised notions of linguistic and cultural particularism to justify departures from what otherwise might be considered desirable by the regime. The normative orientation, the position-taking, of the local notability in relation to linguistic diversity had a discernible impact on the linguistic forms of the state. The central problem here is to historicise the rhetoric of modernisation that emerges from the source material, to understand modernity not as a check-list of conditions that arise through an often unspecified historical process, but, much as with state power, as a conscious mind-set or set of choices—as a normative orientation to the features of social life.[72] Modernity, as the anthropologist Sharon MacDonald reminds us, is a heterogeneous and ambivalent experience, and one which sees social practices constituted and legitimised as 'traditions' and 'heritages' as frequently as they are denounced, restricted or reformed.[73]

Notes

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CHAPTER 2

Language under the Administrative Gaze: State, Statistics, and the Politics of Language under Napoleon

The Napoleonic period witnessed a flourishing of efforts to produce knowledge about society. The enlightened gaze of administrators and amateur scholars was turned towards the territory and population of the Empire in an effort to describe not only the economic situation but also the social and cultural practices of inhabitants. The period saw a concerted effort to make society 'legible' in James C. Scott's terminology.[1] Some efforts aimed at the collection of information about society were directly related to the material concerns of the state or of the management of society. The Napoleonic cadastre, for example, was intended to make tax collection more efficient, while population figures allowed quotas for conscription to be drawn up.[2] The centrepiece of this effervescence of social description—the departmental statistics—went beyond the collation of numbers in relation to population and production, and sought to describe local social practices. The production of these descriptive statistical tracts was inextricably linked to the French state, since they were commissioned by the *Bureau de la statistique*, which was part of the Ministry of the Interior. As Marie-Noëlle Bourguet has argued, these descriptive statistics became increasingly ethnographic in character.[3] This reflected the increasing interest in descriptions of the social and cultural practices of the French population evident in the writings of travellers and scholars of the period.[4]

A common characteristic of all these efforts was the process of observation. This involved not just description, but the imposition

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of an analytical grid on society, a scheme of questions that constituted a technology of seeing and which governed the production of knowledge. It also involved a form of geographical displacement from centre to periphery, either in the form of the observers themselves, be they metropolitan travellers or administrators, or of information through administrative or scholarly correspondence. A vision of society was thus created at the centre that could then be exported back down to the region. This was significant because, as this chapter will argue, the vision implied a course of action; it constructed local society as a particularity and valorised the notion of progress and homogeneity.

As the period went on, language featured with increasing prominence in these descriptions of society. The way in which the population communicated became an object of enquiry for the administrators who compiled the departmental statistics and, in turn, the integration and modernisation of the population of the Empire was understood to involve the spread of the French language. This interest reached its high point with the enquiry into the languages of the Empire, conducted by the *Bureau de la statistique* between 1806 and 1812 under the influence of its then chief, Charles-Etienne Coquebert de Montbret and his son, Eugène. This chapter will situate this effort to describe the linguistic practices of society in the broader production of social knowledge during the period, and especially the state-directed departmental statistics, and the link between these projects and efforts to unify the culture and language of the population.

The Production of Social Knowledge Under Napoleon

The statistical enquiry as practised under the Directory and Empire was not new. It owed a great deal to the statistical treatises of administrators during the *Ancien régime*, and to the enquiries of the intendants carried out under Louis XIV.[5] These studies were generally little concerned with society, focusing instead on the immediate concerns of the monarchy such as taxation and agricultural production.[6] In the second half of the eighteenth century, the scope and audience of such descriptive practices was transformed.

Until the last decades of the eighteenth century, statistics had been the secret of the state. A crucial turning point, according to Marie-Noëlle

Bourguet, was the 1781 publication by Louis XVI's Finance Minister, Jacques Necker, of his famous *Compte rendu de l'état du royaume et des affaires publiques* (Account of the state of the realm and public affairs).[7] Necker's work was not the first account of the royal finances to be published before the Revolution, but its large circulation placed the administrative knowledge of the state prominently within the public sphere.[8] The new impulse towards publicity in state affairs continued into the Napoleonic period, manifested in the annual report or *Exposé de la situation de l'Empire*, presented to the legislative corps by the Minister of the Interior.

Earlier iterations of these reports amounted to little more than a justification of Government policy over the preceding year, and the benevolent impact of the Napoleonic state upon society was simply asserted. In 1804, for example, it was claimed that the encouragement of the government was leading to the improvement of agriculture and to the introduction of improved breeds of livestock, while the return of peace and civil order brought about by the Napoleonic regime encouraged charity and thus the diminution of the number of vagrants.[9] The regime, in other words, sought to claim legitimacy on the basis of social progress, upon the improvement of society. The character of the reports changed in the later years of the Napoleonic period, after the appointment of Jean-Pierre de Montalivet as Minister of the Interior in 1809. Montalivet sought not only to assert the progress brought about by government activity but to substantiate it with reference to statistics on population, agricultural production, commerce and public spending on improvements such as roads and bridges.[10] In each of these categories, 1789 was taken as the starting point and the aim was to demonstrate how the new regime had improved the country by increasing the level of population or agricultural production.[11]

The new emphasis on the public exercise of governmental authority was joined by an increasing desire to describe the social and cultural practices of the population. This was manifested most obviously in enlightened travelogues, and in the work of local learned societies and scholars.[12] An ethnographic interest in the lives of the rural population of France became particularly marked in the travel writing of the 1780s. The enlightened travelogue as a genre had focused predominantly on urban life up to this point, but with publications such as Le Grand d'Aussy's *Voyage dans l'Auvergne*, a new desire to seek out the 'savage' parts of France, to describe and account for the practices of the French peasantry, came to prominence.[13] This ethnographic impulse profoundly marked the production of social knowledge during

the Napoleonic period, including a number of volumes of the departmental statistics and the enquiry of the Coqueberts into the languages of France.[14]

Pre-Revolutionary ethnographic interest took imprinted itself on the official production of social knowledge in the form of the departmental statistics that took shape under a succession of interior ministers during and after the Revolutionary period. Based on the genesis of the genre as described by Marie-Noëlle Bourguet, a number of different types of source may be distinguished. Departmental statistical enquiries were originally conceived during the Revolution with the division of the regions into departments. The earliest enquiries on the departmental level were aimed at grasping the territorial extent of regions to facilitate the setting of tax levels. The outbreak of war and the *levée en masse* brought about an increased interest in population levels and in the distribution of resources that might be requisitioned. However, it was only with the arrival of François de Neufchâteau at the Ministry of the Interior that the widespread composition of statistical surveys at the departmental level began. His circular of the 26th Germinal Year VII (15th April 1799) called for the compilation of summary descriptions of the departments of the Republic.[15] Lucien Bonaparte, following his installation as Minister of the Interior in place of François de Neufchâteau after the coup d'état of the 18th Brumaire, issued a new set of questions to guide the compilation of departmental statistics. He also established the *Bureau de la statistique* to archive and coordinate the fruits of this descriptive effort.[16]

Up to this point the departmental statistics, the summary descriptions composed according to the directives of François de Neufchâteau tended to be fairly unambitious texts. Many of these publications, such as the summary description from the Department of the Aube, which appeared in September 1799, totalled only twenty pages.[17] Even the longer works, such as the summary description from the Department of the Gard, were no longer than eighty pages.[18] They were largely confined to a simple topography of the department followed by an account of the agricultural, commercial and industrial activity taking place in the region and perhaps a few paragraphs on the morals of the population. This changed in 1801, with the intervention of yet another Minister of the Interior, Jean-Antoine Chaptal. His circular of the 19th Germinal year IX (9th April 1801) gave a new structure to the departmental statistics, with five chapters: (1) a topographical description; (2) a detailed breakdown of the population by age,

sex and marital status; (3) a description of state of society; (4) agricultural production; and (5) industrial and commercial activity.[19] The third chapter in particular, describing the state of the population of a given department, marked a broadening of the scope of the enquiry. The details of social customs and practices, of hygiene, education, literacy, criminality and of the character of the inhabitants of a department were now scrutinised by administrators. These statistical descriptions were substantially more detailed than the works that had preceded them. The statistical memoir published in the 1802 by the Prefect of the Moselle was 200 pages long. It contained a lengthy description of the charitable activities, criminality and literacy of the population, concluding with remarks on religion and language, illustrating the changing nature of the genre.[20]

The departmental statistics compiled and published through the Ministry of the Interior were joined by a host of local publications, many of which were also the product of individuals involved with the local prefecture. These works generally took the form of a statistical annual, containing information on local market days, weights and measures and office holders in addition to a statistical description of the department. The description itself, however, generally conformed to the pattern laid down at the centre. The 1807 statistical annual for the Hautes-Pyrénées, for example, was simply a revised version of the 1801 departmental survey submitted to the Minister of the Interior.[21] The statistical table from the department of Dyle adopted a different format, presenting information in the form of a table rather than a text, yet the logic of the enquiry remained, with population broken down by geographical locale and a short series of observations on the language and customs of the region included at the end of a 'précis statistique'.[22]

The prefecture was a pivotal site in the compilation of the departmental statistics. Most descriptions, like the work of Colchen on the Moselle, were composed under the direction of the prefect. The majority of the rest were delegated to the secretary of the prefecture, as was the case with the accounts published on the departments of the Nord, Vendée, Dordogne, and Lot-et-Garonne.[23] Occasionally, a local scholar or other official would be chosen to complete the work. The Statistical Annual of the Seine-Inférieure was written by Vitalis, a professor at the Lycée, while the chief civil engineer of the Department of the Gard was responsible for the summary description of his department.[24] While a figure in the prefecture directed the project, the statistical description was always a collaborative endeavour. The individual compiling the statistical

description of the department would always lean on the knowledge and expertise of local figures. This meant carrying out a correspondence with the mayors within the department, asking them to respond to questionnaires and provide information. As Dalphonse, Prefect of the Indre, explained, "I have put within the reach of all the mayors, all the questions relating to the Statistic. I have received all their responses; I have compared them all".[25] The clearest evidence of this practice is to be found in the correspondence of Christophe de Villeneuve, the Prefect of the Bouches du Rhône under the restored Bourbon monarchy who published a multivolume statistical description of the department in the 1820s.[26] In writing this work, Villeneuve carried out an extensive correspondence with the mayors of his department, distributing questionnaires on topics such as the practice of village festivals, the etymologies of place names and the historical monuments of the region.[27]

Information not obtained through correspondence was collected through direct observation. Where the author was the prefect, this would generally take place during the annual administrative tour of the department, a journey undertaken primarily to oversee administrative activities such as conscription. Dalphonse, for example, describes how intensive travelling across his department allowed him to complete his survey: "for four consecutive months, I have travelled across the Department of Indre; I have visited all its communes, all its establishments, all its roads: wherever I went, I saw, I interrogated, I collected".[28] The practice of statistical description was, therefore, closely related to the enlightened travelogue. Some of the best-known travelogues of the Napoleonic period began as administrative voyages. One such example is Jacques Cambry's *Voyage dans le Finistère*, published in 1799.[29] Cambry was a government administrator, fulfilling various roles during the Revolution before serving as Prefect of the Oise between 1800 and 1802. During his time as prefect, Cambry authored a two-volume description of the Oise, a work fitting neatly into the Napoleonic practice of departmental statistical description.[30] His better-known *Voyage dans le Finistère* underscores the porous nature of distinctions between administrative description and enlightened travelogue. Cambry's *Voyage* was initially undertaken as a survey of surviving monuments and artworks in the department following the vandalism of the Terror.[31] When it reappeared in 1799 as *Voyage*, the work was suffused with the romanticised celtomania that would later permeate the work of the *Académie celtique*. Following a strand of eighteenth century antiquarian thought,

the members of the *Académie* held that all of France's languages were ultimately derived from Celtic, and that the influence of the Romans had obscured the immense cultural and philosophical achievements of the Celts. This Celtic heritage belonged exclusively to France, and was redolent of the kind of 'golden age' sought out by romantic nationalists in the nineteenth century.[32] Yet contemporaries also understood Cambry's *Voyage* as a contribution to the production of statistical knowledge. The reviewer of this 'useful book' in the *Décade Philosophique*, having lamented the impoverished state of France's interior, claimed that "if a similar work on all the other departments existed, we could see the great work of interior improvement as already considerably advanced".[33]

Travel writing and statistical description were therefore understood by contemporaries as closely related activities, and this relationship was manifested in a common epistemology centred on the practice of enlightened observation. It was enlightened observation that allowed the production and distribution of social knowledge, by providing a grid through which accounts of society could be structured. The paradigmatic form of enlightened observation under Napoleon was the questionnaire. The departmental statistics were themselves structured by the questionnaires of François de Neufchâteau and Chaptal, which determined the features of society to be described.[34] The questionnaire became a ubiquitous feature of scholarly, as well as administrative, attempts to describe society during the period. The publication in 1800 of Joseph-Marie Degerando's *Considérations sur les diverses méthodes à suivre dans l'observation des peuples sauvages* (Considerations of the diverse methods to be followed in the observation of savage peoples), which contained a series of questions about the beliefs and practices of inhabitants of the New World intended to structure the work of enlightened explorers, is often cited as an early cornerstone of anthropology.[35] The popular customs and practices of the French population were the object of the questionnaire compiled by the *Académie celtique* and circulated to the provincial scholars and administrators who formed the membership of the *Académie*.[36] The questionnaire was even distributed through the state bureaucracy in the Kingdom of Italy.[37] Towards the end of the period, Volney made the connections between the observations of enlightened travellers and the administrative statistics of the Napoleonic state explicit with the publication of his statistical questionnaire for travellers.[38] Volney's list of 135 questions for the traveller to answer about each location he visited clearly demonstrates the

observational practice of the period. The topics mirrored the departmental statistics, opening with geographical information such as latitude and longitude, before broadening out to examine agricultural and industrial production, population and even cultural practices like reading groups.[39]

The questionnaire, therefore, was intended to structure the practices of enlightened observation across a range of activity, from the descriptive statistics of the prefects and Ministry of the Interior to the writings of travellers and antiquarians interested in popular culture. Questionnaires could be disseminated either through correspondence or through the personal movement of the observer, and they were the central technology in the production of knowledge about society during the period. They were above all a technology of seeing that allowed common techniques of observation to be implemented across the Empire and even beyond. The questionnaire shaped the enlightened gaze of administrators and scholars, producing a standardised form of knowledge that could be transmitted back to the centre where it could be arranged as a coherent and public vision of society.

Social Knowledge and Social Improvement

The paradoxical effect of this very public attempt to describe society, carried out to a significant extent by state actors, was to establish the state as something acting upon society from the outside. It served at once as a diagnosis of society, a way of identifying ills to be cured, and at the same time as a legitimation of state power. The ideological justification of the authority of the state, and particularly the post-revolutionary state, was a central feature of the *Statistiques départementales* as conceived by Chaptal. As with Montalivet's *Exposé*, the aim was to document the condition of the country as a whole and compare it with 1789 in order to assess the impact of the regime's policies. The legitimacy of the regime was thus tied to the idea of social progress and improvement.[40] This tendency was particularly marked in the annexed departments. The Prefect of the Rhin-et-Moselle was particularly sensitive to the comparison of conditions before the Revolution with the situation under French rule. He confessed that literacy rates had fallen since the arrival of the French troops, and that the occupation had 'demoralised' the country.[41] Yet he was certain that the benevolent impact of French governance was making itself felt. In Koblenz, he claimed, prosperity was beginning to flourish because "the Government and genius of France is regenerating her".[42]

Perhaps the most notable benefit of French rule, however, was the banishment of superstitions and archaic customs. As the Prefect wrote:

> If the Revolution, the passage and arrival of the armies demoralised this department, as one claims, they have at least made a powerful contribution to the destruction of a large number of superstitions of which many inhabitants were victims, and reminded them of more simple and sage religious and political ideas.[43]

Thus, according to the Prefect, tales of ghosts, spirits and exorcisms, the 'charlatanism' that impeded progress in agriculture, were swept away by the arms of French reason. The French state, in this formulation, was a tool for the enlightenment and improvement of society.

This justification for state authority was closely related to the practice of 'diagnosing' society as it emerged from Napoleonic social description. Commentators used clinical metaphors such as 'diagnosis' and 'cure' during this period. As the reviewer of Jacques Cambry's *Voyage* in the *Décade philosophique* wrote, in praising his descriptions of popular customs, "to cure you need to know".[44] In common with the departmental statistics, Cambry identified projects and improvements requiring the support of the state. As Sharif Gemie observed, "every second page" saw Cambry bemoan the lack of some public facility.[45] The diagnosis of Breton 'backwardness' served to legitimate state action on society; it was the necessary first step towards 'amelioration'. Administrators like Cambry even claimed that it was in the interests of the Bretons who he described to place their conditions of life before the reading public, because this was the only way to redress the Parisian focus of government. As he wrote, "I reveal the needs of these good peasants […] the countries neighbouring Paris get everything, because they have advocates amongst the government".[46]

As with the Prefect of the Rhin-et-Moselle celebrating the decline of superstition as a product of French rule, so Cambry's statements on the 'absurdities' of peasant 'superstitions' demonstrate how the impulse towards improvement manifested as a desire to censor and regulate cultural practices. According to Cambry, the population of lower Brittany was notable for its superstitions: "several particular absurdities characterise each canton of the universe; Brittany unites them all".[47] The solution proposed by Cambry was education, which he regarded as 'a panacea against despotism'.[48] For Cambry, the

'absurdities' of popular culture arose from ignorance exacerbated by a lack of education. As Cambry wrote of the district of Morlaix where "the education of children is neglected, totally abandoned", and as a result "all the prejudices are taught in the markets: the maids still tell stories of ghosts, of miracles; filling children's brains with errors".[49] It was ignorance that the government needed to combat, and these 'absurdities' would have to be reformed by the government if it were it to avoid 'despotism' and ameliorate social problems; "the most odious of governments is one established on nonsense. In the final analysis, ignorance is the worst of all evils, and the source of all the crimes".[50] In Cambry's account, Brittany existed in a state of backwardness equal to the most isolated reaches of the word, and its inhabitants suffered comparable hardships:

> When you read, in travellers' tales, the description of the unfortunate lives of the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego, the unlucky ones who vegetate on the sea rocks in the south, the unfortunate Lapps buried under the snow, of Kamchatcans fed on rotten fish; you sometimes cried out: Oh France! Too fortunate is he who was born in your bosom, in this so fertile land… You are unaware, in this very same France, of the state of life of the inhabitants of Pontusval, and of the coast of Britany in general.[51]

Cambry attributed this backwardness to despotism and ignorance. He railed, for example, against the inadequate dress favoured by the peasantry, "which only covered half their buttocks,' and which:

> was invented under the system of feudal government, by imperial lords, interested in suppressing [the peasants], to constrict all type of desire, to put them away from temptation. […] It is this principle, one says, which forced women in China to only ever wear tiny slippers; concepts of tyranny are the same anywhere on Earth.

Cambry thus interpreted cultural diversity as evidence of feudal abuses, the 'irrational' and impractical clothing springing logically from the unmitigated dominion of 'tyranny'.

Cambry's remarks were fairly typical of the way in which popular culture was constructed as an object of study in the Departmental Statistic*s*. Louis Texier-Olivier, Prefect of the Haute-Vienne and author of the 1808 departmental statistics, made use of similar clichés about the

simplicity of the inhabitants of the department: "Slow to understand, the inhabitants of the department of Haute-Vienne do however possess a natural spirit".[52] According to Texier-Olivier, the inhabitants of the Haute-Vienne could be rescued from their slowness and simplicity only through exposure to French science and civilisation; "with a meticulous education, they will be no different from other French people, who are accepted as having the greatest aptitude for the Sciences and the Arts".[53] The production of social knowledge under Napoleon reveals a central ideological tenet of Napoleonic governance. Efficient and effective administration of society by the state, it was argued, could lead to the improvement of society. The description of archaic and backwards cultural practices gave purpose to French rule, both within France and in the annexed departments. As scholars such as Michael Broers and Stuart Woolf have observed, this kind of superiority pervaded the mentality of administrators across the Empire during the period. It was what they believed made the enlightened rule of the French necessary.[54] It also made the cultural integration of the populations of the Empire an object of Napoleonic rule, and this meant the spreading the French language.

Language in the Napoleonic Statistics

The study of the spoken language of the French, as opposed to the grammatical, standardised language of written production, gained prominence in France with the 1775 publication of an essay on the patois of Ban de la Roche by Jérémie-Jacques Oberlin.[55] Oberlin's essay, concerned with the *langue d'oïl* variety spoken at the easternmost edge of Alsace, was the first study dedicated explicitly to one of France's regional languages. Oberlin began his work with the following disclaimer: "If it were a question of giving a detailed description of different patois, which distinguish the provinces of the Kingdom, in order to do so it would have been necessary to have an Academy formed of scholars from each province, as well as simultaneously having people of the lowliest backgrounds".[56] Such a proposition made it clear that the distinction between the French-speaking and non French-speaking populations of France was a social, as well as an ethnic one. Authentic samples of those languages particular to various provinces of France could only be found amongst those of lowly extraction, '*le peuple*', but it was to the educated that the study of such languages would be entrusted. This was a trope that surfaced repeatedly in studies of regional language and culture in

France throughout the period. For example, in an article on the '*breton-armoricain*' accent one member of the *Académie celtique* observed "that when speaking with a Breton accent, I always imagine this language in the mouths of the farmers, the artisans and the working people, for whom it is natural".[57] This was because those who habitually spoke in French tended to employ "the quality and the accent of this language when they wish to speak Breton, circumstances which make it lose a lot of its originality".[58]

Linguistic diversity, therefore, was understood as a feature of popular culture in the same way as the superstitions and customs described by figures like Cambry and Texier-Olivier. This made language a legitimate site for the enlightened intervention of the state, something that became clear during the Revolution, when Abbé Grégoire circulated a series of 43 questions on the patois of France.[59] Grégoire's questionnaire, which was printed in the newspaper *Le patriote français* and attracted responses from across France, predominantly from the Societies of Friends of the Constitution, was conceived as the first step in a campaign to homogenise the linguistic culture of France.[60] The questionnaire itself made this goal explicit, requiring the respondent to consider the religious and political effect of the destruction of the patois and to reflect on how this destruction might be brought about.[61] Yet Grégoire also sought to collect a range of information on the use of France's other languages across contexts like the church and schoolroom, as well as the proverbs and vocabulary characterising popular speech and the printed material produced in these languages.[62]

Grégoire's survey, along with his report on the necessity and the means of annihilating the patois and universalising the French language, which he presented to the convention in 1794, have been understood as manifestations of a state linguistic policy aimed at the displacement of regional languages with French.[63] Grégoire offered a damning verdict of the French people's ability to speak French:

> We can guarantee with no exaggeration that at least six million French people, above all those in the countryside, are ignorant of the national language; that an equal number are quasi incapable of holding an extended conversation; that, in the end, the number of those who do speak it does not exceed three million, and that the number of those who write it correctly is likely even less.

This posed an obvious problem for the revolutionaries, for while it was desirable that all Frenchmen should be citizens capable of occupying places in the political administration they would still need to know French:

> If these places are held by men who are incapable of expressing themselves, of writing in the national language, will the rights of citizens be truly guaranteed by acts where the process of drafting will introduce the improper usage of terms, the imprecision of ideas, in a word all the symptoms of ignorance?

It is telling, however,that Grégoire distinguished not simply between those who are able to speak French and those who are not, but also between those who are able to use French 'properly' and those whose grasp of the language is so tenuous as to invite error—an "imprecision of ideas" that could spell political disaster. Public administration was properly the role of the educated who could use language 'correctly'.

While language was not an explicit object of the Napoleonic departmental statistics, the frequency with which it appeared in the studies of the period demonstrates its enduring relevance as an object of official concern. Of 87 departmental statistics published between the year VII and 1813, 40 describe the language of the department's inhabitants. The geographical distribution of these statistics, shown in Fig. 2.1, unsurprisingly reflects the linguistic geography of the Empire. Concern over language was expressed predominantly, although not exclusively, in the Occitan-speaking south of the country, in Brittany, and in the annexed departments of the Rhineland, Belgium and the Netherlands. The map also reveals the irregularity with which concerns about language were expressed in the South, with the departmental statistics for a number of departments in Occitan-speaking territory making no mention of language. It should also be noted that the language of the population was an object of administrative enquiry in several departments of northern France where dialects of the *langue d'oïl* were spoken, such as the Haute-Saône and the Deux-Sèvres.[64]

Language in the departmental statistics of the Napoleonic period appeared as an obstacle to the process of improvement upon which government legitimacy rested. In his work on the Belgian department of the Lys, the Prefect Justin de Viry complained that rural dwellers in the area refused agricultural improvements like new livestock breeds because of ignorance fermented by a lack of knowledge of the French language.[65] Integrating the culturally and linguistically diverse populations

Fig. 2.1 Language in the Departmental Statistics (Year VII; 1813). *Source Statistiques départementales*

of the Empire meant spreading the French language. This position was expressed with particular clarity by Boucqueau, Prefect of the Rhenish department of the Rhin-et-Moselle. As he wrote:

> This is the moment when the people subject to the same laws will speak the same language; it is only in so doing that, with nothing distinguishing them, they will adopt all the same tastes and customs; that communication between them will be more agreeable, and that they will form a homogeneous unity which will truly make up one nation.[66]

The Napoleonic project as understood by figures such as Viry, therefore, involved the homogenisation of not only legal conventions and government structures, but also cultural practices such as language, and the description of society was a crucial first step in this project of linguistic integration.

The Coqueberts and the Languages of the Napoleonic Empire

It was from this context that the enquiry into the languages of the French empire, conducted by the *Bureau de la statistique* between 1806 and 1812, emerged. The enquiry is commonly associated with the name Coquebert de Montbret. However, it was in reality the work of two individuals, Charles-Étienne Coquebert de Montbret, who ran the *Bureau de la statistique* from 1806 until 1810, when he was posted to Amsterdam to administer the imperial blockade in the trading cities along the Roer, and his son and employee at the Office, Eugène.[67] It is unclear where the initial impulse for the enquiry originated, since a letter from November 1807 Charles-Étienne Coquebert de Montbret credits the idea to Champagny, the then-Minister of the Interior.[68] Yet it was undoubtedly the Coqueberts who gave the enquiry its shape, for the draft versions of the Office's correspondence are almost entirely written in the hand of either father or son. Furthermore, the Coqueberts retained an interest in the subject during the restoration, publishing an essay on the linguistic geography of France in 1831, which is attributed to Eugène in the catalogue of the National Library, but may have been the work of Charles-Etienne, in view of a similar manuscript in his hand.[69]

Disentangling the efforts of one Coquebert from another is an equally difficult proposition when it comes to the realisation of the enquiry itself. Upon the dissolution of the*Bureau de la statistique* in 1812, Eugène wrote a report for the Minister of the Interior outlining what had been completed so far and asking to be allowed to continue the work in his new posting. In an unsigned letter accompanying this report, it was claimed that "it is M. Eugène Coquebert who undertook this correspondence, it is he who united and classified all the information".[70] The largest share of the draft correspondence relating to the enquiry was written in the hand of the younger Coquebert, and certainly one may presume that the task fell to him after his father's departure from the Office in 1810, although much of the earliest correspondence is in Charles-Étienne's hand.[71] The elder Coquebert's

script is also evident in corrections made to Eugène's drafts.[72] Father and son, therefore, worked together on the enquiry, and while Eugène may have been more closely involved with its workings, particularly in its last two years, Charles-Étienne's seniority was also evident.

Charles-Étienne Coquebert de Montbret was an assiduous amateur geographer. The elder Coquebert owned a collection of 856 maps, and took voyages around France and Ireland, always accompanied by selection of these maps on which to mark down the geological, agricultural and linguistic features he encountered.[73] Upon returning home, he would add details from travelogues and his own correspondence. He was a founding member of the Society of Geography in 1821, collaborated with Omalius d'Halloy on the creation of geological maps of France, and was elected a member of the Academy of Science in 1816.[74] Perhaps unsurprisingly, therefore, the enquiry into the languages of the Empire overseen by the Coqueberts was essentially an attempt to localise linguistic diversity in geographical space. To this end, the Coqueberts carried out an extensive correspondence with various figures in the local administration from across the Empire, and the Office amassed a prodigious quantity of documentation penned by a slew of prefects, sub-prefects, clergy, teachers, lawyers and other provincial notables.[75] Linguistic maps, perhaps the earliest of their kind, reside in the archive alongside songs, poems and other samples of dialects, some in print, but mostly in manuscripts. Lengthy antiquarian disquisitions on the history of the respondent's commune are accompanied by vocabularies and grammatical treatises aimed at describing the local language.

While the urge to locate the linguistic diversity of the population in geographic space coloured the entire enquiry, it should be noted that an important shift in the object of study took place at the end of 1806, a shift that has lead commentators such as René Merle to claim that we are dealing not only with two Coqueberts, but with two enquiries.[76] Eugène himself understood the enquiry as taking place in two distinct phases. This much is clear from Eugène's draft report of 1812 as well as the draft versions of the letters sent out by the Office to its respondents in the provinces. Thus, in 1806, the elder Coquebert expressed his intentions to the Prefect of the arrondissement of Malmedy in the Belgian department of the Ourthe. According to Coquebert the departmental statistics published up to that point had not traced "with enough precision the boundaries of the French language despite its importance on a great number of accounts".[77] In his 1812 report, Eugène echoed his father, claiming that "we thought that the first step to take consisted in precisely determining the limits of the extent of the countries in which each

of the principal idioms, which can be considered as mother tongues, are spoken".[78] The 'mother tongues' identified by Eugène were French, German, Italian, Flemish, Breton and Basque. Once the geographic limits were defined, the population of speakers of each language was calculated from census data. The second stage was also concerned with linguistic geography, but moved beyond the notion of languages to that of dialects. According to Eugène, the aim was "to attempt in the same way to recognise the principle points which more or less circumscribe the territory occupied by each secondary dialect of these diverse principal languages".[79] This ambition saw the Coqueberts cleave the map of France into two great chunks, the *langue d'oc*- and *langue d'oïl*-speaking regions, a distinction that would recur throughout the nineteenth century and beyond, and then break these areas down further into smaller dialect zones.[80]

It would appear that the enquiry was initially conceived with administrative ends in mind, and the project had potential applications in the administration of the Empire. The Revolution witnessed the complete spatial reorganisation of the administrative structures of the French territory, from the irregular *pays d'élection* (areas administered by a royal intendant) and *pays d'état* (areas where representative bodies or estates regulated fiscal policy) of the *Ancien régime* to more uniform departments. Questions over the administrative organisation of the nation's territory reappeared as France's borders expanded, bringing non-francophone areas with no history of carrying out administration or justice in French under the purview of the French ministries. As a result, language increasingly became an issue in the demarcation and organisation of administrative and juridical structures. Under the Consulate Jean-Baptiste-Moïse Jollivet, the *Commissaire générale du gouvernement* for the territories annexed on the left bank of the Rhine, proposed the reduction of the number of departments in the annexed territories from four to three. As part of this reorganisation, he sought to detach the canton of Reifferscheid from the Sarre and attach it to the canton of Scheiden in the Ourthe. Although his principal justification was to maintain parity in the department's populations, the German-speaking nature of these two cantons made such a reorganisation more desirable. As Jollivet commented: "it is moreover to be observed that the communes which currently make up the Canton of Schleiden […] speak the same language and have the same customs and habits as those from the Canton of Reifferscheid, to which we now have all the more reason to support our proposed unification".[81]

Discussions concerning the establishment of French rule over the territories that had been annexed during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars made the question of language a live one within the Ministry of the Interior. This much is clear from a letter sent by the Minister of Justice to the Minister of the Interior in June 1806, concerning the use of the French language in the occupied departments of northern Italy:

> I have already posed some time ago to His Majesty the question which is the subject of your letter from the 2nd of this month, discussing the necessity of prolonging the delay for the use of the French language in the department composing the aforementioned Liguria. I will call again for the attention of the State Council to this subject.

It is intriguing that this letter should have found its way into the documentation produced by the enquiry. It does, however, make clear that the Coqueberts' initial efforts, in seeking to define the territory of the French language, were not unrelated to the concerns of a government attempting to organise and administer a multilingual Empire.

It is equally clear, however, that while the enquiry began as an administrative project, its final form, concerned above all with the dialects of the French Empire, owed more to the antiquarian interests of the Coqueberts themselves. The report drafted by Eugène in 1812 was essentially an unsuccessful plea to continue the enquiry following the dissolution of the *Bureau de la statistique*, which was closed largely due to its inability to respond promptly to government requests for information on material conditions.[82] When the translations gathered by the Coqueberts to describe the languages of the Empire were published after the fall of Napoleon, they appeared in the memoirs of the Society of Antiquarians.[83] The enquiry should thus be considered a composite work, carried out over a lengthy period of time and shaped both by the administrative and scholarly concerns of the Coqueberts.

Mapping Language, Dialect and Population

The Coqueberts' initial forays into the study of language took place in the summer of 1806. Their concern with the frontiers between French-speaking regions and those areas where German, Flemish, Basque and Catalan were spoken bear witness to the burgeoning multilingualism of

the French state ushered in by the military advances of the Revolution and Empire. In pursuit of these linguistic borders, the Coqueberts had two types of sources produced: a collection of linguistic maps, now held at the National Library,[84] and a number of nominative lists, composed for different *arrondissements* by the relevant sub-prefects. These lists, which are now spread between the National Library and the Rouen National Library, where the family papers were deposited by Eugène Coquebert de Montbret, gave the names of the arrondissements' communes, the language spoken therein, and sometimes the population of these communes.[85] The dates of the correspondence relating to this effort at linguistic geography show that the enquiry began sometime in the summer of 1806, with the responses arriving between late July and October of that year.

These data on the geographic spread of languages was used by the Coqueberts to calculate the populations of speakers of the various languages spoken in the Empire. These figures, which are given in Table 2.1, were presented in a report dated 1808, and then in the Coqueberts' 1831 publication on the subject.[86] In the 1808 report, Eugène Coquebert de Montbret outlined the method followed to arrive at these figures; first 'authentic' information was compiled on the limits of each language in those departments where languages other than French were in use. Then, the population of "all the communes in the departments with mixed languages speaking the same idiom" was counted, giving the number of speakers of languages other than French in the territories of the Empire.[87] This produced a more accurate result than Abbé Grégoire's frequently cited yet vague assertion that six million Frenchmen spoke no French, and only three million spoke it properly. Indeed, while frequently quoted uncritically as evidence of France's linguistic diversity, Grégoire's numbers should probably be treated as a rhetorical flourish rather than a statistical fact, for nothing in the papers he amassed on the subject hint at how he arrived at such figures.[88]

The Coqueberts' efforts represent the first serious attempt to quantify France's linguistic diversity. However, despite Eugène Coquebert's claims that the work he and his father had carried out should be considered as more than 'a simple hypothetical insight,'[89] the outline of the method they used made clear that his own figures should be treated as little more than indicative. The Coqueberts were forced to assume that languages occupy homogenous territories, and that either side of a linguistic 'line of demarcation', the population was effectively monolingual. Yet as the correspondence relating to his effort makes clear, the

Table 2.1 Population of the first French Empire by language

French	28,126,000[a]
Italian	4,079,000
German	2,705,000
Flemish	2,277,000
Breton	967,000
Basque	108,000
Total	38,262,000

[a]In the 1831 publication of these figures, the population of speakers of French 'in its different dialects and patois' is given as 27,926,000. The rest of the figures remain the same giving a total population of 38,062,000. *Source* An F12 1566 Population de la France et langues parlées dans l'Empire; E. Coquebert de Montbret 'Essai d'un travail sur la géographie de la langue française'

situation was not always this straightforward. For example, the sub-prefect of the arrondissement of Saint-Dié in the Vosges claimed that "of all the communes in the aforementioned province of Alsace included in the Department of Vosges, Malzéville [...] is the only one where German is more generally used than the French language".[90] As for the other Alsatian communes in the sub-prefect's arrondissement, "they understand German there but all the inhabitants speak only French, and it is only in Malzéville that the majority of inhabitants only speak the German language".[91] The Coqueberts' method offered no way of representing such degrees of bilingualism, with settlements such as Malzéville simply placed on one side or the other of the language boundary. The Coqueberts encountered similar problems in Brittany. In October 1806, the prefect of Morbihan wrote to Coquebert, who had expressed concerns over the accuracy of the linguistic border indicated by the prefect, explaining the reasoning behind his placement of the line. According to the prefect, the course of the river Vilaine marked, for the most part, the line separating French-speaking communes from Breton-speaking ones. However, "in the three communes of Pénestin, Camoël and Ferél, the French language is truly dominant, I have not included it in my line of demarcation, because they also speak Breton there, albeit less universally than in the country beyond this river".[92] The prefect had therefore included these communes within the Breton-speaking area, "in order to not omit anywhere Breton is known".[93] The Coqueberts recognised this difficulty: "I do not need to tell you", the elder Coquebert wrote to the sub-prefect of Malmedy by way of instruction, "that I consider as

belonging to the German language any commune where this language is habitually spoken even if one concurrently uses the French language".[94] As this attempt to add greater precision to their efforts at mapping demonstrates, bilingualism continued to elude their representations of linguistic space.

The responses to the Coqueberts' enquiry indicate that bilingualism of various degrees was a common phenomenon along the zones of linguistic contact. The prefect of the Loire-Inférieure informed the Coqueberts that French was the language of his department, while "as for the Celtic language or *bas Breton*, it is only used as a means of communication with the inhabitants of the other departments of Brittany".[95] Similarly, in his letter concerning the Basque language, the prefect of the Basses-Pyrénées commented that "in lots of communes of the French language, a large number of inhabitants know Basque. It is a natural consequence of the relations they have with their neighbouring people and that is noticeable at all the borders".[96] A similar observation was made by the prefect of the Belgian department of Jemappes, who claimed that Flemish was in use only in the villages of Bever and Absennes, but that interactions with nearby Flemish speakers encouraged individuals to learn the language: "due to our necessary relations with the Flemish people, whose land we border, there have always been, in all the areas of this canton, and notably in our town, people who have made it their duty to learn their idiom".[97] As these comments imply, this kind of bilingualism seems to have been particularly the case amongst those sections of the population who were mobile, such as those involved in commerce. Thus, the prefect of the Loire-Inférieur, quoting the *departmental statistics* published in 1794, explained that in the environs of Guérande, a commune home to large salt marshes and situated in the north of the Loire-Inférieure on the border with the department of Morbihan about 60 kilometres from the market town of Vannes, there existed several villages "where one also speaks French and the Vannetais celtic". It was claimed that'the use of these two language is necessary for trade, for the business of exchange that they have with the departments beyond the Vilaine where they bring salt and from where they receive the grains they consume'.[98]

Having described the limits of the French language in relation to its neighbours in just a few months, the Coqueberts moved rapidly onto an attempt to outline the distribution of dialects throughout the territory of the French Empire. This attempt led the Coqueberts to move beyond the classification of languages such as French, German, Italian, Dutch,

Flemish, Basque and Breton, breaking them down into smaller dialect zones. To this end, the Coqueberts collected numerous samples of the language in use across the Empire. To facilitate comparison they chose a uniform text, the parable of the prodigal son, to be translated into these 'idioms for vulgar use'. This in itself was something of a departure, for while translations of biblical passages had long fulfilled the purpose of describing and comparing languages, it was invariably the Lord's Prayer that was used. In the mid-sixteenth century, Conrad Gessner collected 130 versions of the paternoster in various languages, and the same piece was used to describe the languages of the indigenous peoples of North America in works like Champlain's *Voyages dans la nouvelle France*.[99] The Coqueberts were well aware of this tradition, but felt the Lord's Prayer too short and too abstract to form the basis of a comparative project. The parable of the prodigal son was longer and had "the merit of containing only simple ideas that were familiar to everyone".[100] The Coqueberts requested the first of these translations in September 1806 from the department of the Haut Rhin. It was only at this moment that the parable was chosen, for the letter contains a crossed-out passage, which read: "as for the choice of passages … to be translated into these diverse idioms, I depend entirely on you", replaced by the demand for a translation of the parable.[101] According to Eugène's 1812 report, the Coqueberts collected more than 350 versions of the parable from 74 departments, each one representing a different dialect, idiom or patois.[102] They also received a diverse collection of songs, fragments of plays, grammatical essays and dictionaries of local dialect. Linguists have subsequently used these documents to illustrate descriptions of language change in these dialects.[103]

For the Coqueberts, the interest of this material was its potential to inform a more complete linguistic geography of the French Empire. The Coqueberts understood linguistic diversity as a foundational characteristic of the population, a feature of the arcane folk culture of the peasant unaffected by education, economic change or technical innovation. As Eugène wrote of the linguistic separation between the *langue d'oïl* speaking North and Occitan-speaking South of the country:

> This distinction was eradicated long ago in relation to politics, and to that of legislation (because the provinces of the South followed Roman law to the exclusion of that of the North, where diverse local customs were alone

> in force) but it still subsists in relation to language, to the mode of farming and the manner in which buildings are constructed.[104]

The Coqueberts considered linguistic difference a product of the long history of the peopling of western Europe, constituting a series of distinctions over which the French state had been constructed. Such distinctions were more durable than political and administrative divisions, a point they reiterated in their 1831 essay on linguistic geography: "One recognises that after the physical divisions, which are only natural and the most important of all, none should be prioritised over another as a result of the similarities and dissimilarities between idioms".[105] From this perspective, the geographies of language sought by the Coqueberts were of far greater significance than political or administrative boundaries:

> Less stable, undoubtedly, than the physical divisions, they are much more than political and administrative divisions. Centuries are hardly sufficient to change the language of a country, on the contrary all one needs is a war, a treaty of peace, exchange or sales, to give a province to new masters. However in ceasing to be fellow citizens, have they stopped being compatriots with those men whose language united them in permanent bonds?

For the Coqueberts, therefore, language was a foundational characteristic of the individual, and linguistic minorities, implanted on their territories and bound together by the ties of a shared language and history, a fundamental feature of the geography of Europe.

The Coqueberts' view of language as a definitional feature of population raises the issue of whether they should be understood as proponents of an 'ethnic' view of linguistic identity. Language was central to the thought of nineteenth century ethno-nationalists. Giuseppe Mazzini, for example, would have recognised the basic features of the European national struggle in the Coqueberts' formulation. As he wrote in an 1847 essay directed towards a liberal British audience, against the backdrop of the rising political and social tensions that would eventually result in the 1848 revolutions:

> Several races are struggling: millions of men placed by God's hand within fixed territorial boundaries, having a language of their own, as well as specific manners, tendencies, traditions and national songs. They are leashed and governed by other men whose manners, tendencies, and language are altogether foreign to them.[106]

If we set aside Mazzini's religious language, which had no counterpart in the secular formulations of geographic and antiquarian discovery employed by the Coqueberts, some parallels in the description of linguistic difference as one part of a foundational distinction between the character and manners of individuals composing the different nations of Europe do appear. Yet while the Coqueberts were pessimistic about the ability of government to change linguistic practice, they did not see language as totally immutable. Moreover, there is no sense that the Coqueberts viewed language as a legitimate basis for national self-determination.

At the same time, the Coqueberts did not appear to subscribe to the kind of civic definition of community expressed by some French commentators faced with the extreme ethno-linguistic diversity that characterised the population of France. This was a view expressed by Merlin de Douai during the Revolution, with his frequently quoted claim that Alsace should be considered part of France not because of the treaty of Münster, but because the Alsatian people had chosen to become French, language and all.[107] The Coqueberts, by contrast, sought to distinguish between linguistic communities, and the typology of linguistic groupings they produced was based on their understandings of the linguistic affinities between named varieties.

The Coqueberts produced two versions of this typology: Eugène's report to the Minister of the Interior in 1812; and the 1831 essay on the limits of the French language, largely conforming to a draft document in Charles-Étienne's hand.[108] According to Eugène's report, all of the dialects of the Empire were derived from four main language groupings, those derived from Latin, those derived from German, Breton and Basque.[109] These groupings were then broken down further into subsets of languages and their dialects. The languages deriving from Latin were grouped by Eugène under the headings of 'correctly spoken French,' the 'idioms of the Midi, Italian and Gascon'. With this last language, a divergence emerged between the writings of Eugène and Charles-Étienne: while the former designated Gascon as a language in its own right, the latter placed it alongside the other dialects of the 'idioms of the Midi or *langue d'oc*'.[110] More generally, Charles-Étienne organised his scheme around the distinction between the *langue d'oïl*, or as Eugène termed it, 'correctly spoken French and the *langue d'oc*, while Eugène, writing before the fall of Napoleon, also concerned himself with the

dialects of Italian and German. Finally, and almost as an afterthought, the Coqueberts touched on two languages spoken by members of diasporas resident in France—the Jewish 'German dialect corrupted by Hebrew words' presumably referring to Yiddish spoken by the Ashkenazi Jewish community in Alsace, and the language of the 'Bohïmans' spoken by Roma communities in Roussillon, Alsace and Lorraine.[111] Here, their attention was far more superficial, and omitted entirely from consideration the Arab populations in Paris and Marseille. For these groups, language became a central buttress of community cohesion, differentiating them from wider French society and reinforcing shared bonds. The community in Marseille, formed from a group of Egyptian refugees who arrived in the city in 1801, was even granted a chair in Arabic at the Lycée in Marseille in 1807.[112] This omission makes clear that the Coqueberts were above all interested in those groups who possessed a well-defined linguistic territory. These speakers were really only the largest minority within a polyglot empire. As is evident from Fig. 2.2, a map compiled from the Coqueberts' observations, they were surrounded by speakers of the northern *langue d'oïl* dialects, with the territory of the *langue d'oc* to the south, Breton to the west, Flemish, Dutch and German to the east, Italian to the southeast and a pocket of Basque speakers to the southwest.

For the Coqueberts, language was a feature of population and territory that could be mapped. This 'territorialisation' of language is familiar to scholars of nineteenth century nationalism. Here, language was used to justify nationalist claims to particular regions: if the population of a territory spoke a nation's language, then that language must necessarily form part of a nation-state.[113] Later in the century, this understanding of language as a fundamental aspect of culture led the Coqueberts to a pessimistic outlook on the capacity of the state to change the language of the people. Reflecting on the failure of Joseph II to foist German upon the Magyar population of his Empire, and on the linguistic conflicts erupting over the use of Dutch and French in Belgium, the Coqueberts expressed doubt that measures undertaken by the government would succeed in effecting linguistic change[114]:

> You must not believe that the destruction of patois is as near as they imagine. We can only hope for it with the march of time, the progress in primary education, and the slow but assured empire of imitation. It is in vain that we hope to acceleration this revolution by administrative measures.[115]

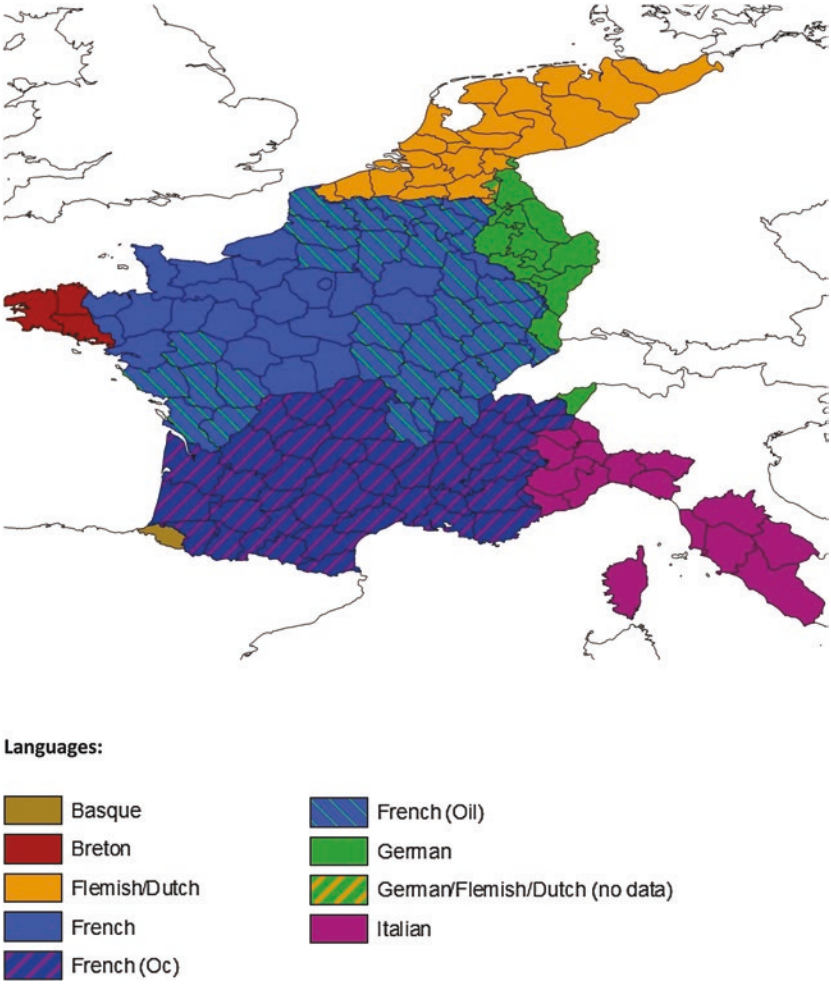

Fig. 2.2 Linguistic Geography of the Napoleonic Empire. *Source* Bnf Naf 5913 (Patois de la France IV- délitations de la langue française), BmR Ms Mbt 191 (Recueil de linguistique)

For many of the politicians of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic period, however, this perspective was somewhat alien. As the statistical descriptions of the period show, is was often held that culture could, and indeed should, be bent to the state's political will, rather than

the other way around. The expansion of France's borders under the Directory, made the example of the Roman Empire a portentous one for many Parisian deputies. The diversity of cultures and worldviews had made it impossible to govern Rome as a Republic and ushered in an era of the Empire, it was argued, and the plurality of citizens now within the French sphere of influence could do the same for the French Republic.[116] Under Napoleon, French politics took on an unapologetically imperial character, and the solution to cultural diversity and backwardness was often seen as unification at the hands of the state.[117] Yet amongst those administrators charged by Parisian governments, the reticence expressed by the Coqueberts was more common. These men, who provided the Coqueberts with their information, were also those charged with the practical implementation of Napoleonic policy, and it is to their views on language that we now turn.

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16. Bourguet, pp. 65, 101–102.
17. Descolins, *Liberté égalité*: *Description abrégée du département du l'Aube* (Troyes, an VII).
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CHAPTER 3

Cultural Imperialism, Linguistic Particularism, and Local Officials

Historical scholarship on language in France often gives a prominent role to politics, and to the efforts of the French state in constructing a linguistically and culturally unified nation. The Villers-Cottêrets ordinance, the linguistic nationalism of Revolutionaries like Barère and Grégoire, the educational reforms of the Guizot and Ferry laws during the July monarchy and Third Republic respectively—all of these remain touchstones in the history of language in France.[1] Yet the French state was not a monolith. It was staffed by men enmeshed in local society, and whose opinions and practices varied. For the historian, the value of the material gathered by the Coqueberts lies precisely in the diverse range of local figures that produced such a vast collection of documents about their own language. Whereas the departmental statistics were generally edited by the prefect and parsed by the Ministry of the Interior, the correspondence generated by the Coqueberts' enquiry into language offers direct insight into the negotiation between the Parisian centre and local society over the definition and value of local language.

Many of the local officials who provided information for the Coqueberts did not share their understanding of linguistic difference. For the mayors, magistrates, parish priests and other translators of the parable, language was often not understood in relation to the broad linguistic regions sought by the Coqueberts. They frequently understood the boundaries of their linguistic communities through the lens of local rivalries and loyalties. Moreover, as the correspondence demonstrates, local languages were not simply reducible to the status of archaic popular

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culture, as the Coqueberts presumed, but formed an important part of the communicative strategies of the frequently bilingual men who worked for the Napoleonic state.

The Informants

The enquiry into language conducted by the Coqueberts mobilised a vast number of local figures, whose responses can tell the historian much about the linguistic attitudes of local officialdom during the period. The first stage of the enquiry, in which the Coqueberts drew up maps of the languages spoken in the Empire, was carried out primarily by the prefects and sub-prefects of the areas with which the Coqueberts were concerned. The second stage, involving the translation of the parable of the prodigal child into the different dialects of the Empire, involved many other types of local notables, figures such as justices of the peace, mayors and local ecclesiastics, in providing translations of the local languages. The need to find individuals who were both literate and familiar with the local language meant that the local priest or *curé* was frequently called upon, as the instructions to the justice of the peace of Pont de Vaux suggest: "I would particularly wish that you employ the help of some ecclesiastical person who is aware of the popular language in order to procure me samples of the idiom they use".[2] However, the instructions were seldom so direct, generally going no further than requesting a translation of the parable of the prodigal son, and leaving the choice of translator up to the local official. The occupations of the 94 translators of the parable that can be identified, given in Table 3.1, reveal the choices of the local

Table 3.1 Translators of the parable by occupation

Legal Officials	10
Teachers	5
Clergy	25
Mayors and Adjuncts	35
Councillors/Secretaries of the prefecture	7
Sub-prefects	6
Prefects	1
State officials (other)	2
Other	6
Total	97

Source Bnf Naf 5910-14 (Patois de la France I-V); An F17 1290 (Enquête sur le patois)

prefect or sub-prefect responding to the Coqueberts' requests. Of the 97 translators, the majority (51) were public administrators. Of this number, 35 were mayors, the largest single occupational group. They were joined by six sub-prefects and seven councillors and secretaries of the prefecture, two mayoral adjuncts, one prefect, one tax collector, and one naval forestry inspector.

The majority of the 25 clergy who translated the parable into local languages for the Coqueberts were *curés*, or *desservants*, along with one Protestant pastor. One lawyer, a notary and seven justices of the peace also translated the parable, along with a number of teachers from various establishments of secondary education. The profile of the Coqueberts' translators reveals a class of bilingual local notables—excluding the prefect, who was generally appointed from outside of the department—comprising locals who filled positions in state administrative or legal bureaucracies, educational institutions, as well as the Church.[3]

Language, Community and Place: An Ethnographic Approach

As shown in the previous chapter, the Coqueberts understood language as a fairly homogenous cultural system. Languages, they held, could easily be distinguished from one other and each had a geographical reality, such that the territory of a language could be marked on a map. However, the typology elaborated by the Coqueberts was that the distinctions they drew between languages were far from universally accepted by their contemporaries. Like the Coqueberts, a formal linguist would begin with a classification of languages along formal lines of grammatical structure and syntax, and then would seek to explain the attitudes and behaviours of speakers with relation to their shared linguistic affinity and spatial distribution. However, a sociolinguistic or anthropological typology would also make ample space for ethnolinguistic data—for the subjective attitudes and practices of speakers.[4] This is, in a sense, to tackle the problem in two opposed fashions; to move from a model positing a linguistic explanation of culture, to one in which language itself as a category is constructed through culture—through the attitudes of speakers. This approach owes much to the anthropologist Dell Hymes, who sought to move beyond formal linguistics by studying language as one part of a broader communicative culture. Hymes observed that formal linguistic classification was often a

rather poor guide to the way speakers defined the limits of their communities. In some instances, communities would strive to maintain communication even across relatively large formal disparities in dialect, while others would declare their varieties to be mutually unintelligible on the basis of a relatively slight differentiation.[5] Hymes' claims are reinforced by findings from folk linguistics, and, in particular, from perceptual dialectology, where folk definitions of the dialect boundaries seem to correspond as frequently with political boundaries as with the isoglosses on dialectologists' maps, often to the chagrin of dialectologists themselves.[6]

This was precisely the difficulty encountered by the Coqueberts, for where they organised languages according to their formal linguistic features, the overriding impression created by the profusion of correspondence from disparate parts of the empire was of a highly fragmented linguistic reality. Liandier, director of the secondary school in the commune of Saint-Flour in the Cantal, was typical, claiming that "the patois used in the diverse area of your district, M. Sub-prefect, vary not only from one canton to the next but from commune to commune; it is not the same in two neighbouring villages, in all the areas of the same town".[7] The refrain was echoed by respondents from across France, as well as in annexed territories in the Rhineland and northern Italy.[8]

The assertions of intractable linguistic diversity with which the correspondence solicited by the Coqueberts abounded demonstrates above all that the Coqueberts' organisation of linguistic space was not the only, nor even perhaps the most significant, geography of language available to contemporaries. As Lacoste, a member of the *Société d'agriculture, sciences et arts d'Agen* remarked of the dialects of the Lot-et-Garonne:

> One claims to notice differences between the language of inhabitants from one district, […] and that of the inhabitants in another district. This seems exaggerated; but what is clearly shown, is that there are no two villages that have absolutely the same idiom. The difference is not very perceptible, to anyone other than the individuals who reside there; but it is real.

Lacoste was suggesting a different way of understanding the linguistic tapestry of the French population, one grounded not in the firm linguistic boundaries sought by the Coqueberts but in the mental geographies of contemporaries. Few correspondents considered mutual comprehension a significant criterion for the delimitation of linguistic communities. As the Prefect of the Stura wrote of the dialects of Piedmont, "whatever

[the language], the inhabitants of a certain province will always understand the language of any other person with this proviso that they will be able to say that the speaker is from a specific different part, or parts of Piedmont".[9] Local distinctions were of great importance, as was clear when the Sub-prefect of the arrondissement of Susa, which incorporated some of the French-speaking areas of the west of the department of the Pô, wrote that

> what is even more remarkable is that this patois varies enough from one commune to another that the countrymen can not only easily distinguish the inhabitants of one commune from the neighbouring commune, but they also manage not to confuse inhabitants from two hamlets a stone's throw away from each other, forming between them the single same commune. This difference does not only exist in accent and pronunciation, but also in part in the words that they used.[10]

Later in the nineteenth century, when conducting fieldwork in the fishing village of Saint-Cast on the northern coast of Brittany, Paul Sébillot found that, when telling a story that involved the inhabitants of nearby Saint-Jacut, the Câtin fishermen would adopt a humorous accent and bizarre turn of phrase to ridicule their neighbours, a common technique amongst storytellers across France during the nineteenth century, and one demonstrating how local rivalries determined contemporaries' assertions of linguistic difference as frequently as the lines on a dialectologists' map.[11]

The patchwork complexity of these subjective geographies was revealed by the geographical distribution of the dialect translations collected by the Coqueberts. The Coqueberts received more than 300 versions of the parable of the prodigal son, and this was in part because their correspondents were eager to demonstrate the variability of local speech. Some of the versions were intended to represent a broadly defined linguistic variety, such as the text in 'Gascon patois' from the Gers, or the version in 'Piedmontese verse' from the Pô.[12] Other translators took national political boundaries as the point of departure; thus, the Coqueberts collected versions in French and Spanish Basque.[13] Some correspondents organised linguistic space in accordance with the commonplace distinction between the mountains and the plains.[14] From the Vosges, for example, the Coqueberts received versions in the 'patois from the mountains' and the 'patois from the flat lands'.[15] However, by far the most frequently employed distinction was between the speech

of two closely defined local areas. For example, the Coqueberts received a 'translation in patois from the canton of Mayet' in the Allier, a version 'in the vulgar language from the area surrounding Marennes' from the Charente Inférieur, and from the Gironde, a translation 'in the most widely used idiom in the canton of Blaye'.[16] No fewer than 290 of the translations received by the Coqueberts were explicitly linked to a locale in this fashion, referencing 268 distinct locations.

For the most part, the production of these translations reflected the linguistic distinctions drawn by the local elites who carried them out. These distinctions were manifested in the multiple versions drawn up for many administrative divisions. The Coqueberts began their enquiries in each department with a letter to the prefect, asking for information on the language spoken in the area, and translations of the parable in it. These requests were invariably passed down to sub-prefects, and then on to local clergymen, officials or scholars. Of the 268 parables explicitly situated by these local notables in geographic space, 107 were intended to represent the speech of an arrondissement or its capital, and 108 related to a cantonal capital. Another 51 were related to communes or town quarters with no larger administrative function, although many of them had at some point fulfilled some kind of administrative role.

This profusion of translations reflected the tendency of locals to draw fine distinctions between the speech of geographically proximate groups, defining the limits of linguistic communities on the basis of local social distinctions and urban rivalries. The geographical distribution of translations, therefore, demonstrates how small town French society influenced the linguistic identification of the local notables who responded to the Coqueberts' enquiry. Probably the clearest example of this uncertainty emerged from the Coqueberts' attempts to distinguish between the *langue d'oc* of the South and the *langue d'oïl* of the North, an effort examined in detail by Guylaine Brun-Trigaud in her doctoral thesis on the elaboration, by nineteenth-century dialectologists, of the metaphor of a linguistic 'croissant' to describe the distribution of intermediary speakers along this boundary.[17] As Brun-Trigaud suggests, the notion of a linguistically distinct South does emerge from the correspondence—the idea was more than the Coqueberts' imposition on the material they gathered.[18] The Sub-prefect of Montélimar, for example, claimed that his commune marked the transition to a distinctive patois derived from Latin and Italian, spoken all the way to Montpellier and Marseille.[19] Yet this assertion of linguistic alterity plainly did not reflect a well-defined or widely diffused 'Occitan' linguistic identity. Indeed, the Sub-prefect identified it only

through its relationship to Latin and Italian, rather than as a *langue d'oc*. Moreover, the Sub-prefect was not even sure the language possessed a unified territory across which it could provide a common medium of communication, claiming that the language varied from commune to commune to such an extent that "an inhabitant from Montélimar is embarrassed to hold a conversation in patois with a farmer from Valence".[20]

According to Brun-Trigaud, the first assertion of the linguistic distinctiveness of the South in the correspondence gathered by the Coqueberts was made in May 1807 by the Sub-prefect of Confolens in the Charente.[21] Yet this distinction was drawn not between the languages of the North and the South of France, but between varieties of speech that the Sub-prefect connected to the old political boundaries of the regions of Poitou and the Limousin: "two vulgar idioms, or rather, two patois, Limousin and Poitevin, are known in this district".[22] In 1812, the Prefect of the Charente invoked the older political geography of France—the regions replaced by the departments during the Revolution—to explain the distribution of linguistic varieties, even if the correspondence was not always definitive. As he wrote,

> One finds two patois or dialects in the district of Confolens; the one derived from the Limousin patois is used throughout the territory which, after the division of France into departments, was distanced from the ancient generality of Limoges, and in a small number of other territories which belong to the small province of Angoumois.[23]

The Prefect was reiterating the view that the departments had cut across boundaries that reflected more readily the cultural identities and practices of the population. This observation did not necessarily amount to a critique of the new administrative boundaries, since the explicit intention of their revolutionary authors had been to efface the provincial ties that might fragment local loyalties—to "melt the various peoples of France into a single people, the various provinces into a single empire", as Abbé Sieyès claimed.[24] Nor is it to claim that the distinction drawn by the Sub-prefect of Confolens was linguistically arbitrary. The arrondissement is located on the cusp of the transitional crescent between northern and southern dialects.[25] As Brun-Trigaud observes, many of the geographies presented by those responding to the Coqueberts were surprisingly proximate to those drawn by modern linguists later in the nineteenth century.[26] The recourse to these older political boundaries, however, reveals how the organisation of linguistic space pursued by the Coqueberts was

not the only frame through which linguistic diversity was understood by contemporaries. This is something underscored by the Sub-prefect of Confolens himself when, after having indicated the linguistic boundary running across his arrondissement, he returned to the trope of a highly variegated linguistic tapestry, claiming that "each locality exclusively employs certain expressions … which are unique to it. The difference is more discernible in the pronunciation; it is above all marked in the accent". The definition of linguistic community, it seems, had a tendency to drift away from the linguistic boundaries charted by dialectologists when these boundaries did not correspond to the distinctions that were relevant to contemporaries.

Most strikingly, the Coqueberts' demands for information on the linguistic geography of an area often seem to reveal local rivalries. In the lengthy response drafted by Liandier, the Auvergnat schoolteacher also cited by Brun-Trigaud as formative in the Coqueberts' search for the *oc-oïl* boundary, the author described phonetic differences between the language of Saint-Flour, and that spoken in the neighbouring départements.[27] These differences, claimed Liandier, meant that the town should be placed on the line separating "the areas where the Gallo-Roman language is best preserved from those where it is almost completely lost: it has degenerated, for example, in the provinces that we have in the North, to the point where it almost no longer offers any family resemblance".[28] Liandier's subsequent claim that "we distinguish the people of Pierrefort from the people of Ruynes [Ruynes-en-Margeride] by their language as much as by their customs", not only underscored the highly localised scale on which contemporaries understood language to differ—the two communes are around 25 miles apart—but again demonstrates the importance of language as a marker of local difference.[29] The Latinate pride in Liandier's distinction between the language of Saint-Flour and the areas to the north, disparaged by the teacher as 'degenerate', points towards the importance of place, and of local rivalries, in the formulation of linguistic geographies and the assertion of linguistic difference—that is to say, in the process of identifying with a given body of speakers in contradistinction with a second group.

The Coqueberts could detect no substantial difference between the samples Liandier provided, seeing both as varieties of the *langue d'oc* spoken in the South, but other correspondents from the area reiterated Liandier's claims.[30] Jean-Joseph Croze, the Sub-prefect of the arrondissement of Brioude, which bordered Saint-Flour, responded to the Coqueberts that:

> The difference between the patois of the district of Brioude and that of the department of Cantal is […] very noticeable, but mainly in the region of St Flour […] The language of Cantal is a mixture of Italian and Languedocien patois, a large number of expressions seem to derive from the Latin language.[31]

The Sub-prefect corroborated Liandier's linguistic geography but had a very different sense of the relative merit of each language. According to Croze, the language of Saint-Flour deserved esteem for its similarity to Latin, "but the same cannot be said for its pronunciation; it is harsh, drawling, and very shrill and has a disagreeable effect on people unaccustomed to it".[32] Croze, like Liandier, emphasised the difference between the languages of the two areas, and in doing so he manifested an unmistakeable local pride.

Such expressions of attachment to the local municipality through praise for the aesthetic qualities of its speech were echoed by other commentators. Following the publication of his statistical description of the Department of the Bouches-du-Rhône in 1821, Christophe de Villeneuve received a letter rebuking the Prefect for his description of the town of Arles.[33] According to the author of this anonymous text, the citizens of Arles were dissatisfied with much of Villeneuve's article on the town—from his description of the inhabitants to derogatory comments about their livestock—and this discontent embraced his account of the commune's speech. In his statistical description, Villeneuve had described the language of Arles as closer to Latin than any other part of Provence. This characteristic added to the prestige of the town's language because, along with the allegedly aquiline features of the townspeople, the power of Rome.[34] Yet even this represented an inadequate panegyric for his demanding local readership, since "the Arlesians would perhaps have wished us to add that their idiom is without exception the most gentle and most agreeable in Provence".[35] Such elaborate praise, continued the affronted commentator, was only proper given the qualities of a dialect that "several people go so far as to prefer it to the patois of Montpellier".[36] Rivalries were also evident between much smaller settlements. According to the Sub-prefect of the arrondissement of Susa, in the department of the Pô, the inhabitants of the canton of Villar-Almese were renowned for speaking "the worst gibberish".[37] The translator of the version of the parable for Sapois, in the south of the canton of Saulxures, which formed part of the arrondissement of Remiremont, justified the

translation on the grounds of the distinctively rustic character of the language spoken there. He wrote, "this patois is the harshest of the south of Remiremont and an inhabitant of Saulxures has difficulty understanding a Sapois who expressed himself in all the coarseness of his patois".[38]

The urge to place the speech of the locality at the top of a hierarchy demonstrating its superiority over neighbouring varieties reflected the intensification of municipal rivalries as a result of the administrative reforms and civic politics of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic period. The Revolution had witnessed a near total reconstruction of the administrative and judicial institutions of the French state. With the new organisation of the national territory into departments and districts (later: arrondissements), the siting of local civic institutions and judicial authorities suddenly became uncertain, precipitating a deluge of disputes and conflicts between urban centres vying to secure a place as capital of a department or district.[39] Success in these struggles meant not only the prestige such a status could convey on the urban population, but a raft of offices for local elites in the prefectural institutions and law courts established in departmental and district capitals, and was understood by contemporaries as essential to the economic vitality of towns and bourgs.[40] These elites comprised precisely the types of local office holding notables who provided the Coqueberts with information on the linguistic diversity of the French population. Such figures, as Ted Margadant observes, were firmly rooted in local social and economic structures, frequently holding land as well as offices.[41] Liandier and Croze provide two good examples. Liandier, while born in the Haute-Loire, spent most of his adult life as a canon and then a teacher in Saint-Flour.[42] Croze was elected several times as deputy to the *conseil de cinq cents*, the lower house of the legislature under the Directory. He was born and later died in Brioude, working within the municipal administration of the town during the Revolution before his appointment as a sub-prefect under Napoleon.[43] The examples of Liandier and Croze point towards a group of local notables and officials with quite local horizons who expressed pride and loyalty towards their hometowns through reference to the local language.

These kinds of distinctions were not confined to the territory of 'old' France, but found expression across the Empire. In the department of the Apennines in northern Italy, it was claimed that the language followed the influence of the principal cities of the pre-revolutionary political order:

> This language in general has its origin in the more sizeable towns that neighbour the inhabitants, and as a result, those from the district of Chiavari in the west have adopted the accent of the language of Genoa; those from the district of Sarzana to the east are starting to the Tuscan accent and those from the district of Borgo Val di Taro that of Piacenza and of Parma.[44]

Similarly, in the Walloon-speaking Belgian department of the Sambre-et-Meuse, Louis Dewez, a native of Namur exercising the position of Sub-prefect in the arrondissement of St. Hubert, furnished a dictionary of dialect words in which he made frequent comparisons between his hometown and his current residence.[45]

The very local linguistic distinctions that emerged from the Coqueberts' enquiry reflected the municipal disputes unleashed by the revolutionary reorganisation of territory. The market town, or local bourg, vying for recognition as capital of a canton or arrondissement was the primary focus for the organisation of linguistic space by contemporaries. Not only did cantonal or arrondissement capitals make up the majority of the explicitly named translations, accounting altogether for 215 of the more than 300 versions received, but a large number of the other communes for which translations were furnished were capitals of cantons before the re-organisation of the departmental system in 1801.[46] This was in marked contrast to the other possible frames through which contemporaries might have understood linguistic geography. Neither the department nor the old provinces seemed to carry much weight in the production of translations of the parable. Of the departments, only the Hautes-Pyrénées received its own version, while Poitou, Gascony and Lorraine were the only provinces cited as the basis of a translation.[47] Nor was the diocese an important consideration, perhaps surprisingly, given the large number of clergy who carried out translations. Only in Brittany, where translations of the parable in the dialects of Tréguier and Saint-Pol de Léon, two of the old episcopal seats until the Revolution, do diocesan boundaries appear to have influenced the production of translations, and here the importance of these boundaries is such that they continue to structure the way speakers of Breton understand the linguistic geography of lower Brittany.[48] Elsewhere, diocesan boundaries were mentioned only once in the correspondence, in the department of the Gers, where the Prefect claimed that the inhabitants of the former diocese of Lombez pronounced definite articles in a way that distinguished them from the rest of the department.[49] The correspondence gathered by the

Coqueberts, therefore, shows the importance of drawing linguistic distinctions in the process of placemaking and local identification. Just as the studies carried out by perceptual dialectologists reflect the importance of political boundaries in the way speakers understand geographies of linguistic diversity, so the linguistic distinctions drawn by those responding to the Coqueberts reflected the significance of local municipal identity that also emerged in the urban rivalries of the Revolutionary period. For many of the local notables and officials from whom the Coqueberts drew their informants, the salient organisation of space was not the large linguistic blocs derived from the comparison of samples, but the far more closely circumscribed local horizons within which competition for distinction and office took place.

Language and Social Status

The informants did not just disagree with the Coqueberts' linguistic classification. For them, linguistic diversity was frequently understood in terms of social status and prestige. These issues of status and prestige reflected the linguistic practices of the communities within which the Coqueberts' informants lived and worked.

In France, these ideas about local languages and those who spoke them were bound up with the concept of a *patois*. The term had originally meant 'incomprehensible speech', but in the seventeenth century came also to refer to the 'coarse and rustic speech of the common people.'[50] The connotations of the term were even clearer in the anonymous and frequently cited entry in the *Encyclopédie*;

> Patois (Gramm.) – corrupted speech such as is spoken in almost all of the provinces: each has its patois; thus we have Burgundian patois, Norman patois, Champenois patois, Gascon patois, Provencal patois etc. One speaks language only in the capital.[51]

This definition rested on at least three distinctions. It began with a normative description: 'corrupted speech', and was contrasted with a language, which had to be pure. Here the use of the French '*langage*' or speech, as opposed to '*langue*', or language, was crucial. A *patois* was part of oral culture, whereas a fully-fledged language was written, and therefore the province of the literate and educated. A *patois,* with its corrupted nature, somehow violated the standards of a proper language. The definition thus makes reference to the notion of a standard language, with norms fixed by dictionaries, grammars and a canon of literary works.[52]

However, the definition also contained a geographic dimension. Since *patois* was spoken in the provinces, we are told that there existed a "Burgundian patois, [a] Norman patois, [a] Champenois patois, [a] Gascon patois, [a] Provencal patois". The definition rooted each *patois* in a particular region of France, which could then be characterised by its linguistic particularism. This division of France made reference to older political entities—the duchies of Burgundy, Normandy and Provence—showing once again how political boundaries can impinge upon the linguistic consciousness of individuals. Indeed, the entry associates the centre of political power with correct language, claiming that "one speaks language only in the capital".

The study of France's regional languages, and the common use of the term patois in its pursuit, marginalised France's regional and minority languages, casting them as popular phenomena. From the middle ages, local dialect and languages were associated with popular speech in the form of the proverbs and stories collected by lawyers, ecclesiastics and members of the literate classes in search of sources of eloquence.[53] The sayings of the people might, it was felt, provide a useful way of expressing thoughts in the courtroom or from the pulpit so that they might be more easily understood by the audience. Yet in the latter part of the eighteenth century, the learned and lettered began to take an interest in the language and culture of 'the people' not as a sin to be pardoned, a malediction to be cured or an inspiration for poetic expression, but as an object to be studied.[54] Across much of Europe, interest in popular culture and indeed language flourished from the late 1770s onwards into what has been termed a 'rediscovery of the people.' Jérémie-Jacques Oberlin published samples of popular speech in French-speaking Alsace in 1775, following a trend most famously encapsulated by the publication of Herder's collection of *Volkslieder* or folk songs in 1778.[55] Interest in language was often associated with the proto-nationalist movements that would eventually emerge to challenge the European order set out in the Congress of Vienna in 1815, and language came to be seen as a crucial element in establishing the legitimacy or otherwise of European polities.[56]

This interest in popular culture was often accompanied by a desire to reform social practice. Description was the prelude to prescription, a transition most evident in France. While the country was populated by a number of linguistically, perhaps even culturally distinct groups, such divisions were overlain by a dominant learned culture and increasingly centralised state, both of which had long utilised French. This language dominated in written and learned spheres while regional languages occupied a largely

marginal position. This was particularly the case with studies such as that conducted by the of Abbé Grégoire during the Revolution. A central concern for Grégoire was not just a familiarity with the national language, but a mastery of it, an ability to speak and write it correctly.[57] Projects like that carried out by Grégoire rested on two precepts: firstly, a learned linguistic culture characterised by a rigid prescriptivism that demanded 'proper usage' as defined by dictionaries and grammars; secondly, it presumed a conflation of linguistic diversity and popular culture. The result was a tendency to describe the linguistic production of regional language speakers as 'improper' or 'corrupt', the result of a lack of the education enjoyed by the literate and French-speaking population.

The Coqueberts similarly understood language as a characteristic of the people. In the initial stages of their enquiry, they had sought to distinguish between the territories of French and other prominent European languages of literate culture, such as Italian and German, but their distinction was linguistic and geographic. Far less prestigious languages such as Breton and Basque were arranged alongside French and German by the Coqueberts, not because they rivalled French as vehicles of written or learned communication, but because they were linguistically distinct and were thought to reflect cleavages in the social and cultural characteristics of the population. The social basis of the Coqueberts' vision of linguistic difference became explicit as they passed from the study of the 'mother tongues' to the 'dialects and patois', articulating a view of linguistic difference as a marker of social stratification. In September 1807, the aims of the enquiry were expressed to the Prefect of the Ain in the following terms: "I have the intention of knowing in some detail the diverse idioms which are in vulgar use across the Empire".[58] As with Oberlin in the 1770s and Grégoire during the Revolution, the Coqueberts were interested in the speech of the people.

It was the concept of popular speech that made the collection of linguistic samples possible for the local notables who translated the parable of the prodigal child into their local dialects for the Coqueberts. Throughout the enquiry, the Coqueberts insisted that those charged with translating the parable pay close attention to the language as it was used by 'the people', and the desire they expressed to the Prefect of the Ain to examine the 'patois or dialects which are in vulgar use' was frequently repeated in their requests to the provinces. For the Coqueberts, 'vulgar' also meant 'impure'. The elder Coquebert dismissed one version from Wegberg in the northernmost tip of the Rhineland, because it

was "in very good German and this is surely not how they speak".[59] For his part, the mayor of Wegberg grasped exactly what Coquebert meant by 'pure German'. This much is evident in his response to Coquebert's request for a new translation, which had been passed to him through the Sub-prefect of his arrondissement:

> [M. Sub-prefect], the Minister of the Interior observes […] that the translation of the parable of the Prodigal Son that I sent you is infinitely more pure than that habitually spoken by the inhabitants of my commune […] I assure you, M. Sub-prefect, that all across my commune the school teachers only teach their students the German language, neither do the priests preach in another language […] the inhabitants only know how to write and read in this language.[60]

One might imagine that the mayor had no particular desire to provide a second version of the parable, yet the manner in which he justified his position—that he need not undertake another translation because the language the inhabitants of his commune spoke was, in fact, 'pure' German—reveals some of the assumptions underpinning the use of this term. To speak 'pure' German, one must be educated; thus, the mayor pointed to the work of the commune's school teachers, and the positive influence of the priests. Furthermore, 'pure' German is related to the literate use of language, thus the mayor emphasised that the inhabitants of Wegberg read and wrote (only) in German.

Coquebert's objection to this translation, along with the mayor's defence of it, reveals why the concept of a patois, of a distinction couched in social terms between the speech of the educated and that which was 'in vulgar use' was so important to the functioning of the enquiry. In a context in which the 'language' used by the educated was so closely tied to the notion of 'purity' laid down for the literate in dictionaries and grammars, regional variations in language—that is to say, 'dialect'—were not only considered different, but incorrect. To map the geography of dialects across the Empire therefore required the collection of language that deviated from the 'standard', and this meant 'popular' speech.

The issue of the *patois* was not confined to those parts of the Empire that had formerly been part of France. In nominally Italian- and German-speaking regions, the quotidian speech of the population did not conform to elite notions of grammatical correctness or purity any more than

it did in patois-speaking France. As a result, it seems sensible to talk of two distinct types of linguistic contact, even conflict, during the period, distinguished by their sociolinguistic character. That is to say, they can be categorised according to 'who spoke what to whom and when', to adapt Joshua Fishman's formulation to the study of past societies.[61] On the one hand, the Empire was home to large numbers of speakers of standardised languages such as French, German, Italian and Dutch, which had for centuries competed for what Peter Burke has described as 'linguistic territory'. This involved competition not just over physical space, but also over the contexts in which they should be used.[62] On the other hand, each of these languages formed only part of the communicative repertoire of these linguistic communities—they all existed alongside dialects or regional languages, which themselves were used by different speakers in different contexts. To adopt the terminology of sociolinguistics, the non-Francophone regions of the Empire were divided between areas where French sought to displace 'L' varieties from the everyday communications of the people, and where French competed with other standardised 'H' varieties to be the language of written culture. Other 'L' varieties also often existed in these second areas, competing with the 'H' varieties that predated the arrival of the French for prominence in the oral communication of ordinary people.

The importance of distinguishing between varieties on the basis of the communicative function to which they were put, rather than simply as a feature of social stratification, becomes clearest where prestige varieties came into contact. To take the example of the arrondissement of Susa, in the west of the Piedmontese department of the Pô; Italian, French, Piedmontese and patois all existed, with speakers in different areas making different choices about which language to employ in given situations. According to the Sub-prefect, the basic division was between French and Piedmontese, a language that lacked the prestige and recognition of Italian, but which was currently the object of something of a revivalist movement centred on Turin.[63] French dominated in three of the eight cantons in the west of the arrondissement: Oulx, Cesana and Bardonecchia, with Piedmontese the principal language in Giaveno and Avigliana. Bussolino and Villar-Almese both had their own 'particular' idioms, of which the former was considered less 'coarse and barbarous' than the latter, although as the Sub-prefect observed, "the inhabitants of all the communes in these latter cantons can equally speak Piedmontese, but they only use it when they leave their territory, or when they are looking to communicate with outsiders".[64] The final canton, that of Susa itself, was linguistically mixed. According to the Sub-prefect, the population of the eastern communes of the canton expressed

itself 'in fairly good French', yet as one moved westward, the situation quickly changed, until one reached the commune of Greniers, a village of "poor farmers [where] they only speak in patois".[65]

Already, the comments of the Sub-prefect reveal a complex threefold distinction of linguistic variety. The territory straddled a divide between Piedmontese and French, with various dialects socially marked as the language of impoverished farmers. Language choice marked the limits of a linguistic community, with speakers in Bussolino and Villar-Almese using dialect to communicate with insiders and Piedmontese with outsiders. Piedmontese was also the language of religious preaching, and dominated the markets of the arrondissement's capital. The communities of the east of the department struggled to impose French as their preferred prestige variety over both Piedmontese and Italian in certain communicative settings. As the Sub-prefect observed of these communities, "it is in French that people of both sexes learn to read, and while they only speak patois among themselves, they prefer French which makes them bitterly regret hearing their curates preach in Piedmontese and teaching them their catechism in Italian".[66]

The distinction between the communes of the east and west lay not principally in the use of dialect, but in a commitment to employ French as a prestige variety in place of both Piedmontese and Italian in the communicative contexts—in the school, the church and the catechism—where these other languages might be employed. French was the prestige language within these communities, and their members jealously guarded its use in education even if the members of the clergy did not oblige them. French was learnt in the commune, Piedmontese only as a necessity for communication and trade with the rest of the arrondissement. As the Sub-prefect wrote of one of the villages neighbouring Susa itself, "the young people of this commune understand French before they leave home whereas it is only after visiting the markets of Susa that they become familiar with Piedmontese".[67]

Underscoring the differing functions for which languages such as French and local dialects were used, many of the Coqueberts' informants offered dialect songs and carols as examples of popular speech. These songs, often cited by informants as the only cultural artefacts in dialect they could provide, illustrated the different roles to which language and local dialect were put. As the Prefect of the Corsican department of Golo warned the Coqueberts, "you should not wait, Sir, to receive works printed in the vulgar language of island, they have never existed: we can only deliver to your Excellency copies of popular songs".[68] The association of popular culture forms with dialect speech was evident in the large number of such songs sent to the Coqueberts. From the Saône-et-Loire,

the Coqueberts received a canticle and a 'rustic song in Charolaise', as illustrative of local speech.[69] The General Secretary of the prefecture of the Lozère provided dialect lyrics, translations and a musical score for a number of songs in the patois of the department's inhabitants.[70] From the Deux-Sèvres, the Coqueberts collected a working song for a plough team and a satirical song about a man attempting to surreptitiously look up a woman's dress, sung in the dialect of Poitou.[71] The implication was that high culture—the sphere of written production—was dominated by languages such as French, while dialect was confined to popular oral culture.

The terms of trade, so to speak, between these languages were not everywhere the same, and could vary significantly locally. The differing degrees of penetration by French across some regions led to a differing allocation of communicative functions between the standardised national tongue and regional varieties. As the Sub-prefect of Seyne in the Haute-Alpes observed, nothing was written in the local dialect, with French dominating not only literate activity but also in oral contexts such as the practice of religion. This contrasted markedly with the situation in Roussillon, where Michel Brunet has described the halting implantation of French and the resulting vigour of Catalan as the language of elite correspondence, religious proselytising, politics and even very occasionally official communications.[72] French dominated written culture in much of the southeast, despite a short-lived enthusiasm for printing political tracts in Occitan during the early years of the Revolution as a way of reaching the people.[73] Where literate, members of the lower classes learnt to read and write in French, with perhaps a smattering of Latin to assist at church services. Jean-Joseph Esmieu, the son of a smallholder from the village of Méolans in Provence who became a peddler and travelled across the region during the Revolution, wrote his memoirs in a French that was devoid of most punctuation but shot through with provincialisms. Writing in dialect was generally an amusement for the bourgeois poet, or was confined to religious instruction manuals.[74]

According to the commentators of the period, the lowest levels of bilingualism were found amongst the minorities who spoke a non-Romance variety—that is to say in lower Brittany and the French Basque country. The Prefect of the Basses-Pyrénées observed that the while French and literacy had made impressive progress in the Béarnais speaking parts of the department, the Basque population generally spoke only their own language, and the great difference between this tongue and French rendered progress in public education a challenge.[75] Educators in Brittany expressed the same concern about Breton as an obstacle to

their work during the nineteenth century.[76] Yet the French language here was still regarded as a prestige form and was frequently spoken in urban areas. Despite an abortive attempt in the 1790s, the first bilingual French and Breton journal only appeared in 1833, lasting only a year, and it was not until the 1840s that Breton language printing really took off outside of religious publications.[77] Arthur Young, travelling in France during the Revolution, only mentions encountering 'bas-Bretons' with their clogs, large trousers and distinctive language in Landivisiau on market day, when they visited the town to sell their cattle.[78] The republican politician Jules Simon recalled the hostility of the largely monolingual Breton peasants of Saint-Jean-Brévalay towards French speakers after his family moved to the village from Lorient, but also that one of the defining characteristics of the Breton parish priest's elevation to the status of notable was the French he learned in the seminary.[79] French, in short, was understood as the prestige variety even in these areas where it was less solidly implanted as the language of everyday communication.

These areas of French linguistic dominance may have varied in the precise distribution of communicative functions between languages, and in the levels of bilingualism amongst members of the community. However, they represented an evident contrast with those regions where languages other than French functioned as the prestige variety. In the Ligurian department of the Apennins, one correspondent described a situation similar to that across much of France, except with Italian functioning as the prestige language: "the practice of spoken dialects is only established for verbal communication between inhabitants and never for written correspondence. Correspondence throughout the Department is conducted in the Italian idiom".[80] The broad strokes of a sociolinguistic geography of the Empire were clear, with a francophone core surrounded by a zone of varying degrees of French bilingualism and, finally, the linguistic marches where French would have to compete with other varieties for the role of dominant language.

This classification of the various sociolinguistic situations within the Empire is crucial to understandings of the ways in which the linguistic demands of the Napoleonic state were formulated at the centre and negotiated on the ground. The French state of the *Ancien régime* had indisputably encouraged the spread of French as a prestige form. Yet French as a prestige form went beyond the borders of France. In parts of Switzerland, present day Belgium and northern Italy, the language of Paris was the prestige variety, spoken alongside the local dialect or patois.

Similarly, standardised Italian, German and Dutch also functioned as 'H' varieties in relation to dialects. The linguistic boundaries between Italian, French, German and Dutch cut across political borders because these languages were not simply 'state' or 'national' languages, but prestige forms, whose position within given linguistic communities emerged from complex historical and social processes, of which the influence of the state was but one factor. Without an understanding of this complex geography—and indeed sociology—of linguistic practice, writing the linguistic history of the Napoleonic empire would be impossible.

Francisation and Linguistic Patrimony

The alignment of linguistic difference with the notion of popular culture and the low social status of regional languages shaped not only the way contemporaries understood state-directed projects aimed at linguistic centralisation but also the strategies they pursued when placed under pressure to conform linguistically by the centre. In October 1806, Charles Emmanuel Micoud d'Umons, the freshly installed Prefect of the Belgian department of the Ourthe, responded to the Coqueberts' requests for information on the language of the region with a letter reflecting on the slow progress of attempts to spread the national tongue. According to Umons, these efforts could be traced back to the Revolution. As the Prefect wrote, "in Prairial of Year II, M. Grégoire, member of the National Convention, created a detailed report on the necessity of generalising the usage of the French language; this necessity is felt all the more since France has once again increased in size".[81] Yet even in Liège and the surrounding countryside, where the population spoke Walloon, a *langue d'oïl* closely related to French, the task was proving a challenge. Umons noted that his predecessor had thought to turn the education system to this purpose, but without great success. "We are still attached to the old language", he lamented, "and time alone will make it possible to forget it, if we even ever succeed in doing so".[82]

In these few lines, Umons offers the historian a glimpse into the dynamics of the language question during the Napoleonic period. The Revolutionary project of remaking the French and their state was not wholly diminished by the coup d'état of Brumaire or the coronation of Napoleon as Emperor in 1804. Even as Grégoire's fervent Republicanism, Gallicanism and egalitarianism left him increasingly isolated on the Parisian political scene, his admonitions to regenerate the

population of France through a shared tongue appeared more pertinent than ever as the expanding borders of the Empire made its population ever more linguistically diverse.[83] The administrative partisans of francisation considered this a struggle against the inertia of tradition—against the 'old language'. The school, the bastion of correct language, was considered an important tool. Yet the experiences of the interceding twelve years had revealed just how immense a task it was to remake society.

This impulse towards the 'modern' and the countervailing weight of tradition informed not only the Napoleonic regime's linguistic politics, but the conditions under which social actors produced language. In this respect, the Coqueberts and their correspondents were exemplary of the dynamics surrounding linguistic production and its implications during the period. As Michel de Certeau has forcefully argued in his classic essay, *La beauté du mort (The Beauty of Death)*, the study of popular culture has not always been the innocent pursuit of the intellectually curious. The very concept implies a normative judgement, for the term itself is meaningless beyond its relationship to a putative elite culture.[84] The study of the culture of the people has very frequently taken on a Janus-faced character—as both an act of preservation and a prelude to censure.[85] The idea of popular culture was used by the Coqueberts and their respondents to define their object of study. The ambiguities of collecting popular speech run through the correspondence, for popular also meant non-standard and uncultivated.

Historical understandings of the language question under Napoleon must embrace the ways in which individual speakers positioned themselves in relation to political and social structures—to the growing nation state and a system of social stratification that prized the corrected language of the schoolroom over the 'corrupted' patois of the popular classes. The pursuit of distinction, alignment with the nation, the state or with a high social status, meant the careful regulation of bodily practices such as language. To be French, enlightened and successful meant speaking the language of high-status Parisians.[86]

Such attitudes towards language shaped communicative practice. Speakers of languages other than French often induced a mixture of derision and anxiety amongst francophone elites. One individual, writing to the Coqueberts from the canton of Saint-Amant-Tallende in the Puy du Dôme, dismissed poetry written in the local dialect because he considered local speech so unpleasant; "he writes poems in this unattractive idiom, we will cite some of the rather expressive ones, but they are very

coarse".[87] Speaking a regional language was frequently regarded as a sign of backwardness, a lack of education and low social status. In his essay on the dialects of the Lot-et-Garonne, Lafont du Cujula made clear that he was discussing primarily the "lowest classes of society […] distant from populous towns".[88] This was, Cujula explained, because the inhabitants of the countryside were isolated from social and cultural change. He wrote, "throughout the centuries, the people of the countryside alone preserve their idiom, its use, its prejudices".

The use of regional languages was also understood in gendered terms. Contemporaries frequently associated patois with the domestic sphere, and, consequently, with female speech. One member of the *Société d'émulation* of the Hautes-Alpes observed that the seasonal migration of male agricultural labour had little impact on the language of the department, because "men quickly readopt their natural language around women and children who perpetuate the patois without even the slightest alteration".[89] In his *Notice sur Montpellier*, first published in 1802, Charles de Belleval claimed that French had gradually become far more common in the city, a result of greater wealth and education, of the increased popularity of reading and the establishment of a theatre. However, in earlier periods, the vitality of the patois had depended on the women of the city. In the previous century, according to Belleval, "a very large number of even the most distinguished women, whether by birth or fortune, spoke almost only patois".[90] Patois had thus remained the domestic language, even for men who practised French in ceremonial or public contexts. How else, asked de Belleval, would they have communicated with their wives?

While a man speaking patois was considered by some ill-educated and crude, a woman was able to maintain a degree of charm, even perhaps elegance, in the local language. As J.J. Lacoste remarked of the Gascon spoken in the Lot-et-Garonne, "the speech of certain peasants grates the ears and resembles the most onerous German's harshest gibberish, but let his wife utter the same phrases; you will remark in her pronunciation, a certain softness, a certain harmony which is charming".[91] Joseph Lavallée, who was in the habit of reviewing the womenfolk of the towns he visited for his readers, offered a very favourable appraisal of those he encountered in Arles. The greatest pleasure awaiting the traveller in the town, according to Lavallée, was taking a promenade along the banks of the Rhône: "there is the meeting place of the most attractive women, and there are a lot of them in this town".[92] Lavallée was enamoured of

the women of Arles. His list of their appealing physical attributes—their beautiful brown hair and eyes, their well-proportioned bodies and graceful movements—was crowned by their use of dialect, by what Lavallée described as "an enchanting softness in their patois: the most caressing tone, the most seductive accent".[93]

Female dialect speech was enchanting only to a point. Within the 'masculine' spheres of public discourse and writing, using French, and using French correctly, was crucial to successful participation. Lafont du Cujula criticised the writing of the women of the Lot-et-Garonne, observing how the Italianate influence of the local language encouraged "the custom of almost every woman, unless an excellent education has corrected her of it, to write the palatalised L in the Italian way".[94] Like Joseph Lavallée, the justice of the peace of Montbron associated patois with female urban sociability, but found the practice more shocking than seductive. He recalled how, "in Perigueux, the capital of the Department of the Dordogne, I was no longer surprised to hear, during a nice long walk, different women from the town in all their finery conversing in patois".[95] For the Prefect of the Nièvre, female dialect speech should still ideally betray schooling: "this patois is quite agreeable in the mouths of women who have benefited from a certain education and who speak it well, but it is odious to hear it uttered by the honest and rustic men of Morvan".[96]

Many respondents claimed that the Revolution had accelerated the implantation of French. The Sub-prefect of the arrondissement of Montélimar in the Drôme claimed that "since the Revolution, in the aforementioned Provence, in Languedoc and in the southern region of Dauphiné, the patois idiom is in general being used less".[97] The field of Revolutionary politics was often considered the exemplary instance of the francophone public sphere. Participation in these gatherings, it was argued, encouraged the spread of French. Bastide, the *conseiller de la préfecture* of the Haute-Garonne, claimed that: "in the towns and in all the surrounding countryside, the vulgar idiom is gradually undergoing changes which bring it closer to the national language".[98] Bastide thought this was the result of Revolutionary political culture, since "the desire to set oneself apart was a necessary result of these meetings, and the effect perhaps remains after the fact. Everywhere, one felt the need to understand and to speak French'.[99] A similar claim was made of the 'patois Cauchois' spoken in Normandy. An anonymous essay sent to the Coqueberts described Cauchois as little more than "a French disfigured

but nonetheless very recognisable".[100] The Prefect, however, claimed that it had "undergone a noticeable improvement, that it had become less unintelligible and that outsiders no longer required an interpreter to make themselves understood or to understand it themselves".[101] This was due above all to "the custom and necessity of reading numerous laws, all manner of decrees that were displayed as placards on the walls of all the communes, public leaflets which came into existence on a daily basis and piqued the curiosity of all the citizens".[102]

It is impossible to quantify the impact of the Revolution on the linguistic capacity of the French population. The local administrators whose testimony is cited above may have presented a deceptively optimistic picture in order to convince Paris of the efficacy of their administration, although, equally, a linguistically diverse population might have provided an excuse for sluggish correspondence or buttress claims for greater resources. Nonetheless, the testimony does clearly demonstrate the association of French with progress and of patois with an old regime in the process of being swept away. Language was evidently a bodily practice marked as politically, as well as socially, significant. At least for a number of those who wrote to the Coqueberts or who penned travelogues or statistical essays, speaking French carried associations of social and political progress.

The influence of the French language on the way speakers of the regional languages of French expressed themselves and its use as a means of achieving social distinction was evident in a description of linguistic practices in Marseille provided to the Coqueberts by Antoine Anthoine, the mayor of Marseille. Anthoine reiterated the distinction between high-status French and low-status regional language, claiming that only "the people of the general populace [who] employ in all its rustic purity the Provençal language".[103] The 'pure' Provençal spoken by the people contrasted with "the inhabitants from a superior class [who] form [their words] from a version of French, with some simple changes of endings, conforming to the Provençal alternative". The mayor illustrated this with reference to the different words for house amongst these groups: "thus for 'maison' (house), the general populace say 'houstaou', the bourgeois and the merchants 'maïsoun'". French, then, might serve to distinguish the social status of French even when speaking Provençal, for the bourgeois and merchants of Marseille, presumably more likely to speak French themselves, made use of French words in their 'Frenchified Provençal', as Anthoine described it.[104]

These strategies may be broadly understood as appeals to status, as the use of a language to distinguish oneself as educated or of high social standing, especially in the exercise of authority. In Pierre Bourdieu's analogy of the linguistic market, the 'symbolic value' of linguistic utterances is evaluated by their recipients according to different normative criteria in different communicative contexts. The efficacy of specific communicative choices depends not only on the linguistic competence of the speaker, but the attitudes of the intended recipients, which change in more or less formal situations.[105] Under Napoleon, speaking or writing French correctly was in many instances a useful sign of wealth or authority. This was particularly the case when it came to appointments made by the state. One traveller to the Alpes-Maritimes complained that in much of the eastern part of the department, "the use of the French language is not as common as one would desire". Since much of the education carried out across the department took place in Italian, "even the majority of public officials [wrote] French badly".[106] The obverse of such comments was that speaking French greatly increased one's chances of securing an office, something reflected in the frequency of claims that a given supplicant could speak French within ministerial correspondence on appointments.

Individuals sought distinction and authority through the use of French in more subtle ways. Jules Simon, for example, recalled that, in the small village in lower Brittany in which his family spent the early years of the restoration, "the curate makes his announcements in both languages, but nobody except us knows a word of French".[107] Such a practice would appear to have a clear performative function, demonstrating greater learning and thus distinguishing the *curé* from his flock.

These strategies were not open only to elites. Individuals of all classes could use French to create a favourable impression or even exercise authority. This point can be underscored with reference to the trial records of the appeal court of Aix. On the 11th May 1810, a group of brigands robbed a shepherd's cabin and killed one of the occupants. In order to gain access to the cabin, Martinet and his companions had devised a wheeze—they would pose as gendarmes on the hunt for deserting conscripts. Every one of the witness statements concurs that as the brigands approached the cabin they, "shouted in French 'Open up, then, because you have conscripts'".[108] Presuming the brigands to be gendarmes, one of the shepherds in the cabin opened the door, allowing the brigands to enter. However, as soon as the occupants realised

their error, noting the costume and blackened faces of the presumed gendarmes, a scuffle ensued. Two of the shepherds fled the cabin and took off in different directions. One was pursued and shot dead by two of the brigands; the other made it to the road and headed to the nearest town to find help. In the commotion, the remaining two brigands were forced out of the cabin, and the door locked behind them, leaving two shepherds and a twelve year old field hand inside. The statements of the three remaining occupants alleged that the brigands then threatened to burn down the cabin, unless they were allowed back in. According to the testimony of the 12 year old field hand, Étienne Vernet, the brigands shouted, "in the Provencal idiom 'My God, we are going to set fire to the cabin'".[109] This example demonstrates the symbolic character of linguistic practice, which offered state officials a way to exercise authority. It also shows how lower-status actors were equally aware of such strategies and able to imitate them, for the brigands—none of whom were literate—used French to 'disguise' themselves as gendarmes.

Individual speakers of regional languages who attempted to '*franciser*' their speech in an attempt to convey an impression of education and social status risked derision and mockery if their language was not considered up to the Parisian standard. Louis-Aubin Millin, in his account of travelling through the south of France during the Napoleonic period, recounted the numerous *provençalismes* of his fellow travellers on a ferry travelling down the Rhône from Tarascon to Arles. One passenger, according to Millin, enquired of another, "how long has it been … since you have been missing from (*manquez de*) Marseille", which Millin corrected to "since you left (*avez quitté*) Marseille".[110] The reply came in a French that appeared equally suspect to Millin: "three weeks; I have been in (*en*) Avignon, […] and I am going (je *vas*) to Arles".[111] A third passenger reassured the Parisian antiquary that Arles would satisfy his interest in architecture: "You will see lots of beautiful statues *(estatues)* there".[112] Millin hypothesised that these 'provençalismes' arose because individuals habitually spoke Provençal, which made itself felt when they spoke the national language. This would appear to be a plausible hypothesis, and an example of 'interference' in the jargon of linguistics. '*Estatues*', for example, is a direct lexical port from Provençal, while confusion over prepositions—'en Avignon' for 'à Avignon'—was a frequently remarked upon feature of southern French speakers.[113] Yet while Millin ascribed this to the habit of speaking Provençal, the striking

feature of the scene he described was the use of French. The language was clearly the language of public discourse when travelling in Provence, even between Provençal speakers, as in the first exchange cited above. Yet these speakers found their language corrected in the journal of their educated, Parisian companion.

Regional speakers of French had to be wary of becoming the butt of a joke when they spoke the language of Paris. The question of provincial accents was distinct from that of patois in one crucial way. While patois frequently connoted low social status as the language of the urban labourer or rural dweller for contemporaries, individuals of all classes could be accused of speaking French like a provincial. As Millin observed, "these provençalisms are extremely frequent among people who have received some education and who have undertaken studies".[114] This could become an obstacle for speakers who wished to participate in public discourse and were obliged to do so in French. In an account sent to the Coqueberts in April 1810, the councillor of the prefecture of the Haute-Garonne was keen to dispel the negative myths surrounding the speech of Toulouse:

> What is certain is that people who speak French with a pleasant mixture of silent letters and Gascon turns of phrase, and with this accent that provokes laughter in our performances, have become less frequent in Toulouse and without doubt therefore in the other towns in this country. An actor who comes here to look for examples of this kind will find far fewer today and far less prominent than in the past.[115]

Speaking in a 'provincial' manner was a well-established comedy device on the Parisian stage during the period. In the character notes for his comic-opera *Le premier venu, ou six lieues de chemin* (The first arrival, or six leagues away), first performed in Paris in 1810, the playwright Jean-Baptiste-Charles Vial stipulated that one character, Juliette, should be played with a Provençal accent.[116] Such techniques were not always well received by critics. The play's reviewer in the *Journal des débats* was scathing about the actor's performance, lambasting her for putting on an accent that served only to obscure her lines.[117] Nonetheless, the mirth-inducing potential for regional speech was clear, and must have weighed on bilingual speakers when they attempted to converse in French, potentially undermining whatever impression of education or social status such an act might convey.

The anxiety of such speakers was reflected in the proliferation of style manuals correcting regional speech from the middle of the eighteenth century. The oldest, and most famous, of these manuals was Desgrouais' *Les gasconismes corrigés (Corrected Gasconisms)*, published in Toulouse in 1766, although in offering a collection of common errors committed by southerners in French, Desgrouais was echoing the terms used by many compilers of regional language dictionaries to justify, and presumably to sell, their works. The cover of the Provençal to French dictionary published in 1723 by a member of the order of Minimes named Pellas promised the reader that the book would serve "the instruction of the Provençal people who have neither a full understanding of nor a perfect use of the French language".[118] Abbé Bossier de Sauvages opened his 1756 *Dictionnaire languedocien-françois* by explaining that the book was intended to correct the errors that littered the speech of the inhabitants of Languedoc, errors committed not only by members of the popular classes, but "also those honest people who have been brought up in this province".[119] This was because most inhabitants still spoke Languedocien amongst friends or in domestic contexts, despite the progress of French as the language of literature and formal communication. For the inhabitants of the region, "French, which hardly ever appears outside serious situations, thus becomes a foreign language for most people, […] turns of phrase and expressions escape them, the language of the country breaks through, they believe they speak French and they only Frenchify pure Languedocien".[120] From the final years of the eighteenth century, the errors induced by this 'penetration' of French by regional languages inspired a number of style manuals in the manner of the 'Gasconismes corrigés'.

Those compiling these catalogues of linguistic error claimed their works could liberate speakers from the influence of regional languages, allowing them to pass successfully as educated French speakers. As Étienne Molard observed in the introduction to his *Dictionnaire du mauvais langage (Dictionary of incorrect language)*, "one cannot deny that a pure and correct elocution distinguishes, in the most simple conversation, the instructed man from the man deprived of the help of an education".[121] The author of a collection of Flandricismes and Wallonismes published in 1806 made an explicit connection between purifying speech and Napoleonic integration of the population explicit. As the author explained:

> Today more than ever, more than one reason motivates the aforementioned Belgians to wish to speak the French language in all its purity, and to make it popular. The fate of this country is irrevocably linked to that of France, of which it is an integral part. Legislation and administration are one and the same: the language must follow suit.[122]

The inhabitants of the Belgian departments, 'the new French' would be called to participate in the workings of the French state, as prefects and in positions demanding 'a gift for speaking'. Manufacturers and merchants would need to present their views to the government in French. Above all, it was in the 'national language' that judges were obliged to hand down their sentences, notaries to draft testimonies and contracts, and lawyers to plead.[123]

This prejudice in favour of French was not universally shared across the Empire. Speaking French may have in many contexts functioned as an appeal to status, but it was not the only language that could be used in this manner. The author of the departmental statistics for the Belgian department of the Meuse Inférieur referred disparagingly to the Flemish spoken in the department, claiming, "it is an idiom which differs in each canton". Using Dutch, as well as French, could mark one out as a member of the educated classes: "the educated people replace [it with] Dutch or French as they write".[124] Speaking French was widely viewed, at least by many French speakers, as a route to social status, a necessary skill for office holding and a requirement for the successful participation in public discourse. Yet 'francisation' was also a risky strategy for speakers. Elite French linguistic practice was characterised by a strict prescriptivism, and speakers who littered their French with regional forms were stigmatised for their 'gasconismes' or 'provençalismes', their 'wallonismes' or 'flandricismes'. Risking such mockery, some speakers of other languages looked to alternative models of communicative practice, to alternative rubrics against which the value of linguistic production might be judged.

Linguistic Solidarity, Patrimony and the Local Notable as the Culture Broker

Speakers under pressure to Frenchify or '*franciser*' their language often sought to mobilise values of communitarian solidarity, and pressure was frequently exerted on speakers to eschew French in favour of the less

prestigious local patois. In the Lot-et-Garonne, Charles Lafont du Cujula claimed that using the local patois demonstrated solidarity with fellow speakers. He wrote, "our peasants use the term *franciman* for a man who always speaks or who feigns to speak in French".[125] In addition to 'franciman', Frédéric Mistral, the influential Provençal poet and lexicographer, cited "Francihot, Francilhot, Petit Français, Méridional who feigns to speak French, an indigenous person who assumes the Northern accent".[126] The naming of speakers of another language—'franciman'—as well as the notion that speaking French could be an affectation, would serve to undermine efforts to secure social distinction through the use of French. Ensuring a favourable response from listeners would mean using the less prestigious patois, thereby emphasising solidarity with the audience. Communitarian pressure influenced speakers to use patois rather than French.

Local elites who participated in francophone culture also felt obliged to court favour through the use of patois. Lafont du Cujula described just such a strategy, remarking that "one uses […] the local idiom, with peasants by necessity, with workers and craftsmen in the towns as a sign of goodwill".[127] A similar technique might be observed in the singing of a dialect Christmas carol at the 1806 midnight mass in the chapel of Charles-Francis Ladoucette, Prefect of the Hautes-Alpes. The clergy of Dauphiné had long used French in religious contexts, for sermons and catechisms.[128] One imagines, therefore, that a dialect carol sung during the Prefect's midnight mass had a certain symbolic value, an indulgence for those members of the congregation flattered by the use of the local language in a religious context where French was prominent.

These prominent local francophones, who abjured French so as to demonstrate communitarian solidarity, were not subverting the linguistic prestige of French. They were engaged in what Pierre Bourdieu has referred to as 'strategies of condescension'.[129] A display of benevolence through the use of patois could only be effective if an audience recognised it as a departure from habit, as a speaker's linguistic choice, or perhaps even linguistic sacrifice. It turned on a shared recognition of the dominant position of French in relation to the local language, without which such a strategy would be impossible. Jules Simon recalled the nobles who returned to Morbihan during the Empire and after the restoration pursuing precisely this kind of strategy to distinguish themselves from the urban bourgeoisie who had bought up land in the region during the Revolution, and thus curry favour amongst the rural labouring classes: "The bourgeois who did not speak Breton were suspect because

of that even. The former lords, the nobles […] knew Breton perfectly and spoke no other language with the peasants".[130] The same might be said of the strategies of resistance proffered by local communities. Invoking solidarity through the use of a particular language inevitably references its position in relation to the prestigious variety. Such strategies, embedded as they were within the existing symbolic order of languages, were thus vulnerable to those committed to the robust assertion of this order. In the Hautes-Alpes, even as the Prefect watched the performance of patois carols in his chapel, the members of the *Société d'émulation* were drawing up lists of faulty, error-strewn regional speech forms.[131] Linguistic resistance based on communitarian solidarity left speakers vulnerable to the charge of linguistic imprecision, to being labelled as provincial or rustic.

This was particularly so where linguistic particularity was used to defend privileges and rights, as it was by the Prud'hommes of Marseille. The councils of Prud'hommes had their origins in the guilds and trade corporations of the *Ancien régime*. They were abolished during the Revolution as obstacles to free trade, but restored under Napoleon as a court of first recourse for professional and trade disputes.[132] In Marseille, the Prud'hommes who exercised authority over coastal fishing found themselves criticised for using the local language in legal disputes as a means of defending the interests of local fishermen. In 1822, a group of fishermen of Neapolitan descent, but resident in Marseille for around a century, claimed the Prud'hommes were inventing regulations to govern fishing in the town and, without publicising the new rules, fining unsuspecting fishermen for infracting them. The victims appealed for fair treatment under the law on the basis of their common membership of the French nation, arguing: "we are French like them". When the Prosecutor of the appeal court of Aix was sent to investigate, the Prud'hommes once again sought recourse in the prestige of local tradition: "according to these gentleman, the teaching of their advice has been lost since time immemorial".[133] However, on this occasion, the tactic seems to have invited more scorn than approval. The Prud'hommes had a set of regulations written in Provençal, but claimed to be forbidden from showing it to outsiders, leading the *procureur* to remark sardonically that the book was "sacred for them like the Holy Book for the Hebrews and the Qur'an for the children of Mohammed". When the Prud'hommes did recount some of their regulations they engendered an equally negative response: "they recited several articles from their regulations for me that may as well have

been in Arabic as far as I was concerned". Like appeals to solidarity, invoking tradition had its limits. Both strategies could be dismissed as trivial, irrational and 'un-French' in more formal situations, or when interacting with speakers who were less inclined to indulge the linguistic sentiments of local communities, since both rested upon the distinction between low-status patois and the prestigious language of the nation.

While such appeals to communitarian solidarity were not always successful, the period did witness the elaboration of a powerful discourse in defence of linguistic particularity, one which prefigured later nationalist arguments in understanding the mother tongue as a fundamental feature of selfhood, invested with a deep affective significance and a route to uniquely authentic expression. Many of the local elites who themselves relied on French to assert and practice their own social authority expressed a profound attachment for the local language. Lafont du Cujula, the *sécretaire de la préfecture* of the Lot-et-Garonne, in the Occitan speaking southwest, expressed his affection for the patois he had spoken as a child: "we speak it out of sentimentality when, far away from the place where we were born, we find one of our fellow countrymen. In this way we remind ourselves, by way of illusion, of the objects which surrounded our cribs, the games of our childhood, the deepest sensations of our youth".[134]

Cujula's impassioned elegy to his mother tongue presented a telling shift from the third person to the first. The patois was no longer used when referring to the popular classes to describe the language 'they' spoke. In Cujula's words, "we speak it". The defence of the local language mounted by the secretary of the prefecture of the Lot-et-Garonne, a Napoleonic bureaucrat firmly ensconced within the francophone networks of the French state, shows how misleading simplistic distinctions can be between the centralising forces of modernity and the resistance of traditionalists. Countervailing attitudes to cultural centralisation developed not just in reaction to state action, but within the ranks of state actors themselves. Cujula's nostalgic affection for this mother tongue reflected more broadly the continued importance of patois in the communicative practices of local francophone elites. Pierre Laboulinière, general secretary of the Hautes-Pyrénées, observed that "patois lends itself easily to tasteful banter; and educated people, those who form high society, know very well how to use to it this end; they even prefer it, in this situation, to the French language".[135] Many of these members of 'high society' therefore used dialect habitually in conversation, and not

simply as a means of communicating with the 'general populace': "often, in conversation, they intersperse a local phrase with French, which they use to tell their anecdote, and this adds some spice, some pepper, some vitality to their speech".[136]

These figures remained sensitive to the charge that speaking patois was an uncouth habit, symptomatic of a lack of refinement. This can be seen in a response sent to Coquebert in 1808 by Richard, the prefectural archivist of the department of the Vosges, on the 'Patois de Neufchâteau', a *langue d'oil* dialect spoken in Lorraine. Richard provided a sample of his 'mother tongue', and in line with this statement of attachment for the dialect sought to distinguish between 'coarse patois', rightly deserving of opprobrium, and 'polite patois', illustrating the difference with an exchange between a woman and her son, who had arrived home late for supper:

> The expressions that this vulgar and surly woman employed in her manner of speaking (although she was the wife of an advisor at the town hall in Neufchâteau) and her attitude (on the street, leaning nonchalantly on the front door of the house), chewing between her broken teeth, a crust of bread, the remains of her dinner, just as stale and harsh as her speech, struck me and made me laugh.[137]

The woman went on to reprimand her son for his tardiness, drawing a sardonic retort: "j'o-n'â bin'ârou (I'm not particularly bothered)", to which the woman responded with a threat, "prot voèdie baîllerâ de m' n'èreule pâ l'net (I'm going to clip you round the ear with my broom)".[138] The most striking feature of Richard's description of this scene was the association of patois with a gendered notion of domesticity—the son spoke patois with his mother despite the public (and presumably francophone) role of her husband. While this woman, 'vulgar and surly' as she was, berated her son in the following terms: "os-c-que t'crô qu'on t'errète pou soupè? (did you believe that we would wait for you for supper)", a polite woman would have said: "os-c'que v'croye qu'on v's'è ètoudu pou soupè". The most noticeable difference was the use of the formal address form, 'vous', in place of the informal 'tu' form. As Richard explained: "one uses the form 'tu' out of familiarity or contempt; but we have never allowed children to use 'tu' when addressing their parents, like some people have done, in the French language, since the Revolution. This manner of speaking would be a crime in similar

circumstances". Richard's distinction between 'polite' and 'crude' patois seems to draw on 'French' norms governing communication. Yet one might also read in Richard's comments a subtle rebuke towards French; while the Revolution and all its excesses unfolded in the sphere of this language, the 'patois' seemed to stand for continuity, for traditional values such as parental authority.

Richard and Lafont du Cujula, both French speakers with positions in the bureaucratic structures of the French state, articulated a powerful argument in favour of the use of patois in spoken communication. Regional languages and dialects were mother tongues, and carried a strong affective value and connection to the traditions of local society. Probably the clearest, and certainly the best known, elaboration of this argument during the Napoleonic period was Antoine Fabre d'Olivet's 1803 publication, *Le troubadour, poésie occitanique*. Olivet was a forerunner of the cultural revivalism of a number of southern scholars in the early years of the nineteenth century who sought to raise the status of their local languages by creating the accoutrements of a standardised language: a literary canon and a set of orthographic, grammatical and lexical norms to govern written production.[139] Olivet was also the first to use the term 'Occitan', at least in its adjectival form 'occitanique', to describe the totality of the languages of the South. He wrote that this term was "a new word, adopted to simultaneously express Provençal and Languedocien, and whose dialects generally derive from the ancient langue d'oc".[140] Olivet constructed a vision of his mother tongue as intimately intertwined with his sense of selfhood. Appropriately enough, he dedicated the volume to his mother; "it is you who made this language so dear to me, since it was from your mouth that my heart received the first utterances, and from your bosom that my inadequate lips learnt the first sounds".[141] For the literate and French-speaking, however, this was a complicated position to take, and Olivet was not prepared to abandon his claim on learned francophone status. After all, his work was a translation into the French, intended to inform a learned French-speaking audience of the glories of a (fictive) medieval poet, and, as he was quick to assert, his mother would have been able to judge the quality of his translations ''since along with the habitual use of the Languedocien dialect, that which resembles the Occitan idiom more than any other, you added a perfect knowledge of the French language".[142]

The idea that regional languages formed an integral part of the selfhood of those that spoke them, even if they were also francophone,

was understood by many as a kind of awakening, stimulated by the rising interest in the language and culture of the population during the period. Le Fur, a clergyman from Finistère who was named Rector of Plougouverst at the concordat then *curé* of Landernau, and who translated the parable into Breton for the Coqueberts in 1811, wrote with a touch of shame that "although low Breton is my maternal language, I have never studied it specifically".[143] This sense amongst francophone speakers of regional languages that one should devote greater attention to the mother tongue was expressed more forcefully by another Breton translator of the parable, Alexandre-Marie Joguet, *curé* of Ploudiry, who adopted an apologetic tone in explaining that, like other men of some status within the local community—the 'bonnes gens' in his words—he had not devoted studies to the language and spoke Breton badly, only by routine. Of his translation of the parable, he wrote: "I reveal to you my shame and my concern about my maternal language".[144] This attitude was particularly clear amongst the Breton speakers involved with the *Académie celtique*. Even as prominent members like Jacques Cambry bemoaned the backwardness of rural Brittany, others articulated the value of the Breton language as a foundational component of their identity. Claude Le Coz, the constitutional bishop who was granted the Archdiocese of Besançon after the concordat, wrote that he had always cleaved to the title of 'breton, bretonnant', and exulted the study of Breton carried out by the *Académie* and formerly by his 'ami' Théophile Malo de la Tour d'Auvergne. Such efforts, he claimed, would save the language from ignominy by reconnecting it with the glories of the Celtic past, "until now despised, neglected or ignored".[145] As with Olivet, the effort to construct the language and its heritage as a space for the elaboration of a cultural identity was coupled with an ambiguous relationship to the French-speaking centre. La Tour d'Auvergne was also a signal example in this respect. The 'premier grenadier' of the French armies, who was killed in battle at Oberhausen in Bavaria, was also an avid celtomaniac. His *Origines gauloises*, a panegyric to the Celtic antiquity of Breton, was intended as a kind of monument to the glory of his *patrie*, a documentation of the 'ruins of a great building', which inspired a number of imitators, particularly amongst the ranks of the *Académie celtique*, in the first decades of the nineteenth century.[146]

Figures such as Olivet, Le Coz and La Tour d'Auvergne sought to accommodate a vision of linguistic patrimony with their membership

of a French-speaking nation. Affection for the mother tongue did not necessarily amount to a linguistically determined demand for political autonomy, so much as a recognition of its value as part of the heritage of the French nation, at once validating the French state and their identities as speakers of a regional language that really amounted to a historical curiosity, albeit one with a glorious past. This was less a claim for linguistic regionalism or nationalism, than for a construction of the local language as a feature of regional patrimony by speakers caught between, on the one hand, a metropolitan sphere of cultural and political action that valued '*francisation*' at the same time as stigmatising regional speech forms, and the other local communities of linguistic practice within which speaking French was often considered a pretentious affectation. Constructing the language as a feature of linguistic patrimony enabled educated speakers to present themselves as experts on regional culture. The *Académie celtique*, for example, had benefited from imperial patents during its existence. In his dedication to the Empress Josephine, which appeared at the head of the first edition of the *Mémoires* published by the *Académie*, Alexandre Lenoir, curator of the *Musée des monuments françaises,* wrote "it is when the greatest sovereign that France has ever had, completely regenerates this vast Empire, that it becomes more interesting to collect evidence of what distinguished these ancient inhabitants".[147] After the fall of Napoleon, the *Académie*, rechristened at the *Société des antiquaires,* was eager to secure fresh royal patents from the restored Bourbon regime, and lobbied the Minister of the Interior to this effect. In the society's minutes, the Minister was said to have informed the *Académie's* delegation "that it made a strong case for particular idioms and notably for the celto-Breton language, which it deemed particularly useful to know". In response, the *Académie* sought to buttress its credentials by sending a copy of the *Grammaire celto-bretonne* written by one of its members, Legonidec.[148]

The construction of linguistic patrimony was more than a simple alienation of regional identity into the politically neutralised sphere of tradition. It was also deployed as an attempt to legitimise claims for political concessions or social prestige, and often carried weight in governing circles. The Prud'hommes of Marseille sought to defend their privileges by leveraging their language and antiquity in just such a way. In his letter to the Coqueberts, the mayor of Marseille intimated that the city's fishermen preserved a distinct manner of speaking: "the term *camié* is used for shirt in St Jean, one of the oldest fishing districts in

Marseille".[149] In response, the Coqueberts had a translation of the parable in the language of Saint-Jean completed, a translation which René Merle has claimed was distinguished primarily by its use of Provençal lexis where, as we have seen, the population of Marseille frequently employed terms derived from French—'païre' in place of 'péro', for example.[150] The Prud'hommes cultivated this association with tradition and Provençal particularism. When the King's brother visited Marseille in 1777, the Prud'hommes played a prominent role in the festivities, attending in their distinctive black garb and addressing him in Provençal, or "our patois" as was later written (in French) in the Prud'hommes chronicle of the encounter.[151] The Prud'hommes reprised this appeal to tradition in 1790, when a group of deputies on mission came to Marseille—a strategy that proved effective in preserving their legal privileges during the Revolution.[152]

When faced with this rhetoric of tradition, even the most zealously committed to the linguistic integration of the population could be persuaded to moderate their approach and expectation. In 1802, the Prefect of the Bas-Rhin wrote that around half the population of Alsace knew some French, and that despite the opposition engendered by linguistic terrorism in the area during the Revolution, the language was gradually spreading amongst all sections of the population.[153] Laumond planned to hasten the progress of French through the appointment of at least one francophone primary school teacher to every commune, but was far from sanguine about the likely impact. The best that could be hoped for, in his estimation, was to gradually familiarise the population with the national language. The destruction of German, if possible, would take centuries because of it was so deeply ingrained in the practices and identities of the populace. This 'maternal custom', argued Laumond, placed language outside of the effective sphere of state action: "there is nothing in human power that can prevent a child from speaking the language of its wet nurse; language is transmitted from father to son. I do not know of a single thing that can overcome this order of things".[154] Recognising the difficulties faced by projects of *francisation* once again created value for the linguistic expertise of local bilinguals. For example, under the Consulate, three members of the *conseil général* of the Côtes du Nord wrote to Napoleon in support of Claude le Gorvec, who had been removed from his position as general secretary of the central administration. Le Gorvec, they argued, was enlightened, well regarded by the population, and above all enjoyed "the advantage of knowing the Celtic idiom perfectly, which is

in no uncertain terms indispensably useful in a department where a great number of the population speak this language".[155]

These examples reveal much about the dynamics of the politics of language and linguistic practice under Napoleon. Francisation was a central tenet of Napoleonic imperialism. Bringing the benefits of the French language to the population of the Empire was considered necessary not only to facilitate the exercise of government business, but as an element in the Napoleonic improvement of society. If the ideology of Napoleonic imperialism was founded on bringing French models of governance to the rest of Europe, the French language was one of those institutions considered ripe for export.[156] One result of this impulse to re-make society was the elaboration of arguments in favour of linguistic diversity. There arose a new sense of the 'mother tongue' as a significant feature of individual subjectivities. Such arguments convinced the Napoleonic regime to adopt a more pragmatic attitude towards linguistic diversity, yet it should not be understood simply as a prelude to linguistic nationalism. The idea of the mother tongue, of the embedded nature of linguistic patrimony, was a tool that speakers could exploit to locate themselves advantageously in relation both to centre and periphery. Such a route was open to speakers of France's regional languages, as much as of the standardised languages of the Empire, and did not necessarily entail claims for political autonomy. Laumond's pessimistic assessment of the prospects of Francisation in Alsace reminds us that this geography did not always mirror the division between 'old' France and the annexed territories. What these arguments did do, however, was make speakers of regional languages invaluable as cultural intermediaries. As the second part of this study will demonstrate, the dynamic between Francisation and the assertion of linguistic particularism as a traditional or intractable feature of local society governed the elaboration of linguistic practice within the institutions that formed a central part of Napoleon's state-building project, and guaranteed a role for local officials able to mediate between centre and periphery.

Notes

1. For example, H.F. Schiffman, *Linguistic Culture and Language Policy* (London, 1996), pp. 83–115.
2. BnF Naf 5910 Coquebert de Montbret au juge de paix du canton de Pont de Vaux, département de l'Ain, 10 Aug. 1808, f. 16.
3. Bourguet, *Déchiffrer*, pp. 135–137.

4. J. Edwards, *Minority Languages and Group Identity: Cases and Categories* (Amsterdam, 2010), p. 82.
5. D. Hymes, *Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach* (Philadelphia, 1974), p. 31.
6. D.R. Preston, *Perceptual Dialectology: Non-Linguists' Views of Areal Linguistics* (Philadelphia, 1989), p. 12.
7. BnF Naf 5910 Liandier, Directeur de l'école secondaire communale de Saint-Flour to sous-préfet de l'arrondissement, 12 Sept. 1808.
8. BnF Naf 5912 Nogaret, Préfet de l'Hérault to Ministre de l'intérieur 25 Feb. 1812 f.125; An F17 1209 Sous-Préfet de Riom to Ministre de l'intérieur 10 Feb. 1808; BnF Naf 5912 Préfet de Rhin et Moselle to Ministre de l'intérieur, 6 Dec. 1808 f.111; BnF Naf 5911 Secrétaire général de la préfecture de Montenotte au Ministre de l'intérieur, 27 Nov. 1808.
9. BnF Naf 5912, Dubois, préfet de la Stura, Observations sur le dialecte Piemontais, f.217.
10. BnF Naf 5912 Sous-préfet de Susa, Rapport sur les différents dialectes usités dans l'arrondissement de Susa, département de Pô, f. 18.
11. D. Hopkin, *Voices of the People in Nineteenth Century France* (Cambridge, 2012), p. 74.
12. BnF Naf 5911 (Patois de la France I-Ain-Eure) Deuxième échantillon du patois gascon. Traduction dans le dialecte de ce patois, qui étoit en usage dans le dix-huitième siècle, de la parabole de l'enfant prodigue ff.41–42; BnF Naf 5912 Paràbola di fient prodigh st luc cap xv vers 11 ad 37 incl. tradotta an vers piemonteis, ff. 26–29.
13. BmR Ms Mbt 489 Langue basque-la parabole de l'enfant prodigue, ff. 4–5.
14. Merle, *Visions*, pp. 50–51.
15. An F17 1209 Vosges, parabole de l'enfant prodigue, patois des montagnes, parabole de l'enfant prodigue, patois du plat pays.
16. BnF Naf 5910 Parabole de l'enfant prodigue, traduction en patois du canton de Mayet, f. 38; Traduction en langage vulgaire de environs de Marennes de la parabole de l'enfant prodigue, ff. 239–240; BnF Naf 5911 Sous-préfet de Blaye to Ministre de l'intérieur, 26 Mar. 1810, f. 72.
17. G. Brun-Trigaud, *Le croissant: Le concept et le mot, contribution à l'histoire de la dialectologie française au XIXeme siècle* (Lyon, 1990), pp. 41–82.
18. Brun-Trigaud, *Le Croissant*, p. 42.
19. BnF Naf 5910 Sous-Préfet de Montélimar to Préfet de la Drôme, 2 Dec. 1807 f. 348.
20. BnF Naf 5910 Sous-Préfet de Montélimar to Préfet de la Drôme, 2 Dec. 1807 f. 348.

21. Brun-Trigaud, *Le Croissant*, p. 42.
22. BnF Naf 5910 Sous-préfet de Confolens au Ministre de l'intérieur, 30 May 1807, f. 203.
23. BnF Naf 5910 Préfet de la Charente au Ministre de l'intérieur, 30 Mar. 1812, f. 186.
24. Cited in T. Margadant, *Urban Rivalries in the French Revolution* (Oxford, 1992), p. 94; On the formation of the departmental system see M.-V Ozouf-Marignier, *La formation des départements: La représentation du territoire français à la fin du 18e siècle* (Paris, 1989); Ozouf-Marignier et al. *Atlas de la Révolution*.
25. Brun-Trigaud, *Le Croissant*, p. 330.
26. Brun-Trigaud, *Le Croissant*, p. 81.
27. Brun-Trigaud, *Le Croissant*, pp. 46–49.
28. BnF Naf 5910 Liandier, Directeur de l'école secondaire communale de Saint-Flour to sous-préfet de l'arrondissement, 12 Sept. 1808, f. 169.
29. BnF Naf 5910 Liandier, Directeur de l'école secondaire communale de Saint-Flour to sous-préfet de l'arrondissement, 12 Sept. 1808, f. 169.
30. BnF Naf 5912 Ministre de l'intérieur au Préfet de la Haute-Loire, 31 Mar. 1809, f. 220.
31. BnF Naf 5912 Croze, Sous-préfet de Brioude au Ministre de l'intérieur, 28 Feb. 1809, f. 222.
32. BnF Naf 5912 Croze, Sous-préfet de Brioude au Ministre de l'intérieur, 28 Feb. 1809, f. 222.
33. AdBdR 6 M 1601 (Statistique Villeneuve-Monographs des communes) Arles.
34. Villeneuve *Bouches du Rhône* i, p. 899.
35. AdBdR 6 M 1601.
36. AdBdR 6 M 1601.
37. BnF Naf 5912 Sous-préfet de Susa, Rapport sur les différents dialectes usités dans l'arrondissement de Susa, département de Pô, f. 18.
38. An F17 1209 Traduction de la parabole de l'enfant prodigue, Sapois, canton de Saulxures.
39. Margadant, *Urban Rivalries*, pp.107–110; Ozouf-Marignier, *formation des départements*, p. 292.
40. Margadant, *Urban Rivalries*, pp. 111–116.
41. Margadant, *Urban Rivalries*, p. 117.
42. P. Chassang, *Le grand séminaire de Saint-Flour* (Saint-Flour, 1994), p. 60.
43. A. Robert, E. Bourloton and G. Cougny, *Dictionnaire des parlementaires français, depuis le 1er mai 1789 jusqu'au 1er mai 1889*, vol.2 (Paris, 1889), p. 227.
44. BnF Naf 5910 Observations sur les dialectes du département des Apennins f. 100.

45. BnF Naf 5912 Dictionnaire des vieux mots conservé ou altéré dans les différentes dialectes du département de Sambre et Meuse, ff. 156–159.
46. Using the online database of administrative organization, 'Des villages de Cassini aux communes d'aujourd'hui' http://cassini.ehess.fr/cassini/fr/html/index.htm (accessed 20/05/2014) I have identified 11 communes that both received translations and had been cantonal capitals. A further 17 towns that were cantonal capitals during the period had been capitals of a district before their abolition and replacement with arrondissements in 1801.
47. The version of the parable for the Hautes-Pyrénées is missing-only the letter announcing its translation remains. BnF Naf 5912 Secrétaire général de la préfecture des Hautes-Pyrénées to Ministre de l'intérieur, 10 Apr. 1808.
48. J.-F. Legonidec, 'Parabole de l'enfant prodigue mise en Breton, dialecte de Léon', *Mémoires de l'académie celtique*, vol. 2 (1808), pp. 118–126; J. Le Brignant, 'Le même parable, traduite en Breton, dans le dialecte de Tréguier', *Mémoires de l'académie celtique*, vol. 2 (1808), pp. 127–131; F. Broudic *Parler Breton au XIXe siècle*: *Le nouveau sondage TMO régions* (Brest, 2009), pp. 123–127.
49. BnF Naf 5911 Préfet de Gers to Ministre de l'intérieure, 10 Feb. 1808 f. 34.
50. Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, p. 47.
51. 'Patois', D. Diderot and J. le Rond D'Alembert (eds.) *Encyclopédie*, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, vol. 12, p. 174 University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2011 Edition) http://artflx.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/getobject.pl?c.11:252.encyclopedie0311. Accessed 19/02/2015.
52. Haugen, 'Dialect, Language, Nation', pp. 922–935. For a discussion of the concept of standardization in the context of France see Lodge *Dialect to Standard*, Chap. 1.
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between two linguistic codes, say French and Provençal; and convergence, where speakers' linguistic production over time moves towards the prestige form. The comments of the mayor of Marseille remind us that particular instances of language shift can be placed on a spectrum between these two poles, characterised to a greater or lesser extent by substitution and convergence, rather than one to the exclusion of the other: Lodge *Dialect to Standard*, pp. 190–191.

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CHAPTER 4

Language and Education under Napoleon

No social institution has been more intimately associated with the spread of official, state-sanctioned national culture than the French school. Historical understandings of the classroom have often understood it as a space dominated by the national language, and school teachers as 'village notables' who traded on their ability to read, write and speak French.[1] The role of the school in the destruction of minority cultures in France is often illustrated by the use of the *symbole*, a repressive pedagogical practice originally used for teaching Latin, but applied around the 1830s to France's regional languages. According to one of the school inspectors of the *Académie de Rennes*, this involved a piece of wood that would be given to the first child who spoke in Breton. Whist holding this piece of wood, the child was forbidden from participating in playground games with his or her classmates. The piece of wood could be passed on only by catching one of the child's classmates speaking Breton.[2] For many modern Breton-speakers, particularly Breton language activists, the *symbole* is seen as an especially pernicious manifestation of the French state's repression of ethnic and linguistic difference, particularly despised for the way it was used to stigmatise children's native tongue from a young age.[3]

Recent historians of French education have argued that this view of the classroom as a disseminator of official culture overstates the power of schooling.[4] Yet generations of French statesmen and educators have sought to make the school play exactly this role. The association of schooling with nation-building projects was expressed with great vigour during the Revolution when, at the height of the Terror, the deputies

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of the Convention voted for French teachers to be posted to all parts of France where the national language was not spoken.[5] This vision of education as a tool for spreading the French language had a distinctly democratic flavour. As one administrator in the Haute-Loire argued as late as 1798, aristocrats, fanatics and other 'troublemakers' sought to keep the people ignorant in order to dominate them. They "knew too well that nothing has given more souls over to seduction than ignorance of the French language; they knew that the unity of this language had too much of a connection with the unity of the Republic".[6] The Napoleonic regime shared this vision of education as a tool for shaping the population, although the values to be inculcated alongside patriotism were dynastic loyalty and social order, rather than democratic liberty.[7] The classroom remained a tool to achieve the linguistic, and in turn political, unity of the Empire.

What resulted was a highly centralised system of education in which, at least in principle, the contents and methods of public instruction were set out at the centre and enforced by a state bureaucracy. This system was, focused primarily on secondary schools, and especially on the militaristic Napoleonic *Lycées* created in 1802 to produce loyal servants of the military and state administration. However, the local school masters who provided the majority of primary education did still come under the auspices of the state, even if the absence of central funding meant that the burden of paying for them still fell on parents and local communities. The Imperial University established in 1808 detailed inspectors to regulate primary schools, examined and approved schoolmasters before they were permitted to teach, and crucially demanded a twentieth of the school fees paid by any students studying Latin—a serious burden in rural areas where the chief attraction of education for wealthy peasants was the prospect of their son becoming a priest.[8]

While the Napoleonic system made its presence felt at all levels of education, it should not be assumed that the politics of education during the period can be reduced to a simple opposition between a centralising state that sought to impose an official language and culture, and local communities eager to preserve their own autonomy. Critics of the centralised French education system that emerged during the Napoleonic period have observed that the experience of the 'common culture' offered by schools has always been stratified by social background, and that access to particular forms of higher knowledge and culture has served simply to buttress the power of elites.[9] This chapter will argue

that the Napoleonic regime did seek to employ the education system as a tool of cultural imperialism: it saw schools as a means of spreading state-sanctioned culture and language, and in turn of unifying the diverse population of the Empire. The responses of educators and local communities, however, reveal the importance of understanding the school not simply as a vector for official culture, but as a 'meeting point' where both local and national actors elaborate and negotiate a variety of strategies.[10] Where Napoleonic policy threatened the patterns of social reproduction that ensured school teachers' livelihoods, such as through restrictions on the teaching of Latin in rural areas, it was met with defiance and ultimately failed. However, in secondary education, where Napoleonic devotion to classical education offered teachers in non-French speaking regions a degree of cultural capital, a more complicated process of negotiation and collaboration was evident.

Education and Language at the End of the Ancien régime

The French Revolutionaries were above all concerned with refoming the language of the people. As such, concerns over language and education intersected most often in the primary or village schoolroom. The primary school classrooms of France as they were found by the Revolutionaries were often anything but a vehicle for the proliferation of French. When Abbé Grégoire conducted his enquiry into the patois of France during the Revolution, seven of his 43 questions related directly to education. In addition to question 31, on whether French was taught in the area's schools, Grégoire asked whether each village had its own schoolteacher (question 32); what was taught in these schools beyond reading, writing, arithmetic and the catechism (question 33); whether these schools were rigorously monitored by the clergy (question 34); and finally what reading materials were available to them (questions 31, 35–37).[11]

The responses to Grégoire's survey, received between 1790 and 1792, offer some clear indications about linguistic practices in the French classroom at the end of the *Ancien régime*. Perhaps the most prominent distinction to emerge was between the northern, *langue d'oïl*-speaking territories and the *langue d'oc*-speaking areas of the South. According to Grégoire's respondents, schooling in the North tended to take place almost exclusively in French. The response from the mayor of Saint-Claude in the Jura stated simply that schooling took place in French, even though he observed that many villagers still spoke patois.[12]

However, this did not prevent concerns about the quality of French that might be taught within schools, such as those expressed of the schools in Poitou by Abbé Perreau, who claimed that despite French being the only language used in the area, "teaching is done in French, but bad French".[13] This did not make all classrooms in the North linguistic monocultures. In Burgundy, for example, it was claimed that, "teaching is done in French, and ordinary speech in patois",[14] highlighting how even where French was the language of instruction, the speech of pupils and even teachers was not always as rigorously policed.

According to respondents from the southern France, French was generally an aim of the education provided in schools, although on the whole those writing from the South were sceptical about the impact such instruction had on students' knowledge of the language. Just as in the North, French was not necessarily the sole language to be spoken in the classroom, even where it was the object of the lesson. As the members of the Society of Friends of the Constitution of Carcassonne wrote, "we read uniform books […] elsewhere, the children and teachers speak patois".[15] Pessimism about the contribution schools might make arose as much from the language spoken outside classrooms as within it. Thus, the response from Lyon, located within what is now regarded as the territory of the Francoprovençal language, lamented that, "teaching is done in French, but […] the obligation on the children to always communicate with folk who speak only patois renders this education useless for the language".[16] Unlike most respondents from the South, the Society of Friends of the Constitution of Maringues in the Auvergne implied that little effort was made to teach French to rural dwellers in the area's schools: "The peasants learn only a catechism, that they would not understand if they spoke French'.[17] This limited curriculum was perhaps all that might be expected given the disparaging characterisation of the area's teachers by the Society, which claimed that only one in twenty villages had "a master who barely knows how to spell", a meagre provision supplemented only by "the priest who makes his parishioners parrot the words of the catechism".[18]

The obstacle to the effective teaching of French in schools most frequently cited by respondents from the South was the widespread teaching of Latin. The Society of Friends of the Constitution of Auch in the Gers claimed that, "teaching is done neither in French, nor in patois. The priests, who are responsible for it almost everywhere […] limit themselves to teaching one or two [children] to serve at Mass".[19] The response drafted by the Society of Friends of the Constitution of Agen

described a similar situation, whereby teachers, predominantly the local *curé*, taught both French and Latin to their pupils, but frequently began with the latter. As a result, "education is reduced, in our countryside, to making the students capable, on feast days and Sundays, of helping their pastors to sing the praise of God in a language that they do not understand".[20] An identical situation was described by François Chabot, a former Capuchin from Rodez, and Pierre Bernadau, a lawyer from Bordeaux.[21] Of course, the emphasis placed on teaching and learning Latin was not simply a function of the local clergy's need for assistants at religious ceremonies, but doubtless reflected the priorities of those being taught and their parents. While some villages had endowments left by wealthy individuals to fund schools of the poor, and others might oblige teachers to allow poor students to study for free, their fees subsidised by those paid by the more affluent, the majority of students had to pay for lessons. As a result, educators had to meet, to some extent at least, the demands of parents, and learning Latin was frequently one such demand. For some, this no doubt arose from the enduring prestige of Latin as a language of learning.[22] However, for the majority, the desire for their children to learn Latin stemmed from the language's importance in Catholic religious practice. As François Chabot observed of the predilection of the rural dwellers Lot-et-Garonne for the language, "the most affluent peasants sometimes ruin themselves to teach their children Latin, in order to make them priests".[23]

The idea that Latin inhibited the teaching of French was linked to distinctions between urban and rural space. The rural school was viewed as a key site in any effort to bring enlightenment and the French language to the population of France.[24] Grégoire's respondents duly characterised rural space in opposition to urban space, as a zone where little or even no French was spoken, where teachers were scarce and schools dominated by the frequently less-than-benevolent gaze of the local clergy. The response from Agen blamed the reduction of education to a smattering of Latin on the small size of rural villages. These villages, unable to support a schoolmaster, were forced to rely on the clergy for instruction.[25] As Pierre Bernadeau remarked of the education in the territory surrounding Bordeaux, "the teaching in the countryside is quite hopeless in this district […] it is only the large villages that have schoolmaster […] one finds writing masters only in our small towns; there the education is better cared for, but more expensive".[26] Bernadeau's description revealed a more variegated understanding of the distinctions between types of

space than the simple opposition of 'rural' and 'urban'. *Bourgs* were distinct from the smaller villages that surrounded them. They were home not only to the parish church and other services but, where they existed, professional teachers chosen by the village council. The presence of a designated schoolteacher would not necessarily have marked a departure in the kind of education provided. Most would likely have been ecclesiastics themselves, or at least appointed under the auspices of the local *curé*, who served on the municipal council, although they would most likely have had more time to devote to education. However, inhabitants of the surrounding villages thus had the obstacle of travelling into the local *bourg* in order to attend school regularly, whether run by the local *curé* or by a schoolteacher.

The school at the end of the *Ancien régime* was, therefore, far from a homogenous institution. Not simply the accessibility of education, but the linguistic ecology of the classroom could vary drastically according to where a school was found. The classrooms found in parts of France where French was not the mother tongue of large swathes of the population were, perhaps unsurprisingly, much less likely to have large amounts of French spoken within them. The enduring importance of Latin in Catholic religious practice could result in a situation where this language and the local tongue dominated educational settings, to the detriment of French. This was a distinction overlain with divisions between urban and rural areas. Grégoire's respondents made clear that French education was more likely to be available to urban dwellers and that the less densely populated an area, the less likelihood a dedicated teacher working in French.

Educational Reform and Language from Revolution to Restoration

Following the political upheavals of 1789, the profound disparities that characterised the French primary school in general, and the teaching of the French language in particular, became an object of concern for successive regimes. The Revolution brought with it a multitude of educational projects intended to create an enlightened citizenry that might buttress the new civic order.[27] Henceforth, the school was to be a national institution, and education a tool for the creation of Frenchmen.[28] This meant that the classroom would have to become a foothold for the French language, and the state would have to take a more active role in ensuring both provision and quality.

The desire to extend the influence of the state into primary school provision was manifested in legislation on the 29th Frimaire year II (19th December 1793) with the passage of the Bouquier law. This law made education obligatory and free, with teachers salaried by the state. A little over a month later, on the 5th Pluviôse (24th January), Barère made his now famous speech to the convention, and the decree that followed explicitly mobilised schools for the purposes of spreading the French language. Barère proposed a measure requiring that, within ten days, a teacher of the French language would be established in every Breton-speaking commune of the departments of Morbihan, Finistère, Côtes-du-Nord, Ile-et-Vilaine and the Loire-Inférieur, in every German-speaking commune of the departments of Alsace and Lorraine, in every Italian-speaking commune of the Alpes-Maritimes and every Basque-speaking commune of the Basses-Pyrénées.[29] Not only was spreading the French language now seen as crucial to the survival of the Republic, it was within the walls of the classroom that the population of France was to be transformed into French-speaking citizens.

The establishment of French schools across such a large number of communes proved wildly overambitious, as did the provisions of the Bouquier law. In practice, the reforms were implemented in a piecemeal fashion, hampered by political conflict and a lack of both money and suitable teachers, meaning they had little impact across France as a whole despite some progress in areas like Alsace.[30]

Following the fall of Robespierre, education continued to be viewed as a sphere in which the state should act and one purpose of such action was the spread of the French language, underscoring how far the belief transcended the political divisions of the Revolution. The Lakanal law of the 27th Brumaire Year III (17th November 1794) sought to establish a school for every 1000 habitants, free to pupils but not obligatory. The law also required not only that schools taught French, but that they used it as the primary language of instruction, for the first time regulating the use of languages within the classroom on a national scale. The law's author, Joseph Lakanal, was dispatched on mission to the south-west of France shortly after its publication, charged with ensuring its execution. The school regulations published in the area tended to mirror the text of the law. The regulations governing the primary schools of the district of Agen, for example, stipulated that, "lessons will always be given in French, but the instruction can sometimes employ the local idiom, as a back-up or for comparison".[31]

The impossibility of fulfilling the provisions of this legislation, largely due to a lack of resources, was recognised less than a year after the passage of the Lakanal law, when the Daunou law of the 3rd Brumaire Year IV (25th October 1795) ended free schooling. However, while individual communes and parents, rather than the state, now had to meet teachers' salaries, this did not mean the total withdrawal of the state from primary education or that efforts to spread French were forgotten. The Daunou law established local juries of public education to oversee schools. These juries were initially established on the level of the district, and despite questions surrounding their efficacy, they survived the fall of Napoleon, being shifted to department level and then finally down to the canton after the Restoration.[32] A central function of such juries was to examine the capacity of teachers, including their ability to teach French, with prefects enjoying the power to approve the selection of teachers by municipal councils based on their recommendations. The state's role in the oversight, if not provision, of primary education was secured by the establishment of the Imperial University in 1808, which also saw the creation of a new centralised bureaucracy dedicated to the administration of the education system. The University was split into a series of smaller academies, each one responsible for education within the jurisdiction of a different court of appeal, and each one with school inspectors tasked with visiting primary schools in the area. All teachers were now obliged to become members of the university; in theory at least, no schools could be opened without the authorisation of the Grand Master of the University in Paris. The establishment of the University also brought about new proscriptions on the teaching of languages. Perhaps mindful of territories newly annexed to the Revolution, where the great majority of literate culture took place in a language other than French, secondary schools and *lycées* were now explicitly required to teach French. Furthermore, all teachers providing tuition in Latin were obliged to pay the University a twentieth of the fees received from their students, in theory making the language less attractive to rural schoolmasters and parents, while also encouraging a focus on reading, writing and arithmetic, as well as French. The university, like the juries of instruction, survived into the Restoration, and as will be seen, the men who staffed it remained loyal to the notion that spreading the French language amongst the non-francophone populations that came under their authority was one of the basic functions of the school.

The Politics of Language and Primary Schooling Under Napoleon

For Napoleonic officials, the classroom remained in theory a potent tool for the linguistic, and in turn political, unification of the Empire. However, the regime was unwilling to finance mass primary schooling, leaving the payment of teachers up to parents, municipal authorities and charitable foundations. This compounded the difficulty of finding capable French teachers in non-francophone regions, since local schoolmasters running village schools were dependent on the goodwill and patronage of local communities. For many officials, the solution was necessarily long term. The Prefect of the German-speaking department of the Sarre backed the creation of an *École normale* to train primary school teachers, arguing that it would "contribute effectively through the propagation of the French language to amalgamate, so to speak, the inhabitants of newly conquered countries, with those of the interior of the Empire".[33] In other areas, the strategy involved a greater degree of compulsion. In the Belgian departments administered by the Academy of Liège teachers who did not speak French were granted only temporary authorisation to open schools on the understanding that they would learn the national language. In some instances, official pressure met with resolute disobedience. Jean Morhaye, local priest of the commune of Hoeselt near Maastricht who taught children Latin and Flemish, was forced to close his school because although he knew enough French to teach reading in the language he 'obstinately' refused to do so.[34]

As one of the areas singled out to receive French teachers by Bertrand Barère in the Year II (1794), the Alpes-Maritimes stood out as a particular locus of government action. The old county of Nice, from which the department was formed, was part of the Kingdom of Sardinia until the Revolution, only becoming part of France when it was annexed by French troops in 1792. Italian formed an important part of the area's literate culture, and a spur to French administrators who were wary of linguistic separatism and its political ramifications. Despite the attentions of figures like Barère, Italian remained widely used in the schools of the department into the period of the consulate, particularly those situated in remoter, less populous areas. On the 7th Thermidor Year XI (27th July 1803), a few months after his appointment as Prefect, Marc Joseph de Gratet Dubouchage circulated a questionnaire on the department's schools. Dubouchage included questions on the number of teachers and

students, how the teachers were paid, and crucially on "the nature of what is taught in the schools, and in which language the teaching is done".[35] The responses conserved in the departmental archives give a total of 62 teachers, an incomplete sample since replies from some of the department's communes, notably Nice, are not present. Breaking these figures down by the language of instruction, as in Table 4.1, shows that of the 62 teachers identified by mayors in their responses, 22 taught French, 24 Italian and 14 both languages, with two teachers for whom no information on language was presented. These figures reveal just how prevalent Italian remained in the department's schools. Well over a third—38.7%—taught no French whatsoever, while Italian was taught in nearly two thirds-—61.3%—of classrooms. Furthermore, these figures probably exaggerate the extent of French tuition in the department's schools. Many of the schools listed as bilingual in fact focused on Italian, frequently with the addition of Latin. Jacques and Antoine Granella, both priests trained in Piedmont employed as teachers in La Brigue in the Year XI were examples of just such a practice. The commune's mayor listed both as teachers of French and Italian, along with Latin, but added that "the French language is however the most neglected".[36] While over half of teachers may have taught French, this did not necessarily mean that significant classroom time was spent on the language. Even where a French teacher existed, the language was generally only taught at the behest of parents. Thus, in addition to Italian and Latin, Charles Bacelli, a priest and teacher in the commune of Peille, taught French "to those who wished to learn it".[37] In many parts of the department, this may have been a minority, to judge by the comments of the Mayor of La Brigue, who claimed that "the inhabitants of the country are tied by force of habit to the Italian language which is practically natural to them, viewing French as useless".[38]

Not only did Italian remain the dominant language of instruction in many of the department's classrooms a decade after the arrival of French

Table 4.1 Alpes-Maritimes: Teachers by languages taught, Thermidor–Fructidor year XI (July–August, 1803)

Languages(s) taught	*French*	*Italian*	*French and Italian*	*Unknown*	*Total*
Number of teachers	22 (35.5%)	24 (38.7%)	14 (22.6%)	2 (3.2%)	62

Source AdAM CE 1 T 1 (Organisation générale de l'instruction publique)

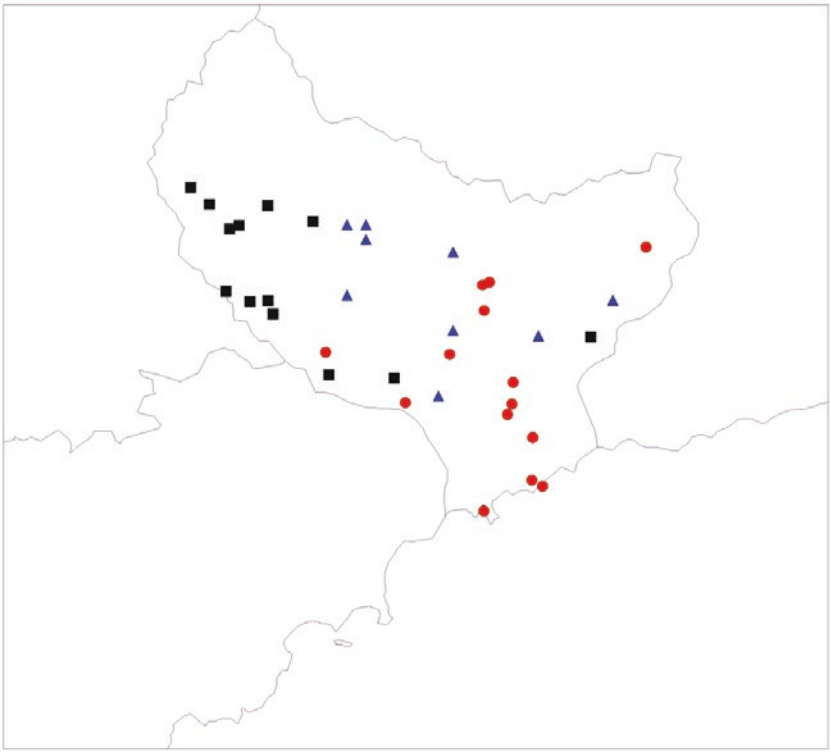

Fig. 4.1 Alpes-Maritimes: Communes by language of instruction, year XI (1803). *Source* AdAM CE 1 T 1 (Organisation générale de l'instruction publique)

troops, it is difficult to discern any significant increase in the teaching of French once the linguistic geography of the area before it became part of France is considered. Figure 4.1 shows the geographic spread of French

Fig. 4.2 Alpes-Maritimes: The French–Italian linguistic border, 1806. *Source* BnF Naf 5913 (Patois de la France IV-Délimitation des limites de la langue française)

language teaching according to the responses to Dubouchage's survey. Plotting the information in this way reveals a distinct geography. In the Year XI, communes where teaching was confined to French were clustered in the north-west of the department; those where education took place in both French and Italian were located predominantly on the more populous littoral, home to the larger urban centres like Nice and Monaco. Meanwhile, communes where education was restricted to Italian were generally found in the more rugged and sparsely populated terrain of the centre of the

department. There was a striking concordance between the distribution of French language schools and the border between French and Italian languages shown on the linguistic map drawn up at the behest of the Minister of the Interior in 1806 (Fig. 4.2).[39] According to the Sub-prefect of Puget-Théniers, this linguistic division was an old one. Many of the communes of this area had been part of France, but were ceded to the Sardinian crown by treaties signed in 1713 and 1760. When these communities became part of the county of Nice, Charles-Emmanuel II permitted them the continued use of French for the drafting of legal documents, a practice that endured until the annexation by France.[40] The rest of the territory identified as French speaking by the Sub-prefect had belonged to the old diocese of Glandèves, where "French was in use in high society, and learning took place in this language".[41] As a result, it seems likely that the cluster of teachers working solely in French in the north-west of the department predated the area's annexation to France. French language teaching in this area was not the result of the transfer of sovereignty to France, or the efforts of French administrators, but followed older patterns of language education.

It also seems likely that the presence of French language instruction in the department's coastal areas was not entirely an innovation brought about by French government. Even in these parts of the department, designated as Italian speaking by the linguistic map compiled in 1806, French was not entirely absent. Most of the teachers working in this area do not appear to have been imports brought with the French. For example, Jean Baptiste Bosio, a bilingual teacher from Monaco was said to have exercised the same position under the Old Regime.[42] Dominique Rossetto, a priest teaching both French and Italian in La Turbie had pursued his studies in Italy.[43] French language teaching was not necessarily introduced into the area by the French state.

The responses to his questionnaire of the 7th Thermidor Year XI prompted Dubouchage to take action. On the 30th of the same month, before the final responses had even reached the prefecture, he despatched a circular to the sub-prefects and mayors of the department expressing his unease that the information he had gathered showed that most of the department's primary schools taught Italian and Latin, while ignoring French. Dubouchage made clear his position on the teaching of languages other than French: "the French language is the language of the government, and must be the language of the country". To this end, the Prefect stipulated that, "no teacher will be paid, unless he can prove, before the juries of instruction, that he can teach French

[…] the teaching of foreign languages will not be at public expense, it is up to wealthy families to pay for it".[44] The public expenses to which Dubouchage referred were the stipends and lodgings provided to many of the department's teachers from communal funds and property. The Prefect's circular demonstrates not only the commitment of administrators to establishing a French language education system, but also the measures that could be deployed to such an end.

The Prefect's circular did meet with some immediate success, though perhaps not of the enduring and comprehensive character for which he might have hoped. This can be seen from the dossiers of correspondence relating to the nomination, payment and regulation of each commune's schools found in the papers of the prefecture in the departmental archives. On the 6th Fructidor Year XI (24th August 1803), in response to the circular of the 30th Thermidor, the municipal council of the commune of Peillon appointed Pierre Raimondi as communal schoolteacher, to take effect only after he had been assessed capable of teaching French by the local jury of instruction.[45] In Brumaire Year XII (1803), the nomination of André Blanqui as teacher for the commune of Roure was justified by his ability to fulfil the requirements of the circular, and his nomination would only be confirmed after satisfying the jury of education that he could teach French.[46] However, despite having expressly required the teaching of French in the primary schools of the Alpes-Maritimes, the Prefect continued to receive letters denouncing teachers for teaching Italian. Thus, Pierre Boccaron of Saint Martin du Var wrote to the Prefect in Floréal of Year XIII (1805), complaining that, "Monsieur Victor Baudoin prêtre […] allows himself to continue to teach Italian and Latin and tramples underfoot the orders that M. the Mayor may have given".[47]

That the Prefect, despite his efforts, was unable to impose French upon the totality of classrooms in the department is evident from the information collected for a second survey of the areas teachers in 1809. This time the mayors were required to complete a table, providing information such as the name and age of any teachers in the commune; their salaries and number of students; and, finally, any other observations about the teacher or school.[48] These observations sometimes included information about the language taught by specific teachers, although since the mayors were not prompted to give such information, the information they provided was inevitably far sparser than for the Year

XI. Nonetheless, these records indicate the continued predominance of Italian teachers.

The relative inefficacy of efforts to spread French in the department was in part due to the unreliability of the juries of education charged with examining primary school teachers and distributing certificates of capacity. This unreliability was demonstrated when, in August of 1810, Dubouchage circulated a letter to his sub-prefects asking for information on the linguistic capacity of the department's teachers.[49] In his response, the Sub-prefect of Puget-Théniers claimed he had often been shocked by the lack of knowledge many of the *arrondissement's* teachers displayed on the very subjects they were meant to be teaching. This was despite their possession of certificates of capacity delivered by the *arrondissement's* jury of public instruction, composed of the local *curé*, another local member of the clergy and a doctor. Dismayed by this state of affairs, the Sub-prefect confronted one of the members of the jury:

> Having reproached some members of the jury for having awarded certificates of capacity to inept men, it was observed to me that if it were necessary to apply rigour, there would exist no primary teachers in the *arrondissement*, and I understood that provided the applicant was a priest, and that he could babble a few words of French, no more was demanded.[50]

If the standards demanded by the juries were deemed insufficiently rigorous by the Sub-prefect, it should be noted that they were further weakened by the possibility of negotiating a period of grace, in which a teacher could practice despite not having yet fulfilled the requirements of the examination. In the Year XII, Jean-Baptiste Priori was authorised by the jury of public education to teach in the commune of Lucéram, "on the express condition that he make an effort to improve in the French language, that he teaches only in French, and that he quits his post if, in the inspection that will take place in the course of the year, French is not being taught".[51] Several years later, in January 1812, Priori was the subject of a petition by five of the members of the commune's municipal council who demanded Priori's replacement, in part, on the grounds that he was not teaching French to his students.[52] The *Abbé* Delerbra was authorised to teach in the commune of Castellar in 1805 on the same conditions, but despite having failed to fulfil them he was only removed in 1812.[53]

The juries of instruction were not entirely irrelevant, and they did on occasion fail candidates. This was exactly what happened to François Benet who was examined in the Year IX (1801), with the members of the jury concluding that, "The citizen Benet having no knowledge of the French language, has been recognised incapable of filling the post of primary school teacher".[54] However, it often proved too easy for teachers to avoid the examinations that were supposed to be conducted by the jury on all new teachers before they took up their posts. Jacques Robion of the commune of Roure, for example, was listed in the survey of the Year XI as teaching only Italian and Latin. For the Year XII, he was replaced by André Blanqui,[55] who was to teach French at the school, but Robion regained the position in 1808.[56] However, Robion claimed that he was unable to travel to Nice to undergo the examination required of all teachers due to a bad leg.[57] This left the Prefect little choice but to allow the school to open without the jury examining the teacher.[58] Regardless of the truth of Robion's leg ache, only 77 teachers were approved for the *arrondissement* of Nice between Thermidor Year II (1804) and March 1814, and since at least 72 were practising in the area in 1809 it is likely that Robion was not alone in teaching without having passed the jury's examination, assuming a modest turnover of schoolmasters.[59]

Aside from the lack of rigour exercised by the juries of public education in the oversight of the department's teachers, the spread of French language education was also inhibited by opposition from the area's inhabitants. This opposition was particularly fierce in Roquebillière, a mountainous commune renowned as the source of numerous bands of *barbets*, the bandits that proliferated in parts of the department after its annexation to France. In the Year XIII, the mayor of the commune wrote to the Prefect confirming receipt of a set of placards exhorting the population to learn French. The mayor's brother, who was also the local priest, had apparently learnt French from a teacher in Nice and was eager to teach it, but found the task almost impossible. This was due, he claimed, to a combination of parental disregard for education and dissatisfaction with French rule, which locals presumed would not last long:

> the ignorance of the fathers and mothers who did not want to buy books for their children, and […] and troublemakers who constantly spread rumours that the Russian, Prussian and Austrian troops will soon arrive,

> and that soon we will no longer be French and […] will no longer be obliged to teach the French language to our children.[60]

Three years later, the mayor reported that opponents of the government within the commune "did not wish to hear French spoken".[61] The language of the local schoolroom, therefore, became a proxy for political conflicts over the legitimacy of the Napoleonic Empire in some parts of the department. Even though the commune's teachers were willingly provided lessons in Italian as well as in French and Latin, two teachers opposed to French rule set up an unauthorised Italian language school in a private house, which the Prefect ordered closed.[62]

The inhabitants of the department were certainly not uniformly ill-disposed towards French. The inhabitants of Nice were generally eager to teach their children the language, as they had been before the annexation of the County of Nice to France.[63] This much was evident from the two distinct patterns of teaching evident in Villefranche, a commune just across a small inlet from Nice, in the Year XI. The mayor's response to Dubouchage's survey of that year names two teachers within the commune: Nicolas Galini, a Neapolitan priest who taught Italian and Latin; and a Frenchman, Joseph Anne, a teacher by profession who taught French and handwriting.[64] While Galini was paid 200 Francs per year by the commune, Anne's income was made up entirely of the monthly fees paid by his students. However, despite being free for students to attend, Galini's school had fewer pupils—12 to Anne's 20. The reason for the disparity became clear when the Prefect asked Anne to take up Galini's communal teaching post. Anne refused the offer "because the twenty students that he has, almost all Niçois and boarding with him, keep him occupied all day, such that it would be impossible to teach others if they came to the school".[65] This was a pattern familiar from the correspondence received by Grégoire at the start of the Revolution, and evident in much of the geography of language teaching in the department. Learning French was the object of wealthy town dwellers, who were prepared to pay good money to a capable teacher of the language. Meanwhile other languages tended to find themselves taught only in rural areas. Whether arising from sentiment or from a rational appraisal of the relative advantages to be accrued from learning Italian or Latin over French, the reluctance to teach children a new language proved a significant barrier to change since many teachers relied on the fees paid by parents or at least the confidence of the municipal council. As the

Mayor of Lucéram explained, "in the poorest of mountain communes, French is not taught, and for the good reason that the fathers and mothers, or at least the greatest part of them, would withdraw their children from the primary schools if we taught the French language there".[66] Language teaching in the Alpes-Maritimes under Napoleon reflected older habits and the preferences of local communities far more than the will of the state and its operatives.

Dubouchage was not the sole French administrator to attempt to spread French amongst the primary school teachers of the department only to be confronted with the difficulties in doing so. Upon the establishment of the Imperial University in 1808, the new Rector of the Academy of Aix, André Alexandre Eymar, appeared every bit as eager as Dubouchage. Eymar wrote to one of the members of the jury of instruction in Nice in May 1810 asking him to identify which teachers taught in Italian, so that they might be removed from the profession. This, according to Eymar, was necessary because "we will only manage to give the department of the Alpes-Maritimes French tastes, habitudes and mores, in a word to create Frenchmen, by teaching in the French language".[67] However, by September 1810, Eymar was no longer optimistic about the prospects of spreading French in the Department. According to Eymar, the standard of French amongst the teachers of the Department was so poor that some of them corresponded with him in Italian. Requiring these teachers to work in French would mean depriving a large number of them their livelihoods.[68] Eymar's pessimism reflected the practical difficulties of imposing French upon the schools of the Alpes-Maritimes. However, his view of the importance of 'creating Frenchmen' through the teaching of the national language in the classroom were shared by many of those responsible for the administration of French schools both during and after the fall of Napoleon.

As the Alpes-Maritimes were ceded to the Kingdom of Sardinia in 1814, it is obviously impossible to follow the evolution of the French state's policy in the department under the restored Bourbon monarchy. However, France retained control of another area where Italian dominated the education system—the Island of Corsica. In 1822, a report compiled for the Minister of the Interior by the Prefect of Corsica made clear that the fall of Napoleon had not seen the desire to replace Italian with French recede, and the Prefect observed with some satisfaction that "the teaching of the French language meets with less apathy than in the past, and perhaps we are not far from triumphing over the Italianism

that appears to natural to Corsicans".[69] However, perhaps unsurprisingly given the clerical opposition to state driven attempts to spread French in the Alpes-Maritimes under the Empire, the Prefect felt that the increasing control of the Catholic Church over the education system might jeopardise this progress. "Maybe it would be more appropriate," he wrote, "to close all the primary schools, rather than confer their surveillance or direction to ecclesiastics".

The same distinction between rural and urban areas evident in the Alpes-Maritimes could also be seen on Corsica. Despite the apparent conflict between Church and State, it was a religious congregation, the Brothers of Christian Schools, that found themselves at the head of French language teaching in Corsica. Teaching congregations in general and the Brothers in particular were frequently seen as an efficacious means of spreading French. In a lengthy dissertation on education sent to the Prefect of the Haut Rhin in October 1801, the Mayor of Eguisheim eulogised the Brothers of the Doctrine and the Sisters of Providence, claiming that these two institutions could "easily introduce the French idiom".[70] A table drawn up in 1811 of the primary school teachers in the department of Liamone (before its amalgamation to form the Department of Corsica), noted that just eight out of 63 primary school teachers taught French. Of these, four were the Brothers of Christian Schools established in Ajaccio. In 1818, a report on primary education in Corsica observed approvingly that the Brothers' school established in Ajaccio, "which counts more than 250 students, has already produced a noticeable revolution in the language and the customs of this part of Corsica. The Brothers teach French, working in this language according to the express wishes of the founders of their establishment".[71] The Christian Brothers taught in congregations of three, and were therefore always centred on larger towns with sufficient resources to sustain them.

Just as in Nice, the French state showed itself keen to spread the French language to the German-speaking populations of Alsace. This much is clear from a letter written in February 1811 by the Rector of the Academy of Strasbourg to the Grand-Master of the University: "according to your Excellence's intention to succeed in *frenchifying* the country, something that has still not been managed in the century and a half since its reunion with France, it is important to give extremely careful attention to the choice of primary school teachers".[72] As with Italian in Corsica, the 'foreign' nature of the language continued to mark the

region out as a priority after the Revolution. According to an 1811 report from an inspector of the academy of Strasbourg, spreading French in the area was "of great national interest on a frontier where German, unlike the patois of other parts of France, is not the specific form of the country from which it comes, but the language of foreign countries that surround us on three sides".[73]

The initial efforts to this end closely resembled those taken in the Alpes-Maritimes. In August 1812, one of the inspectors of the Academy of Strasbourg proposed a series of new regulations for the primary schools of Alsace.[74] Convinced that pupils would not be able to handle a bilingual education, the inspector sought to position French as the dominant language in the Academy's schools. The fifteenth regulation read:

> The French language being the only idiom with which it is important to familiarise the peoples of the Empire, we will only teach reading and writing in French in the intermediate and superior classes of every primary school of the town of Strasbourg, from the 1st January 1815 and earlier if it is possible. In the lower classes, […] reading and writing will be done in French and in German, but we will spend much less time on this second language than on the first.[75]

In addition to this, and again closely mirroring Dubouchage's efforts in the Alpes-Maritimes, the sixteenth regulation stipulated that no teacher or assistant would be approved unless he proves that he "knows how to read and write French correctly, and that he is also able to teach basic mathematics in French".[76]

However, amongst the papers sent to the Ministry of the Interior during the Restoration period by the Academy of Strasbourg, there is another project that approached the question in a different way. The author of this unfortunately anonymous and undated manuscript begins with the observation that "most teachers do have the smallest knowledge of French, however it is in the interests of the area and of national government that the use of the language is propagated". In order to circumvent this difficulty, a series of tables containing both French and German were proposed. The first such table would contain, in both French and German characters, the sounds represented by the same sign in both languages. The idea, according to the author of the project, was that "when the master reads the German syllable then the French one, the simple identity of sounds forces the student to recognise that the letters are

themselves identical".[77] This first table was to be supplemented with a second, of similar sounds with different symbols, a third showing different sounds that are represented by the same symbol, a fourth of French vowels and final table with signs and sounds in French that do not have an analogue in German. Thus the teacher reading and pronouncing the German would be able to teach French pronunciation even if he did not speak the language. In the words of the author "the tables guide him, as they guide the students: the table is the true teacher of both at once".[78]

Esoteric though this scheme may have appeared, it did represent a trend in the German-speaking areas of the east of France to work around the issues posed by the endurance of these foreign languages and the perennial difficulty of a lack of francophone teachers. In 1818, the *conseil général* of the department of the Moselle in Lorraine proposed the creation of a bilingual *école normale* to train teachers in both French and German. Ten years later the Rector of the Academy of Strasbourg proposed a set of cheap books with the text in both German and French be printed. The year after that he had a dormitory built in Belfort, the French-speaking arrondissement of the Haut Rhin, allowing students to travel to an area where French was the native language so that they might pick up the pronunciation.[79] In 1833, the Rector of the Academy of Nancy proposed a bilingual catechism, so that "the pastor will no longer be able to say that books written in French are dangerous for religion and morals".[80] This effort to spread French by accommodating the religious and educational priorities of local communities was significant. Efforts to impose French on classrooms as a language of instruction invariably sparked opposition, as teachers and local communities rejected the burdens of using a foreign language. Administrators often sought to introduce French through collaboration with local institutions, be they religious schools such as the Brothers of Christian Schools, or through the distribution of bilingual word tables and catechisms.

Language and Secondary Schooling

The colleges of the *Ancien régime* were not immune to the kinds of linguistic difficulties encountered in primary schools, as attested by the frequent appearance of rules against speaking patois in school regulations. Yet by the nineteenth century, this was a problem encountered primarily in those regions such as Brittany, Alsace-Lorraine, Flanders and Corsica where non-Romance or 'foreign languages' were spoken.[81] However, the

expansion of France's borders to incorporate large numbers of German, Flemish, Dutch and Italian-speakers made this a significant problem for those seeking to establish the new Napoleonic schooling system.

Whereas Napoleonic reforms of primary schooling generally amounted to an effort to regulate existing practice, the regime's reconstruction of secondary school reforms was far more wide-reaching. The first step came with the law of 11 Floréal Year X (1st May 1802), which categorised all institutions where French and Latin were taught as secondary schools, and replaced the unloved central schools of the directory with *lycées*. One of these new schools was to be established in the circumscription of each appeal court, which meant roughly one *lycée* for every three or four departments, and these schools were to teach a more conservative curriculum, focusing on the classical languages, rhetoric, logic, the sciences and mathematics.[82]

Secondary schools were the focus of the Napoleonic regime's nation-building efforts. The new *lycées* were intended to create an administrative and military elite loyal to the regime.The sons of soldiers and civil servants, along with the cream of students from local secondary schools, were granted bursaries by the government, and were joined by the sons of local families who paid for them to attend either as boarders or as day students.[83] This elite was to be self-consciously national. Government students from the interior were placed in *lycées* across the annexed departments, ensuring that the student body was not dominated by locals and, it was hoped, facilitating the spread of French language and culture.[84] From 1812, *lycées* and colleges in non-French speaking departments provided French lessons for all of the town's secondary school pupils.[85]

Despite the apparent scope of the Napoleonic regime's centralising reforms to secondary education; in practice, officials were aware that schools had to reflect local demands in order to succeed. In 1804, the Prefect of the Rhin-et-Moselle in the Rhineland, proposed creating a special 'academy for the two nations' alongside the *lycée* in Bonn. This proposal grew out of the necessity of attracting local parents and students to the institution. As the Prefect explained, "Germans are keen that their children are taught in their natural language", meaning families often sent their children across the border to German universities to study. After all, "how, in effect, will young Germans leaving primary and secondary schools where they have been taught in their language profit from special schools and even from *lycées*, where the method of

instruction, and the language, will be equally unknown to them".[86] The Prefect had in mind an academy that would facilitate exchange between the French and German nations, where the "special object of this institution would be to teach and cultivate the two languages simultaneously at their point of contact in order to consolidate the links between the two reunited peoples". According to the Prefect, all would benefit from the free exchange of knowledge and culture between nations, and local parents would no longer need to send their children abroad for German language education.

The Prefect's 'academy of the two nations' was never realised, but the *lycée* established in Bonn did depart from the pattern established in the interior in order to accommodate local demands, for German language and literature, along with French and Latin, was the principal object of study in the school.[87] This was a familiar pattern in *lycées* and colleges in the non-French speaking annexed departments. In the Rhineland, French was a significant element of education in colleges, with ten institutions out of 16 employing French teachers in 1813.[88] In general, the teaching of French was accompanied with German instruction, as at the college in Bingen, which had chairs in both French and German literature. A similar pattern was evident in the Flemish- and German-speaking areas of the academy of Liège, while the *lycée* in Chiavari in the Italian-speaking department of the Appenins had a chair in Italian language and literature. In some cases, as with the Prefect of the Rhin-et-Moselle, this formed part of an explicitly formulated project to court local opinion by cultivating the local language. In Genoa, the Prefect explained that his goal was to encourage "the teaching of French in the *lycée*, without jettisoning Italian, which, on the contrary, must be cultivated and purified in Genoa".[89]

When it came to organising secondary schooling in the annexed departments, the Napoleonic regime largely worked with what it found in order to create a functioning system. In 1806, the Prefect of the department of Montenotte argued for the preservation of several existing schools, especially that of Savona. Rather than starting from scratch, he proposed adding a "good master of Mathematics and a capable master of the French language to give the education a more liberal character". To do otherwise, he claimed, would be "to struggle against opinion" and see education neglected in the area.[90] Similarly, when the abolition of religious congregations led to the closure of a religious school in Genoa, the Rector of the Academy reorganised it

as a communal secondary school, preserving the existing teachers and adding a professor of French.[91] As the Prefect of the Rhin-et-Moselle described, the *lycée* in Bonn was constructed from "the debris of the old *Gymnasium*".[92] Most of the men teaching in Napoleonic secondary schools of the annexed departments were hold-outs from the Old Regime precisely because Napoleonic officials like the Prefect of Montenotte or the Rector of Genoa were attuned to local 'opinion', and sought to preserve institutions valued by local elites, sometimes in the face of the regime's efforts to regularise provision under tighter central control.

This was, in part, recognition of the realities of teaching in these areas. Those charged with overseeing schools sought to protect the integrity of local institutions by resisting the appointment of French-speakers to posts requiring knowledge of other languages. A former professor from the central school of the Meuse-Inférieure, for example, was rejected for a post. Kaiserslautern in the Rhineland because he did not speak German well enough to conduct classes in the language.[93] Similarly, an ageing francophone teacher recommended by Paris could not be found a position in the Academy of Liège because all of the positions required either a German or Flemish speaker.[94] Yet the credibility of existing practitioners in the annexed departments as candidates for Napoleonic teaching posts rested on the importance of the classics to the Napoleonic curriculum. In an 1810 report on teachers at the secondary school in Venray, the inspector was observed that the Director "[was] not without talent; he can be employed as a professor of Latin; not in France, since he struggles to babble a few words of French, but in the German annexed departments". The Mathematics tutor, however, was less impressive. According to the inspector, "he speaks neither French nor Latin, I have no idea if he is educated".[95] As this suggests, Napoleonic secondary schooling was as much a vehicle for a shared European culture based on classical languages and literature, as an officially sanctioned national culture. Teachers with a strong grasp of Latin were apt to take up teaching posts, but those without were simply viewed as ill-educated. Natives might even hope to outmanoeuvre their French rivals through their knowledge of Latin. In one dispute over the distribution of teaching duties at the college of Spire, a professor from Colmar in German speaking Alsace complained that he was forbidden by the school's director from teaching Latin because he spoke the language with a French accent.[96]

This is not to suggest that the presence of French was not felt in Napoleonic secondary schools. There was, at least amongst those who collaborated with the regime, a belief that speaking French was an indispensable skill, and this persuaded many to push for the appointment of French language teachers. For Nicolas Grillo-Cattaneo, the Genoese rector of the University of Genoa, the imposition of French on the legal profession made teaching French to the Genoese a necessity. He wrote, "I am persuaded of the necessity that […] education be promptly set in motion in our country, above all since the French language has been prescribed to us for exclusive use in public acts and judgements".[97] The administrative board of the secondary school in Zweibrücken went further, arguing that a career in the law or church now required much more than a smattering of French, one had to be wholly fluent in the language and appreciate its aesthetic appeal:

> In what started out as a German country and now transformed into a French one, it no longer suffices, as it had previously, that young people be educated only in the basic elements of the French language. It is necessary that they be able to use it in all its force and in its purity at the bar, from the pulpit, in all circumstances, and therefore that they understand its genius, absolutely different than that of the German tongue, and that they appropriate its beauty and elegance.[98]

Even if the common heritage of Latin allowed non-French-speakers to teach, in order to be truly amalgamated into the educated elites of the Napoleonic state, their students would need to be eloquent users of the French language.

The selection of candidates to teach French in Napoleonic secondary schools marked out the limits of the service that native teachers could provide. The ideal was always to find a native French speaker to teach the language, even if it invariably proved difficult to attract them to such posts.[99] Candidates for these positions were remorselessly judged on the quality of their spoken French. This was clear in the remarks offered on candidates by the board of the school in Zweibrücken, who claimed of one teacher from the German Lorraine that "his accent is not […] that of a well brought up Frenchmen", while observing of another candidate from French Switzerland, "his pronunciation is not entirely pure, but mixed with the accent of his country".[100] The Prefect of the Marengo complained in 1806 about the very poor quality of French instruction

in the *lycée* at Casale. This was because most of the students were from departments south of the Alps, and none of the teachers were born in France. This teaching meant that local students made "no progress in their national idiom" and would also "corrupt the purity of [the] accent" of government students from the interior.[101]

The language of purity and corruption that structured these discussions of the speech of teachers is revealing, for it demonstrates a vision of schooling as a mechanism for conveying social prestige. Attending a *lycée* should allow a student to develop 'pure' French, marking the speaker as educated, and this could never be achieved under the tutelage of a non-native speaker with their corrupted language. Speaking French correctly, like knowledge of Latin, was cultural capital to be inculcated in Napoleonic elites within the *lycées* and colleges of the Empire. The educational cadres of the annexed departments were able to engage in the sphere of classical culture as equals, but lacked credibility as purveyors of the national culture.

Language, Schooling and Society Under Napoleon

Those employed by the Napoleonic state to oversee the country's education system shared a vision of the school as a handmaiden of a broader project of cultural imperialism intended to bind a linguistically diverse population to the state. However, schools never functioned as straightforward disseminators of official knowledge and culture. Despite the centralising impulses of the Napoleonic regime, the classroom was a hinge between centre and local community, in which useful forms of official knowledge could be disseminated, but were likely to find an audience only where local practices provided a market for them. In secondary schools, the Napoleonic regime worked to accommodate local priorities about the purpose of institutions and the knowledge they purveyed, with prefects and officials ever sensitive to local opinion. Even if the overt militarism of the *lycée* alienated elites in some parts of the Empire, French language tuition was generally grafted onto existing practice, with tuition in Latin and the local language continuing.[102] Because the Napoleonic curriculum centred on a foundation of Latinate classical culture recognised by local elites across the Empire as a necessary part of their sons' education, teachers practising under the *Ancien régime* with a solid knowledge of this shared heritage were able to find positions under the New Regime.

The Napoleonic regime's approach to primary schooling offered teachers far less opportunity to collaborate. Demands to abandon Latin and adopt French as the object of instruction cut against the role played by village schools in local communities. These schools were expected to teach basic literacy and Latin that would serve the sons of wealthier parents in the local college or seminary, and efforts to impose French were generally resisted by teachers who either did not know or who saw little appetite for the language. Despite the efforts of the Napoleonic state to create a centralised education system that might spread a shared culture and language, the responsiveness of educators, and in many cases of Napoleonic administrators, ensured that linguistic practice in the classroom still reflected the cultural demands of local society.

Notes

1. Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, pp. 303–338; F. Reboul-Scherrer *La vie quotidienne des premiers instituteurs 1832–1882* (Paris, 1989), pp. 28–29; Singer *Village notables*, p. 2.
2. AN F17 9368 (Rapports des recteurs sur l'instruction primaire) Inspections des écoles primaires de l'arrondissement de Brest (extra-muros), 1833.
3. M. McDonald, *We are not French! Language, Culture and Identity in Brittany* (London, 1989), pp. 46–49.
4. J.F. Chanet, *L'école républicaine et les petites patries* (Paris, 1996), p. 25.
5. B. Barère, 'Rapport du comité de salut public sur les Idiomes', Certeau et al., *Une politique de la langue*, pp. 329–330.
6. An F17 1344 32 (Affaires diverses- enseignement publique) Commissaire du directoire exécutif près l'Administration central de la Haute-Loire au Min. de l'Int., 5 ventôse an VI (23 Feb. 1798).
7. A. Grab, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe* (Basingstoke, 2003), pp. 55–56.
8. T. Tackett, *Priest and Parish in Eighteenth Century France* (Princeton, 1977), pp. 72–73.
9. A. Green, *Education and State Formation: The Rise of Education Systems in England, France and the USA* (Basingstoke, 1990), pp. 160–170; P. Bourdieu and J.C. Passeron *La Reproduction, éléments pour une théorie du système d'enseignement* (Paris, 1970).
10. D. Reed-Danahay, *Education and Identity in Rural France: The Politics of Schooling* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 22–26.
11. Certeau et al., *Une politique de la langue*, pp. 15–16.
12. Gazier, *Lettres*, pp. 200, 205.

13. While this response was listed as anonymous by Gazier, Certeau et al. have identified Perreau as the author. Gazier, *Lettres*, p. 278; Certeau et al., *Une politique de la langue*, p. 187.
14. Gazier, *Lettres*, p. 226.
15. Gazier, *Lettres*, p. 20.
16. Certeau et al., *Une politique de la langue*, p. 243.
17. Gazier, *Lettres*, p. 164.
18. Gazier, *Lettres*, p. 164.
19. Gazier, *Lettres*, p. 95.
20. Gazier, *Lettres*, p. 119.
21. Gazier, *Lettres* p. 60; Certeau et al. *Une Politique de la Langue*, p. 202.
22. P. Burke, *Languages and Communities in Early Modern France* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 44.
23. Gazier, *Lettres*, p. 60.
24. Certeau et al., *Une politique de la langue*, p. 20.
25. Gazier, *Lettres*, p. 119.
26. Gazier, *Lettres*, pp. 141–142.
27. R.R. Palmer *The Improvement of Humanity: Education and the French Revolution* (Guildford, 1985).
28. Bell, *Cult of the Nation*, pp. 1–3.
29. Bell, *Cult of the Nation*, pp. 329–330.
30. H.C. Bernard *Education and the French Revolution* (London, 1969), p. 132.
31. AN F 17 1344/35 (Pièces adressées ou renvoyées au comité d'instruction publique- papiers de Joseph Lakanal) Règlement provisoire proposé par le juré d'instruction à l'administration du district d'Agen pour les écoles primaire de ce district, arête par le conseil du district, 15 Ventôse An III (5 Mar. 1795).
32. R. Gildea, *Education in Provincial France, 1800–1914* (Oxford, 1983), p. 30.
33. An F17 1587 (Organisation de l'instruction publique dans les pays conquis-Mayence) Préfet au Grand maître de l'université, 12 Jul. 1811.
34. An F17 10171 (Instruction primaire- Liège, Limoges) État des instituteurs à supprimer, Ourthe, Sambre et Meuse, Meuse Inférieure, 1813.
35. AdA-M CE 1T 1 (Organisation générale de l'instruction publique) Questionnaire sur les écoles du département des Alpes-Maritimes, 7 Thermidor An XI (26 July 1803).
36. AdA-M CE 1T 1 Maire de La Brigue au sous-préfet de Monaco, 20 Thermidor An XI.
37. AdA-M CE 1T 1 Maire Peille au préfet des Alpes-Maritimes, 19 Thermidor An XI.

38. AdA-M CE 1T 1 Maire de La Brigue au sous-préfet de Monaco, 20 Thermidor An XI.
39. BnF Naf 5913 Carte du département des Alpes-Maritimes.
40. J.-B. Lacroix (ed.) *Trésors d'archives, Mille ans d'histoire* (Nice, 2005), p. 229. A report detailing the lack of Italian speaking legal officials and the consequent necessity of permitting the use of French can be found in AdA-M Nizza Mazzo add. 005 Memoria per l'amministrazione della giustizia nelle terre della provincia, e per lo stabilimento della prefettura nel luogo di Guillaume, 1761.
41. AdA-M CE 4T 1 (Fonds de la préfecture, affaires culturelle) Sous-préfet de Puget-Théniers au Préfet des Alpes-Maritimes, 16 Jul. 1806.
42. AdA-M CE 1T 1 Maire de Monaco au préfet des Alpes-Maritimes, 5 Fructidor An XI.
43. AdA-M CE 1T 1 Maire de La Turbie au préfet des Alpes-Maritimes, 23 Thermidor An XI (11 Aug. 1803).
44. AdA-M CE 1T 4 (Enseignement primaire) Circulaire préfectorale du 30 Thermidor An XI (18 Aug. 1803).
45. AdA-M CE 1T 6 (Enseignement primaire) Extrait des délibérations du conseil municipal de Peillon, 6 Fructidor An XI (24 Aug. 1803).
46. AdA-M CE 1T 6 Arrêté du maire de Roure, 10 Brumaire An X.
47. AdA-M CE 1T 4 Pierre Boccaron au préfet des Alpes-Maritimes, 18 Floréal An 13.
48. The replies are found in A.D. A.-M. CE 1T 4.
49. AdA-M CE 1T 2 (Organisation de l'instruction publique) Préfet des Alpes-Maritimes aux Sous-préfets, 20 Aug. 1810.
50. AdA-M CE 1T 2 Sous-préfet de Puget-Théniers au Préfet des Alpes-Maritimes, 24 Aug. 1810.
51. AdA-M CE 1T 5 Jury d'instruction, certificat d'aptitude de J.B. Priori, 30 Brumaire An XII (22 Nov. 2803).
52. AdA-M CE 1T 5 Membres du conseil municipal de Lucéram au préfet des Alpes-Maritimes.
53. AdA-M CE 1T 5 Maire de Castellar au préfet des Alpes-Maritimes, 7 Oct. 1812.
54. AdA-M CE 1T 1 procès-verbal du jury d'instruction publique, 2e jour comp. An IX (19 Sept. 1801).
55. AdA-M CE 1T 6 Arrêté du maire de Roue, 10 Brumaire An XII (10 Nov. 1803).
56. AdA-M CE 1T 6 Maire de Roure au préfet des Alpes-Maritimes, 10 Oct. 1808.
57. AdA-M CE 1T 6 Maire de Roure au préfet des Alpes-Maritimes, 21 Nov. 1808.

58. AdA-M CE 1T 6 Préfet des Alpes-Maritimes au maire de Roure, 5 Dec. 1808.
59. AdA-M CE 1T 1 Instituteurs et institutrices approuvés pour les écoles primaires.
60. AdA-M CE 1T 4 Maire de Roquebillière au préfet des Alpes-Maritimes 9 Floréal An XIII (29 Apr. 1805).
61. AdA-M CE 1T 6 Maire de Roquebillière au préfet des Alpes-Maritimes, 12 Jan. 1808.
62. AdA-M CE 1T 6 Préfet des Alpes-Maritimes au maire de Roquebillière, 18 Jan. 1808.
63. Joseph Levrot, a librarian and scholar from Nice working under the Third Republic, collected evidence on language usage in the city before the Revolution. Levrot's research shows that French was widely used in Nice as the written language during the eighteenth century. AdA-M 6J 3 (Fonds Joseph Levrot- usage de la langue française à Nice).
64. AdA-M CE 1T 1 Maire de Villefranche au préfet, 18 Thermidor An XI (6 Aug. 1803).
65. AdA-M CE 1T 1 Maire de Villefranche au préfet, 25 Thermidor An XI (13 Aug. 1803).
66. AdA-M CE 1T 6 Maire de Lucéram au préfet des Alpes-Maritimes 10 Oct. 1811.
67. AdA-M CE 1T 2 Recteur de l'Académie d'Aix au Dubutel 4 May 1810.
68. AdA-M CE 1T 2 Recteur de l'Académie d'Aix au Préfet des Alpes-Maritimes, 30 Sept. 1810.
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CHAPTER 5

Language and Military Service Under Napoleon

For Napoleonic officials, military service was often seen as an invaluable tool for shaping the culture and language of those they administered. As the Sub-prefect of Montélimar in the Provençal-speaking southeast of France observed, one happy consequence of widespread military service during the Revolution was the spread of French: "The return of soldiers to their homes must have brought a certain number of people to apply themselves to the French language".[1] Similarly, the councillor to the prefecture of the Gascon-speaking Haute-Garonne claimed French was spread by the "frequent mixing of inhabitants from different countries […] in the armies and the mass levees".[2] Putting a man in uniform was viewed as a good way of making him speak French, another benefit of military service for a regime that already saw it as a means of 'amalgamating' the sons of reluctant imperial elites into the French system.[3]

Just how far this matched the reality of military service is a matter for debate amongst historians. Working on the Third Republic, Eugen Weber followed the views of French statesmen during the period and argued that the army served as a medium for national culture and language.[4] More recently, historians have found the nation to have been less important in military service during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic than was previously thought. In his study of soldiers' letters, Alan Forrest describes a rural population serving reluctantly, concerned more with their comrades and their families back home than with grand notions like nation and conquest. David Hopkin, working on popular representations of military service in the Lorraine, found that soldiers were variously feared as marauders, and

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soldiering considered a route to adulthood for young men. However, it was rarely held up as the embodiment of the nation.[5] On linguistic practices within the institution itself, Christopher Tozzi has pointed out that the army was often obliged to accommodate linguistic difference by hiving off non-French speakers into separate units.[6]

In this chapter, I will argue that, despite the ideological weight placed on the military service, the Napoleonic regime was obliged to accommodate the increasing linguistic diversity of recruits arriving from all parts of the Empire. Conscripts from non-francophone areas were consistently more likely to desert and less likely to achieve promotion to the ranks of non-commissioned officers. In addition, in order to maintain unit cohesion, the military had to play on their regional and linguistic identities, moderating their efforts at 'amalgamation'. However, this is not to suggest that all soldiers who were removed from their homes, placed in what was becoming an increasingly multi-national Napoleonic army, and marched across Europe on Napoleon's campaigns, simply retreated to local identities. Any examination of soldiers' testimony makes it impossible to deny the significance of local attachment for the soldiers of the Revolution and Empire.[7] However, as an examination of these writings shows, the practical realities of serving in the Napoleonic armies, and the opportunities for promotion it entailed, led many soldiers to learn another language.

The Ideology of Military Service Under Napoleon

In August 1808, Chabrol de Volvic, the Prefect of Montenotte, wrote to the French Interior Minister flaunting the smooth progress of the year's conscription efforts in his northern Italian department. Despite the active surveillance of the police, the local correctional tribunal had received no reports of fraudulent activity related to conscription. In Acqui, the bishop had apparently excited such commitment to the regime that the conscripts marched from the city to cries of 'long live the Emperor', while several young men who had secured replacements chose to join the cohort and serve instead. Elsewhere, the son of one of the most prominent families of the department had chosen to engage as a volunteer. For Chabrol, such developments augured well for the integration of the department into the Imperial system. He wrote, "all this proves to me that the military spirit is winning out, and is spreading itself across the country'.[8]

Chabrol's letter reflected the central importance placed on conscription by the Napoleonic regime. As scholars of the period such as Isser Woloch and Alan Forrest have argued, conscription and military service shaped the relationship between state and society.[9] The wars of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods created a thirst for men that was felt in even the most remote village. During the Revolution, the state sought to solve the manpower crisis faced by the Army through a series of levies in February and August 1793, which eventually mobilised, in principle at least, the entire population of men aged between 18 and 25. This mass draft left deep scars, contributing to the outbreak of civil war in the West of France in 1793. As a result, a law on conscription into the army was not formalised until the Jourdan Law of 1798, which required an annual levy of men to be raised from each department.[10] This extraction of the annual 'blood tax' came to define relations between the state and society. Ordinary Frenchmen drawn from an overwhelmingly rural population resented losing the best part of their youth to national service, not to mention any prospect of achieving economic self-sufficiency and marriage. Their families, and the communities from which they were drafted, felt the loss of labour particularly keenly. Young men seeking to avoid the draft pursued a variety of sometimes ingenious and sometimes crude methods, from the purchasing of replacements or the use of charms all the way through to desertion and self-mutilation.[11]

For a prefect, nothing could demonstrate competence to superiors in Paris more clearly than the efficient administration of military recruitment within their departments, while a failure to meet the yearly quota was a sign that an individual was unfit for their office. Prefects and other administrators therefore wrote regularly to the Interior Ministry to advertise the successes achieved by their zealous application of the law. Chabrol attributed successes in conscription to the good work of administrators, "who could not merit their eulogies more".[12] In a letter from 1809, Jean-Baptiste Roggieri, the Prefect of the Meuse-Inférieure was similarly eager to underscore the dramatic decline in draft dodging in the department since his arrival in 1806.[13] Conversely, those prefects faced with a shortfall of men reached for a range of explanations in order to explain their underperformance. Rolland de Villarceaux, the Prefect of the Italian department of the Apennins, writing in May 1807 typified such responses. According to de Villarceaux, difficulties in the department had arisen because the first round of conscription arrived before the administrative structures

of the department had been organised, and officials who knew nothing of the French language and laws. A harsh winter and the Piacentino rebellion of 1805 added to the difficulties, as did the disproportionately large size of the levee, a fifth higher than similarly populous departments according to the Prefect.[14]

In response, the Napoleonic state employed ever more repressive means for ensuring co-operation, notably *garnissaires*, troops billeted on recalcitrant communities at their own expense, and mobile columns, detachments of troops deployed in areas riven by bandits and draft dodgers to a degree intolerable for the authorities. From around 1810–1811, these measures seem to have achieved a measure of success, bringing rural order and the orderly completion of conscription activities. In the Alpes-Maritimes, for example, the Prefect Alexandre de Châteauneuf-Randon complained in the September of 1800 that mobilising reserve troops would be impossible. The department, he claimed, was blighted by anti-republican sentiment, Piedmontese sympathisers and brigands, and he feared that forcing young men in the department to serve would simply drive them into armed opposition to the state.[15] Yet when the call to mobilise 100,000 troops following the calamitous retreat from Moscow came in January 1813, his successor, Marc-Joseph de Gratet Dubouchage, was able to boast that the previously troublesome department had not witnessed a single refractory conscript.[16] What was true of the Alpes-Maritimes also seems to have applied to most of the departments of the interior, if not to some of the annexed territories of the Empire, until the military collapses of 1812–1813 spurred a fresh wave of dissent.[17]

In the eyes of Napoleonic officials, acquiescence to state demands for military manpower reflected the degree to which a population might be considered assimilated to the culture and norms of the metropole. The 'spirit' and 'character' of the population determined the success of conscription efforts, and the degree to which a department could be considered a successfully integrated part of the Empire. Antoine Hargenvilliers, General Lacuée's second at the War Ministry's General Directorate of Conscription, expressed exactly this sentiment in a report on conscription. The institution of military conscription, he argued, linked particular interests with the public interest, while desertion was the "thermometer of the resistance opposed to the laws on conscription, the spirit of the different departments".[18] This understanding was widely shared by Napoleonic prefects. For Dubouchage, the success of recruitment in the Alpes-Maritimes reflected the "good spirit

of the inhabitants", just as Chabrol de Volvic celebrated the growing "military spirit" in the Italian department of Montenotte.[19] Conversely, opposition to recruitment was often understood not simply as disloyalty, but as the result of cultural particularism and tradition, and in the annexed territories of the Empire represented a failure of the population to acculturate to French norms and customs. In September 1805, Antoine Desmousseaux de Givré, the Prefect of the Belgian department of the Ourthe, argued that the 'repugnance' of conscripts for military service merely replicated the views of their parents, and in some areas those of the clergy who opposed the recruitment efforts of the state.[20] In the department of the Meuse-Inférieure, situated just to the north of the Ourthe in present day Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands, linguistic difference was similarly viewed as an obstacle to successful recruitment. The Prefect of the Meuse-Inférieure, Pierre Loysel, complained in 1802 that recruiting officers from the Batavian Republic were poaching the department's young men for their regiments, making conscription problematic. According to Loysel, the preference of the department's young men for service in the Batavian armies was in part the result of a signing on fee, although a more powerful motivation for the recruits was the thought of serving with men who shared their language and culture: "above all that, the inhabitant of the Meuse-Inférieure there [In Batavia] finds comrades who speak his language, who have the same tastes, the same customs".[21] The implication was that service in the French army was, for Dutch speakers, a fundamentally alienating experience, and that cultural differences such as language were a barrier to the successful integration of diverse populations into the Napoleonic system. Whatever the perceptions of Napoleonic administrators, it cannot be claimed that there was a straightforward relationship between linguistic diversity and resistance to Napoleonic conscription. According to the statistics gathered by Hargenvilliers for the years from 1799 to 1802, recruitment was, in general terms, more problematic in the non-francophone south of France than in the French-speaking north of France.[22] Yet France's linguistically diverse frontiers offered up a willing and reliable supply of military manpower during the nineteenth century, making it difficult to identify a straightforward relationship between language and willingness to serve in the military.[23] Even before the Revolution, military service in the frontier territories of north-eastern France from which the French regiments of the *Ancien régime* largely recruited had become a recognised path into male adulthood. To judge from the relative enthusiasm of non-francophone populations in these regions, such cultural attitudes appear to have played a more

important role than a shared language in normalising conscription as an institution.[24]

For Napoleonic officials, one of the most significant roles of military conscription was to break down exactly this kind of local attachment by regenerating the morality of recruits and spreading French culture. The idea that military service could act as a school for the nation in this way was a prominent one in Napoleonic propaganda. The Sub-prefect of Annecy in the department of Mont-Blanc declared in a speech marking the start of the conscription round of 1805, which was subsequently printed for distribution around the arrondissement: "the army is a school of morals, it is a hotbed of patriotism where souls will be re-immersed; it is a field fertile in great deeds, and where one learns to devote oneself to the Fatherland".[25] These sentiments were not just for public consumption, but are to be found in the official correspondence of Napoleonic administrators. For the Prefect of the Meuse-Inférieure, one of the most significant duties for those charged with the administration of the territories annexed to France was to ensure these regions were effectively integrated into the Empire, and military service was considered one of the most effective means of achieving this goal. As the Prefect wrote to the Minister of the Interior in 1802:

> [administrators of these areas] must constantly look to achieve rapprochement by the best means, and as a result the identification of the new with the old French. The most effective means to obtain this significant result consists, in this country as elsewhere, in rendering communications between the two people closer, more essential and more general. That is very difficult in the countryside, and nothing would contribute more to the gradual introduction of the customs, the speech and the character of the French than making recruitment for the French armies as frequent as possible.[26]

Napoleonic officials like the Prefect of the Meuse-Inférieure saw conscription and military service as a means of breaking down local attachments of the kinds expressed by soldiers themselves. Military service, therefore, was a means of integrating the 'new' French who inhabited the annexed territories, especially the non-francophone ones, into a broader national community by spreading French language and culture.

The mere act of stationing troops in an area was thought likely to make the population more French, such was the influence of this vision

of the military as a tool of cultural imperialism. In October 1803, Napoleon instructed the minister for war to garrison French troops in the Aosta valley, formerly part of Piedmont. The aim was "to attach to us, and to familiarise with the French language, this portion of the 27th Military Division".[27] The same principle underpinned the project to establish camps of French veterans in the departments of the Rhineland and northern Italy. The idea was to construct ten settlements of veterans in parts of the Empire where there was a need to introduce French language and culture. Mathieu Dumas, the state councillor charged with passing the legislation, claimed that by placing a number of Frenchmen in the newly conquered territories, the settlements would serve "to spread and gradually acclimatise the national language".[28] The policy itself was indisputably a failure. Of the ten settlements originally envisaged, only two were established, and these were plagued by breakdowns in discipline and the assimilation of the French veterans to local customs.[29] However, the episode reveals the role envisaged for military service by Napoleonic officials. Not only was military service a tool for the moral regeneration of individual soldiers, but it was a means of binding populations to the imperial project.

A Confusion of Tongues: Accommodating Linguistic Diversity in the Napoleonic Military

The ideal, for Napoleonic officials, may have been a military that would spread French culture, but the reality was quite different. The *Grande armée* was described by one French veteran as a 'Tower of Babel'. Most of the men led into Russia by Napoleon were not French, but were recruited from Napoleonic satellite states.[30] Moreover, the annexation of large, non-francophone territories in northern Italy, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands meant that even the men conscripted into the French army from the departments of the French Empire itself were less likely to speak the national tongue. The resolutely multilingual character of life in the Napoleonic military struck Narcisse Faucheur, who enrolled as a sergeant because in 1812 because his family could not afford for him to attend the prestigious *École polytechnique*. While travelling to join his regiment, Faucheur stayed in a converted convent in Limoges, along with a recruiting sergeant and his detachment of Piedmontese conscripts. There they were joined by Polish lancers, Alsatian hussars, soldiers

returning from Spain and a number of replacements buying drinks for everyone with the money they had earned from enlisting. The result, according to Faucheur, was "confused voices [that] rose from all of the rooms neighbouring ours, shouts and songs in every language".[31]

The linguistic shock of arriving in a regiment where several languages were spoken could be alienating for new conscripts, and prevent them from integrating into the army. This was especially true if they did not share a common language with men with whom they would live in close proximity, such as the all-important bunkmate or *camarade de lit*. When Pierre Robinaux from department of the Sarthe in north-west France was incorporated into the 11th regiment of line infantry he "was given a certain Chaffen as bunkmate, German in origin, he spoke only a few words of French".[32] A few days later Robinaux's misery led him to desert with fellow conscripts from the Sarthe. Some soldiers would even pay to have a good bunkmate. Jef Abbeel, for example, was conscripted from the department of the Escaut and because of his height was incorporated into the 2nd regiment of *carabiniers*, one of the most linguistically diverse corps in the Napoleonic military.[33] Abbeel's wealthy bunkmate paid to share with him, in part, because he was also Flemish.[34]

The alienation felt by men serving in the army could result in severe morale problems and instances of the dreaded *mal du pays* or *nostalgie*. This disease is generally translated into English by the deceptively innocuous term 'homesickness', but the *mal du pays* was a menace for military commanders. The *mal du pays* could strike anyone obliged to leave their homeland and the malady affected soldiers in particular; it ravaged the Revolutionary and Napoleonic armies.[35] The symptoms included gastric difficulties, fever, loss of appetite, melancholy and an obsessive desire to return to one's family and home. While rarely fatal on its own, nostalgia could make normal life impossible, as well as aggravate other illnesses or injuries. At the time, there was disagreement as to whether this disease was a physiological affliction—the result of removing individuals from the native climate to which they were adapted—or a 'moral' disorder stemming from the boredom and sadness experienced by those separated from their homes and families.[36] The only cure for most sufferers, according to the military surgeons with most experience treating the disease, was to return home.[37]

While nostalgia is no longer a diagnosis offered by doctors, its prevalence as an explanation during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars reveals how widely military service was understood as a form

of dislocation amongst military surgeons and the officers tasked with maintaining unit cohesion.[38] Moreover, the prominence of language in discussions of nostalgia demonstrates its importance for contemporary understandings of such dislocations. According to one Napoleonic era commentator, nostalgia was a particular problem earlier in the century for Swiss troops serving foreign powers. These soldiers were reduced to tears by renditions of traditional pastoral songs in their local dialect, and their commanders could find no solution except to ban the singing.[39] Separation from those who spoke a soldier's native tongue was recognised as an important element in explaining the onset of nostalgia. As one surgeon observed, nostalgia arose when an individual who previously lived an agreeable life "amongst his relatives, his friends, under a beautiful sky and in a pleasant country", was forced to "live far away for a long time in a gloomy climate, in a society where the customs and mores repulse and the language is perhaps not understood at all".[40] Another surgeon in the Napoleonic armies observed that Breton speakers were particularly badly afflicted. Eventually they had to be moved to their own hospital since only their comrades from the same country could understand their language sufficiently well to give comfort.[41] In some cases, simply hearing someone speak in the 'accent' of one's country was said to elicit an improvement or even cure the affliction.[42]

However, the local attachment of troops posed a dilemma for a military hierarchy that had to balance military effectiveness with the ideological imperative for the army to function as a national institution that could integrate soldiers from across the Empire. Nowhere was this balancing act more fraught than in decisions over the regional composition of regiments. In France under the *Ancien régime*, recruitment to the Royal line army generally took place either where the regiment was stationed, or in the home towns of officers who were expected to recruit whilst on leave. This in part explained the large proportion of troops from northeastern provinces such as Lorraine, but it also made regiments a kind of extension of regional spaces.[43] Young men who decided to enlist were free to choose the regiment in which they wished to serve, and particular regiments developed positive reputations in given areas, some to the point where they featured in local folklore. The regional nature of regimental recruitment meant that men were unlikely to find that they were unable to communicate with their comrades, and in many regiments German or Italian was used as the language of command.[44] Moreover, the choice of enlistees

was often influenced by language. In the Lorraine, for example, German speakers often chose service in the Hussar regiments in which German was the language of command, a practice that endured amongst volunteers who enlisted rather than face conscription in the nineteenth century.[45]

Where the army of the *Ancien régime* had generally tolerated linguistic diversity of this kind, even though it was viewed as a tool for integrating elites in conquered provinces such as Lorraine into the French system, the issue of soldiers' language became deeply contentious during the Revolution.[46] More often than not, non-French speaking divisions were viewed as suspect. In May 1790, six German-speaking regiments garrisoned in Alsace and Lorraine were denounced in a report to the National Assembly as a potential fifth column for counter-revolutionaries, in large part because their language was thought to separate them from the French nation. According to the author of this report, foreign troops should be integrated into 'national' units, rather than formed into 'foreign' regiments, because while they were grouped in separate units, "their language, their discipline, their mores, their customs, can never be regarded as French".[47] Such men, it was argued, were connected to the nation only by the money paid to them, and consequently could scarcely be considered loyal. The security of the nation could only be entrusted to men who truly formed part of the nation, and that meant men who spoke the national tongue.

This is not to say that the benefits of accommodating linguistic diversity through non-francophone regiments were not recognised in some quarters during the Revolution. A 'Germanic legion' was created in 1792 with the stated intention of mobilising pro-Revolutionary German speakers, while a 'Legion of the Mountains' was created specifically to recruit Basques to defend the border with Spain.[48] Ultimately, however, the Regimental system, which had proven effective in harnessing the local pride of young men, was dissolved by the National Convention in 1793, when the former regular troops of the line army were amalgamated with the volunteers of 1792 and the conscripts raised from the Revolutionary *levées*. Although driven primarily by practical considerations, the move had an ideological dimension. It was considered a necessary step in the creation of a national army because it broke the connection between regiments and particular regions. The hope was that if soldiers were separated from their village companions and billeted with men from across France they would have to abandon their local languages and embrace the national tongue.[49]

Under Napoleon, there was a self-conscious effort to place recruitment back on a more regional basis, so as to capitalise on the local attachments of conscripts to their region or *pays*, although such efforts still encountered both practical difficulties and ideological opposition. Napoleon himself sought to have each regiment recruit from a single department, but this proved impractical where particular services required conscripts of a minimum height, or where the population of a department was too small to meet the manpower needs of an entire regiment or *demi-brigade*.[50] Yet officials within the regime still felt that regionally based recruitment would have political benefits. In a report to Napoleon on the allocation of conscripts to the army in 1802, General Lacuée argued that the necessary division of departmental contingents was to be welcomed, "(1). Because it prevents federalist ideas (2). Because it mixes and amalgamates (3). Because to a certain point it prevents the destruction of a canton".[51] For Lacuée, therefore, not only could the army be a means of 'amalgamating' the populations of the Empire, doing so could avoid the dangers of rival, 'federalist' (i.e. regional) loyalties emerging amongst the troops. Napoleon also viewed the amalgamation of troops as a means of spreading a militaristic spirit and French sensibility amongst them, and this could even apply to soldiers from the Empire's satellite states. Thus, in his instructions to his brother Jérôme on the organisation of the new military divisions of the Kingdom of Westphalia, Napoleon ordered that one quarter of the new regiments be composed of French veterans "that will give military spirit to our youth, and will achieve its amalgamation with France".[52] There were limits to this process of amalgamation, however—these French veterans were required to be fluent in German.

For troops conscripted within the departments of the Empire itself, the overall pattern was towards a more regional model. Line infantry regiments were in principle assigned a particular department or departments, meaning that men were far more likely to be incorporated into regiments with others from their own region. In 1802, approximately 60% of line infantry regiments recruited from a single department, and none recruited from more than four different departments.[53] In 1806, this figure was 50%, and in 1808 it was 45%. The result was that certain regiments would have become linguistically quite distinct. The fourth regiment of the line, for example, received German-speaking Lorrainers from the Moselle in 1802 and 1806, while the contingent was supplemented in 1808 with troops from the department of the Roer, where Flemish and German were spoken, and from the department of Sesia

in northern Italy.[54] Similarly, the 111th line regiment received conscripts from the Italian department of the Pô in 1802, 1806 and 1808. In 1811, 85% of those conscripted in the three annexed departments of Tuscany—nearly 2000 men—were split between the 113th regiment of the line (the 'Tuscan Regiment') and the 31st light infantry regiment.[55] However, the linguistic composition of other regiments would have been far more mixed. The 64th regiment of line infantry, for example, received conscripts from the French-speaking Loiret in 1806, but in 1808 this regiment was sent men from the Breton-speaking department of the Finistère and the Italian-speaking department of Gênes, as well as a detachment from the francophone Haute-Saone. The second regiment of the line received detachments from French-, Italian-, Provençal- and Gascon-speaking regions in 1806, joined by Flemish and German speakers in 1808. Linguistic variety would have been still more prominent in cavalry and artillery units, which commonly recruited from a larger number of departments.

The linguistic homogeneity that resulted from this system should not be overstated. Troops were incorporated into regiments with a significant number of men from the same region and who spoke the same language, but since many regiments recruited from more than one department this was no guarantor that particular units would be monolingual. This inevitably made it more difficult to assimilate troops, an obstacle faced by the then Sergeant Robinaux in 1811, when he was stationed in his regiment's depot in Mont-dauphin training new recruits:

> I received 52 Italian conscripts, with the 30 I had, that gave me a detachment of 82 men out of which a dozen spoke French: the youths, leaving their homes, did not know a word of French. It was necessary, however, to train them, to show them exercises, above all to teach them what a soldier must do.[56]

Language here was an obstacle, though not an insurmountable one. As Robinaux claimed proudly of his Italian trainees, "I succeeded, but not without difficulty. At the end of four months they were no longer the same". On their departure, Robinaux even gave a speech praising them for their efforts, and proclaiming that the 'good spirit' of the French was matched by Italians, after which his charges embraced him, thanked him for his guidance and apologised for their failings.[57]

If the issue of drilling non-francophone troops could be overcome, finding suitable candidates to promote to the non-commissioned officer ranks, such as Corporal and Sergeant, could be more problematic. Troop inspection reports from the Restoration period make this problem explicit—regiments with recruits from Alsace and Brittany struggled to find candidates for enlisted officers because the men spoke German or Breton but not French.[58] This was also a problem for largely non-francophone units under Napoleon, because even where officers could communicate with their troops in another language, they had to keep up with paperwork in French. In 1808, the Minister of War asked to appoint 40 Frenchmen to the Tuscan infantry because none of the regiment's existing troops wrote French correctly. Similarly, Frenchmen were appointed to all the posts of Sergeant-Major and Fourrier in the 1st infantry regiment of the Polish *Légion de la Vistule*, because it was impossible to find individuals within the regiment who knew enough French to keep the accounts.[59]

The prospect of promotion must surely have been one of the most significant inducements for conscripts from non-francophone departments to learn French. Knowledge of French could often lead to job offers from other regiments. Robinaux, for example, was approached by one Colonel who was raising a regiment in the Kingdom of Italy: "The colonel was French. He called us in particular to ask us to serve in his regiment, since he very much wanted to have Frenchmen, as all the commands were made in French".[60] Some indication of the impact this had on non-francophone troops can be gleaned from an examination of regimental matriculation registers. These record the soldiers' origins, details of their career in the regiment, including any promotions and the campaigns served, and how the soldier left the regiment, whether through death, injury, desertion or retirement. The rates of promotion to the ranks of enlisted officers, and the desertion rates from four regiments, recruiting from 12 departments between them, are given in Table 5.1.

The department of origin is an imperfect proxy for the linguistic capacity of troops, for it may be presumed that at least some conscripts from non-francophone departments spoke French, even if only haltingly as a second language. Nonetheless, it is clear that in the three mixed regiments, the 8th, 16th and 54th infantry of the line, soldiers from non-French speaking departments were less likely to be promoted than those from French-speaking ones. Thus, in the 8th, over 12% of conscripts from the French-speaking Marne attained various grades as

Table 5.1 Promotion and desertion by department of origin, 1806 conscripts

Regiment	*Department (language(s) spoken)*	*No. of conscripts*	*No. of NCOs (% of conscripts per department)*	*No. of deserters (% of conscripts per department)*
8th line infantry	Dyle (French, Walloon, Flemish)	62	2 (3.2)	3 (4.8)
	Marne (French)	283	35 (12.4)	9 (3.2)
	Montenotte (Italian)	207	2 (1.0)	23 (11.1)
	Orne (French)	56	6 (10.7)	3 (5.6)
16th line infantry	Charente (French)	352	63 (17.9)	51 (14.5)[a]
	Escaut (Flemish)	104	17 (6.1)	13 (12.5)[a]
	Mont-Tonnerre (German)	478	55 (11.5)	64 (13.4)[a]
54th line infantry	Vienne (French)	289	8 (2.8)	5 (1.7)
	Sambre et Meuse (Walloon, French)	134	8 (6.0)	5 (3.7)
	Stura (Italian)	40	0 (0.0)	1 (2.5)
111th line infantry	Pô (Italian)	344	49 (14.2)	2 (0.6)
	Indre-et-Loire (French)	31	9 (29.0)	0 (0.0)

[a]The very high desertion rate in the 16th resulted from a catastrophic breakdown in unit discipline in this regiment in the spring of 1814

Source SHD GR 21 YC 68 (Registre matricule, 8e régiment d'infanterie de ligne, 26 Thermidor an XI (14 août 1803–1807 Oct. 1806); SHD GR 21 YC 69 (Registre matricule, 8e régiment d'infanterie de ligne, 7 Oct. 1806–1829 Oct. 1808); SHD GR 21 YC 143 (Registre matricule, 16e régiment d'infanterie de ligne, 10 Aug. 1806–1807 Nov. 1808); SHD GR 21 C 450 (Registre matricule, 54e régiment d'infanterie de ligne, 1 vendémiaire an XII (24 Sept. 1803)-28 Feb. 1807); SHD GR 21 YC 792 (Registre matricule, 111e régiment d'infanterie de ligne, formation-20th Jun. 1808)

non-commissioned officers, but only 3% from the Belgian department of the Dyle, which was fairly evenly split between Flemish and French speakers were promoted. The 54th regiment followed this pattern, with enlisted officers chosen amongst the contingents from the francophone departments of the Vienne and the Sambre-et-Meuse. Overall, promotion was easier for French-speaking troops than those from non-French-speaking troops, but many soldiers from non-French-speaking areas were still able to earn promotion. This presumably meant that these soldiers either arrived in the army literate and knowing French, or developed these skills while serving.

The troops of the 111th line infantry regiment demonstrate this pattern most clearly. This regiment was formed in 1802 from the 1st Piedmontese demi-brigade. It was, therefore, Italian from the outset, and men from the Italian-speaking department of the Pô were much more likely to be promoted in this regiment than Italian speakers elsewhere. However, soldiers from the French-speaking Indre-et-Loire were more likely to achieve promotion in the 111th, and more likely still to achieve the higher ranks (those above Corporal) for which literacy and French skills were more essential. Of the 49 non-commissioned officers from the 1806 contingent from the Pô, 19 achieved a rank of sergeant or above, while seven of the nine non-commissioned officers from the Indre-et-Loire made this rank or better.[61]

Not only were soldiers from non-francophone areas less likely to achieve promotion, they were more likely to desert. This was clearly the case in the 8th, where Italian speaking conscripts were far more likely to desert than their French speaking comrades. and marginally evident in the 54th. This was also the case in the 54th, although it is obscured by the rash of desertions suffered by the regiment in the aftermath of Napoleon's abdication in 1814. Only three soldiers from the Charente deserted before 1814, as compared with 26 from the German-speaking department of the Mont-Tonnerre.[62] The comparison of these three regiments with the more homogeneously and self-consciously Italian 111th is striking. Here, desertion amongst Italian troops compared favourably to those from French-speaking regions in other regiments. These figures offer a clear explanation for the Napoleonic regime's decision, in 1811, to conscript Tuscan and Dutch troops into their own regiments. Ultimately, accommodating the linguistic particularism of these soldiers enabled the military to field effective units, and this proved more important than moulding troops to spread French language and customs.

Language and Soldiering

Even if the Napoleonic Regime sought to accommodate linguistic and regional particularities, the military was still frequently portrayed in popular culture as a centralising institution that threatened local interests and identities. Given the scale of opposition to conscription, it is not surprising that one of the songs relating to Napoleonic military service most frequently collected from French folksong repertoires in the nineteenth century was *The Conscripts of 1810*. In this song, the conscripts bid farewell to their parents and lovers, who watch in tears while the young conscripts

leave the village. The hostility towards the representatives of state authority who forced the conscripts to leave was clear, for it was the prefect and the mayor "who force us to draw lots/to send us to our deaths".[63]

In some cases, this opposition was expressed in linguistic terms. In the Walloon-speaking region between the Moselle and Meuse rivers, part of the French Empire under Napoleon but today mainly located in Belgium, Luxembourg and the French department of the Ardennes, several versions of a bilingual folksong, *The Return of the Bourgmestre's Son*, were collected during the nineteenth century. In this song, a soldier returning home speaks in the French he learned in the army, while his former lover speaks in Walloon. At first, she does not recognise him, and cannot understand him when he talks: "you have an odd language/ I cannot understand your words". The soldier replies, "even if my language is foreign/ I am a boy from the *pays*". [64] Eventually the soldier is recognised by his former lover, and they get married. This song is a more sympathetic treatment of military service than *The Conscripts of 1810*. Rather than being led to his death, the soldier returns home and is reunited with his sweetheart, despite the obstacle of language. However, the army was still an institution that transformed the 'boy from the pays' into a French-speaking soldier, revealing way gender intersected with understandings of locality and military service in the popular imagination. The masculine adulthood achieved through soldiering, in this song at least, was a francophone one.

These attitudes towards military service were not a creation of the Napoleonic period. In *The Return of the Bourgmestre's Son* the soldier had fought in the Indies, which would probably date the song to the eighteenth century. In Wallonia, therefore, military service was associated with learning French before the Revolution and it still appeared a relevant distinction for singers to make after the fall of Napoleon. Nor should it be imagined that this process was always unwelcome. Soldiers from non-French speaking areas may have deserted more often and been promoted less frequently, but some did still achieve enlisted officer grades. Indeed, Dezydery Chlapowski, who later went on to become a key figure in the Polish rebellion against Russia in 1830, seemed more than content to spend afternoons with his fellow Polish commissioned and enlisted officers taking French lessons.[65]

Despite the ideological significance of soldiering for the Napoleonic regime, and the clear importance of local attachments and culture for soldiers themselves, military service during the period cannot be reduced to this opposition between a homogenising, centralising institution on the

one hand and particularism on the other. As David Hopkin has argued, soldiering was also an occupation, and as in *The Return of the Bourgmestre's Son* it was understood before and after the Revolution as a route into adulthood for young men.[66] To judge by the memoirs of those who served in the Napoleonic military, the nature of soldiering as a profession, and the realities of life in the Napoleonic military, shaped attitudes towards language as much as its associations with regional and national ethnicities.

Those who served in Napoleon's armies were carried across much of Europe, and language framed their experiences of the societies they encountered. The soldiers of the Napoleonic wars often devote lengthy passages in their journals and memoirs to describing the lands and peoples they came across. According to Marie-Cécile Thoural, these descriptions serve to reveal the assumptions and prejudices of the soldiers themselves.[67] For many of these soldiers, the passage between different countries was marked by the transition between languages. This was the case for Jacques Chevillet, who observed that on reaching Oedembourg, "we well understood that we had entered Hungary, given the change in costume and in speech of the inhabitants; and soon no-one could understand or could explain anything".[68] Jakob Walter, a Württemburger serving in the *Grande armée*, observed that on reaching Rzepin, "the use of the German language stopped, and the manners and culture made a strange impression".[69] Captain Elzéar Blaze claimed that language boundaries were usually gradual, with transitional zones where the inhabitants spoke both languages. The border between Spain and France was an exception to this rule, however. According to Blaze, "when you have crossed the Bidassoa, you are in Spain, entirely in Spain. Two minutes before, you were in France, when you have crossed the river you are a thousand miles away; the habits, the language, the dress, everything is different".[70] Language, therefore, was central to the ways in which they understood the geography of Europe, framing their distinctions between peoples and countries.

If language shaped the mental maps of Napoleonic soldiers it was probably because it mattered so much to their material existence. For soldiers obliged to spend time billeted with the local population, speaking the local language could make life much easier. As Jacques Chevillet, a trumpeter in the cavalry, recalled of his time quartered near Utrecht in 1804, "it was not long before I earned the confidence of my lodgings; my Boss told his neighbours that I was a good boy. Already knowing how to speak Dutch, I spent the evenings pleasantly and I lacked

for nothing".[71] Conversely, an inability to speak the language was an unpleasant handicap. As the officer Charles-Amand Faré wrote to his mother, "while Germany is a very good country, I am not at all upset to leave it. The language is very hard and there is nothing less agreeable than to be in a country where one cannot string two words together".[72] While stationed in Germany, François Paquay from Seraing near Liège complained that his ignorance of German made it impossible to talk with the local girls.[73]

In the extreme, not understanding the local language could be fatal. The grenadier François-Joseph Jacquin only escaped death at the hands of a lynch mob in an Austrian village burnt by the French because he related the story of all his hardships as a conscripted soldier to his host.[74] When Jef Abbeel reflected on the horrors of the retreat from Moscow, he considered ignorance of the Russian language a major obstacle: "our situation was pitiable. Six or seven hundred miles march from the fatherland on the unknown roads of a country where we did not know the language".[75] This was a retreat that Jakob Walter, a conscript from Württemberg who served in the *Grande armée*, survived only because he encountered a German-speaking servant in a manor house in Poland. Able to explain that he was not French, the servant supplied him with bread, brandy and butter.[76]

Not only was language invaluable for soldiers who sometimes had to survive on what they could beg or steal from the local population, it was also a tool that could serve in combat. Speaking another language could function effectively as a disguise for soldiers. Georges Bangofsky, a German speaker from the Lorraine who enlisted in a Hussar regiment rather than be conscripted, explained the importance of this for one reconnaissance mission: "Since, with our overcoats, it was difficult to recognise us for French hussars, the order was, when passing through towns and villages, to say nothing or to speak German".[77] On another occasion, Bangofsky was able to escape capture by the Prussians by hiding in a fishing cabin, convincing the occupant that he was himself a Prussian soldier himself. Language could also be used to ambush opponents, or lead them into traps. Jacques Chevillet described capturing a number of Austrian troops by using language as a disguise. As Chevillet recalls the incident, an Austrian sentry spotted them and asked them to identify themselves. Then, "Brigadier Lang, who was German, advanced a few paces and responded to the Kaiserlite: 'Don't shoot! Stay calm, Austrian hussars comrades'". The sentry bought the ruse and they were able to catch

the Austrian soldiers unawares.[78] French soldiers were not immune from this kind of deception. Jean Conan, who wrote his memoirs of serving in the armies of the Revolution in Breton, recalled sitting with a comrade when a grenadier approached them, asking them to accompany him to a nearby village. Conan distrusted this man, believing him an enemy spy because of his bad French. Sure enough, Conan's comrade accompanied the Grenadier, who promptly shot him in the back and fled.[79]

Language also played a crucial role in offering insults and keeping face. Jef Abbeel, who was a native Flemish speaker, started a brawl in Kempen, on the border between present day Germany and the Netherlands, because locals had insulted him in a bar presuming that a French soldier would not understand their words.[80] In Sergeant Faucheur's regiment, which had served in Spain, all of the officers and enlisted officers knew Spanish, but according to the regiment's colonel, spoke it very badly. Faucheur had learnt Spanish 'from principles' from a prisoner of war while studying at the *lycée* in Clermont, but the colonel advised him not to tell anyone. Faucheur had used family contacts to obtain a post that many felt should have gone to a veteran. This made it likely that the other men would insult him in Spanish, presuming that he did not know that language, and Faucheur would thereby be able to identify his rivals and enemies.[81]

Learning other languages was not just common for soldiers; it was practically part of the *métier*, and was accomplished a number of ways. For some, this was done simply by 'chatting' with the local peasants.[82] Unsurprisingly, soldiers' writings are often peppered with terms for essentials such as food items in other languages.[83] Soldiers generally learnt how to at least ask for the basics. Jean Conan, for example, learned how to ask for bread in Flemish.[84] For soldiers, however, learning another language was often a more sustained project, albeit one that permitted friendships to be consolidated. Jacques Chevillet, for example, learnt Italian with the 26 year old son of his host in north-eastern Italy: "He was eager to learn to speak French, and I to learn Italian. […] We taught each other reciprocally to write and to translate phrases in the two languages".[85] This was even more the case where learning another language involved seducing girls. Faré, who had struggled with the German language, found this to be exactly the motivation he needed. He recalled, "I was lodged in a house where there were 5 young maidens between 15 and 22 years. They did not speak a word of French, me not a word of German, and yet we had to make

ourselves understood".[86] With one of the 'young maidens' for a teacher, he was able to make a great deal of progress in the month he was staying there.

Multilingualism helped make a good soldier, and especially a good officer. Colonel Boutrouë remarked admiringly of a Polish officer with whom he dined, that he spoke six languages. This contrasted with his own slow progress in Italian, and when asked by his brother if he had made any progress in the language, Boutrouë's response revealed a degree of frustration with the francophone elites of Piedmont with whom he was, as an officer, mixing: "You have asked me if I have made any progress in Italian; my word no! I believe that I would know just as much in German. The reason is that nearly everyone speaks French here".[87] Although Charles Faré had required the inducement of female company to learn German, he took up Italian as a worthwhile occupation to stave off the boredom of life in camp:

> A man who wishes to occupy himself with his profession, and who combines that with some other study, has little time to get bored, and that is the side that I have taken. […] I play the flute, I copy music, and I learn arms and Italian, because our regiment having long fought in Italy all the officers speak Italian and I do not lack for teachers in this language'.[88]

This was not just the preserve of officers. Jacques Chevillet, who served as a regimental trumpeter, expressed a similar attitude towards learning languages. Already fluent in German and Italian, Chevillet found himself in Hungary and unable to communicate with the locals. However, he was lodged in a Jewish household where German was spoken along with Hungarian. Chevillet claimed to have used the opportunity to create a basic Hungarian–French phrasebook, through the medium of German, to his evident satisfaction: "in no time there I was, the translator for my captain and our company".[89]

Military service, therefore, did not simply make French men or French speakers. The Napoleonic regime certainly wished for the army to function as a tool of nation building, viewing cultural homogeneity as a desirable goal and mass conscription as a way to achieve it. In practice, however, the regime was obliged to seed to the practical realities of troops whose morale often rested on serving alongside men from the region. Moreover, military service inculcated an ideal of the soldier, and especially the officer, as polyglot explorer. This ideal was most clearly expressed by Charles Faré:

> No-one more than a soldier, and above all an officer, can benefit from his travels. Marching either on foot or by horse, and usually slowly, he can consider in his own time the appearance of the country, lodged sometimes with a peasant, sometimes with an artisan, sometimes with a lord, he gets to know the mores, the language, the customs, the character even of the different conditions, advantages that he has over an ordinary traveller who see little close up other than innkeepers, who are the same everywhere, and of the rich folk, amongst whom the national character is always less well conserved that amongst folk of a lower station.[90]

Faré's proto-ethnographic attitude towards linguistic diversity reflected a nascent romanticism that placed the 'true' culture of the nation amongst the 'people'. Yet it also revealed something of an aristocratic culture of soldiering in its insistence that 'rich folk' shared a kind of common, cosmopolitan culture that stretched across national boundaries. Yet ordinary soldiers, like the innkeepers in Faré's commentary, still belonged to that group of people obliged by circumstances to communicate with those who spoke other languages. Despite the Napoleonic regime's accommodation of linguistic diversity, military service did put pressure on soldiers to communicate in other languages, just not always the language that Napoleonic officials envisaged.

Notes

1. BnF Naf 5910 Sous-préfet de Montélimar au Min. de l'Int. 29. Jul. 1808 f.352.
2. BnF Naf 5910 Le Conseilleur de la préfecture de la Haute-Garonne au Ministre de l'Intérieur, 21 Apr. 1810 f.15.
3. M. Broers, 'Noble Romans and Regenerated Citizens: The Morality of Conscription in Napoleonic Italy, 1800–1814', *War in History*, vol. 8, no. 3 (2001), pp. 249–270.
4. Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen* Chap. 17.
5. D. Hopkin, *Soldier and Peasant in French Popular Culture, 1766–1870* (Rochester, 2003), pp. 4–5.
6. C. Tozzi, 'One Army Many Languages: Foreign Troops and Linguistic Diversity in the Eighteenth-Century French Military', H.Footit and M. Kelly (eds.) *Languages and the Military: Alliances, Occupation and Peace Building* (Basingstoke, 2012), pp. 15–16; idem. 'Soldiers of the Pays: Localism and Nationalism in the Revolutionary Era Army', P. Whelan and P. Young (eds.) Place and Locality in Modern France (London, 2015), pp. 161–170.

7. This testimony comes to us broadly in three forms; letters, *carnet* or *journaux de marche*, written by soldiers in the field, and *memoirs*, penned later. For a critique of these sources see M.C. Thoural, *From Valmy to Waterloo: France at War, 1792–1815* (Basingstoke, 2011), pp. 6–10 ; P. Dwyer, 'War Stories: French Veteran Narratives and the "Experience of War" in the Nineteenth Century', *European History Quarterly*, vol. 41, no. 4 (2011), pp. 561–564 ; D. Hopkin, 'Storytelling, Fairytales and Autobiography: Some Observations on Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century French Soldiers' and Sailors' Memoirs', *Social History* vol. 29 (2004), pp. 186–198.
8. An F9 221 (Recrutement, correspondance générale, Montenotte-Mont Tonnerre) Préfet de Montenotte au Ministre de l'intérieur, 12 Aug. 1808.
9. I. Woloch, 'Napoleonic Conscription: State Power and Civil Society', *Past and Present*, vol. 111, no. 1 (1986), pp. 101–129; idem. *The New Regime*, pp. 380–426; A. Forrest *Conscripts and Deserters: The Army and French Society During the Revolution and Empire* (Oxford, 1989), p. 219.
10. Woloch *New Regime*, pp. 387–391.
11. Forrest, *Conscripts and Deserters* Chap. 3; Woloch *The New Regime*, pp. 404–411.
12. An F9 221 Préfet de Montenotte au Ministre de l'intérieur, 12 Aug. 1808.
13. An F9 220 (Recrutement, correspondance générale, Méditerranée-Mont Blanc) Préfet de la Meuse Inférieure au Ministre de l'intérieur, 2 Dec. 1808.
14. An F9 155 (Recrutement, correspondance générale, Alpes-Maritimes-Apennins) Préfet des Apennins au Ministre de l'intérieur, 24 May 1807; D.P. Harsanyi, 'Brigands or Insurgents? Napoleonic Authority in Italy and the Piacentino Counter-Insurrection of 1805–1806', *French History* (2016), vol. 30, no. 1, pp. 51–76.
15. An F9 155 Rapport au Ministre de l'Intérieur 17 fructidor year VIII (4 Sept. 1800).
16. An F9 155 Préfet des Alpes-Maritimes au Ministre de l'intérieur, 5 Mar. 1813.
17. Forrest *Conscripts and Deserters*, p. 97; Woloch *The New Regime*, pp. 417–420; Michael Broers has argued that successes in the 'old' departments of France were not replicated in the 'new' departments of Northern Italy. Broers, 'Noble Romans', p. 269.
18. An AF IV 1123 (Rapports du ministère de la guerre, conscription) Compte générale sur la conscription de l'an VII à l'an XIII.
19. An F9 155 Préfet des Alpes Maritimes au Ministre de l'intérieur, 5 Mar. 1813; An F 9 221 Préfet de Montenotte au Ministre de l'intérieur, 12 Aug. 1808.

20. An F1c III Ourthe 3 (Comptes rendus administratifs, an V-1813) Préfet de l'Ourthe au Ministre de l'Intérieur, 22 Fructidor An XIII (9th Sept. 1805).
21. An F9 221 9 Messidor An X (28 Jun. 1802).
22. Forrest, *Conscripts and Deserters*, p. 2.
23. J.-P. Aron, P. Dumont and E. Le Roy Ladurie *Anthropologie du conscrit français d'après les comptes numérique et sommaires du recrutement de l'armée (1819–1826)* (Paris, 1972), pp. 70–71.
24. Hopkin, *Soldier and Peasant*, pp. 132–134.
25. An F9 220 Discours prononcé par Lamaignan, sous-préfet d'Annecy à l'ouverture des opérations de la conscription de l'an XIV.
26. An F9 221 Préfet de la Meuse Inférieure au Ministre de l'Intérieur, 9 Messidor year X (28 Jun. 1802).
27. 'Napoleon au ministre de la Guerre, 15 Vendémiaire year XII (8 Oct. 1803) *Correspondance de Napoléon 1er tome IX* (Paris, 1861), p. 31.
28. Journal des Débats, 14th April 1803, pp. 2–3.
29. I. Woloch *The French Veteran: From the Revolution to the Restoration* (Chapel Hill, 1979), pp. 234–236.
30. E. Blaze *La vie militaire sous l'empire, ou mœurs de la garnison, du bivouac et de la caserne* (Paris, 1837), pp. 73–74, cited in P. Dwyer *Citizen Emperor: Napoleon in Power* (London, 2013), p. 361.
31. N. Faucheur, *Souvenirs de campagnes du sergent Faucheur* (Paris, 2004), p. 78.
32. P. Robinaux *Journal de route de capitaine Robinaux, 1803–1832* (Paris, 1908), p. 6.
33. An AF IV 1123.
34. J. Abbeel, R. Willems (trans.) *Mémoires d'un carabinier à cheval, 1806–1815* (Paris, 2010), p. 75.
35. M. Reinhard, 'Nostalgie et service militaire pendant la révolution', *Annales historique de la révolution française* vol. 30 (1958), pp. 1–15.
36. C. Castelnau, *Considérations sur la nostalgie* (Paris, 1806), p. 14.
37. Castelnau, Considérations, p. 17.
38. L.O'Sullivan, 'The Time and Place of Nostalgia: Re-situating a French Disease' in *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, vol. 67, no. 4 (2012), p. 629.
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CHAPTER 6

Language, the Law, and the Legal Profession under Napoleon

The law as a set of institutions—courts and the judges who staff them, the lawyers who plead before them, the documents offered up as evidence and the notaries who draft them—has long been understood as a tool of state building. Such projects have frequently involved an effort to consolidate the sovereign's monopoly on the administration of justice through the abolition of legal particularism and the creation of a professional, centrally controlled judiciary, all the better to enforce the extraction of tax and soldiers.[1] Given that France is so frequently understood as a paradigmatic civic or state-nation, wherein national identity is said to arise from existing state structures, it is unsurprising that French legal institutions have often been implicated in processes of cultural integration and nation-building, and particularly in the spread of the French language.[2]

The invariable touchstone for such accounts of linguistic integration driven by legal institutions is the ordinance of Villers-Cotterêts, promulgated by François I in 1539. This ordinance required that all legal documents, including registers, commissions, inquests, contracts and wills, "be pronounced, recorded and delivered to parties in the maternal French tongue (*en langage maternel françois*), and none other".[3] A few years after the 1860 annexation of the county of Nice to France, the Niçois author Émile Negrin claimed it was Villers-Cotterêts that had determined the triumph of French over the other languages of France. Underscoring the perceived importance of the act, and by extension the

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S. McCain, *The Language Question under Napoleon*,
War, Culture and Society, 1750–1850,
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official language of legal practice, Negrin argued that Occitan would have become a national language without the ordinance.[4]

Villers-Cotterêts became the subject of renewed historical controversy at the start of the twentieth century.[5] The ordinance was specifically designed to end the use of Latin in legal and administrative contexts throughout the kingdom, but it is not clear which language or languages were intended to replace Latin. Prominent scholars like Henri Peyre argued that the ambiguous wording of the ordinance, '*langage maternel françois*', transcribed by Negrin in a telling slip as '*langage françois*', did not preclude the use of regional languages, but followed earlier royal edicts that had excluded Latin but explicitly permitted vernacular languages such as Occitan and French in official business.[6] By contrast, Auguste Brun and Ferdinand Brunot maintained that Villers-Cotterêts represented a decisive shift in monarchical language policy, enshrining French as the sole language of state.[7]

Villers-Cotterêts was emblematic of a shift towards French in legal, administrative and political contexts, although whether the ordinance enjoyed the kind of influence attributed to it by Negrin is far less certain. The language of the royal court did displace regional languages across much of the kingdom by the end of the sixteenth century, right down to the level of the town council.[8] During the seventeenth and eighteenth century, Royal officials interpreted the text to mean French rather than the languages of France, and imposed it upon newly annexed territories.[9] Yet efforts at *francisation* were primarily concerned with written production, and were accompanied only by rather perfunctory efforts to spread French to the royal colleges intended to train administrators.[10] Moreover, while enshrining French as the language of administration undoubtedly gave it currency as a medium of elite expression, particularly in written contexts, the linguistic culture of sixteenth-century France was undergoing a transformation at precisely this time. Renaissance scholars valorised the vernacular at the expense of Latin in all spheres of written production. It is difficult to dissociate the impact of Villers-Cotterêts from these trends, much less determine the influence it had on the vulgarisation of French.[11] Nonetheless, figures such as Negrin attributed a great value to the capacity of a government to fix the language of legal texts.

The provisions governing the use of language in legal texts set out by Villers-Cotterêts probably had as much significance under Napoleon as at any other point since 1539. The wars of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic period brought unprecedented numbers of non-French

speakers under Parisian rule, and these populations were to be governed by French law. Legal commentators of the period cited Villers-Cotterêts. One guide for notaries reminded its readers that all acts had to be written in French according to the provisions of the ordinance.[12] No lesser a legal authority than Joseph-Antoine Merlin de Douai, who was named Imperial Prosecutor at the Paris *cour de cassation* (the highest court in the French legal system) following a controversial stint as minister of justice under the Directory, also pointed to the ordinance. In his article on court interpreters, Merlin observed that not only written documents, but "procedures in the vulgar language of the province were […] completely abolished by this article", implying that legal hearings should take place in French.[13]

Linguistic practice within legal institutions was, therefore, a live issue during the Napoleonic period. The invocation of Villers-Cotterêts and the associated effort to get legal professionals to conduct business in French underscore how the law became an ideologically charged tool of Napoleonic imperialism. Napoleonic state building was imbued with a pronounced sense of legal universalism. A common legal code, greater professionalism and public trials were, along with linguistic unification, understood as central to the 'regeneration' of the diverse populations of the Napoleonic Empire, and Napoleonic legal officials were expected to facilitate this project of integration.[14] However, this chapter will argue that the quotidian experience of justice, at least from a linguistic point of view, was little changed by such efforts. In practice, the French legal institutions encountered most frequently by the population—the notary and the local magistrate or justice of the peace—tended to remain linguistically flexible in oral contexts, even if they were obliged to write in French. This was as true in the non-French speaking parts of old France as it was in the territories annexed after 1789. This is not to argue that French linguistic policies in the law courts were irrelevant. On the contrary, they put a great deal of pressure upon the local legal elites who collaborated with the French. Under Napoleon, Paris controlled the appointment of legal officials, and a grasp of the French language was greatly valued. Combined with increasing legal pressures to work in the language, this sparked ethno-linguistic tensions within the judiciary of the annexed departments, calling the cultural identity of many individuals into question. Judges were invited to acculturate, to align themselves with the Napoleonic project, and language thus became a proxy for issues of loyalty and identity even as the linguistic demands of local communities were accommodated by legal officials.

Napoleonic Integration and the Law

The application of the French legal system was central to the Napoleonic project and its legacy. It is an often-repeated observation, but no less significant for this familiarity, that many features of the Napoleonic model of administration survived and prospered across Europe long after the empire itself had shrivelled. In the Rhineland, the Napoleonic code was retained, in the French language, when the region fell under the control of the Prussians, who themselves adopted it in German translation in 1851.[15] The Netherlands retained the code and French judicial structures until 1827, and these were restored in Belgium following the 1830 revolution.[16] While the code was abrogated in Italy, certain Napoleonic administrative, financial and judicial institutions were conserved in fact, if not in name. Even in Piedmont, where the restoration was pursued with vigour under Victor Emmanuel I, who abolished all French legislation and returned to the judicial system of the *Ancien régime*, French judicial practices remained popular in liberal political circles.[17] When Charles Félix reformed the Piedmontese judicial system in 1822, the model that inspired him came from north of the Alps.[18]

Evaluating the legacy of French domination requires some idea of the nature of the French legal institutions—or as Jean Hilaire has described it, 'the French judicial model'—that the Revolutionary and Napoleonic regime attempted to apply across the Empire, as well as a sense of how this model differed from what it replaced.[19] This is not only a question of law and institutional structure, but of procedure, personnel and mindset; of what might be called 'legal culture'. It is also a question of how the institutions and personnel of law and order related to the societies that they sought to regulate. The second part of this chapter will deal with the significance of language in the context of personnel and legal cultures. In the initial part, however, the focus will be on the institutional aspect of the French judicial model and its place in the state-building projects of successive French governments.

Many of the institutional features of the French judicial model exported under Napoleon were shaped during the Revolutionary period. The first major reform came in November 1789, when the constituent assembly, mindful of the lengthy tussles that had unfolded between the royal government and the *parlements* during the eighteenth century, replaced the latter with a completely new court system. Civil and criminal law were separated, with a criminal court established in each

department and a civil court in each district, later replaced by a departmental court when the districts were abolished under the Directory. Juries were established for criminal trials, but not for civil courts, which were regulated initially by a rotating system of appeals in which one district court heard appeals on verdicts handed down in another. The Revolution also saw seigniorial justice replaced with the justices of the peace, many of whom were legal amateurs, who were expected to arbitrate in small-scale local disputes.[20] These institutions underwent another transformation after the 18th Brumaire, though certainly one of lesser magnitude than that which had followed the Revolution. The district civil courts returned as *tribunaux de première instance*, or tribunals of first instance, one of which was established in each arrondissement. Overseeing them at the departmental level was a series of new appeal courts. Crucially, the justices of the peace were retained, although they were now expected to cite principles of law when judging disputes, rather than simply resolving them in an 'equitable' way.[21]

The association of legal reform with state-building projects remained constant throughout. Rationalising laws and institutional structures remained a constant priority from the abolition of the *parlements* by the Constituent Assembly to the imposition of the Napoleonic judicial model on the territories annexed throughout the period of the Empire. This continuity was neatly demonstrated on the 5th Frimaire year VIII (26th November 1799), just short of a month after Napoleon's *coup d'état* of the 18th Brumaire, when the new *tribunal de cassation* of the four departments of the left bank of the Rhine was installed at the town of Trier with a ceremony of oath taking and distinctly Republican pomp. Bell ringers were joined by the sound of trumpets and artillery salvos as a cortege comprising the luminaries of the local administration, judiciary, military, and gendarmerie, as well as local teachers and their pupils, wound its way towards the *temple décadaire* as the centres of worship of the Republican culte décadaire were called. Inside the temple, which was decorated with the colours of the French tricolore, the members of the court took their oaths of loyalty and duty, followed by cries of "long live the French Republic! Long live liberty, equality and fraternity!" Following the ceremony, the soldiers and gendarmes in attendance left singing patriotic hymns, while the various officials and officers, along with the presidents of the constituent authorities of Trier, attended a banquet. This dinner, 'civic and fraternal' in character, saw toasts made to the Republic, to Liberty, to the victorious armies of the nation, and to the union of the four departments of the Rhine with France.[22]

This was fairly typical of the continued republican presentation of state power under the consulate, although Brumaire did bring changes to the administration of the Rhineland.[23] In the New Year, the hated Jacobin commissar of the Rhenish departments, Joseph Lakanal, was replaced by Henri Shée, a change of personnel accompanied by a shift in both the style and character of French rule in the region. Jacobins were purged, the French prefectural system was finally implemented in full, and stability and order became the watchwords of the new regime.[24] Yet the installation ceremony of the *tribunal de cassation* in Trier prefigured Napoleonic rule in an important way. With its tricolores and public oaths, the ceremony highlighted the centrality of the administration of justice to the way in which the French government sought to legitimate its authority. Under Napoleon this continued to define French rule. Napoleonic administrators were expected to take part in all manner of public civic engagements—processions, festivals, feasts and balls—and the judiciary took up a prominent place at these events.[25] Later in Napoleon's reign, Bastille day celebrations gave way to celebrations of the birth of the King of Rome and the St Napoleon festivities, and they took place in a church rather than a temple of the Supreme Being, but the judicial elite of the Napoleonic empire was still expected to take up a prominent position behind the civil authorities in the processions leading to and from the church.[26] In general, the highest civil authority—which would be the prefect in the chef-lieu—headed the procession, followed by the commander of the gendarmerie, with the president of the highest law court in third place, followed by the mayor.[27]

Such processions mattered greatly to those involved, generating the kinds of disputes over precedence that characterised the ceremonial life of courts, *parlements* and other legal and civic bodies of early modern Europe.[28] Yet the ceremonial exercise of power also had tremendous significance as propaganda, and the prominence of members of the judiciary underscored the centrality of the administration of justice to the claims made for the legitimacy of French rule. The account of the installation of the court at Trier in 1799 was printed and distributed to all the cantons throughout the four departments of the Rhine.[29] Reproduced in this pamphlet was the speech given at the ceremony by the new president of the Trier court, who claimed that the ultimate aim of the judges over whom he presided would be to win support for French rule through the fair administration of justice:

> Fortunate if, by our principles and our example, we manage to make them increasingly desire the reunion of their territory; and if finally we see them definitively associated to the advantage and the prosperity of the Great Nation! Make haste, citizen-judges, to respond to the wishes of our subjects. Give them from today a proof of our zeal to complete our duties.[30]

As the president's rhetoric demonstrates, the French sought to justify their rule in the territories they conquered during the Revolution through the efficient governance of society, and this meant the efficient administration of the rule of law. Such claims to legitimacy, along with the impressive calendar of civic events organised by Napoleonic administrators, often failed to resonate in the shadow of material hardships caused by French economic policy. Yet the notion that good governance and legal administration would demonstrate the benevolent nature of French rule and the benefits of membership in the 'Great Nation' remained strong amongst French administrators.

During the Revolutionary and Napoleonic period, legal institutions were understood, at least by French administrators, as a tool for spreading civilisation, and the Napoleonic regime strove for the ideal of universal laws applied by a consistent judicial structure.[31] They were viewed as a way of integrating the diverse populations of the French empire. The creation of the *tribunal de cassation* at Trier sprung from this commitment to a rationalised, or in the terminology of Mona Ozouf, regenerated, system of justice. In 1797, following the cession of the Rhineland by Prussia and Austria, François Rudler was appointed government commissar, charged with implementing French law and establishing French institutions in the region. Rudler achieved this through administrative fiat, issuing a huge number of decrees.[32] However, during this period, before the official annexation of the departments of the Rhineland following the treaty of Lunéville in 1801, the law courts of the region had found themselves in an ambiguous position. The lower echelons of the French legal system had been erected, but unlike across the rest of France, the *cour de cassation* in Paris did not function as the ultimate chamber of appeal for judgements handed down in the Rhineland. Instead, the Minister of Justice ruled personally on appeals, a process denounced as despotism in *Le Nécessaire, ou courrier du corps législatif et de la guerre* (The Necessary, or courier of the legislative corps and of the war): "If we wished to establish an odious and terrible tyranny, would we find a system that favoured it more than this monstrous gathering of

powers".[33] The *tribunal de cassation* in Trier was intended to correct this anomaly, underlining how a unified and coherent judicial model was not only a significant part of the symbolic exercise of French power after the Revolution, but also a central element of the aims of the regime.[34]

Language Policy and the Law from the Revolution to Napoleon: Governing the Written Word

The paradox of a homogenous judicial model of this type is that it can produce very different outcomes when it encounters different social and cultural conditions. For example, changes to property rights, and in particular the abolition of the right to dispose of property through wills in 1793, caused far greater disturbance in the southern France than in the North. This was because the greater scope to designate inheritance by testament granted under Roman law had fostered a sort of 'common primogeniture' as a way of keeping smallholdings viable.[35] Similarly, historians have observed a divergence in the status and importance of the justice of the peace in different parts of France. The pivotal role of the justice of the peace in some regions seems to have come down to the poverty of agricultural production, which in turn produced smaller civil cases of the sort that usually did not go up to the local tribunal.[36] Curiously, as Bernard Schnapper has shown in examining the rates of litigation throughout France during the nineteenth century, there also existed an enduring division between the *pays du droit écrit* or Roman law of the South, and the *pays du droit coutumier* or customary law of the North. In general, the populations of the South displayed a greater propensity to seek redress from the legal system, a fact it is difficult to explain except as the manifestation of a distinct litigious culture or mentality.[37] Perplexing, yet a striking example of how different populations can respond in very different ways to an identical, centralised institution.

One might therefore expect language to have played a significant role in the way populations related to the judicial system in France. After all, the institutions of the justice system were an important symbolic manifestation of state power. It should also be recalled that the French legal system for several centuries had been an officially francophone system. In a context where the institutions of the justice system played a prominent role in state efforts to integrate the diverse populations of the empire, one might hypothesise that linguistic diversity would make these institutions more contentious. It could be supposed that a system working in a language other than the mother tongue of locals would be contentious by its very

nature, encouraging local populations to seek redress through other mechanisms, such as violence or the mediation of the local *curé*. The data studied by Schnapper, unfortunately, begins only in the 1830s, yet it is already clear that the populations of the South made relatively greater use of the justice system, not only of the tribunals one might expect the richer, and therefore generally francophone, local inhabitants to turn to, but of the justice of the peace who resolved all manner of disputes over property and contracts.

Understanding the role of language in this dynamic between population and judicial system requires us to distinguish between the different types of communicative encounters as they were identified and regulated by the French judicial model. Undoubtedly the most significant distinction in the way the French system regulated the language of legal activity can be drawn between written and oral contexts. In general, language policy formulated in Paris privileged the written word over the spoken. During the Revolution, it was common for politicians agitating for action on the language issue to conflate literacy and language. When Abbé Grégoire argued that French had to become the language of the nation so that all citizens might participate in the business of government, he explicitly transposed the issue into the realm of written, rather than spoken, language. According to Grégoire, legal acts could function as a guarantee of citizens' rights only if they were correctly drafted. Errors in the language and composition of such documents, by contrast, would undermine their efficacy.[38] The emphasis placed on the written word by Grégoire is significant. His concern, it seems, was not primarily with spoken communication, but with written documentation, and it arose out of a legalistic concern for clarity and accuracy. Legal documents that were drafted in inaccurate terms, it was feared, would produce misunderstanding, error, and eventually injustice.

Legalistic concern for the integrity of written documentation governed much Revolutionary and Napoleonic language policy. Some of the most notorious legislation regarding language passed by the National Assembly during the Revolution concerned just this issue. The law of 2 Thermidor Year II (20th July 1794) effectively reiterated the demands of Villers-Cotterêts, requiring that "no act can, in any part of the French territory, be written in any language except French".[39] This measure was repealed six weeks later, on the 16 Thermidor Year II (2nd September 1794), but on the 21 Vendémiaire year III (12th October 1794) the dominance of French over public documentation was re-established with a law requiring public functionaries to draft acts in French, a law cited by

Merlin when he asserted that French was the official language of the justice system.[40] These provisions were a significant departure from the language policy of the earlier period of the Revolution, when efforts were made to translate the laws and decrees of the assembly into the other languages used across France. In parts of the south of France—Toulouse for example—this seems to have taken on the character of political missionary work; the object was to speak to the 'people' in their own language, so as to win them to the cause of the Revolution.[41] In Alsace, the translation policy was explicitly understood as part of a Revolutionary transformation in the way individuals related to the institutions of state, and the measures taken to promote linguistic uniformity during the year II were hated within the political clubs of the major towns.

Strasbourg was a particular locus for opposition to these measures, reflecting the enduring importance of German to the literate elite culture in a city that retained a German-speaking university.[42] Members of the political clubs in Strasbourg saw this as an opportunity to reshape judicial and state institutions to make them more representative of the local population, and above all more responsive to the linguistic demands of the majority of Alsatians. On the 6th July 1790, André Ulric addressed the Society of Friends of the Constitution of Strasbourg, claiming that the linguistic demands of the crown had served to alienate the population from these institutions:

> Up until now, administrators and judges addressed themselves to [the people] only in a language that was absolutely unknown to them. Contracts were passed in French, all the responses to their grievances and requests, all the prosecutions, announcements, decisions, decrees, judgements and all the pieces concerning the administration of justice, were written in a language entirely foreign to the majority of Alsatians.[43]

Again, the emphasis on written documents shows the dominance of the written over the oral in contemporary formulations of language policy, particularly in relation to the legal system. It is also significant that this resistance to the linguistic unification of the legal system originated in Alsace—the one part of France where a large linguistic minority spoke a language with a clear tradition of elite literate use.

As the borders of France expanded during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, even larger groups of German, Italian, Flemish and eventually Dutch speakers were drawn into the French state. Initially,

there was some ambivalence towards the issue of language in these territories, although the legal document remained the principal site of concern. After the installation of the *tribunal de cassation* in Trier in November 1799, it quickly became clear that language would become a major issue for the monolingual Frenchmen who staffed the court. The vast majority of documentation passed up from the local courts—even the judgements and appeal requests—were written in German. This was a problem exacerbated, in the eyes of Barris, the French president of the tribunal, by the irregular orthographic conventions of the German used in the legal documentation of the region. As Barris wrote in a letter to the Minister of Justice, "we are situated in a region which is not yet at all French, where few people speak and write the French language, where the German language is spoken and written in a very different fashion in the different countries that make up the four departments".[44] This was a question both of the selection of the language of legal documentation and of the accuracy of the language used.

Barris proposed a compromise to solve the linguistic issue. A sworn translator was appointed to the court and charged with providing French versions of the documentation for the francophone judges to consult. Even this measure, which fell a long way short of requiring a French language legal system, was problematic, because it was unclear who should pay for the work of the translator. Barris suggested that the translation of legal documents produced by legal bodies should be made at the state's expense: "As for acts forming the basis of an action, I have no doubt that the translation must be done by order of the tribunal by a sworn interpreter, who must be paid by the [court] receiver,". Payment for petitions appealing judgements made specifically to the court, in contrast to the documentation produced by other legal bodies, was a more complicated matter. In principle, he argued, these documents were "the responsibility of the parties, and consequently their translation cannot be at the expense of the Republic". Yet he also recognised that requiring parties to pay for the translation of documents would be a controversial measure: "In this country, which is not reunited, where the law has not obliged citizens to abandon their native language to speak and write the language of a country to which they are still foreigners, can we order that only French will be written and spoken before us?"[45] Requiring litigants to foot the bill for translation when they plead before what was then the highest court in the region would be viewed, Barris feared, as tantamount to establishing French as the official language of the legal system.

Sentiments within legal circles were apparently so elevated surrounding this issue of language that a tussle emerged between Paris and the *tribunal de cassation* over who should make the final decision. Barris attempted to pass responsibility to the centre, arguing that the court had no authority to determine the language of legal practice: "It is a measure that belongs to the legislature […] it is for the Government to outline for the tribunal and for the citizens, by a particular decree, what is to be done in this regard".[46] The issue encumbered the functioning of the court to such a degree that, just nine days after his initial missive, Barris wrote to the minister again, claiming that "it is urgent, citizen-minister, that you make yourself clear on the reflections that I presented to you relative to our German procedures. Even the judgements are almost always written in German".[47] When the Minister of Justice did respond, he instructed the court to follow the regulations for the other tribunals of the region, regulations laid down in Germinal of the year VI by Rudler, the then-government commissar in the French Rhineland.[48] However, it seems that these regulations were ignored or forgotten, for in his next letter Barris wrote that no such regulations were in force in the region: "I will observe that in this regard there exists in this country neither legislation, nor regulation, nor forms in the tribunals, and it is perhaps a wrong from which many abuses can arise".[49] Barris attempted once more to formalise practice relating to language, and presented the minister with a decree taken by the tribunal on the subject, asking him to approve the measures it contained. This decree followed Barris' initial suggestion that any *moyens de cassation* (the outline of the legal justification for appeal) not presented in French would not be considered, with the case decided simply on the accompanying legal documentation. The cost of translating these pieces would be met by the plaintiff only if their appeal was unsuccessful.[50] This was, Barris hoped, a workable compromise: "To us it appeared to reconcile the interests of the parties with the interests of the Republic in the forms necessary that judgements would be handed down in perfect understanding of the case".[51]

Barris' desire to compromise underscored the symbolic importance of enshrining French as an official language as well as the real practical impact such a move would have on the legal systems of the annexed territories. This would become clear in the following years, as more territory was annexed to the Empire and French language policy in relation to the legal system hardened. The four departments of the left bank of the Rhine were formally annexed to France following the treaty of

Lunéville in February 1801, and Paris imposed linguistic uniformity in place of the conciliatory approach that Barris had pursued. On the 24 Prairial of the year XI (13 June, 1803), Napoleon decreed that all public acts in the Rhineland, in Belgium in Piedmont, and "in the others where the usage is to draft acts in the language of these provinces" would, by June of 1804, be written in French.[52] The measures introduced by Barris had affected only those coming before the *tribunal de cassation*, but now the language policy of the French state was applied to even the most mundane and habitual interactions with the legal profession. The notarial office, probably the most frequent site of interaction between the legal system and the wider population, was not spared, with the acts drawn up there now written in French or accompanied by a French translation.[53] An exception was granted for private documents such as contracts and testaments drawn up privately, rather than by a notary, which could still be written "in the idiom of the province". Yet even here, French was to dominate. To be wholly effective, such documents still had to undergo *enregistrement* so that the date from which they took effect could be officially established. Without this legal formality, they could be vulnerable to challenge in legal disputes. Documents presented for *enregistrement* had to be accompanied by a French version, translated by a sworn court interpreter at the expense of the parties themselves. In short, French was imposed on the administrative and legal documents that governed society in the annexed departments.

These measures were explicitly concerned with the regulation of language choice in a specific context: the production of legal documentation. They would also become the model applied to the next wave of annexed territories as they were incorporated into the French state. Progress, however, was neither straightforward nor uniform. Like the courts of Piedmont, Belgium and the Rhineland, the legal establishment in Liguria was initially given a year to transition to the French language, following the annexation of the territory in June 1805. However, it proved far more difficult to impose French on the Ligurian legal establishment, and the efforts were beset by multiple delays. As the deadline drew nearer, it became obvious that this target would be missed, and the Minister of the Interior wrote to Régnier, the Minister of Justice, outlining the need to postpone the measure.[54] Régnier was already resigned to this, and on the 20th June 1806 a decree accorded an additional delay for the area. The length of the delay varied in relation to the apparent readiness of these areas to conform to the new linguistic requirements.

Genoa was given six months; Parma and Piacenza and Liguria, including the department of San Remo now attached to the formerly Piedmontese Alpes-Maritimes, got eight months, except for the seats of the prefectures and sub-prefectures of the departments of the Appenins and Montenotte, which were granted a year—until the 1st July 1807—to adapt to French. This was not, however, the end of the issue, and three further delays were granted, with the result that French did not become the official language of the legal system in the region until the start of 1809.[55]

Liguria, therefore, offered greater obstacles to the language policies of the French state than the previous round of annexations in Belgium, Piedmont and the Rhineland, where only foresters required longer than a year to adapt to French.[56] The legal system of Liguria was granted two and a half years, and even after this period the results were somewhat patchy. As late as April 1809, candidates for judicial posts in the region were flagging their knowledge of Italian as a compelling justification for their appointment, not only to facilitate oral communication, but because so many public acts continued to be drafted in the language.[57]

The difficulties encountered in Liguria seem to have informed the way the French approached later annexations. The authorities in Paris sought to establish a bilingual legal system, with French used alongside the local language, rather than attempting to create an entirely francophone structure. This was first tried in Tuscany following the annexation of the region in December 1808. A decree passed on the 9th April 1809 noted that "the peoples of the departments of Tuscany are, of all the peoples of old Italy, those who speak the most perfect Italian dialect, and that it is important for the glory of the Empire and for that of letters that this elegant and fecund language is spread in all its purity".[58] Provisions were made to support literary production and it was decided that "the Italian language will be allowed to be employed in Tuscany, concurrently with the French language, in the tribunals, in acts passed before notaries and in private writings".[59] In October 1810, a decree created bilingual courts allowing the use of Dutch concurrently with French in all but two of the departments formed from the Kingdom of Holland. The exceptions—the Bouches-du-Rhin and the Bouches de l'Éscaut, presumably because of their position as the closest territory to the existing Belgian departments—were initially given until the end of 1813 to transition to a francophone legal system. At the end of November 1810, a decree prolonged the deadline indefinitely.[60] When the Swiss canton of the Valais, home to a significant minority of Swiss German speakers, was annexed as the department of Simplon, German was permitted

in the courts, as it was in the Hanseatic departments of northern Germany. Both German and Italian were allowed in the courts established in the Illyrian provinces on the Adriatic in September 1811.[61] Finally, in December 1812, a decree was issued allowing the all-important *enregistrement* to take place without a French translation in the departments where the local language was permitted in the tribunals, effectively giving German, Dutch and Italian parity with French within the legal system in these areas.[62]

This final measure meant that, by the end of 1812, the departments of the Empire could be arranged into three camps, as evident in Fig. 6.1. The departments of 'Old France' were largely unaffected by the Napoleonic regime. Certainly, the hopes of a German language legal system stirred up in Alsace during the Revolution were dashed, but by and large French was the language of written legal practice before 1789, and with regard to language practice within the legal system, this continued much as under the *Ancien régime*. The legal elites of the departments of Belgium, the Rhineland, Liguria and Piedmont, by contrast, experienced a sharp linguistic jolt, as the Napoleonic regime sought to impose French on the legal system. Finally, the most geographically distant territories annexed to the Empire, which were also incorporated towards the end of the period of French expansionism in Europe, were granted a degree of latitude in relation to linguistic practice within the context of the legal system. This was, however, more a concession to reality than a wholesale abandonment of principle. Only in Tuscany and the Illyrian provinces did the French make any real concessions to the local language. In the German- and Dutch-speaking areas of the Empire, leniency in the form of a bilingual legal system was accompanied by the appointment of French language teachers, and the prohibition of non-francophone journals. In short, the desire to establish the empire of French over the written word remained throughout the Napoleonic period, and the law was understood as a crucial vector of French language and civilisation.

The Spoken Word Before the Law: The Justices of the Peace and the Accommodation of Linguistic Difference

The Napoleonic state sought constantly to control the language in which legal documents were to be drafted, but the myriad occasions for oral communication provided by the French legal model were often less

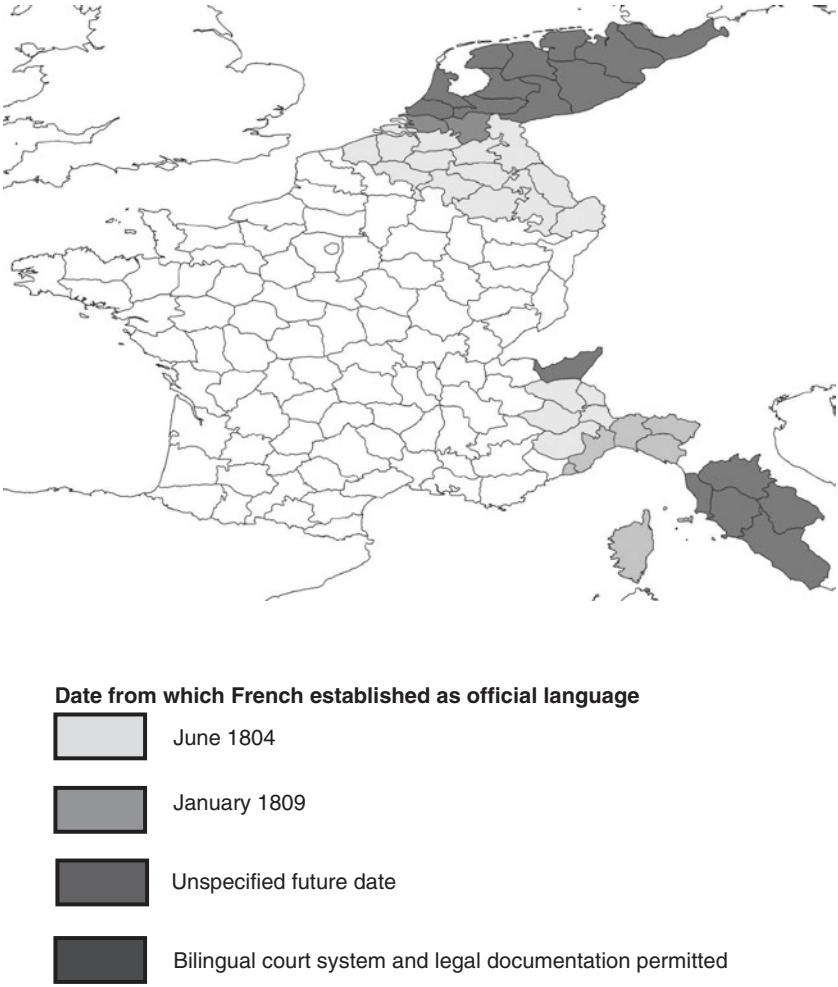

Fig. 6.1 Establishment of French as the official language of legal practice. *Source* Bulletin des lois

stringently policed. These communicative occasions varied in formality. Some legal contexts saw the rigorous policing of some aspects of oral communication. The public trial, for example—unquestionably the most significant procedural innovation of the Revolution—was a context in which

communicative practices were strictly governed. This control was not only exerted through conventional pressures (the formality of the occasion determining register or formality of language, for example), but also by the president of the tribunal, who, following trial procedure, might determine things such as who spoke when, or the appropriateness of a given statement. Despite this, the language in which such communication should take place was never unambiguously determined, and what resulted was a patchwork of different practices across the Empire and in different contexts. For this reason, the institutions of the French legal system tended to accommodate and reflect local linguistic realities, even as the officials who worked in them often had to come to terms with writing in French.

These ambiguities were experienced in even the most quotidian encounters between the public and the legal system—those taking place in the notary's office. As we have seen, the notarised documents had to be redacted in French, though nothing prevented the contents of the notarial act being dictated in another language and translated by the notary. This practice was explicitly endorsed by the Minister of Justice in 1805, in response to a query from the chamber of notaries in Brussels, and reaffirmed by a decision of the *cour de cassation* in Paris in 1807.[63] Uncertainty had emerged because the Napoleonic Code required notaries to record every testament 'as it is dictated to him'. This apparently contradicted the decrees establishing French as the language of notarial acts, since notaries might not be considered to have recorded a testament exactly as dictated if they wrote in French when their clients spoke in another language.[64] When, the wife of a Rhenish merchant died in 1805 and left her estate to another inheritor, the merchant challenged his deceased wife's testament on the basis that since the notary had written in French, even though she had dictated the terms in German, the notary could not have transcribed her testament precisely as she had dictated it. The *cour de cassation* threw out the appeal, arguing that since notaries were obliged to draft their acts in French, their validity could not be challenged on the basis of the language in which they were written. It thus defined in practice a clear demarcation between the formal written linguistic production of the notary and the verbal exchange upon which it was based.[65]

The divide between written and spoken linguistic production in legal contexts was evident in the practices of the other legal institution with the greatest relevance to the everyday life of the general population: the justice of the peace. The justice of the peace was expected to produce his minutes in French. However, there were no constraints on the language used in the proceedings and arbitrations overseen by the judge. Again, the division between written and oral communication was clear. This

distinction was particularly evident in the evaluation of candidates for the position of *greffier* or clerk to the justice of the peace. In the appointment of legal officials, especially in relatively lowly positions like *greffier*, the government relied heavily on the local knowledge of the imperial prosecutor and president of the regional appeal court, who in turn sought the opinion of their counterparts in the civil tribunals located in each arrondissement. These reports were collated by the Ministry of Justice, who would then present a list of three candidates ranked in order of preference to the Emperor, who would make the final decision. The lists of candidates for the place of *greffier* to the justice of the peace provide a telling insight into the importance of language in the selection of candidates, and therefore in the practices of the justice of the peace as an institution. Since the *greffier* was charged with drafting the minutes of the procedures of the justice of the peace, it was essential that he could write French, a rare skill in many of the annexed departments. This was made clear by evaluation of one candidate from the Piedmontese department of the Stura, whose favourable report read that "he knows the French language, circumstance just as rare as it is singular in this division".[66] The ideal candidate spoke the local tongue and wrote French. Thus, a positive report on one candidate from the department of the Forêts, which was formed from territory in present day Belgium, Germany and Luxembourg, observed "that he is an excellent subject, that his conduct is beyond reproach, that he knows French and German".[67] Similarly, Luis Jassin was considered a strong candidate for a place in the Flemish-speaking Belgian department of the Escaut, in part because of his linguistic capacities: "He has the necessary understanding of the French and Flemish languages".[68]

The preference for bilingual *greffiers* reflected not only the requirements of a French language legal bureaucracy, but also the realities of working in communities where French was not widely spoken. When Louis Victor Gengoule was proposed for the post of *greffier* in the Dutch department of the Deux-Nèthes, the author of the report cautioned, "I am unsure if he knows the local language enough to manage cases in a rural canton where the justice of the peace does not know it".[69] This hesitation reveals official expectations about the linguistic practices of the justices of the peace and their court *greffiers*. They were to redact their documents in French, but the efficacy of the institution rested on the ability to communicate orally with the inhabitants of a canton in their own language. If the judge himself was unable to fulfil this function then

it was imperative that his *greffier* could. This assumption also held for the non-francophone areas of Old France. In lower Brittany, for example, knowledge of Breton was frequently included amongst the positive qualities of a candidate. Thus Jean-Marie Cruzel from Finistère was described as "knowing the Breton idiom, combining probity with morals. Appears the most suitable to fill this position".[70] This was also the case in Bayonne, where Jacques Detcheparre was considered a strong candidate because "he is well versed in juridical practice and possesses the precious advantage of speaking the Basque idiom, which is the language of more than half of the subjects of the canton".[71]

The expectation that the justice of the peace or his *greffier* should be able to communicate in the local language while producing written documentation in French placed the burden of French language policy on legal officials, rather than the general population. In non-francophone regions like the Rhineland this made the justice of the peace a popular institution for resolving legal disputes.[72] The significance of this informal bilingualism was underscored by the appointment of a *greffier* named Raoul to the canton of Pont-Scorff in the Breton department of Morbihan. Raoul's candidature was supported by several pieces sent by the president and the procureur of the local tribunal, including "a letter from the justice of the peace in favour of Sr. Raoul and a certificate signed by the president and the mayors of the six communes composing the canton, who all say many good things and attest that he knows the Breton idiom".[73] The intervention of the mayors of the canton demonstrates how the distinction between written and oral language within the French judicial model allowed local administrators to mediate between francophone centre and non-francophone locality, at least at the level of the justices of the peace, and that such practices were crucial to the functioning of the office.

While language appears frequently in the evaluations of candidates from annexed territories where foreign languages were spoken, and from areas like Brittany and the Basque country, where languages that were completely unrelated to French were spoken, reports from the Romance-speaking bulk of Old France remain entirely silent on the issue. In southern France, selection appears to have focused on literacy rather than linguistic difference. When a position as *greffier* for the canton of Sainte Maries near Arles in the Bouches du Rhône became vacant, the successful candidate was chosen not for his grasp of French in a Provençal-speaking region, but for his literacy, with the local prosecutor writing that "in this canton there are very few

subjects able to fill this place, I have found only Sr. Brunnel who is worthy of being presented. The population is composed only of illiterate fishermen and farmers".[74]

It is unclear why the issue of language, so prominent in the discussion over appointments of *greffiers* in non-francophone annexed territories and the Basque- and Breton-speaking areas of western France, should be obscure in Romance-speaking France. However, as the struggles of the prosecutor to find a capable subject in Sainte-Maries demonstrates, most justices of the peace and their *greffiers* were drawn from the area in which they functioned. It is likely that as local figures themselves they were, across the Empire, capable of the kind of informal bilingual practice such as in the annexed departments, in Brittany and in the Basque country. It was in the higher courts, where legal officials were more likely to come from outside the local community, that the ambiguities and tensions of the cultural mediation carried out by legal professions were most clearly visible.

Accommodating Linguistic Diversity in the Higher Courts

While the oral, relatively informal, process of arbitration overseen by the justice of the peace, leant itself easily to this kind of flexibility, the legal processes of the higher courts were, in principle at least, governed by a more formalised code, in which the language of spoken communication was more strictly regulated. If, as the former Justice Minister Merlin de Douai claimed, Villers-Cotterêts meant the abolition not only of documentation but of legal proceedings in languages other than French, then there emerged a practical difficulty concerning the management of trials involving individuals who spoke no French. Merlin posed the question: "how did we proceed, not only with regards to foreigners, but with regard to nationals who did not understand the idiom of the towns?"[75] In these situations, where a witness or accused did not understand the language in which they were to be questioned, or when the accused did not understand the language of a witness, the only acceptable course was for the president of the court to appoint a sworn interpreter, and the verdict could be considered unsafe if he failed to do so.[76]

In practice, this apparently clear procedural form produced a variety of different practices. This can be seen in the commentary provided by the judges who sat in the higher courts themselves in one of the most

important sources on the judicial culture and practice of the period, the *Observations des tribunaux sur le projet du code criminel de l'an XI* (Observations of the Criminal Courts on the New Code of the Year XI). These observations were written in response to a proposed criminal code, which was published in 1804 and would, after sustained discussion and revision, become the basis of the 1808 code of criminal inquiry and the 1810 code of criminal procedure.[77] In total, twenty two of the appeal courts of the Empire and seventy-six of the then-106 departmental criminal courts furnished reflections on this project, which were published in eight volumes in 1804, providing invaluable insight into the linguistic practices of the legal system.[78] Many of the legal officials who wrote these observations criticised various aspects of the proposed criminal code because they would make the informal accommodation of linguistic diversity more complicated. The responses of the criminal and appeal courts reveal three key points of linguistic tension within the French judicial model: the linguistic capacities of the judge and consequently his ability to direct proceedings; the role of oral translation and interpreters; and, finally, the composition and conduct of juries.

The new code proposed a reorganisation of the criminal courts, whereby judges presiding over proceedings would be rotated around the courts of the Empire on a yearly basis.[79] The intention was to reduce corruption by replacing local judges with outsiders who would be less susceptible to influence form local society, but the reform was singled out by many observers as problematic because these outsiders would be unable to communicate in the local language. The response of the tribunal of the Gers claimed that "a judge replaced annually and foreign to the department will lack understanding of the local idiom", a serious problem since this knowledge was "of an absolute necessity for the direction of proceedings".[80] The problem of mutual comprehension took on special importance within the courtroom, because misunderstanding the testimony of a witness could have such an impact on the lives of those involved in a trial. As the members of the tribunal of the Limousin department of the Haute-Vienne observed, an outsider would struggle to follow the deliberations of the court because "most often he will not understand that which the accused and the witnesses will say to him; they will not themselves understand the questions that he poses them; at every step he will encounter difficulties that will tire him, that will be detrimental to the defence of the accused, that will obscure the proofs of his culpability". The potential for confusion and misinterpretation introduced by a judge from outside the department could

only be to the detriment of the administration of justice, since "it is essential, above all in criminal cases, that the magistrate charged with collecting all the proofs for and against grasps their true meaning".[81]

Objections to the travelling magistrates were joined by concerns over the role of oral translators within the courtroom. The appeal court of Agen in the Gascon department of the Lot-et-Garonne criticised the rotation of judges because the practice could lead to a greater dependence on interpreters to translate the testimony of witnesses and accused where judges were placed far from their existing posts.[82] This criticism reflected a general unease about the place of translators within the courtroom due to the particular demands of communication within a legal setting. As the criminal tribunal of the Lys observed, "it is impossible that the most able translator can always suffice in the examination of a criminal case; the expression of a witness, in their native language, is not always well grasped by an interpreter". This was considered detrimental to the effective administration of justice because the statement of a witness or accused "is often of such importance, when it is well understood by the judge, that it can change the whole course of the trial, either for the conviction or for the exoneration of an accused".[83] The same sentiment was expressed by the tribunal of the Basses-Alpes, where it was observed that "trial by interpreter is not an exact justice; we must employ it only when there is no other way to give justice".[84] As the tribunal observed of the prospect of rotating magistrates overseeing criminal trials across the Empire, "then trial by interpreter, which is always and amongst all peoples an exception, would become the standard procedure for one part of the departments of the Empire".[85] In this instance, dialect and the other standardised languages of the Empire posed similar issues.

The projected criminal code sought to regularise the use of interpreters, specifically proscribing the practice of selecting translators from amongst the witnesses or jury. Many of the responses from the southern regions of France claimed this would be a particular issue because they faced a highly varied tapestry of different languages. The tribunal of the Ain, for example, claimed that in the department, "there prevail 5 or 6 different idioms or patois which are well understood only by the inhabitants of those localities where they are in use". Excluding members of the jury or other witnesses from acting as interpreters would be impractical, exposing "the course of justice to be interrupted in the middle of debating a case, because very often we would not find another interpreter in the place where the court sits".[86] The tribunal of the Haute-Vienne also cited the extreme variability of the spoken language of the region

as a strong argument against the idea of ambulatory magistrates, writing that "the citizens living at the far reaches of a department often do not understand the vulgar idiom in use at the opposite end of the same department". Legal officials were as vulnerable to this linguistic mosaic as anyone else: "We have seen judges, albeit native to the department where they exercised their functions, and having always lived there, be sometimes troubled in the examination of a procedure". How then, the tribunal argued, could an outsider ever hope to supervise a trial effectively, "especially in the southern departments, where the idiom changes from one town to another, where the people are very unfamiliar with the French language, where they speak and understand only the vulgar languages of the region"?[87] Objections to the practice of formal translation, and to the rotation of judges, both turned on the same desire to avoid introducing a greater linguistic distance between the judge and the public, a goal many members of the judiciary evidently felt could be best achieved through the maintenance of an informal process of linguistic negotiation within the courtroom. Rather than a foreign judge and a sworn interpreter, the ideal was for a magistrate familiar with the population and region over which he exercised authority to informally seek clarification from individuals present.

The third and final point of linguistic tension raised by the members of the criminal and appeal courts was the composition and conduct of juries. While moving judges from court to court—like the tighter regulation of court interpreters—was an issue broached by members of the judiciary across the Empire, juries were raised as an issue most frequently in the annexed territories. In the south of France, it was simply assumed that the members of the jury would broadly speak the same language as the witnesses and accused. When the members of the tribunal of the Aude, for example, criticised the rotation of judges, they included the members of the jury in the list of those a monoglot French-speaking magistrate would struggle to communicate with, observing that "almost all the accused, the major part of the witnesses, often even some of the jurors, speak only a language which would be unknown to him".[88] In the Belgian department of the Escaut, by way of contrast, concerns focused not on the ability of the judge to understand the members of the jury, but on the capacity of jurors to follow the trial. The question posed by the members of the tribunal—'can one be sworn, without knowing French?'—implied that, in the Escaut, the procedure would take place in French, making it problematic to appoint a juror who did not speak the language.[89]

A similar concern was evident in the neighbouring department of the Lys. Here, problems encountered in the establishment of trial by jury had precipitated the "exclusion of former nobles, of the relatives of emigres, of men who do not understand French".[90] In one respect, the responses on the subject of juries from both Belgium and southern France describe exactly the same situation: that juries, like witnesses and the accused, had a tendency to replicate the linguistic profile of the local population from which they were drawn. The lack of francophone jurors was probably exacerbated by the process of jury selection. Jury service was viewed as an imposition, and the wealthier urban candidates, who were more likely to know French, were often quick to excuse themselves with the help of a compliant health officer.[91] However, while in the South it seems judges were expected to accommodate this linguistic diversity, the courts of the Belgian departments sought to remove non-French speakers from the jury whenever possible. In this context, the regional languages of France were accommodated to a greater extent than standardised languages in the newly annexed territories.

An indication of the geography of these practices is given in Fig. 6.2, which shows the distribution of the criminal or appeal courts that cited language as a specific issue in their observations on the proposed criminal code. Many of these responses expressed concerns in a general way, about the how one or another aspect of the code would lead to a formalised, francophone judicial procedure. The response from the Rhenish department of the Roer criticised the plan to rotate judges around the Empire for much the same reasons as the courts of southern France The members of the tribunal questioned whether judges who "do not know the area, the customs, the mores and the idioms accepted in the departments where they must oversee criminal courts, how will they give the necessary direction to the proceedings?"[92] Such a statement is fairly limited in what it can tell the historian about the specific linguistic practices within a particular tribunal. However, it is striking that concerns over measures that might lead to a formalised diglossia—that is over the appointment of migratory judges requiring translators to communicate with those appearing before the court, or the hardening of regulations surrounding the use of translators—emerge almost exclusively from the Occitan-speaking South, the Flemish-speaking Belgian departments and the German-speaking Rhenish departments. Concerns were focused on those parts of France that contemporaries thought to be linguistically diverse. Thus, the response from the Manche, a department the Duruy enquiry found to be entirely French-speaking in 1864,

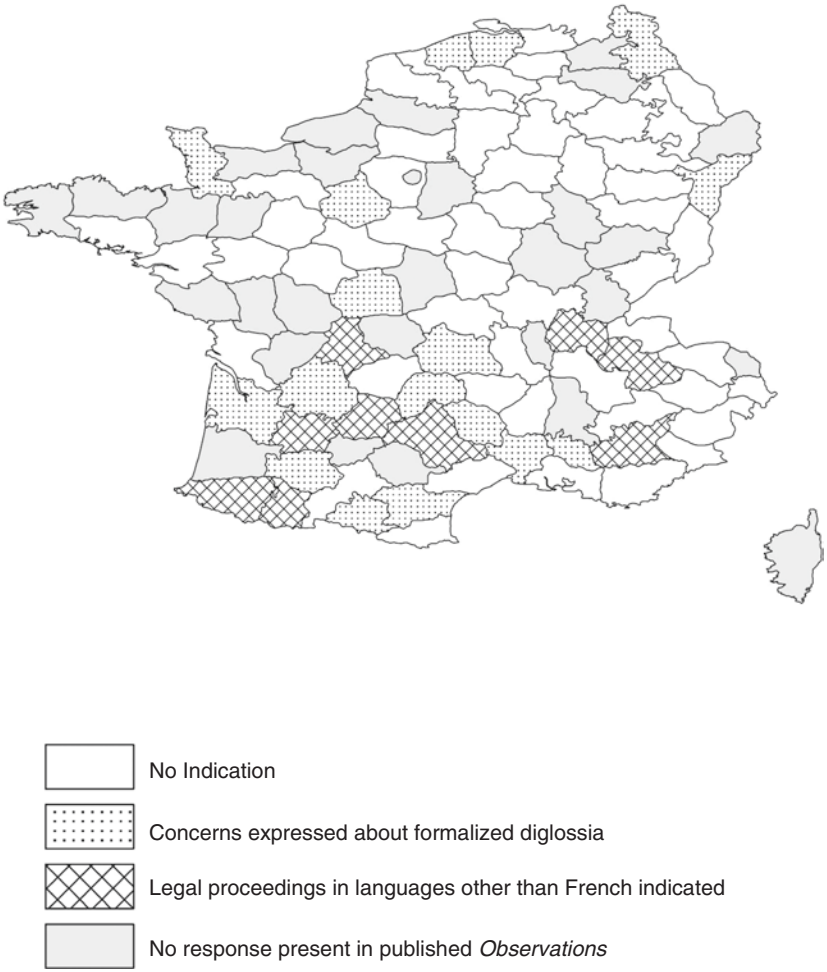

Fig. 6.2 Linguistic Practice in the Courtroom. *Source* Observations des tribunaux criminels sur le projet de code criminel 6 vols. (Paris, 1804)

worried not about the introduction of new judges to Normandy, but whether in other parts of France where language was an issue: "would a man who has lived only in Paris be able to sustain the necessary dialogues with Bas-Bretons, Picards, Auvergnats, Savoyards".[93] The French

legal model, therefore, had a strong linguistic dimension, and applying it brought linguistic tensions to the fore both where other standardised languages were spoken and where dialects were in use.

As this suggests, the ostensibly straightforward linguistic regulation of the trial procedure within the French legal system—that of a French-language courtroom supplemented with interpreters where necessary—resulted in a number of different practices across the courtrooms of the French state. In Brittany, the regional *parlement* sitting in Rennes had long required anyone who did not speak French to have a sworn interpreter appointed to aid them in legal proceedings. This practice continued throughout the nineteenth century, and the court records provide an invaluable source for historians of language shift, who, in the absence of sound statistics, have used the proportion of individuals given interpreters as a proxy for rates of French speaking in the broader population.[94] While the courts in Brittany cleaved assiduously to procedural best practice throughout the nineteenth century, appointing translators for monolingual Breton speakers, the courts across Romance-speaking France did not use sworn interpreters when confronted with speakers of regional languages despite the risk of having their judgements struck down. In Languedoc, for example, researchers have found no trace of Occitan translators, even where slips and stray Occitan words suggest that a deposition was not given in French.[95] Similarly, in Provence during the Napoleonic period, 26 case files heard at the appeal court of Aix, along with the trial records of the criminal court of Aix between 1802 and 1808 reveal only one instance of an interpreter being sworn in.[96] This interpreter was not a translator of Provençal, but of Oriental languages, appointed to Jacques Calicopulo, a merchant from the *République des sept îles (the Greek Ionian Islands)*, who unsuccessfully pursued a claim for fraud in at the appeal court of Aix in 1802.[97] The absence of Occitan interpreters indicates that the process of informal translation by bilingual legal officials that was evident in the practices of the justices of the peace also pertained within the higher courts of the south. As Séguin de Pazzis, author of a statistical description of the Vaucluse, wrote, "the magistrates, especially the judges in the criminal [courts], are in the habit sometimes employing [the local language], and must even know the power and finesse of it".[98]

As the claims of Séguin de Pazzis and the absence of translators shows, the burdens of managing linguistic diversity in the south of France generally meant that oral portions of legal proceedings were often

conducted in the local language. The observations of the criminal court of the Lot in 1804 made this unambiguously clear: "In the 20th military division, to which the department of the Lot belongs, the proceedings in the criminal courts take place in the patois idiom".[99] In the department of the Basses-Alpes, the criminal tribunal observed that: "in the direction of proceedings, we are ordinarily obliged to use the Provençal idiom, equally as regards accused as [we are with] witnesses". The tribunal went on to make clear that while civil cases might be treated in French it would be impossible to direct a criminal case in any language other than Provençal: "We can require that civil cases are treated in French, but we cannot oblige someone that we accuse, or from whom we require testimony to speak a language that they do not know; it is necessary to make use of a language which is familiar to them".[100] As can be seen in Fig. 6.2, nine of the criminal tribunals of the south of France submitted observations on the new criminal code describing this kind of practice as the norm in their departments. While the presence of Breton language translators indicates that trials in Brittany took place in French, the courts of the Occitan-speaking South pursued a very different policy of conducting trials in the local language. More broadly, it seems that the linguistic practices of the Old Regime largely persisted within the departments of the interior. In Brittany, this meant the continued use of interpreters, whereas in the South this resulted in an enduring distinction between oral and written language, whereby oral communication took place in dialect, and written communication took place in French.

While communicative practices in the departments of the interior remained substantially unaltered by the changes of the Revolution and Empire, French rule constituted a short, sharp linguistic shock for many of the territories annexed during the period. The distinction between vernacular oral exchanges and written communication in French rested on the competence of legal officials in both languages, a competence often lacking in territories where other languages dominated formal communicative occasions before the advent of French rule. As a result, the government often exported French legal officials to annexed territories for their knowledge of French law and legal forms, resulting in precisely the kind of outsiders that the tribunals of the interior had objected to presiding over courts. This was especially true for sensitive posts, such as that of public prosecutor, and doubly so in the criminal courts, where the greatest concentrations of French jurists could be found.[101] Appointing such men made the administration of justice all the

more difficult, since they rarely spoke the local language. In 1809, three Frenchmen, Franquen, Maillot and Goubeau, were considered for the positions of president in the three criminal courts of the Tuscan departments of Arno, Ombronne and the Méditerannée, respectively. The prosecutor of the appeal court of Florence wrote to the Minister of Justice, weighing up the advantages of these appointments. The central problem was that they would be unable to conduct procedures in Italian, a crucial task for those presiding over the criminal courts. He wrote:

> It has appeared to me that the presidencies of the courts of criminal justice, putting those who occupy them in daily contact with witnesses and accused who do not understand a word of French, it was of the greatest importance to fill them with magistrates who understood and spoke the local language.[102]

The prosecutor acknowledged that appointing Frenchmen to the position would have the distinct advantage of placing the court in the hands of individuals with a sound understanding of French law and procedure, something one could not expect from a native. He made clear, however, that any candidate who spoke no Italian could not be an effective appointment.[103] In this instance, the prosecutor's arguments were effective in winning a concession from Paris on linguistic practice, since none of the three candidates were successful in obtaining these posts.[104]

While linguistic diversity was accommodated in Tuscany—one of the areas where a bilingual court system was permitted—it seems greater efforts were made in other parts of the Empire to shift the language of procedure to French, with varying degrees of success. In his dictionary of jurisprudence, Merlin observed of the courts of Liguria that "it is remarkable that since this time [1809], all the procedural acts, as well as the presentation of cases, are made in French before the tribunals of Genoa".[105] Merlin's claim that the presentation of the cases took place in French implies that the language played a prominent role in the oral proceedings of the law courts. However, this was only accomplished after several years of pressure and delays, as well as the presence of a number of French officials. In the Rhineland, French language proceedings seem to have spread unevenly. By June 1803, cases were heard in French in the courts of Mainz and Speyer, while those of Zweibrücken, Kaiserslautern and other

towns where French was less widely known were heard in German.[106] Even in apparent success stories like Mainz, the use of French was not straightforward for all concerned. In 1810, the then vice president of the tribunal of Mainz, Bodmann, faced demotion to the rank of judge. According to his detractors, Bodmann was "unfamiliar with the French language, he expresses himself in a manner so singular that it amuses the public, who return in number to audiences to laugh at his expense".[107] The humiliation of Bodmann points not only to the prominent role of French in court procedure, but to the difficulties encountered in arriving at and maintaining such a practice.

Even where French language procedure was apparently entrenched, the kinds of informal translation practices described elsewhere in France were evident. In the Belgian departments of the Lys, the Dyle and the Escaut—all of which were primarily Flemish-speaking—French language procedures were the norm. This was apparent from the exclusion of Flemish speakers from jury lists, and reinforced by the reflections of the tribunal of the Dyle on the use of translators. In their observations, the members of the tribunal of the Dyle observed that, "in some departments where the French language is not widely spread, we have had to have recourse to interpreters for the examination of criminal cases".[108] Just as in Brittany, therefore, the departments of Flemish-speaking Belgium followed a pattern of French language procedure supplemented by interpreters. However, the constant recourse to interpreters was seen as problematic, with a move towards the more informal translation practices of southern France deemed preferable: "If it is only a case of translating the local language or jargon, I do not see the need to have recourse to the ministries of an interpreter […] the *greffiers* or trainee *greffiers* should be charged with translating the local jargon or language".[109] In the Lys, where non-French speakers had also been removed from the lists of jurors, it seems that such informal practices of translation were important in the functioning of the court. The members of this tribunal proudly declared in 1804 that "in the department of the Lys, the criminal tribunal is the only one in the nine annexed departments which since the Year VI has been composed entirely of men of the region".[110] This was especially significant given the criticism levelled at translators by the members of the Court of the Lys, who felt that judges themselves had to be capable of understanding the depositions of witnesses and the accused themselves.[111]

The Legal Profession Between Paris and Province

The French judicial model, therefore, exercised pressure on the judiciary to administer justice in the French language; although, in practice, linguistic diversity was accommodated in a number of different ways. At the level of the justice of the peace and the notary there was a clear distinction between the written documentation, which almost everywhere had to be in French, and spoken communication, which could be in whichever language was deemed most appropriate. This distinction blurred inside the courtroom, where the importance of testimony made spoken language a more delicate issue. The consequences of misunderstanding testimony in court were potentially significant, and in principle judges were obliged to call on sworn interpreters where necessary. In the annexed departments, political pressure and the arrival of French speakers seems to have sparked a movement towards French language proceedings. In practice, a range of less formalised methods of accommodating linguistic diversity were often preferred, from the Occitan deliberations of the South to the persistence of German language proceedings in the Rhineland and the informal translation described in Belgium. This made the legal profession a key mediating body between the francophone centre and non-francophone provinces.

Many members of the judiciary understood this mediation between the strictures of the law laid down by Paris and the interests and culture of the local community as part of their role. In criticising the project of rotating judges around the courts of the Empire, the tribunal of the Eure-et-Loire outlined an ideal of the legal official enmeshed in local culture and society. Appointing a judge to travel across different legal jurisdictions was problematic because "he will be deprived of local understanding, [which is] so essential to be perfectly instructed in the mores, in the spirit of the country".[112] Some members of the judiciary explicitly criticised the prevailing Napoleonic vision of the law as a tool for the reform of society. The central legal reform of the period, the Napoleonic Code, was based on the idea that good law could be universally applied to the benefit of all.[113] A countervailing body of opinion emerged from the commentaries gathered in the *Observations*, one clearly informed by a reading of eighteenth century thinkers such as Montesquieu, whereby laws should be drafted to suit the character and morality of the population.[114] In the observations of the tribunal of the Lot-et-Garonne, the members of the tribunal argued that "criminal and penal law must

be essentially in correspondence with the mores of the people for whom we make them […] Give [the people] overly harsh laws, they will be a calamity, they will elicit compassion towards the guilty, and their duration will be short".[115] According to the tribunal of the Escaut, "all the writers teach that laws must be in harmony with the size of the country, with the number of inhabitants, with their mores and their habits".[116]

This commitment to accommodating the interests and preferences of local society, of mediating them in the face of the centralising tendencies of the Napoleonic state, coalesced around the issue of language and the defence of the local legal officials who could speak the language. The tribunal of the Lot-et-Garonne defended the use of Gascon in court, but did so with a curious fusion of local pride and shame. In the first instance, it was the lack of order, the chaos and confusion that rendered a local judge necessary.

> In these terrible proceedings, where everything can be gruesome, especially the dialect of the witnesses and the accused, dialect in which the acceptations offer a different sense from one bank of a river to the opposite bank, would you prefer an outsider to a man of the region, who hears the language of his wet-nurse in that of the witnesses and the accused to judge it?[117]

Bemoaning the 'gruesome' nature of the deliberations in court and the confusion exacerbated by the intractable linguistic diversity of the participants hardly represents a convincing defence of regional culture, although it did highlight the value of the special knowledge of local officials. This knowledge, passed down by the wet nurse, could never be replicated by an outsider. While the members of the tribunal expressed disdain for the chaos unleashed by local particularism, they also expressed scorn for Parisian culture:

> We ask the authors of the project, if they were accused in one of our southern or maritime provinces, […] would they not prefer to have for a judge a Basque, a Bas-Breton, or a Gascon, according to the region, than a Parisian, with his rounded mouth and his fluted accents, who would understand nothing?[118]

The tribunal members' sardonic description of the softly spoken Parisian bemused by local dialect is striking, and there is an unmistakable pride in

the notion that a judge from the capital could never cut it in the province. The members of the tribunal identified themselves as intermediaries, disdainful of the raucous trials produced by the regional culture, yet at the same time convinced that their local knowledge marked their value within the legal bureaucracy. The provincial judges presented their local knowledge as expertise vital to the functioning of the legal system, cementing their position within the legal structure.

Equally, the status of legal officials within local communities rested on their ties to central authority, and those that came before them seem to have recognised their position as intermediaries, brokers or outsiders. In many of the comedies and vaudevilles of the south of France, the judges that featured simply spoke in French, with the local populace confronted by the language every time they interacted with legal institutions. Playwrights used language as a tool of characterisation, with characters enjoying high status—or those who would affect to enjoy high status—marked out by their use of French, while peasants and the popular classes spoke Provençal.[119] According to Auguste Brun, judges and other officers of the law are habitually arranged on the French-speaking side in these comedies. In the plays of Abbé Thobert, Provençal-speaking peasants are translated before French-speaking judges, while in another example cited by Brun, a comedy published in 1785 under the title *Le Marché de Marseille, vo lei doues coumaires (The Market of Marseille, or the Two Friends)* a French-speaking commissar steps into resolve a dispute over alleged tampering with a set of scales between Provençal-speaking market traders.[120]

In other representations of legal officials, the practice of informal bilingualism in legal contexts was clear, but the judge was still understood as an outsider. When James Bruyn Andrews published his *Essai de grammaire du dialecte mentonnais (Grammatical Essay on the Mentonnais Dialect)* in 1875, he illustrated his argument that the dialect spoken in Menton was a transitional language between the Provençal dialects of Niçard and the languages spoken in Piedmont and Genoa with a series of songs in the dialect.[121] Amongst these songs was a short round entitled '*O Gat e ro Giuge*' (The Cat and the Judge), in which a hunter catches a thrush, which is then stolen by a cat, who in turn is brought before a judge by the hunter. The judge takes the side of the cat, ruling that "*Soch o gat s'e piglià es tot sieu/ Tant l'invern coma l'estieu*" (That which the cat has taken is his own/ As much in the winter as the summer), an intervention Bruyn observed was made not

in the same Mentonnais dialect of the rest of the song, but in "Niçois [since] the judge is rarely local".[122] Indeed, the rhyming couplet '*sieu/estieu*' would not have worked if Bruyn Andrews had simply replaced the Niçard '*estieu*' (summer) with the Mentonnais translation '*éstade*', as listed in his dictionary of the dialect published two years later.[123] The song collected by Bruyn shows how the kind of informal bilingualism legal officials themselves claimed to practice was also expected from below, at least as far as the popular singing culture of Menton was concerned. Yet Bruyn's comment also shows how the judge remained a linguistic outsider even while communicating in patois; he simply hailed from the regional, rather than national capital.

These ambiguities were recognised by legal officials themselves. The members of the tribunal of the Indre claimed that "in certain criminal courts, for example the one sitting in Limoges, the president, the government commissar and the defence attorneys are obliged to take the floor in patois, otherwise they would be neither heard nor understood by the jurors, the witnesses or the accused".[124] This was necessary because the juries, witnesses and the accused, "belong ordinarily enough to the rural class of inhabitants".[125] The members of the appeal court of Agen echoed the familiar refrain that the ambulatory magistrate would be unable to understand the local language. This was especially problematic because "it is the class of people who speak only this idiom that find themselves most especially in the presence of the criminal courts, either as accused, or as witnesses".[126] Linguistic diversity was viewed by the members of the local judicial elites as the characteristic of a stigmatised social 'other'—as rural dwellers or, as the tribunal of the Manche labelled those who spoke no French, as 'the indigent and uncouth class'.[127] Yet this stigmatisation was accompanied by a valorisation of linguistic and cultural diversity, an ambiguity reflecting the interstitial position of those who staffed the law courts in the interior, who formed a hinge between the centre and local society.

The dynamic was similar in the annexed departments, where many of the same ambiguities were also present. Judges were keen to cement their position within the francophone legal system of the Napoleonic state. This was particularly striking in the case of the tribunal of the Lys, which as we have seen was composed entirely of judges native to the department. After extolling the virtues of appointing judges to their home departments, the tribunal criticised the composition of jury lists, which they claimed "always presents a mass of individuals of the most crass

ignorance, of which the best part do not know the French language, and the rest know neither how to read nor write".[128] Although such views may have emerged from existing tensions between Walloons and Flemish speakers, criticising non-French-speaking jurors also emphasised the value of the bilingual judges of the Lys. Their position rested on their ability to mediate between the francophone centre and Flemish-speaking local society. The legal profession under Napoleon acted as a hinge between the francophone structures of the French state and local society, leaving individual members of the legal elite to negotiate between these two poles of cultural identity. They were at once expected, as members of the legal bureaucracy, to move comfortably within French-speaking circles, yet remain enmeshed in local structures. As an examination of the correspondence relating to legal appointments in Liguria and the Rhineland shows, French language became a marker of a new identity for some, but for many more this ambiguity was a source of tension and alienation.

Language and Assimilation in the Legal Profession: The Examples of the Rhineland and Liguria

The government's language policy had a clear impact on the composition of the judiciary in both the Rhineland and Liguria. From the correspondence on appointments, I have been able to identify the origins—that is to say either their place of birth or the jurisdiction within which they trained—of 79 judges in the jurisdiction of the court of appeal of Genoa, and of 59 in that of Trier. The figures show that a substantially higher proportion of the judiciary in the Rhineland were taken from the local population than in the jurisdiction of Genoa: 66.1% in the former against 45.2% in the latter (31.6% from Genoa and 13.6% from the former duchy of Parma and Piacenza, which was also placed within the jurisdiction of the appeal court of Genoa). This was not due to a heavier reliance on personnel from the interior. If judges from Alsace, Lorraine, and the rest of France are taken together, the Rhineland had a larger proportion of judges from 'Old France' than Liguria. Rather, it resulted from the recruitment of officials from Piedmont, who comprised 26.6% of the total (Tables 6.1, 6.2).

The significance of this with regard to language becomes clear when one considers the conviction of French officials that Piedmont could provide a ready source of bilingual judges for other areas of Italy.[129] The large number of judges from Piedmont appointed in Genoa, and from Alsace and Lorraine appointed in the Rhineland, was part of a broader

Table 6.1 Judges in the jurisdiction of the court of appeal of Genoa by origin

Place of origin	*No. of judges*	*%*
France	17	21.5
Piedmont	21	26.6
Genoa	25	31.6
Parma and Piacenza	11	13.6
Italy (other)	5	6.3
Total	79	

Source An BB5 296–302 (Organisation judicaire- Cour d'appel de Gênes)

Table 6.2 Judges in the jurisdiction of the court of appeal of Trier by origin

Place of origin	*No. of judges*	*%*
Rhineland	39	66.1
Alsace	6	10.2
Lorraine	6	10.2
France (other)	8	13.6
Total	**59**	

Source An BB5 255–261 (Organisation judicaire- Cour d'appel de Trêves)

trend in appointments. The Napoleonic regime sought to balance the need to accommodate local elites and the desire to ensure the correct implementation of the French legal system. The government thus attempted to amalgamate the local legal establishment with personnel drafted from elsewhere in the Empire familiar with French legal practice and language.This policy was also reflected in the origins of francophone judges in Genoa—those judges who can be identified as having known French, either through correspondence with the Minister of Justice in the language or the comments of their superiors. Here, the Piedmontese overtook the Genoese as the largest single group, representing 32.4% of the identifiable francophone judges. A similar effect can be seen in relation to judges from Alsace and Lorraine in the Rhineland. Piedmont, Alsace, and Lorraine all became pools for the recruitment of bilingual, apparently acculturated judges. This is striking since Piedmont was only annexed to France in 1802, and when an English traveller in Turin visited the appeal court in October 1802, he found the proceedings conducted in Italian.[130] Clearly, a significant number of Piedmontese legal officials adjusted to the linguistic demands of the French state by

Table 6.3 Francophone judges in the jurisdiction of the appeal court of Genoa by origin

Place of origin	*No. of judges*	*%*
France	9	24.3
Piedmont	12	32.4
Genoa	3	8.1
Parma and Piacenza	10	27
Italy (other)	3	8.1
Total	37	

Source An BB5 296-302 (Organisation judicaire- Cour d'appel de Gênes)

Table 6.4 Francophone judges in the jurisdiction of the appeal court of trier by origin

Place of origin	*No. of judges*	*%*
Rhineland	13	52
Alsace	5	20
Lorraine	3	12
France (other)	4	16
Total	**25**	

Source An BB5 255–261 (Organisation judicaire- Cour d'appel de Trêves)

learning the language of Paris between the annexation of Piedmont in 1802, and 1805, when Genoa was incorporated into the Empire, making them strong candidates to help establish the French justice system there (Tables 6.3, 6.4).

In the Rhineland, the proportion of francophone judges originally from the region was 52%, lower than the proportion of native judges in the area's judiciary as a whole, which was 62.2%. The proportion of francophone judges from France, including Alsace and Lorraine, was higher than the proportion of judges from the same areas in the total population, again demonstrating the role as linguistic intermediaries envisaged for these judges by the government. In order to reconcile the impulse to impose French with the need for officials who might understand those they were judging, the government turned to the bilingual legal elites of Piedmont and Alsace Lorraine. While the linguistic particularity of the population was accommodated within the informal bilingualism of legal practice during hearings, judges themselves were pressured to conform to the linguistic demands of the centre, as the adjustment of

Piedmontese judges to French language proceedings shows. These legal officials secured their positions through the ability to function as cultural intermediaries between Paris and local society; for them, expertise both in the local language and in the authorised knowledge of the centralised bureaucracy was crucial.

These pressures allowed individuals who spoke French before the annexation to France to exploit their linguistic capacities. While Alsace and Lorraine were an important source of francophone judges in the Rhineland, a significant proportion of francophone judges were taken from local elites. As in Piedmont, proximity to France and the influence of the French language resulted in a degree of spread of French within certain sections of the elite. Rhinelanders were considered 'frenchified' by other Germans during the period, and proximity to France also facilitated cross border migration.[131] Historically, Protestants had moved from France into the Rhineland, although it was not unheard of for individuals to travel in the opposite direction; for example, in 1802, the president of the criminal court at Speyer was Charles Joseph Boost, a bilingual native of Mainz. Having studied at the universities of Mainz and Strasbourg, Boost fulfilled a number of roles for the electorate of Mainz before the entry of General Custine in 1792, at which point he accepted a position under the French.[132] The biography of J.J. Haan reveals a similar trajectory. Haan was born in 1754 "on the frontiers of the former territory of France, grew up in part in that Empire, in part in Germany".[133] Haan studied in Nancy, Trier, Mainz and Rheims, before being admitted to the *parlement* of Metz as a lawyer, a position he left for a role overseeing education, followed by a role in military justice in one of the electorates of the Holy Roman Empire.[134]

The linguistic demands of the state allowed individuals such as Haan and Boost to exploit their bilingualism, and encouraged others to cultivate knowledge of French. Such pressures were manifested in the disparaging attitude of the French towards the linguistic capabilities of local officials. In 1811, a leading candidate for the place of prosecutor at the Imperial court of Trier was described in glowing terms, save for his French: "He does not have the talent to speak French in a very easy and correct manner, being originally German".[135] A candidate for judge in the court at Zweibrücken was felt to be "generally esteemed for his probity and for his morality, but he expresses himself with difficulty in French".[136] These criticisms also reveal something of the impact of policies in favour of French, for such men must have been obliged to toil in the language so that such opinions could be

formed and deemed relevant. Above all, the French could view language as a proxy for political loyalty, or lack thereof. A certain M. Ferber, proposed for the place of *greffier* of the justice of the peace of Germünd in the Roer, was apparently "known as a capricious man, French despite himself, and not knowing sufficiently the French language".[137] The report on the candidate thus conflated his trustworthiness with his lack of linguistic ability, and above all, the damning conclusion that he would rather not be French at all.

Some individuals embraced French without reserve. Such was the case with Domenico Alberte Azuni, the author of the section on maritime law of the Napoleonic code. Azuni was born on Sardinia, taking up a role in the judiciary in the county of Nice before the Revolution. In the 1790s, he published a series of legal essays in Italian, but in 1798 he chose to write his history of Sardinia in French, with translations of his previous Italian language work into French to follow.[138] In May 1812, a petition was received by the Minister of Justice in which the author claimed that he believed it necessary "to call him before your particular attention at a time when Italian jealousy agitates to remove him on the wretched pretext that he is not Genoese. M. Azuni is much more than Genoese, because he is a good Frenchman".[139] The dynamic of tension in the courts existed as much between Piedmontese 'outsiders' and Genoese 'natives' as between Italians and French. Moreover, Azuni had invested in the French state, even the notion of being French, and the necessary corollary to this position was the use of the French language.

Azuni was probably not typical of the reaction of local officials to the state's pro-French language policy. The language, the policy and the means that the French used to pursue them were all rejected or contested in various ways, even by those who chose to serve the regime. This contestation frequently took the form of an explicit rejection of the outsiders drafted in by the French at least in part thanks to their linguistic capacity. In the courts of Genoa, this pitted the Genoese against Piedmontese, the former resentful of the favour shown to the latter by the French. In the Rhineland, it was the French who were considered rivals, with language frequently an issue. In the summer of 1799, a series of complaints were made against three French judges sitting on the civil court of the Rhin-et-Moselle. According to the German judges who expressed their discontent to the Minister of Justice, these three judges spoke no German, which meant a disproportionate quantity of work fell on their German colleagues.[140] These tensions lasted throughout French rule. In 1811, Dupont, the French vice president of the tribunal at Koblenz described a somewhat different experience: "I found

myself, on arriving in Koblenz, with 19 German judges who had only vague notions of the French language. […] It was then that I had to sacrifice myself, to guide the lawyers, to instruct the lawyers".[141] Dupont went on to note with dismay that his 'former disciples' were agitating to replace him, arguing that while they might need a Frenchman in the presidency, they would be better with a German in the vice presidency.[142] This in a sense represented a significant boundary, even for those who chose to serve the Napoleonic state. The use of French as the language of legal practice, like French rule itself, remained something foreign, imposed from the outside.

The often superficial impact of French cultural imperialism even amongst the elites who staffed the institutions of the French state was apparent in a dispute arising over the falsification of a certificate by Alexandre Buratti, a lawyer and substitute in the *cour de première instance* of San Remo. According to the minutes of the incident drafted by the prosecutor of the court, Buratti admitted his forgery, but sought the collusion of the other members of the court in covering up his actions. The minutes report that Buratti exlaimed, "'as for this last [the forgery] it is not prey for the prosecutor' and as he uttered these last words he fixed a spirited gaze upon us".[143] When the other members of the court reproached him for such a mutinous statement, Buratti "searched feebly then, even while admitting several times to having used that insulting phrase, to excuse himself by claiming that he knew the French language poorly; and he thus put us in a position to reply that he knows French well when it suits him".[144] Buratti manifested distaste for the central authority of the French state and crucially, when confronted with his corruption and impolitic choice of words, he pursued a strategy of renouncing his competence in French, unsuccessfully seeking refuge in the notion that, as an Italian, his grasp of French was tenuous, making the misunderstanding possible. He displayed no compunction about forfeiting his status as a French speaker, which had only served the transitory purpose of attaining employment within the bureaucracy.

The legal system was central to the regime's attempt to integrate the territories and populations of the Empire. The government considered it a tool with which it sought to unify and regularise the societies over which it ruled. This process of centralisation involved an effort to create a francophone legal system across the Empire. However, the features of this system enabled local legal elites to mediate the linguistic demands of state and local community. This placed members of the judiciary under the greatest linguistic pressure. It was they who would translate between the written French and the oral sphere of legal debate, and thus they who were forced to acculturate to

French rule by learning the language of the newly dominant state. Yet the apparent cultural dominance of French amongst this group was a chimera. As a professional grouping, a large swathe of the judiciary owed their positions to their knowledge of French, yet in none of the linguistically complicated communities of the empire did this result in the straightforward establishment of French as an uncomplicated marker of status and prestige. Some men, such as Azuni, did accept the prestige of French as a given. Above all, the members of the legal profession were engaged in a process of negotiation over cultural and linguistic identity between Paris and Province, a process analogous to that observed in the writings of the local officials who studied language for the Coqueberts and the teachers who sought to bring French to the Alpes-Maritimes. Their positions rested on their ability to mediate between state and local society, and the strategies they pursued reflected their need to establish their expertise both in the authorised knowledge of the centre and the particular knowledge of local society.

Notes

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21. Woloch, *New Regime*, pp. 317, 339.
22. An BB5 256 (Organisation judiciaire- Trèves) Procès-verbal de l'installation du tribunal de révision créé pour les quatre départements de la rive gauche du Rhin, 5 frimaire an VIII (26 Nov. 1799).
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28. An BB5 297 (Apennins) Oliveri, président du tribunal de première instance de Chiavari au Min. de la Justice, 16 Aug. 1808. At the festival of St. Napoleon in Chiavari in 1808, Oliveri complained that Charvillak, the imperial prosecutor of the criminal court, had usurped his place at the head of the procession in the absence of the prefect, general of the gendarmerie and president of the criminal court.
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CHAPTER 7

Organised Religion, Language, and the French State

On the afternoon of the 21st February 1803, the faithful of the parish of the Major in the town of Arles assembled in celebration of the forty hours' devotion. Nalis, the parish priest, had settled on the rite of penitence as the topic for his sermon. This may have seemed a less astute choice of subject when, mid-way through his instruction, an apprentice tanner named Louis Aillaud rose to harangue the unfortunate clergyman, shouting: "go f… yourself, we want none of your penitence".[1] Aillaud continued his invective as several members of the congregation ushered him forcefully from the church. The visibly shaken *curé* halted his sermon and descended the pulpit. The police commissioner despatched the following day to investigate the incident noted pointedly in his report that Aillaud had made his intervention "at the top of his voice in the idiom of the country"; that is, in the dialect of Provençal spoken in Arles.[2]

Languages other than French have often been associated with the persistence of religious belief and practice.[3] Religious observation, like the patois themselves, would simply fall away once the economic and political integration of the population of France made them obsolete.[4] The impression that Catholicism and regional languages were both characteristically traditional was underscored by the contributions of a vocal section of the French clergy who, at the end of the nineteenth century, increasingly viewed local languages as a bulwark against the corrupting influence of francophone modernity. In the 1890s, Justin Bessou, the Provençal poet and priest from the Aveyron insisted that "faith, patois and peasant are three which make one whole".[5] In the following decade, scores of

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Breton, Basque and Flemish clergymen staunchly resisted Emile Combes' interdiction of languages other than French in Catholic preaching and teaching.[6] Yet a century earlier, here was Aillaud, a Provençal speaker, lashing his pastor, in Provençal, over a fundamental tenet of Catholic doctrine, the sacrament of penance imposed by the priest during confession. Aillaud's harassment of his *curé* reminds us that the clergy were an elite whose interest in regional languages was grounded in an attempt to regulate the beliefs and practices of those who experienced the most meaningful parts of life in a tongue other than French. Preaching in patois was, according to one commentator, primarily an attempt to diffuse 'elite' religious culture and practice into a 'popular' milieu more effectively.[7]

Aillaud's intervention shows that we need to understand the place of language in religious practice not only in terms of Church-state relations and the struggles over secularisation and modernisation, but with reference to the strategies of clergymen and faithful as they sought to position themselves socially. While accounts of the incident provide no indication of the language used for the sermon by Nalis, the inclusion of the language in which Aillaud made his intervention as part of the police report appears only to underline his culpability. Hectoring the priest in French might have been considered less dangerous because the faithful were not expected to understand the national language. Tensions over the language of religious practice arose precisely because of the nature of the priest as a local elite whose role was to guide and regulate the community. Members of the clergy engaged in pastoral work were concerned with preserving their status as members of an educated elite, and cognisant that speaking French was one sign of membership in such a club. Above all, the relationship between religion and language cannot be reduced to a simple opposition between the French-speaking secular state and the patois-speaking church.

The Catholic Church and the Vulgar Language

While Latin dominated Catholic liturgy, vernacular languages necessarily played an important, if varied, role in the organised worship of the church. The use of a vernacular language was crucial in the practice of the faith, because assailing the congregation in what was essentially a dead and unfamiliar tongue could scarcely cater for the spiritual needs of the faithful. The official formulae for confession, baptism and marriage were all given over to the vernacular, which also replaced Latin in the parish *curé*'s *prône* or sermon, in the preaching of religious

missionaries, and of course in the Catechism, although it was not always clear which language functioned as the 'vernacular'.[8] In 1790, Abbé Grégoire included a question on the language of religion worship as part of his survey on the patois.[9] The responses generated by Grégoire's questionnaire reveal just how widely the place afforded to regional languages within religious practice of the Catholic Church varied.

In some parts of France, it seems that French played only a minor role. In Brittany, for example, Breton, rather than French, seems to have been the preferred language of the clergy when addressing the faithful. Pierre Riou, a wealthy farmer or *laboureur* from Plougonoil in the department of Finistère wrote to Grégoire that "we always preach in the countryside in Breton, the towns themselves share their conversations in the two idioms, the commodity of everyone".[10] The response from Gascon-speaking Mont-de-Marsan asserted that "we used to preach and we still do preach in Gascon in the countryside. This usage still exists in several towns".[11] In other areas, it was French rather than dialect that dominated the church's pastoral activities. This was the case in the Franche-Comté, where one respondent from Saint-Claude in the department of the Jura claimed that the local patois had never been used for preaching, and another informant from the same department elaborated that he had only ever known one *curé*, now deceased, who had preached in patois.[12] Similarly, the respondent from the town of Maringes, in the Auvergnat department of the Puy-du-Dome, claimed that "we do not believe that one ever preached in patois there, or else this usage is lost from inhabitants' memories".[13] In the Mâconnais region of Burgundy, all religious instruction was performed by the clergy in French, despite the fact that, according to one of Grégoire's correspondents, "there is no doubt that they would be, if not more fruitful, then at least more within their grasp, if they were conducted in patois".[14]

The social and linguistic divisions of a bilingual society were reflected in the languages employed for religious worship. The town–country divide in particular was reinforced by the language used in church. The political club of Carcassonne in the Languedoc wrote to Grégoire that "we preach in French in the town, the villages and in the *bourgs*: but the habit of preaching in patois is commonplace and practised almost everywhere else".[15] The distinction between town, where French might well dominate the language of religious practice, and village, where it was more likely to be the local language, was a palpable manifestation of the divergent status and prestige of the national language and the

local language, as was evident in the response received by Grégoire from the Limousin-speaking department of the Haute-Vienne. In Limoges, it was claimed that a century ago all public prayers and sermons in the town were conducted in dialect, and that just ten years ago "the sermon was conducted in patois for the first Mass of the three main parishes, attended by servants and artisans".[16] The great and the good, the socially aspirant and wealthy, would thus attend a service with sermon and prayer in the prestigious language of the royal court, while servants and artisans would worship in patois. It was claimed that less than a century beforehand even the public prayers and sermons of the church of Saint Peter, the town's first parish, were conducted in Limousin. While French dominated religious practice in the town, according to Grégoire's correspondents, "preaching currently is conducted in patois by the country *curé*, and the missionaries speak no other language there".[17]

In some cases, different elements of the religious life of a single community took place in different languages. François Chabot, the former Capuchin friar who went on to marry following the Civil Constitution of the clergy, in addition to serving as Grégoire's *vicaire général* in the Bishopric of Blois, wrote from the department of the Aveyron in the former Languedoc, that "everywhere sermons, as well as catechisms, are conducted in patois, with the exception of Rodez, Villefranche and Millau", thus reiterating the distinction between rural and urban religious practice.[18] However, he also reported that all the *sermons de parade*, the exterior celebrations of Catholicism, took place in French, even though most of those who understood the language rarely attended, at least according to Chabot.[19] Pierre Bernadau, formerly a lawyer in the parliament of Bordeaux, informed Grégoire that "we do not remember having ever heard someone preach in patois in this district, but the instruction of the catechism takes place in this idiom".[20]

The use of dialect by *curés* was a deliberate strategy by a francophone elite to appeal to their congregations. Collections of sermons and preaching guides invariably appeared in French, while those works intended for the consumption of the faithful—the collections of canticles, carols and prayers intended to guide the flock's contribution to the worship of the divine—were all frequently printed in regional languages. From the basis of this divergence in the kinds of religious texts printed in one or the other language, one commentator has drawn a distinction between the 'descendant' speech of the *curé* to his flock, generally appearing in French on the printed page, and the 'ascendant' speech

of the faithful towards God, published in regional languages so that the non-francophone worshipper might understand the significance of the words they were uttering.[21] The transition between languages might even take place within the pages of a single publication. In 1724, a collection of prayers and religious song for the use of the Jesuit missionaries in Marseille was produced by the official printers of the bishopric.[22] The volume contained morning and evening prayers in French, followed by a series of prayers set to music and canticles—predominantly, though not exclusively, in Provençal. The daily prayers offered by the Jesuits as a sign of their devotion were printed in French, while the religious songs—the tools with which they sought to excite fervour amongst a non-French-speaking public—appeared in Provençal.

The preference of the Catholic clergy for forming the written word in French rather than the less prestigious regional languages did not originate in the printing presses, or with typesetters habituated to the language of the capital. Manuscript versions of the religious texts used in Catholic devotion were invariably made in the language of Paris rather than the province. A collection of sermons from the parish of Saint-Pierre in Avignon, for example, was drafted entirely in French, save for a litany dedicated to the patron Saint Peter of Luxembourg, which was written in Latin and accompanied by a song in Provençal exhorting the congregation to "sing everyone to the honour of St Peter of Luxembourg".[23] The parish archives of the village of Maubec in the Vaucluse contain a volume of eighteenth century sermons written in French, with Latin passages translated into the language of Paris, but with no trace of Provençal to be found.[24] Of course, the language in which a sermon or other element of religious service was written need not have determined the language in which it was used. It was rare for catechisms in the eighteenth century to be produced in a language other than French, yet one presumes that Pierre Bernadau's observation that the catechism took place in the local language must have held for many areas of France where clergymen were keen to imbue the tenets of Catholicism in a non-francophone population.[25] Within the written culture and religious practice of the clergy, French and dialect fulfilled distinct roles. In this way, the linguistic stratification of French society imprinted itself on the hierarchy and practices of French Catholicism. As the correspondence gathered by the Coqueberts between 1806 and 1812 shows, the lack of conventions regarding orthography and grammar often meant the local notability did not feel comfortable writing in dialect.

To judge from their writings as well as from accounts of their religious practice, a preference for French in contexts ranging from pulpit to page was common within the ranks of the clergy during the late eighteenth century. Between the prestige of French as the language of educated written culture, and strains of enlightened Catholicism, which saw the improvement of society as part of the church's mission, the place of regional languages in religious practice came under question. The episcopate was central in determining linguistic policy within the church, and some bishops disposed to reform sought to banish regional languages from the religious practice of their clergy. According to a response sent to Grégoire from the south-western department of the Gers, Claude-Antoine de Apchon, Bishop of Auch from 1776 until 1783, and his successor, Louis-Apollinaire de la Tour de Pin-Montauban, had both attempted to replace Gascon with French in the religious practice of the diocese. Their efforts floundered on the opposition of the parish *curés*, for whom "instruction of patois put them out of work".[26]

Some *curés* did consider their role to include enlightening their flock by introducing literacy and the French language. Jean-Baptiste Deguigues sought to bring metropolitan culture to his parishioners in a small village near Vence during the early years of the nineteenth century by lending books and giving readings at the vigil.[27] Deguigues' efforts to educate his parishioners were ultimately unsuccessful. He was accused of witchcraft and debauchery and denounced by his bishop as a Jansenist, and such projects were not the rule amongst parish clergy. However, the *curés* of the diocese of Auch were not alone in viewing the use of regional languages as an unavoidable necessity for the fulfilment of their pastoral functions. However, this was likely a reflection of the realities of administering a parish, rather than a rejection of francophone metropolitan culture. At a cantonal conference in March 1719, the Bishop of Vence asked his clergy whether "*curés* are obliged to understand the language of their parishioners, or does it suffice that they have an aide who knows it".[28] Of the 15 local *curés* present, only one, Eusiéros of the parish of Saint-Paul, claimed that a *curé* could continue to serve his parishioners without speaking the local language. Eusiéros reasoned that the *curé* could still instruct those who understood French but could not speak it—"which is not all that rare"—while working through a secondary who did speak the language would enable him to minister the rest of his flock.[29] Most of the other responses held that no *curé* could carry out his functions without speaking and understanding the language of his

parishioners. One *curé* worried that a priest who not could explain the tenets of the Catholic faith to his parishioners in a language they could understand "would be an idol and not a pastor", a curious statement since one presumes he would not have considered the preponderance of Latin in the Catholic liturgy to lead to idolatry. In most of the responses, however, the focus was on the practical realities of administering spiritual succour to the inhabitants of the parish. A village priest had to preach the gospel and take confession, which could only be done successfully if priest and penitent understood each other.

A number of those who responded to the Bishop of Vence went beyond a consideration of pastoral duties, arguing that the village *curé* should be concerned with the temporal as well as spiritual welfare of the parish, making knowledge of the local language even more important. The vicar of Hautes-Gréolières, pointed out that it was the vicar's duty not only to "instruct the flock with which he has been entrusted, distributing the bread of the Word of God and administering the sacraments, principally that of penitence", but also to fulfil the "functions of doctor and judge". In doing so, he introduced the unmistakeable motif of the *bon curé*, the village priest concerned above all with the interests and well-being of his flock, to a discussion of the linguistic capacity needed to successfully minister to a parish. However, even though the clergy of Vence asserted the necessity of employing regional languages in the organised worship of the Catholic Church, they did so on the basis that without speaking the language of the people they could not instruct their flocks. They used the local language to bring the religious beliefs and practices of the people into line with the doctrines of Catholicism.

The Episcopate, the Village *Curé* and the Lay Community—Language, Status, and Religion

The clergy of the diocese of Vence embraced the use of regional language as a practical necessity. Without recourse to the local langauge, it would have been impossible to stimulate devotion amongst their flocks. However, this should not obscure the extent to which they themselves may have preferred to make use of the French language, and indeed the issue of language cut across probably the most bitter division in the French Catholic Church of the eighteenth century—that between the parish clergy, the *curés* and *vicaires* directly occupied with the care of souls; and the episcopate, the almost entirely noble ranks of bishops,

vicaires généraux and those in receipt of benefices like priories and abbeys without pastoral functions.[30] Because it was virtually impossible for a commoner to obtain an office above that of a simple *curé* in the eighteenth century, and because so little of the spectacular wealth of the Catholic Church found its way into the relatively impoverished hands of the parish clergy, an enormous store of resentment was built up by these men towards their episcopal superiors.[31] This tension between the parish clergy and the episcopate could take on a linguistic dimension. A nobleman occupying the prestigious office of bishop would generally express himself in the prestigious language of Paris. By contrast, a parish *curé*, an individual who was educated, who spoke French, and who was socially distinct from the agricultural workers amongst whom he probably lives, might still find himself obliged to fulfil his ecclesiastical duties in the local language. When the *curé* of Issole responded to the Bishop of Vence's question in March 1719 by observing that "we would object that the Bishops do not understand the language of their diocesans, yet are the first priests of their diocese", he may well have been expressing a sentiment shared by many of his colleagues.[32]

Members of the clergy who were obliged to undertake their duties in the local language may well have found themselves in an invidious position, for the upwardly mobile sections of society desired francophone eloquence in public pronouncements. In 1807, the Bishop of Aix wrote to the minister of religion to denounce a 'libellous' pamphlet circulating in the town of Arles. This pamphlet criticised the choice of Easter preacher in the church of St. Trophime, and "former Gascon monk, known for his politico-religious opinions, that he dredged up from the banks of the Rhine and the Morbihan, and with which he flooded several southern departments". The author of the pamphlet described his indignation upon hearing this monk preach, with his "Béarnais accent, monotonous discourse, and indecent gestures".[33]

With the parish clergy, caught between the desire to demonstrate status and learning through the use of French, and the need to be understood by the congregation, the language of official religious practice in some parts of France became divorced from the language of popular religious devotion. In the Jura, for example, the same observer who informed Abbé Grégoire that the clergy preached exclusively in French wrote that "in several village schools they pray to God in patois, or at least, they conducted certain prayers in patois".[34] In 1815, the Prefect of

the Bouches du Rhône, Christophe de Villeneuve, published a descriptive travelogue of his journey across the valley of Barcelonnette in the Basses-Alpes, claiming that "everyone understands French […] and hardly any other language is used for preaching, sermons and religious instruction".[35] However, while organised religion may have taken place in the national language, popular devotion still took place in Provençal. In 1835, Abel Hugo inserted a series of religiously themed questions and responses into the language section of the Basses Alpes entry in his *France Pittoresque* to illustrate the local dialect.

Dem. outé auaras passa?	Question, Where will you go?
Rép. A la vallé de Josaphat. D. Qué li trouveras? R. Lou mouvais Satanas. D. Te dira: outé vas? R. Lou li dirai: Laissa-me passa, mouvais Satanas, que iou m'en agué adoura Dieou et la Vierge Maria, lou jou de la Purification.	Response. To the valley of Josaphat. D. What will you find there? R. Satan, the evil one. D. If he asks you: where are you going? R. I will respond: Let me pass, evil one Satan, that I am going to worship God and the Virgin Mary, on the day of purification.[36]

According to Hugo, the mothers of the region would wake their children at midnight on the day of the feast of the Virgin Mary. They would pray together until dawn, when they would recite this series of questions and responses.

A similar linguistic divergence between the official religious practices carried out in church under the auspices of the parish clergy, and the religious devotion of the laity outside of church, was evident in the Dauphiné. In the diocese of Gap and Embrun, as in the department of the Basses Alpes to the south, the clergy invariably fulfilled their religious duties in French.[37] However, Abbé Jean Gondret, who penned a description of the customs, beliefs and religious practices of the valley of Queyras in the 1850s, noted a series of formulaic, religiously inflected sayings, which were reproduced by those taking part in various rites of passage. For example, when attending a wake, the visitor would offer, "*Dio gardé aquous qué restoun*, God protects those who rest here" upon entering the house of the deceased. The host would respond, "*Dio gardé il vouestré*. May God keep your own".[38] The relationship between faith, language and the Catholic Church was a complicated one. Clergy used dialect to preach in many instances, precisely as a tool for regulating popular beliefs. At the same time, popular belief was often expressed in

dialect, even where official religious practice took place in French. The linguistic choices of clergy and parishioners cannot be reduced to a vision of dialect as a bulwark against secularisation.

Liturgy, Language and Religious Reform from Revolution to First Empire

As a whole, the French clergy confronted the linguistic diversity of the French population at the turn of the nineteenth century in an inconsistent and somewhat ad hoc manner. The religious mission of the Catholic Church made it difficult for them to abandon entirely the languages spoken by large numbers of the faithful, yet they as much as any other strata of French society felt the dominance of French over public pronouncements, and the pressure to distinguish oneself through the use of the prestigious national language. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the cataclysmic upheavals experienced by the Church during the Revolution brought the issue of language into broader debates around the reconstruction of religion in France.

With the onset of the Revolution, the Catholic Faith, like so many other areas of French cultural life, suddenly appeared apt for reform. The liturgy of the Catholic Church, and specifically the Latin in which it was performed, were singled out as anachronistic and alienating for the faithful. In his letter to Grégoire on the patois of the Aveyron, the former Capuchin François Chabot speculated that "the national assembly will probably feel that the French language is as appropriate as bad Latin to attract the attention of the Supreme Being".[39] This was not simply about the ignobility of prayer in 'bad Latin'. Chabot viewed the introduction of a French language liturgy as a means to establish social concord. A centuries-old rift could be bridged as Catholics would be reunited with their Protestant brethren who, he claims, "would never be separated from us if the court in Rome had not persevered in scorning the most just of their complaints".[40] Along with Latin, Chabot also wanted to banish dialect from the church. He recommended that rural *curés* preach their sermons in both French and the local language, thereby habituating their parishioners to the national tongue, preparing the way for dialect to be jettisoned entirely from religious practice. Chabot was just as committed to the linguistic unification of the nation as Grégoire, and he saw a crucial role for the Church, and especially for a French language liturgy,

in uniting the nation. He wrote: "liturgy in a single language would remove an additional obstacle [to civil union]".[41]

As Ferdinand Brunot observed, the issue of a French language liturgy was fraught during the Revolution, and the Revolutionary Constitutional Church returned to the issue later in the 1790s.[42] In a move described in detail by Brunot, the National Council of the Constitutional Church decreed in November 1797 that the '*langue vulgaire*' would occupy a far more prominent role in Catholic worship. The vernacular langauge was to replace Latin in all prayers that formed part of the priests' sermons, and in those churches where more than one mass was held on a Sunday, a reading from scripture in the vernacular was to take place during the first and last service of the day.[43] This was not simply about making the organised manifestations of Catholicism more accessible for the laity; the National Council sought to become the eponymous founder of a genuinely national church. It was thus decreed that a new ritual would be drafted, in which the administration of the sacraments would take place in French, while the formulae that accompanied them remained in Latin. The objective was to nationalise religion, and mirrored state-driven efforts towards national unification. This became evident in the next article, which stipulated that "in the dioceses where particular dialects are in use, the pastors are invited to redouble their efforts to spread the knowledge of the national language".[44]

The task of drafting the new French rituals of the Church fell to Ponsignon, the *vicaire général* of the diocese of Versailles, though it would ultimately prove a thankless undertaking. Ponsignon's French language sacraments, and their preliminary adoption for the dioceses of Versailles, stimulated a fierce pamphlet dispute.[45] A denunciation of Ponsignon by Jean-Baptiste Pierre Saurine, the constitutional Bishop of Dax, appeared in the *Annales de la religion*, the Gallican and Jansenist-inflected paper edited by prominent figures in the Constitutional Church.[46] Saurine began with a lengthy discussion of the council of Trent, cited by the Bishop of Versailles as justification for the administration of the sacraments in French, observing that it had never been intended for the vernacular to replace Latin, but merely for vernacular explanations to supplement the liturgy in Latin. He then raised the spectre of France's regional languages being used for the sacraments, necessitating the repeated translation of the liturgy, which could only lead to error:

> How can people who speak languages unknown to everyone else, such as the Basques, Bas-Bretons etc. be assured that the divine service, translated into their language by particular people, and not examined and approved by the Church, contains no capital error, no heresy? How could the Church examine it, if no priest knows their language?[47]

Saurine's liturgical conservatism was centred on the troubling, discordant effects of translation, and followed anxiety within eighteenth century thought over the pernicious effects of linguistic diversity. Thinkers like Locke argued that political conflict was generated by an inability to grasp the external world satisfactorily through language, for if only the circumstances of the polity could be put into words clearly enough, everyone would surely agree on the correct course of action.[48] Latin for Saurine was a guarantee of theological rectitude, where translation into other languages would bring only schism, error and heresy.

Ponsignon rebutted Saurine's criticism in his own pamphlet, *Apologie de l'usage de la langue française dans l'administration des sacremens* (Apology for the use of French Language in the Administration of the Sacraments). There had never been any question, he claimed, of translating the liturgy into these other languages. That temptation would be removed by the efforts of the current government, "which will soon make French the vernacular in these countries".[49] However, Ponsignon was in a clear minority within the Constitutional Church. Jean-Baptiste Royer, the constitutional Bishop of Paris, endorsed Saurine's savaging of the project.[50] The Bishop of Rennes, Claude Le Coz, echoed Saurine in a denunciation penned for the *Annales* in December 1799: "it would be spreading gruesome seeds of division into the Church, which would soon be multiplied and disseminated by ignorance or the malice of translators".[51] According to Le Coz, translating the liturgy into Provençal, Languedocien, Basque and Breton "would be to damage good sense', for it was far from certain that these languages would ever be suitable for this 'strange innovation".[52] The scepticism of Le Coz, who otherwise expressed affection for Breton, his 'mother tongue', underscored the prestige of French. French might possess the requisite dignity for religious worship but the regional languages did not. The strength of opposition to the introduction of the French language into the liturgy of the Constitutional Church became evident from a letter in the *Annales* signed by 13 bishops in support of Saurine's arguments.[53]

Displacing Latin from the Church's liturgy was too extreme even for the reform-minded prelates of the Constitutional Church, but the French state under Napoleon still saw the Catholic Church as a tool that might be turned to the creation of a common French culture. One of Napoleon's first acts in power was to begin negotiation of a new concordat with Rome, toppling the already precarious edifice of the Constitutional Church in the process. This move towards religious conciliation flowed from a pragmatic desire for social order—for an end to the religiously inspired civil conflict of the previous decade.[54] In part, this more pragmatic attitude to the Catholic Church meant an attempt to re-sacralise governmental authority. State officials were to be given prominence at religious services, leading to interminable disputes over position and status. In Grasse, for example, an intense row arose between the town's *curé* and the president of the local tribunal, who wanted to install his own ornate pew in the church in order to engender respect for the legal system.[55] The Concordat did not mean an end to the tensions in church–state relations unleashed by the Revolution. Napoleon saw in the Church a means of securing civil peace, but only once the primacy of state over Church was secured. The Organic Articles, implemented in 1802, obliged all seminaries to teach Bossuet's four articles of 1682, a particularly strong expression of Gallicanism, the doctrine that the Gallican or French Catholic church had special rights and exemptions from Papal authority. In the annexed departments, ecclesiastical institutions all became part of the Gallican church. The regime manifested a strong desire to see religious union follow political union, and the French administrators to whom clergymen now had to answer displayed little tolerance for local particularism, such as the baroque Catholicism of northern Italy.[56] Inevitably, as the state attempted to unify religious practice within its expanded borders, language again became an issue.

A crucial step in harmonising Catholic practices and beliefs across the Empire was the introduction of a uniform catechism, and the state pursued this project with gusto. Previously, the catechism used in a diocese to prepare young Catholics for their first communion was a matter decided by the local bishop. Napoleon abrogated this authority to the state, promulgating a new catechism for use across the Empire. In addition to a few choice additions about the duty owed by Catholics to Caesar, the Imperial Catechism was intended to bring a degree of conformity and harmony to the Catholics of the Empire, but achieved the reverse. The Imperial Catechism sparked resistance across the Empire.[57]

In Belgium, for example, the bitter religious conflict unleashed by the opposition of Corneille Stevens and his followers to the concordat was aggravated by the Catechism. The Bishop of Namur complained to the Minister of Religion that his authority would be destroyed by any perception that he had meekly acquiesced to an imposition from Paris—especially if it carried the imperial crest and was prefaced by an Imperial decree.[58] While the insult to episcopal authority sparked a revolt in Belgium, in Italy it was the language that proved unpalatable. In 1808, an Italian translation of the Catechism was published in Turin, prompting the same fears over imprecision expressed by Saurine in relation to the translation of the liturgy. According to Jacques Raillon, who would be named Bishop of Orléans in 1810 and was charged by the Minister of Religion with examining the translation, the version was not "as precise as it should have been: there are additions in several places, and in many others where nothing has been added, the version is not as literal as the genius of the Italian language would permit".[59] In 1811, Pommereux, as Director of the Press, ordered the confiscation of all the old diocesan catechisms still in circulation in Belgium and the Rhineland. Pommereux also expressed concerns over the accuracy of translations of the Imperial Catechism, recommending that any versions in a different language be authorised by the state and that the French text should be presented in a second column beside the new version, as was the case in those departments where laws were published in a different language.[60]

Given the difficulties in administering a church, and indeed a polity, splintered by linguistic divisions, it is unsurprising that the state put certain members of the episcopate under pressure to expedite the spread of the French language. In March 1805, then Minister of Religion Jean-Etienne-Marie Portalis, wrote to the Bishop of Nice and the Prefect of the Alpes-Maritimes at the behest of Napoleon following a report that "in one of the churches in Nice we used to preach at Lent in the Italian language". Portalis left scant room for negotiation: "it is necessary that … religious teaching must take place, like all public acts, in the national language. Such is the will of his Imperial Majesty".[61] However, both the Prefect and the Bishop of Nice replied to Portalis urging him to reconsider, and the minister of religion duly addressed a report to the Emperor observing that the preachers for the coming Easter service had already been chosen, that they were incapable of giving their sermons in French, and that replacements could not be found at such short notice.[62] Portalis successfully obtained a year-long reprieve from the Emperor, and the relieved Bishop

of Nice wrote to the Prefect thanking him for his support in front of the Minister. He added that introducing French into the religious instruction of the diocese would be difficult because the majority of his priests did not speak the language, and the majority of the faithful did not understand it. Perversely, the Bishop was led to consider the introduction of a practice imported from France, but perhaps not the one Portalis had in mind, for he resolved to instruct his clergy that, having abjured Italian, those who found themselves faced with "the impossibility of preaching in French, should preach in patois, like they preach throughout Provence and elsewhere".[63]

A year later, the state again sought to put the clergy to work spreading French. The Bishop of Metz was instructed to 'invite' his clergy to preach and conduct the catechism in French, or at least in French and German. The Bishop expressed support for the objective, responding that: "I have myself felt for a long time the importance of creating a uniform language in all the reaches of the Empire and I have employed all the means within my power to achieve this". However, he encountered a number of obstacles, the most significant of which "comes from the fact that a great number of priests only know German". This was a difficulty he had attempted to solve at source, by striving "to ordain only those who know at least a little French".[64] However, his efforts had not yet achieved their desired effect, and the Bishop confessed he would have to reflect along with his *vicaires générales* on what further measures might be taken.[65] Similar difficulties were encountered by the Bishop of Nice upon the expiry of his period of grace. This time, he was granted leave to allow preaching in Italian until such time as his seminary could furnish him a sufficient number of French-speaking priests.[66]

This was neither clerical obstructionism on the part of the Bishops of Nice and Metz, nor did it represent a deeper commitment to regional linguistic diversity, for the promises both men made to pursue other means of spreading French were not idle. The seminaries of Nice and Metz were governed by regulations including the sorts of rules on the use of language more commonly associated with the secular institutions of the Third Republic. Article 17 of the regulations for the seminary of Nice, drafted in December 1807, stated that "patois is expressly prohibited in the seminary; one must only speak the French and Latin languages there".[67] In the diocese of Metz, German was not entirely excluded from the seminary, probably reflecting the greater prestige of

German compared with the dialects of France, although there was a clear effort to elevate the status of French above that of German. German-speaking priests were obliged to attend French lessons, while for their francophone peers learning German was optional. However, the starkest indication of which language was to be favoured could be found within the general disciplinary regulations, which held that "it is forbidden to speak German during recreation time, in all of the small seminaries".[68] Such rules were intended to create a stigma around the other language, to inculcate a sense of shame amongst speakers who would come to dissociate the language from public contexts and relegate it to the private sphere. That they should be promulgated by prominent members of the episcopate confounds the common expectation that the church was always to be found in the vanguard of resistance to the language policy of the French state.

Of course, Metz had been part of France for several centuries before the Revolution, and Nice had long faced towards France as much as Italy. It was easy for administrators to envisage the assimilation of these areas into a French cultural, as well as political area—easier perhaps than some of the further flung areas incorporated into the state during the period. The Minister of Religion wrote to the Prefect of the Alpes-Maritimes in 1805 on the subject of Italian language preaching:

> How has it come to be that today in a French department whose inhabitants have never stopped understanding or speaking our language, that we believe ourselves obliged to use a different one for religious instruction? […] your department has recognised that during its time as part of the French territory: now that those who live there, along with ourselves, form one single, same people, the French people […] it is necessary that we are henceforth united by the same language.[69]

Evidently, this could not be said for the large parts of northern Italy, the Rhineland, Belgium and the Netherlands that became annexed departments. If the government could not impose French on the clergy of areas like Nice and Metz, the chances of imposing French on more distant possessions with no history of francophone literary culture were remote.

The influence of Napoleonic rule on the place of French in clerical life in these areas, to judge by the place the language occupied in the seminaries of northern Italy, varied greatly, and in some places was marginal. In the seminaries at Arezzo and Sansepolcro, teaching

was confined to Latin and Italian.[70] French was not entirely ignored on the Peninsula, however. The regulations of seminaries in areas that had spent longer under French rule, such as Casale Monferrato, Asti, Parma and Turin, all required their students to study French, and held classes in the language for local priests who were unfamiliar with French.[71] Despite these injunctions, it is unclear how seriously the study of French was taken in these institutions. François-André Dejean wrote to the Minister of Religion in December 1812 outlining the need to reorganise the diocesan seminary. According to Dejean, a good number of the seminary's regulations had become redundant, and, "I have also observed that another part, over the course of time has gradually fallen into a state of oblivion".[72] It is not clear whether the obligation to learn French was one of the regulations ignored within the seminary, though implementing French language tuition was one of Dejean's aims in reorganising the seminary. As he wrote in the new regulations, "having become French, the language of the nation must henceforth be an essential part of students' instruction". In pursuit of this aim, not only would students be obliged to follow a course in French, they would face an oral examination in the language three times a year.[73]

Dejean may have supported the regime's cultural politics, but he displayed no great urgency—the Bishop had arrived in Asti in 1809. Moreover, Dejean was a French bishop imposed on Asti by the regime, and struggled to command loyalty from his clergy throughout the period.[74] Hostiliy towards Dejean on the part of the local clergy might also explain why the previous seminary regulations, which had included an obligation to study French, were treated as an irrelevance. In short, episcopal willingness to support efforts to spread French did not necessarily impact greatly on religious practice. The Bishop of Vercelli probably struck a more realistic note when he flatly refused to impose French language preaching on his diocese in 1809. As he explained, "it is not possible to teach in French. Our teaching tends to prepare students for the Christian instruction of the faithful. Yet the faithful observers in my diocese do not understand French at all". This was, he asserted, all the more justifiable given that in provinces that had long been part of France, like Alsace and Brittany, preaching and the catechism frequently took place in a language other than French. The need to learn French was an unwelcome and impractical imposition for the Bishop, who observed that "it is a lot to ask that we teach students to read and stammer badly in French, when we priests do not speak it, and only write it poorly". However, far

graver than the discomfort felt amongst the clergy from the imposition of French would be the impact on the laity: "it would be to abandon the people if we made them speak French in church".[75]

The opposition of the Bishop of Vercelli to the use of French in religious practice reflected a broader struggle that characterised much of French rule in Italy during the Napoleonic period. The French sought not only to rule, but to govern, to reform social, cultural and religious norms so as to render the territories over which they had dominion both more enlightened and more French.[76] In the parts of Italy under French domination, this effort was problematic for the church. Reforming religious practice and institutions, introducing a new language to religious worship, was not simply a usurpation of episcopal authority, it also threatened to alienate the laity from the church. As a result, the religious policies of the Napoleonic state, and in particular the enduring obsession with clerical oath taking, which perturbed the ranks of the clergy as they became subjects of the Empire, functioned as a clarion call to resistance against state authority in the provinces.[77]

These difficulties in Italy inevitably reflected the thorny realities of occupation. Yet such conflicts were an iteration of wider struggles taking place across France, not only between state and episcopal authority, but between the officially sanctioned culture of the metropolis, and the religious practices considered in some sense peripheral, whether as 'foreign' or 'popular'. While more conciliatory in its attitude to religion than the Jacobin de-Christianisers of the year II, the Napoleonic regime still sought to establish a high degree of centralised governmental control over the church and practices like religious holidays.[78] The best known consequence of this tussle was the imprisonment of Pius VII at Fontainebleau, although even the ostensibly conciliatory period following the concordat witnessed a degree of religious dissent. In 1804, the government drew up a list of politically seditious priests in the departments of France.[79] The clergy of some departments, such as the Breton department of Morbihan, the Gers in the south of France and the Rhenish department of the Sarre were listed simply as 'tranquil'. By contrast, other departments, such as the Tarn in Languedoc and the Gascon department of the Landes were signalled as centres of religious and political dissent, without individual malefactors being named. For most, however, a number of priests were cited individually, along with an outline of their indiscretions, which varied from refusing to acknowledge the authority of the Bishop to outright denunciations

of the concordat in writing or from the pulpit. This was accompanied by a decision on precisely what action should be taken against these individuals. Those deemed to pose the greatest threat were exiled to Turin or Rimini in northern Italy. This was the fate of Jean-Joseph-François Costaing, a native of Avignon arrested in the Bouches du Rhône as a 'dangerous troublemaker', who had been apprehended with a series of seditious pamphlets including one entitled *Anti-Christianism or the so-called Concordat*, which he had penned himself. Others deemed less dangerous, such as the clutch of priests in the Charente Inférieure who, while apparently reconciled to the concordat refused communion with their bishop, were placed under surveillance.

The distribution of these priests does not reveal patterns that are any more concrete than does the distribution of oath taking during the Revolution. Certainly, many of the areas that had seen widespread religious and civil conflict during the Revolution remained problematic for the government, with the west of France in particular offering a disproportionately high number of troublesome priests. Similarly, the Ile-de-France and surrounding areas in the centre and into Lorraine remained broadly untroubled by religiously inflected political dissent. However, adhesion to the concordat frequently reflected not only regional religious culture, but also the character and nature of the episcopal hierarchy in certain areas, and the relationship of the bishop to his clergy. The difficulties in the Haut-Rhin, for example, stemmed from the appointment of the constitutional Bishop of Dax, Jean-Baptiste-Pierre Saurine to the archbishopric of Strasbourg. The resistance of the clergy of the Haut-Rhin seem to have been rooted in the perception that Saurine ran his diocese in a partisan fashion, favouring juring priests, as much as a principled rejection of a reform-minded constitutional bishop.[80]

If there was to be no repeat of the religious discord that had wracked the nation during the Revolutionary period within 'Old France', these seditious priests remind us that tensions over Church-state relations, as well as the nature of the Catholicism that was to be practised, continued throughout the Napoleonic regime. However, the relationship between religious dissent and linguistic diversity was not a straightforward one. In Finistère, ten clergymen were signalled as politically problematic. However, the two other departments with Breton-speaking populations—the Morbihan and the Côtes du Nord—were relatively tranquil, with two *curés* in the latter department the sum total of religious dissenters. There were hotspots in the south, particularly the Landes and in the Archdiocese

of Montpellier, yet much of Provence was comparatively placid. By contrast, the Walloon-speaking Sambre-et-Meuse, and French-speaking Vendée joined Breton-speaking Finistère as central loci for the activities of the Stevenists and the *Petite église*, while much of the German-speaking Rhineland and Flemish-speaking Belgium was untroubled.

This is not to say that the issue of language was unconnected with those surrounding the reform of Catholic practice and the relations between Church and state that characterised the period. The state viewed promulgating the French language within the practice of the church as a way of forging a broader national community. The numerous seminary regulations, which included articles necessitating the teaching of the French language, along with the evidence of direct ministerial interventions on the subject indicate a fairly consistent policy in this regard, even if short-term exceptions had to be made in some areas. Yet these disputes over the language of religious instruction interacted in a complicated way with the more general efforts towards the reform and management of religious practice pursued by the regime during the period.

Resisting the use of French did not necessarily reflect a broader hostility towards the regime or French rule in particular. Grimaldi, the *vicaire général* of Nice who had consistently petitioned the government to allow the preaching in the Alpes-Maritimes to continue in Italian, was not implacably opposed to reforms to Catholic practice, even those emanating from Paris. In 1808, he wrote to the Minister of Religion advocating that the Imperial Catechism be complemented with a unified liturgy that could serve for every diocese in the Empire. As he suggested, "Your Excellency would perhaps deem it useful to prescribe a similar goal for the redaction of liturgy, which after having been approved by His Majesty and His Holiness, could become commonplace in all the churches in the French Empire".[81] Yet while Grimaldi supported the idea of a liturgy compiled and authorised by the state, his remarks on language revealed the bind in which reform-minded members of the clergy found themselves. According to Grimaldi, the Roman ritual governing ceremonies such as marriage and baptism, still in use in many of the dioceses of France, was too often an obstacle to the faithful who rarely spoke Latin. Grimaldi argued that, "their piety would find a useful aid in the short instructions in vulgar language contained in the diverse rituals particular to certain dioceses".[82]

While this solution was hardly radical (the Council of Trent settled on the same remedy), it reveals that Grimaldi was not opposed in principle either to state-driven reform or the use of the vernacular in church. Rather, the issue was choosing which language was to be considered the vulgate, which might actually enhance the participation of the laity in religious ceremonies. The issue of language within the church during the Napoleonic period might thus be understood as a process of conflict between three distinct parties: the officially sanctioned and promulgated metropolitan culture of Paris; the divergent preferences and religious practices of the faithful; and the clergy. The members of the clergy were themselves divided over the legitimacy of the Napoleonic regime, and the desirability of reform to religious institutions. Many bishops were caught between, on the one hand, government authorities that sought to use the church as an instrument to make the population more French and society better ordered, and the preferences of their flocks on the other hand. More than this, however, they were themselves torn between didactic impulses and the church's spiritual mission—between the desirability of reform and the need to speak to the people.

Religious Dissent and Linguistic Conformity—The Case of Alsace

Religious communities were forced to negotiate these complex tensions between the nation-building efforts of the state and their own religious and linguistic particularities. This was, however, not a straightforward struggle between the partisans of regional culture and the reforming central authority. Local religious and political elites were often pro-French in their linguistic attitudes, at least in those areas where the language had historically enjoyed prestige as the 'H' variety employed in elite written culture. They were invested simultaneously in their own religious practices and in the French state and national culture, which could grant cultural capital along with political and social power, and as a result the politics of religion often unfolded in a complicated pattern of accommodation and resistance. There is no better case study for such a process than the confessional and linguistically divided Alsatian department of the Haut-Rhin.

During the Napoleonic period, the Haut-Rhin was a complex agglomeration of territory, not all of which had belonged to France before the Revolution. The predominantly German-speaking rump of the department had formed 'upper' Alsace before the Revolution, along

Table 7.1 Population of the towns of Colmar, Mulhouse, Ribeauvillé and Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines by Religious Confession, 1817

Commune	*Catholics*	*Lutherans*	*Calvinists*	*Anabaptists*	*Jews*	*Total*
Colmar	9117	4596	0	0	247	13,960
Mulhouse	1979	1008	6076	18	266	9347
Ribeauvillé	3661	805	13	24	391	4895
Ste Marie aux Mines	4100	1810	1972	150	10	7042
Total	18,858	8219	8061	192	914	36,244

Source AdHR V 1 (Recensement des populations des trois cultes)

with the mainly French-speaking area to the South, which today forms the Territoire de Belfort. To this was added, in 1798, the German-speaking and resolutely Calvinist republic of Mulhouse, and in 1800 the linguistically mixed territory of the Swiss districts of Biel and Délémont. The department was also home to fairly substantial religious minorities. A survey carried out by the Prefect in 1837, which of course excluded the Swiss territory detached from France after the fall of Napoleon, gave a figure of 46,311 Protestants and 10,643 Jews from a total population that numbered 424,258, according to the 1836 census.[83] Moreover, these religious minorities were largely urban and wealthy. According to a report written by the Prefect in 1821, the Protestant communities of the department were "more hard-working, more instructed, more rich" than the Catholic ones.[84] A study carried out by the Prefect in 1817, of the religious populations of Colmar, Mulhouse, Ribeauvillé and Ste Marie aux Mines found that of the 36,244 inhabitants of these four towns, only a little over half were Catholics.[85] As the figures in Table 7.1 show, the mayors of these four towns claimed just over 16,000 of the inhabitants were Protestants, split roughly evenly between the Lutheran and Calvinist churches, with just under a 1000 Jews and a handful of Anabaptists. Given the figure of 46,000 Protestants in the department 20 years later, it seems that at least a third of the Protestant population lived in these four towns, even if we assume no growth in the Protestant population between 1817 and 1836.

The presence of a large and socioeconomically significant Protestant population in a majority German-speaking population on the borders of the territory of France made Alsace a focus for the anxieties of French administrators and politicians of all stripes who feared secessionism and

political dissent. These fears were typified by a report drafted by the Prefect of the Haut-Rhin in December 1853, outlining public reactions to the establishment of the Second Empire. According to the prefect, the biggest difficulty stemmed from the wealthy Protestant communities of the region, who were committed to what they saw as the Protestant-friendly constitutional monarchy toppled by the Revolution in 1848 and the abdication of Louis-Philippe d'Orléans. With little prospect of a return of the previous regime and "in despair of the cause, the most fanatic dissidents, for whom France is Catholicism, would wish to remove Alsace from the territory".[86] The Prefect claimed that language was an intrinsic part of this political separatism, for it not only aggravated the separation of the German-speaking Protestant population from the French nation, it gave them common cause with the Catholic and German-speaking majority. He wrote: "it is certain that Protestantism pushes one towards this separation; using everything in its power, it favours the German language and customs and it seeks in convoluted ways to convert others from among the Catholic population, above all the children".

Such anxieties were not novel in the 1850s. During the Terror of the year II, spreading the French language in Alsace was a preoccupation of Saint-Just in his capacity as the National Assembly's representative on mission to the Army of the Rhine.[87] Yet it is unclear how far this perception of a tripartite complex of the German language, Protestantism and secessionism reflected reality. It is certainly true that the Protestant population of the Haut-Rhin was largely German-speaking. According to the survey of the religious populations of the Haut-Rhin carried out by the Prefect in 1831, the Protestant population was concentrated in Mulhouse and the German-speaking north of the department around the capital Colmar. To the south, the predominantly francophone arrondissement of Belfort was entirely Catholic, and the only francophone Protestant communities were to be found in Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines in the north-western corner of the department. However, the Protestants of the Haut-Rhin were not a homogenous community, split as it was between Calvinists and the Lutheran confession of Augsbourg. As Table 7.1 shows, the Protestants of Colmar were exclusively Lutheran, with the former republic of Mulhouse dominated by Calvinists and Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines split more or less evenly between the two churches. These two churches had distinct organisations, and while sometimes treated by the administration as a single group, retained their identities as distinct confessional

communities. Thus when, in 1804, rumours circulated that a single pastor for both communions in Ste Marie aux Mines was to be appointed, the Prefect received a petition in favour of the 'Reformed French Church of Sainte-Marie', claiming that "French, which has existed since Calvin, should be favoured; it is French which built the temple which they have loaned to the Germans for around a hundred years like the ones established in Ste Marie".[88] The Prefect responded a week later that he had received no official communication on the subject, yet the designation of the two churches, Calvinist and Lutheran as 'French' and 'German', respectively, was telling—the francophone Calvinists of the department apparently considered themselves French, and as distinct from the German Lutherans of the same town.

In general, the linguistic and confessional divides of the Haut-Rhin correlated no better than in the rest of France. German was just as prominent within the Catholic clergy as the Protestant. In 1803, a series of machinations erupted around the appointment of a new *curé* for the parish of Rougemont in French-speaking Belfort. The mayor of neighbouring Leval denounced the mayor of Rougemont for spreading rumours about the new *curé* in an effort to get his favourite, an ecclesiastic named Thammer, appointed to the position. According to accusations of the mayor of Leval against his counterpart from Rougemont:

> This mayor, orchestrator of the projects of citizen Thammer, has had a new petition written, which he has taken round to be signed, telling the parishioners that the priest named by M. the Bishop is an old man of 90 who does not even know the French language, and that we must request another; in this petition the name of citizen Jacques Thammer is found.[89]

The object of these rumours, a M. Gobert, *desservant* of Saint Léger in the canton of Dannemarie, was indeed the intended occupant of the *curé* of Rougemont.[90] When the *Bureau de la statistique* drew up a linguistic map of the department in 1806, St. Leger found itself just on the German-speaking side of the line, although this tells us little about Gobert's capacity to speak French. The linguistic border was not absolute, and French speakers were to be found on the German side. Dannemarie, the cantonal *chef lieu* situated to the north-east of St. Leger, petitioned the Bishop of Strasbourg for a francophone vicar in 1823, indicating some kind of audience for religious practice in the language.[91] Nonetheless, the plausibility of these rumours demonstrates the significant scale of German language practice within the Catholic communities of the area, while the hostility of Saint Léger to the prospect

of a German-speaking priest shows how language divided communities of the same confession. The significance of German within the Catholic religious practice of the Haut Rhin was underscored in 1814, when the *curé* of Bennwihr wrote to the Prefect complaining that the mayor of Mittelwihr, a commune he was also required to administer, had taken to organising the singing of Vespers without the presence of a priest, a practice expressly prohibited by the Bishop of Strasbourg. The *curé* apologised for making such a complaint by letter, explaining that "the undersigned priest of Bennwihr has long wished to personally pay you his respects and to bring you his grievances on various matters, but lacking sufficient knowledge of the French language, may he be so bold as to convey them in writing".[92] The *curé* of Bennwihr was not the only member of the clergy of the Haut-Rhin who struggled in French, at least to judge from the apparent lack of French-speaking priests in the department. In 1832, the Bishop of Strasbourg confessed he had been unable to fulfil a request for a resident *curé* from the commune of Croix in the arrondissement of Belfort due to a lack of French-speaking clergy: "I have always regretted that the lack of French priests has prevented me for a long time from satisfying this wish".[93] Other communes, with larger populations, he wrote, were in more pressing need of these French speakers.

While the Catholic clergy of the diocese of Strasbourg may have remained largely German-speaking, this did not mean that the French language failed to penetrate religious practice in the German-speaking areas of the department. The desire for a French language vicar in German-speaking Dannemarie demonstrates a fairly obvious driver of language change—proximity to French speakers. However, it is not clear whether the audience for French language religious practice in Dannemarie stemmed from migration or the adoption of French by those who previously spoke German. Proximity was not the only factor that might determine a preference for religious services in French. The Catholic congregation of the departmental capital, Colmar, developed a taste for religious preaching in the language when a preacher from Belfort was brought into the town to help celebrate the coronation of Napoleon. This preacher was so successful that it was decided to appoint him permanently as a vicar to the town to lead religious services in French, with the parish council writing to the Prefect in April 1804 that:

> The large audience which can be can be found at every one of M. Bourier de Belfort's sermons in this town during times of Jubilee allows us to see how very useful it would be to have a permanent French preacher in this

> parish […] M. the *Curé* has suggested to M. Bourier the position of a vicar specifically tasked with conducting sermons and teaching in the French language.[94]

Unsurprisingly, it was the departmental capital, with its French institutions and administrators, in which this enthusiasm for French language Catholic instruction was evident.

If the success of Bourier reflected a desire for francophone religious instruction in Colmar, it should be recognised that this desire was not confined to the Catholic congregation. In 1811, a service in French was established at the Lutheran church in Colmar, with a priest specially charged to preach in the language. In April 1856, the director of the church complained that this service had suffered after it had been divided amongst the German-speaking pastors of the church, and called for the appointment of a dedicated French preacher. It is worth noting, however, that the principle of a French language service—described by the director as a 'veritable need' in a town such as Colmar—endured into at least the Second Empire.[95] It seems, therefore, that the Lutheran population of Colmar was not immovably opposed to the use of French in a religious context, although they did remain fiercely attached to German. German was still a central part of the religious practice of the Lutheran community, as a memoire to the rector of the academy of Strasbourg in favour of the re-establishment of the Lutheran gymnasium in Colmar, written in late 1817, made clear. The author of this memoire, M. Metzger, one of the members of the Consistory of Colmar, observed that: "the Holy Books translated into the German language by Luther are in the hands of every family. Belief is celebrated in German, which is the idiom of Alsace, and thus knowledge and study of this language becomes necessary, it must be used as the basis for all instruction". This reality led the Lutherans of the department to shun the secondary schools overseen by the state: "the failure to teach this language in *collèges* and *lycées*, is one of the key reasons, which prevents parents from sending their children there".[96]

Within their own schools, however, the Lutherans of Colmar were keen to see French taught. Following the establishment of the Imperial University in 1808, the parish school of Colmar was obliged to stop teaching Latin in order to avoid the fees due to the University by secondary institutions that taught the language. According to the letter drafted by the Consistory, the teaching at this school was "limited

to teaching of religion, French and German language, the basic rules of arithmetic and writing".[97] The rector of the Strasbourg Academy, the local official responsible for the oversight of education under the authority of the Imperial University, accepted that Latin was not taught at the school, but was more sceptical about the claim that French was taught. He wrote to the president of the Consistory of Colmar, asking him to "to take very particular care over the teaching of the French language in this school, in accordance with the orders of His Majesty the Emperor", and warning that his inspectors would be tasked with examining the school's progress.[98] Despite this scepticism, however, it is worth noting that the pastor directing the school, M. Mackler, was also the French preacher appointed in 1811.[99] Hitschler, who was president of the Consistory of Colmar, from at least 1825 into the 1840s, certainly did not set himself against the spread of the French language. Rather, he seems to have felt teaching French to his flock to be a part of his role. Noting that the only teacher capable of providing instruction in French had an accent in the language, he sought the appointment of a French schoolmistress to the parish school.[100] Similarly, in 1829, the Consistory resolved that "in the older classes of boys and girls, the teachers are required to speak the French language with their students".[101]

The decisions taken by the Consistory of Colmar, reflected a general trend in the Lutheran church in Alsace during the period. In 1839, the General Consistory determined that all church records would be kept in French, rather than German, allowing not only a uniformity in the documentation of the church, but greater facility in correspondence with the civil authorities, "French being the only official language of the country".[102] The authors of this regulation felt it necessary to address concerns specifically about the population of the countryside who, it was felt, might struggle in French: "one could argue it would be useless to have secular members of the consistories who would not be sufficiently aware of the French language and out of consideration for whom it would be necessary to continue the former custom of deliberating in the German language".[103] This should not pose any difficulties, according to the Consistory, for meetings could still take place in German, only the *procès-verbal* and any written documentation would need to be in French. Since this was already the case for official acts such as birth and marriage certificates, it should not prove difficult to find someone capable of drafting reports in French. The Consistory denied this amounted to an attack on German, claiming it was simply a reflection of the need

to produce French language documentation when interacting with the francophone institutions of the French state.

> Sirs, it is not that we dream of relegating the German language to an inferior status, since it will always remain essential in the departments of the Rhin and will continue to be taught in schools and cultivated as it rightly has been up to now […] But French being the sole language permitted for official acts, it is important that there is uniformity on this account.[104]

The German-speaking Lutherans of Alsace, therefore, seem to have retained a connection to German, whilst at the same time recognising that progress meant embracing, to some extent at least, the French language. In short, they recognised that membership of the French nation made French unavoidable, and sought to forge a kind of middle way—a bilingualism that would enable them to both belong to the French nation yet retain their cultural orientation towards Germany. In this vision, described brilliantly by David Bell, Alsace was to be a kind of intermediate ground between the two nations.[105]

This marked an important similarity between the experience of the Lutherans of Alsace with those of other confessions and other parts of France. The increasing presence of the bureaucratic state was evident. Decisions to teach French in the parish school or to draft minutes and correspondence in French may not have been driven by the state, but interactions with state officials certainly entered into the equation. Using the French language was understood as part of the process of social 'improvement'. Drafting minutes in French, for example, was assumed to improve efficiency by avoiding the need to translate correspondence or keep double records in each language. Similarly, Hitschler's enthusiasm for a new French primary school teacher in Colmar was driven not only by recognition of the need for French language instruction. He also extolled the knitting classes she might teach, exclaiming to the members of the Consistory, "oh how it is the duty of a good housewife to know how to knit and sew, an enforced duty, but one so often neglected through ignorance, above all in the lower classes".[106]

The principle that embracing the use of French represented one of the primary duties of a clergyman to his flock was embodied in the work of perhaps the most famous Alsatian Lutheran of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic period, Jean-Frédéric Oberlin. In 1767, Oberlin was appointed pastor of Waldbach in the Band de la Roche, a small and

impoverished Lutheran valley surrounded by Catholics on the border of Alsace and Lorraine. Oberlin set about improving the lot of his parishioners, primarily through a transformation of the education on offer to them, often paying teachers from his own pocket and earning a nationwide reputation for his efforts, with articles written about him in the *Journal d'éducation* and school inspectors rhapsodising about his success.[107] A central part of this project was spreading French amongst his parishioners, who had previously spoken the 'patois' or dialect of French known as Welche. As he wrote to the Minister of the Interior in 1807, when questioned about the local patois as part of the enquiry into the languages of the French Empire being run by the *Bureau de la statistique*, "although forty years have passed (since 1767) since I started serving this parish, I understand nothing when I hear my parishioners speaking patois among themselves. However in my presence they never speak patois, and in many families they no longer speak patois with their children".[108] This principle was, according to one British observer of Oberlin's work, extended to the schools he oversaw. She wrote of the girls' infant school, that the teachers "never permitted them to speak a word of patois […] by this means correct French was introduced into the Ban de la Roche, and the *patois*, […] partly abolished".[109]

On the issue of language, therefore, the Lutheran pastors of Alsace found themselves in much the same position as their Catholic colleagues. The distinctly Enlightenment model of education and improvement called for the language used by individuals to be regulated and corrected—and above all, it had to be French. This was perhaps most obvious in an area like Ban de la Roche where French competed with a 'patois', yet even amongst the Lutherans of Alsace, reticent to cede the status of their German language to French, the language of the nation was making inroads. Indeed, it is striking that the pattern of French language religious instruction should cut across confessional lines in Alsace, with Colmar, the departmental capital, as the epicentre and the smaller rural congregations felt to lag behind in German monolingualism. If the language of religious practice was a function of societal linguistic demands, of how much education the laity might bear, the influence of the state should not be ignored. Certainly, as Oberlin demonstrates, language was implicated in a religiously inflected notion of educating the laity well before the Revolution. However, not only did French language preaching in the German areas emerge amongst both Catholic and Protestants in the same town, but that it did so at the same time. The pressure of the French state and the

establishment of centralised, francophone institutions that emerged during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods were thus crucial. In the words of the president of the General Consistory, it was these institutions which, however slowly, made French 'the *only* official language', and the gradual spread of the use of French within religious practice and institutions was the inevitable result. The situation in non French-speaking departments that were annexed during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods differed from Alsace. Where there was no tradition of using French as an 'H' variety for elite written culture individual members of the clergy found themselves under less pressure to employ the language from elements within local society. However, they still had to balance the demands of the state with the needs of the local population.

Re-Christianisation and Regional Languages

Above all, it is clear that during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic period, the religious institutions of France were not the bastions of linguistic conservatism they would become under the Third Republic. For the most part, and especially in those parts of France where one or the other 'patois' was spoken, the use of the local language seems to have been considered a necessary part of preaching to the 'people' rather than a bulwark against secularism and irreligion in itself. Paradoxically, this is revealed in the work of Eugène de Mazenod, the pioneer of Provençal language missionary preaching in restoration France. Born into a noble family in Aix, Mazenod spent much of his childhood in exile in Italy. He returned to France under the Empire, studied at the seminary of Saint-Sulpice in Paris, and was ordained in 1811. Following the fall of Napoleon, Mazenod took up what was to become a prominent role in efforts to re-Christianise the country, founding a group of missionary preachers in Aix—the Missionaries of Provence. Outlawed under Napoleon, Catholic missions, which were necessary to fill in the gaps left by an elderly and undermanned clergy, became a feature of the religious life of restoration France, often to the consternation of local government officials and clergy alike. Officials were concerned about public disorder surrounding missions, while the many local clergymen feared losing authority over their congregations. Such concerns were only exacerbated in 1819 by the riots that gripped Brest when the imminent arrival of a group of missionaries became known. Songs decrying the missions for their 'anti-Enlightenment' activities, for burning copies of Voltaire and

Rousseau, and most gravely for turning women against their menfolk, circulated in the town. As one, entitled simply 'La Mission', read:

> In all the places where good fathers preach,
> We no longer see a single united household;
> The wife wages war on her husband here,
> And elsewhere is battered by her husband.[110]

The mission itself had to be abandoned when a crowd, more than two thousand strong and apparently composed of the town's welathy citizens and fathers, assembled and marched through the town, crying "long live the King! and down with the mission!".[111]

The activities of the Catholic missions under the Restoration, and most notably their book burning have been well documented.[112] Mazenod, the pioneer of Provençal language preaching, was in the vanguard of this conservative, and controversial, brand of Catholicism. Mazenod himself drew complaints in December 1818 when, at the head of a mission to Barjols in the Var, he refused burial to a woman suspected of Jansenism. He was also accused of overseeing a three-hour night-time vigil in the cemetery, in which sermons on the subject of death were accompanied with a display of the severed head of a recently deceased corpse, complete with hair and which was apparently still recognisable.[113] The activities of the Missionaries of Provence reflected the wider return of the Jesuits and Jesuit missionary practice to France under the restored Bourbon monarchy.[114] Both the Jesuits and missionary preaching were banned under the Revolutionary and Napoleonic regimes, and their return was controversial.[115] Perhaps unsurprisingly, Mazenod was obliged to leave the department under threat of prosecution.[116]

Mazenod founded the Missionaries of Provence in 1814 in the hope that they might "instruct the people, particularly those in the countryside, in the Provençal language".[117] The impulse emerged from a fervent, reactionary and self-consciously anti-Enlightenment Catholicism. Believers sought to save souls they felt had been abandoned during two and a half decades of spiritual neglect. This effort manifested its own particular didacticism, disconnected from the ambition to make 'the people' better Frenchmen, or even better educated, and focused singularly on making them better Catholics. Shorn of any attachment to the projects of nation building or educational reform that influenced more moderate churchmen, Mazenod embraced Provençal in his efforts to proselytise amongst the people of his native Provence.

The centrality of language to Mazenod's endeavours became clear in 1817, when it appeared that the Missionaries of Provence might be forcibly incorporated into the larger Missionaries of France. Mazenod travelled to Paris to make representations in person, armed with a letter from the Baron de Damas. According to Damas:

> the particular objective of the voyage of M. de Mazenod is to understand that the Missions of Provence are not united to those of France, because the language of the country totally differs from the rest of the Kingdom, and that the people do not understand the latter. I am persuaded that priests foreign to this country, would not have the same effect at all on the people as the priests of this country because of the language.[118]

The mayoral office in Aix, perhaps motivated by a series of disputes that had arisen between the missionaries and the clergy of the town over their right to perform first communion for children of residents, was less supportive.[119] Making reference to Mazenod's oft-repeated claim that their capacity to preach in Provençal made their independent existence crucial, the adjunct of the mayor of Aix wrote that "if the missions are necessary, we can have recourse to French missionaries who have in their number subjects from all the provinces who know their diverse idioms".[120] Yet the linguistic particularism upon which Mazenod based his claims was not an idle one. In a letter to Abbé Forbin-Janson, one of the most prominent members of the Society of French Missionaries, Mazenod wrote that: "it would be to abandon them in joining with you, because we alone, and not you, can be useful to them. It is necessary to speak to their own language to be understood by them; it is necessary to preach in Provençal".[121]

Mazenod's claim, that one must preach in Provençal in order to reach the people, and that this required a separate group of missionaries dedicated to the task, reflected the significant investment in time and effort required to undertake religious preaching. Preaching, particularly of the sort practiced by missionaries, was a vocation in itself. Parish *curés* might have managed Sunday sermons, but professional preachers were often brought in for the important ceremonies of the year, particularly in larger towns and cities, at great expense to the diocese and—as the disputes between Paris and Grimaldi over Easter preachers in Nice shows—often in the teeth of state opposition. Missionary preaching also required a repertoire of sermons, and the absence of such a collection forced Mazenod to decline an invitation from Forbin-Janson in 1815 to take part in a mission in Marseille:

> I am obliged to warn you that you must not count on us for the mission in Marseille. The missionaries are not willing, and I do not have the power. I have not had the time to write anything at all, and as a result I do not have a single sermon.[122]

Even if an experienced preacher was sufficiently comfortable in another language to preach, translating this material was not a straightforward matter. Preaching in a second language was thus a significant undertaking, and for this reason religious preachers preferred not to do so. This was why the Lutheran Consistory of Colmar sought to maintain a single priest for its French services, rather than splitting them between the four priests who worked in the parish. As the president of the consistory wrote in 1856, "nobody can deny how difficult it is, if not impossible, to preach simultaneously in two language. Regular practice can alone lead to relative perfection, and consequently it is not achieved in the small number of sermons conducted in the course of the year".[123] As a result, Mazenod's descision to commit to Provençal language preaching limited the area in which his missionaries could work effectively. This difficulty became evident in 1823, when two members of the Missionaries of Provence joined a Jesuit mission to Gap, a diocese where religious preaching had traditionally taken place in French. The Jesuit superior in charge of the mission did not ask the two members of Mazenod's order to preach, "having been warned that [they] would not be appreciated, being accustomed to preaching in Provençal, he did not make them preach".[124] These two missionaries were instead tasked with instructing children in the catechism. As this shows, Mazenod's conviction that successfully spreading Catholicism required the use of regional languages did not characterize the Missionary movements of the Restoration period as a whole.

That Mazenod's efforts to propagate the faith through Provençal language preaching were considered exceptional points to a central conclusion: religious groups were not the champions of minority and regional languages that later disputes between church and state might suggest. Rather, religious practice was a complex terrain over which language preferences and choices were made in a rather ad hoc fashion, reflecting various pressures. The habitual practices of the clergy of a diocese, as with the use of French in Gap, the pressure exerted by the state, and a desire to appeal more effectively to non-French speakers all played a role in determining which language would be used in religious settings, and for which functions. Clergymen themselves emerged from an elite

culture, which denigrated the use of patois, even in religious contexts. The Jesuits, like Mazenod, in seeking to reach the masses had stood apart from this culture. Mazenod himself courted the disapproval of the Aixois nobility, who had expected the son of a prominent noble to occupy an important seat in the town, and were disappointed to find him preaching to the poor in Provençal.[125] In short, the most striking feature of the language of organised religious practice during the period was not so much its influence on the sociolinguistic situation, but the way in which it reflected a broader nexus of practical and ideological concerns over linguistic diversity.

Notes

1. An F19 5660 (Police du culte- Bouches du Rhône) Pomme au Ministre des Cultes, 4 Ventôse an XI (23 Feb. 1803).
2. An F19 5660 Procès-verbal dressé par Jean-Baptiste Jéhan, commissaire de police d'Arles.
3. Furet and Ozouf, *Reading and Writing*, p. 298.
4. Weber, *Peasants* p. 345; Much historical work has cast doubt on the narrative of secularization, see C. Ford 'Religion and Popular Culture in Modern Europe', in *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 65, no. 1 (1993), pp. 153–154.
5. Cited in G. Cholvy, *Christianisme et société en France au XIXe siècle 1790–1814* (Paris, 2001), p. 87
6. F. Broudic, *L'interdiction du breton en 1902: La IIIe république contre les langues régionales* (Spézet, 1996), p. 174.
7. M.-H. Froeschlé-Chopard, *La Religion populaire en Provence orientale au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1980), p. 271.
8. R. Bertrand, 'Usages religieux du provençal aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles' in M. Lagrée (ed.) *Les parlers de la foi*: *Religion et langues régionales* (Rennes, 1995), p. 111.
9. Gazier, *Lettres*, p. 9.
10. Gazier, *Lettres*, p. 282.
11. Gazier, *Lettres*, p. 150.
12. Gazier, *Lettres*, pp. 203, 209.
13. Gazier, *Lettres*, p. 164
14. Gazier, *Lettres*, p. 222.
15. Gazier, *Lettres*, p. 19.
16. Gazier, *Lettres*, p. 171.
17. Gazier, *Lettres*, p. 171.
18. Gazier, *Lettres*, p. 58.

19. Gazier, *Lettres*, p. 58.
20. Gazier, *Lettres*, pp. 127, 139.
21. R. Merle, 'Du catéchisme en provençal, 1825–1851', M. Lagrée (ed.) *Les parlers de la foi, religion et langues régionales* (Rennes, 1995), p. 136.
22. *Prières du matin et du soir et quelques cantiques provençaux et françois à l'usage des Missions des RR. Peres Jésuites à Marseille* (Marseille, 1724).
23. AdV 37 J 37 (Fonds de la paroisse Saint-Pierre d'Avignon).
24. AdV 31 J 10 (Fonds de la paroisse de Maubec) Sermons du curé, XVIIIe siècle. The imperative form of the verb 'cantar' ('to sing') is generally written 'canten' rather than 'cantem', while Frédéric Mistral noted 'tóutei' as a Marseillais variation of 'touti', 'tout' (all). F. Mistral, *Lou trésor dou félibrige ou dictionnaire provençal-français*, vol. 2 (Arles, 1979), p. 1017.
25. Merle, 'Du catéchisme en provençal' in Lagrée (ed.), *parlers de la foi*, pp. 135–136.
26. Gazier, *Lettres*, p. 95.
27. M.H. Froeschlé-Chopard, 'Entre peuple et hiérarchie: l'échec d'un pastorale', in *Dix-huitième siècle*, no. 12 (1980), pp. 271–292; on the veillée see M. Lyons *Reading Culture and Writing Practice in Nineteenth Century France* (London, 2008) ch. 7.
28. AdAM G 1306 (Fonds de l'Evêché de Vence) Conférences ecclésiastiques 1719–1720; Froeschlé-Chopard, *La religion populaire en Provence orientale*, p. 272.
29. AdAM G 1306 réponse du curé de Saint-Paul, March. 1719.
30. Aston, *Religion and Revolution*, pp. 14–15.
31. J. McManners, *French Ecclesiastical Society under the Ancien Régime*: *A Study of Angers in the Eighteenth Century* (Manchester, 1960), pp. 173–181.
32. AdAM G 1306 (Evêché de Vence) Conférences ecclésiastiques, réponse du curé d'Issole, March. 1719.
33. An F19 5660 Essai sur la chiffonnière d'Arles, par un ancien Théologal de la Métropole.
34. Gazier, *Lettres*, p. 203.
35. C. de Villeneuve, *Voyage dans la vallée de Barcelonnette* (Agen, 1815), p. 139.
36. A. Hugo, *France pittoresque: ou description pittoresque, topographique et statistique des départements et colonies de la France*, vol. 1 (1835), p. 146.
37. Tackett, *Priest and Parish*, p. 159.
38. J. Gondret, *Mœurs et coutumes des habitants du Queyras au XIXe siècle* (Nyons, 1974), p. 16.
39. Gazier, *Lettres*, p. 74.
40. Gazier, *Lettres*, p. 74.

41. Gazier, *Lettres*, p. 76.
42. Brunot, *HLF* ix, pp. 371–373.
43. 'Décrets du concile national de France, 5 Novembre 1797', *Collection des pièces imprimées par ordre du concile national de France* (Paris, 1797) pp. 10–12; Brunot, *HLF*, pp. 374–378.
44. 'Décrets du concile national', p. 12.
45. Brunot, *HLF* ix, pp. 386–398.
46. J.-B. Saurine, 'Avis de l'évêque de Dax sur le sacramentaire français', *Annales de la religion*, vol. 10 (1799), pp. 49–96.
47. Saurine, 'Avis', p. 76.
48. Aarslef, *Locke to Saussure*, p. 32.
49. J.-F. Posignon, *Apologie de l'usage de la langue française dans l'administration des sacremens* (Paris), p. 48.
50. Saurine 'Avis de l'évêque de Dax sur le sacramentaire français' in *Annales de la religion*, vol. 10, p. 96.
51. C. Le Coz, 'Déclaration des Évêques de la métropole de Rennes, contre l'emploi de la langue vulgaire dans la Liturgie' in *Annales de la religion*, vol. 10, p. 121.
52. Le Coz, 'Déclaration des Évêques', p. 121.
53. *Annales de la religion*, vol. 10, p. 576.
54. Aston, *Religion and Revolution*, p. 321.
55. AdBdR 96 V 16 (Fonds de l'archevêché d'Aix) Culte paroissial an XI-1890.
56. M. Broers, *Politics and Religion in Napoleonic Italy: The War Against God* (London, 2002), pp. 52–54.
57. B. Plongeron, *Théologie et politique au siècle des lumières, 1770–1820* (Genève, 1973), pp. 278–284.
58. AN F19 5438 (Catéchisme impériale) l'évêque de Namur au Ministre des Cultes, 26 Aug. 1806.
59. AN F19 5438 Raillon au Ministre des cultes (n.d.).
60. AN F19 5438 Pommereux au Ministre des cultes, 12 Apr. 1811.
61. AdAM 2 V 1 (Fonds de la préfecture- cultes) Ministre des cultes au préfet des Alpes-Maritimes 2 Germinal An XII (25 Mar. 1805).
62. An F19 1076 (Police des cultes) Rapport de Portalis- Permission demandée par les marguilliers de la cathédrale, pour faire prêcher en italien encore pendant l'année qui va commencer.
63. AdAM 1 T 4 Enseignement de la langue française, L'évêque de Nice au préfet des Alpes-Maritimes, 19 germinal an XIII (9 Apr. 1805).
64. An F19 453 (Police des cultes- Moselle) L'évêque de Metz au Min. des cultes 27 Feb. 1806.
65. An F19 453 L'évêque de Metz au Min. des cultes 27, Feb. 1806.
66. An F19 1076 Rapport de Portalis- Permission demandé par l'évêque de Nice pour la prédication en langue Italienne, 25 Jun. 1806.

67. An F19 819 (Affaires générales du culte- état des séminaires en Piémont) Règlement du séminaire de Nice, 16 Dec. 1807.
68. An F19 3973 (Séminaires: règlements et fonctionnement. An X-1904) Règlemens de grand et petits séminaires du diocèse de Metz, 12 Mar. 1808.
69. AdAM 2 V 1 Ministre des cultes au préfet des Alpes-Maritimes 2 germinal an XII (25 Mar. 1805).
70. AN F19 818 (Affaires générales du culte- état des séminaires en Piémont) Regolamento per gli studi del seminario Vecovile di Arezzo; Regolamenti per il seminairo di San Sepolcro.
71. An F19 818 (Affaires générales du culte- état des séminaires en Piémont) Projet de Règlement pour le Séminaire de Casal; Règlement pour le Séminaire d'Asti; AN F19 819 Règlement des séminaires de Parme et de Turin.
72. An F19 818 l'évêque d'Asti au Ministre des Cultes, 24 Dec. 1812.
73. An F19 818 Règlements pour le séminaire d'Asti, Dec. 1812.
74. Broers, *Politics of Religion*, pp. 94–95.
75. An F19 819 L'évêque de Verceil au Min. des cultes, 26 Jul. 1809.
76. Broers, *The Politics of Religion*, pp. 4–5.
77. Broers, *The Politics of Religion*, p. 151.
78. N. Shusterman, 'Une Loi de l'église et de l'état: Napoleon and the Central Administration of Religious Life' in *French History*, vol. 21 no. 3 (2007), pp. 313–330.
79. An F 19 5598 (Police du culte) Liste des ecclésiastiques séditieux, 1804.
80. AdHR V 60 (Opposition entre l'évêque et son clergé) Maire de Landser au sous-préfet d'Altkirch, 6 Messidor An X (25 Jun. 1802).
81. An F19 1076 Grimaldi, vicaire général du diocèse de Nice, au Ministre des cultes, 18 Nov. 1808.
82. An F19 1076 Grimaldi, vicaire général du diocèse de Nice, au Ministre des cultes, 18 Nov. 1808.
83. AdHR V 1 (Recensement des populations des trois cultes) Recensement de 1837; *Statistique de la France,* (2 vols., Paris, 1837) i, p. 190.
84. Ad F1 C III Haut Rhin 7 (Esprit public) Compte annuel sur la situation du Haut Rhin, 1821.
85. AdHR V 1 (Recensement des populations des trois cultes) État de la population des villes de Colmar, Mulhouse, Ribeauvillé et St. Marie aux Mines sous rapport des différents cultes que les habitants y professent, 30 Août 1817.
86. An F 1 c III Haut Rhin 7 Rapport du préfet sur la situation politique du department, 19 Dec. 1853.
87. H.F. Schiffman, *Linguistic Culture and Language Policy* (London, 1996), pp. 136–137.

88. AdHR V 499 (Culte protestant- nomination des pasteurs) Peyre au préfet du Haut-Rhin, 23 fructidor an 12 (10 Sept. 1804).
89. AdHR V 61 (Culte Catholique) Maire de la commune du Val au préfet du Haut Rhin, 12 brumaire an XII (4 Nov. 1803).
90. AdHR V 61 Secrétaire de l'évêché de Strasbourg au préfet du Haut Rhin, 29 vendémiaire an XII (20 Oct. 1803).
91. AdHR V 62 (Culte Catholique) Préfet du Haut Rhin à l'évêque de Strasbourg, 23 Jun. 1823.
92. AdHR V 218 (Organisation et police du culte) Curé de Riquewihr au préfet du Haut Rhin 9 Dec. 1814.
93. AdHR V 62 Évêque de Strasbourg au préfet du Haut Rhin 8 Mar. 1832.
94. AdHR V 62 Extrait du registre des délibérations du conseil de la fabrique de l'église paroissiale de Colmar, 13 germinal an XII (3 Apr. 1804).
95. AdHR 101 J 1406 (Fonds du consistoire de Colmar- diverses) Directoire de l'église de la confession d'Augsbourg au mm. Le président et membres du consistoire de Colmar, 10 Apr. 1856.
96. AdHR 101 J 1704 (Fonds du consistoire de Colmar- écoles) Mémoire sur le gymnase de Colmar, Dec. 1816.
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98. AdHR 101 J 1701 Recteur de l'académie de Strasbourg au directeur général du consistoire de Colmar, 23 Apr. 1812.
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CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

There can be no doubt that the Napoleonic regime saw spreading French as a desirable and legitimate goal, and the issue of language spurred critics of French imperialism during the period. In 1813, John Chetwode Eustace published an account of his travels through Napoleonic Italy, promising the reader "occasional observations of the recent spoliations of the French". Eustace found a visceral loathing of the French in Piedmont, focused on the language and manners of the French, as much as their politics. He wrote, "the French, everywhere disliked, are here abhorred; […] their language, manners, and persons are equally objects of antipathy; and […] the day of deliverance and of vengeance is most ardently desired by the oppressed *Piedmontese*".[1] Another traveller through Italy during the period, John Gustavus Lemaistre, recalled his disappointment at meeting Vittorio Alfieri, the Italian playwright and revolutionary, at the home of the latter's lover and host, the countess Albany, in Florence.[2] In the last decades of the eighteenth century, Alfieri had been a prominent Francophile, living in Paris and writing in French. Alfieri was initially supportive of the Revolution, but his disappointment with the Revolution as it descended into war and terror was intense.[3] Lemaistre met Alfieri twice, but neither time was able to engage him in conversation. According to Lemaistre, Alfieri was "disgusted with the crimes and excesses committed at Paris", and the playwright had "become so decided an enemy to France, that he now refuses even to speak the language of that country".[4]

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In her work on Hamburg, Kathryn Aaslestad cites Christoph Daniel Ebeling, a librarian and university professor in Hamburg, who greatly resented the cultural politics of the Empire: "the loss of freedom was severely felt, our constitution abolished and [we] were subjected to a commission that was to Frenchify us in every respect. French superiors and rules, French laws, French language, and what was worst of all, French manners and principles".[5] Similar responses to French linguistic imperialism emerged from provincial France. In 1835, the committee of the arrondissement of Cahors issued a decree banning the use of patois in the classrooms of the area.[6] Teachers were no longer to use the patois themselves and were to encourage their students to speak only in French while at school. According to the committee, the move was necessary because the patois exercised a baneful influence on the French spoken by students, and, echoing the rhetoric of Napoleonic centralisers, because "the political and administrative unity of the kingdom urgently demands unity of language".[7] Charles Nodier published a satirical pamphlet lampooning the committee for their measures against "the innocent and sweet speech that comes to us from our mothers, our wet-nurses, the earliest companions from our villages".[8] Thus local elites, faced with the unifying pressures of the state, sought to accomodate local culture by wrapping it in nostalgia and thereby rendering it harmless to nation-building projects. This pattern of cultural politics, which was so evident during the Napoleonic period, flourished as the nineteenth century continued.

Linguistic practice, such commentary would seem to suggest, was politicised across Europe in a new way, or at least with a new intensity, by the events of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic period. Speaking French—once a marker of education and social status in the elite circles of the major cities of Europe—came first to connote support for the Revolution, then allegiance to the Napoleonic regime. The new interest in a 'nationalised' style of linguistic practice, as an alternative to 'frenchification', was expressed by Mme de Staël. In her account of exile in Germany and Austria during the period, de Staël wrote scathingly of foreigners who 'imitated' the French: "a frenchified foreigner permits himself neither an opinion nor a phrase that is not orthodox, and most often it is an old orthodoxy that he takes for the opinion of the day".[9] De Staël argued that the stale and derivative ideas of those who imitated French mores and adopted the French language arose from an unwillingness to embrace the genius and inspiration of the native, national tongue. As she commented of those she encountered in the Austrian capital, "we too firmly believe in Vienna that it is good taste to only speak French;

whereas the glory and even the approval of each country still resides in the national character and spirit".[10]

However, as with the rhetoric of tradition employed by speakers of France's regional languages, the assertion of a national style of communication suited to the expression of selfhood was only one of the strategies elites chose in response to French domination, and there are equally compelling examples of local elites pursuing strategies of linguistic assimilation. Perhaps the best example of such assimilation, according to Michael Broers, was Napoleon's librarian, Carlo Denina.[11] In an 1803 pamphlet entitled 'On the use of the French language', printed in the form of a letter addressed to Carlo Arnaud, professor of rhetoric and philosophy on the French language, Denina acknowledged that French rule, and the linguistic policies that accompanied them, would lead to the displacement of Italian by French: "I have no doubt […] that the reunion of Piedmont with France, and the order that followed to use French in place of Italian in all public acts, must sooner or later change the written language of the country".[12] Denina considered this a positive development. He argued that the Piedmontese would benefit from the superior French language, which was at any rate more widely spoken in France and Europe, and that since Piedmontese, like French and Tuscan Italian, was a corrupted form of Latin, and thus an 'Italian dialect' in its own right, the introduction of French would simply replace one imposition from the outside with another, more useful, one.[13] A similar indifference, if perhaps not such outright hostility, towards linguistic nationalism was evident in the preservation of the French language Napoleonic legal codes in the Rhineland after the Fall of Napoleon. An unofficial German translation only appeared in 1836, and the French language official versions were not supplanted by what was effectively an official German version preserving most of the features of the French code until 1851.[14]

Unifying the language of what was a linguistically diverse population was clearly a priority for the Napoleonic regime, and this did distinguish it from the restored Bourbon government that followed the fall of the Empire. While social change remained an objective for paternalistic reformers like Christophe de Villeneuve, the royalist prefect of the Bouches du Rhône who began his administrative career under Napoleon, linguistic homogenisation was pursued with less urgency at the centre, whether as a result of changing ideological predilections in Paris or the vast reduction in the number of 'foreign' language speakers.[15] Either way, measures from Paris regulating linguistic practice largely dried up,

and when they did appear reflected a greater degree of linguistic tolerance, such as the 1824 act establishing German tuition at the Royal Forestry School in Nancy.[16] This book therefore adds to the burgeoning literature that views the period as one characterised by state-building projects. Even as the democratic gains of the Revolutionary period were reversed, displaced by a political authoritarianism, the Napoleonic state was self-consciously engaged in the consolidation of a 'new regime', to appropriate Isser Woloch's phrase, and the new reach of state centralisation into features of everyday life called basic features of social practice—the language of teaching, preaching and pleading—into question.[17] For the Napoleonic administrator, state building, the unification of the diverse territories of the Empire and the integration of its culturally diverse populations was a mission, and the attempts to spread French during the period underscore this impulse as clearly as any other. It is difficult to deny that, based on the regime's approach to language, something like the cultural imperialism identified by Michael Broers featured among the objectives of Napoleonic governance.[18]

However, while terms such as linguistic imperialism are clearly relevant to the understanding of cultural politics during the period, they can imply a rigidity that would be misleading in relation to the Napoleonic period. The later annexations carried out by the Napoleonic state reveal a degree of flexibility over competing priorities. The regime had to bow to the inevitable in the Netherlands and Tuscany, allowing other languages to be used in an official capacity. It approved the appointment of bilingual judges and tolerated preaching in languages other than French. The ultimate ambition of spreading French remained, manifest in seminary regulations and efforts to Frenchify schoolrooms, but was constrained by the fear of bringing institutions to a halt. Moreover, this study has demonstrated the important role of the men who staffed these institutions in the elaboration of linguistic practice. Not only did these Napoleonic functionaries ultimately determine the language in which these institutions worked, they often articulated arguments in favour of greater latitude when it came to the linguistic demands of Paris.

These functionaries relied on their place within bureaucratic hierarchies to secure their status. Where they articulated opposition or sought to moderate centralising efforts, their concern often centred on safeguarding the value of knowledge and expertise as much as national sentiment. When the school teachers and clergymen of the eastern parts of the Alpes Maritimes proved reluctant to embrace French instead of

Italian, this was not just a defence of a subaltern regional culture. After all, when people gathered in the area to celebrate the fall of Napoleon and the return of the house of Savoy, they sung not in Italian, but in 'Niçois dialect'.[19] The language of Dante and Petrarch was the language of literate, elite linguistic practice, and these figures acted primarily to safeguard their distinction and expertise.

The relationship between the local notability and the state was clearly different where there existed prestige variety in its own right. Local dialects offered problems of communication in certain contexts; for example, in the law court where informal processes of translation became necessary. These difficulties could be leveraged by notables, as by the members of the Napoleonic law courts, or local administrators, to underscore their vital role as intermediaries. Where notables had previously employed a different standardised variety, their expertise suddenly became more problematic. In this context, knowledge of French, the authorised variety of the centralising bureaucracy, became more valuable to local notables seeking office. However, the weight of previous linguistic practice often presented difficulties for Napoleonic administrators confronted by a society that wrote in a different language. Local notables themselves found their existing knowledge devalued and were obliged either to embark on a tricky path of assimilation by learning French or resist the linguistic demands of the centre. This distinction was crucial, because as the evidence from the law courts, church and education system shows, Napoleonic language policy tended to encounter far greater obstacles in areas where another standardised variety was implanted as the language of written culture, than where French already dominated written culture.

Many of these tensions were manifested in the Napoleonic state's attempts to describe society. These efforts, particularly the departmental statistics begun under the directory and pursued during the Napoleonic period, revealed the ideological character of the Napoleonic regime. Describing society was the first step in remaking it, a notion driven by Enlightenment notions of social progress. Yet as the work of the Coqueberts on language revealed, the centralising impulse of the regime stimulated reflection on the value and place of local knowledge. Local notables articulated the value of regional culture as patrimony, and emphasised their significance as experts on local knowledge forms. Nowhere was this clearer than in the effusion of interest generated by the Coqueberts' enquiries or the defence of native legal officials and informal translation practices by members of the judiciary.

While the relative prestige of different languages altered the position of the local notability in relation to the centre, the process of negotiating between local forms of knowledge and identification and the forms authorised by the centre characterised the Napoleonic period in a general way. The various iterations of this dynamic between centre and periphery, the responses of figures like Ebeling, Alfieri or Nodier may have expressed a similar countervailing aesthetic of authentic communication, militating against the demands of the centre. Yet it was those who stood in the courtroom, the classroom and who spoke from the pulpit or the bench, who navigated these conflicting demands and who ultimately determined in which language the French state spoke, to whom, and in what context.

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11. Broers, *The Napoleonic Empire in Italy*, pp. 214–215.
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18. Broers, *The Napoleonic Empire in Italy*, p. 3.
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