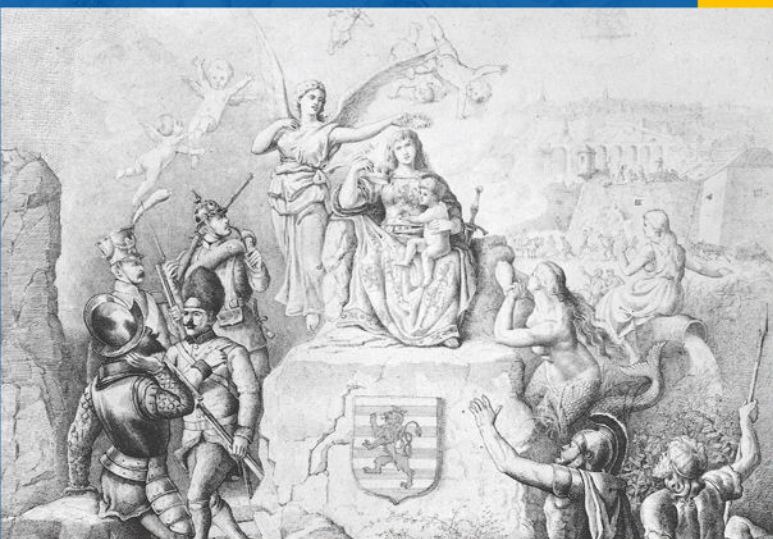


# INVENTING LUXEMBOURG

*Representations of the Past,  
Space and Language  
from the Nineteenth  
to the Twenty-First Century*

Pit Péporté, Sonja Kmec,  
Benoît Majerus & Michel Margue



NATIONAL CULTIVATION OF CULTURE | BRILL

# Inventing Luxembourg

# National Cultivation of Culture

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VOLUME 1

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## INTRODUCTION

When visiting Luxembourg in 1913, the English travel writer Georges Renwick marvelled at how tiny the country was:

The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, a country a few square miles smaller than Cheshire, with the population of Edinburgh, lies hidden away in a corner between Belgium, France and Germany... it might be the child of some novelist's imagination, a curious experiment in nation-making.<sup>1</sup>

The country is indeed small, both in terms of its population, which does not exceed half a million permanent inhabitants (although cross-border commuters bring the day-time population to over 600,000) and in terms of its territory (2,586 km<sup>2</sup>, as every schoolchild has to learn by heart).<sup>2</sup>

It is rather unusual to write about Luxembourg in English and this linguistic decision reflects our intention to reach the broadest readership possible.<sup>3</sup> Generally, scholarly research is published in French or German, or both, in keeping with Luxembourgers' perception of themselves as bilingual (or trilingual, if one includes Luxembourgish). This self-image, linked to the notion of an in-between country at the crossroads of 'two great cultures', is one of the main topics discussed

---

<sup>1</sup> George Renwick, *Luxembourg. The Grand-Duchy and its People* (London: Unwin, 1913), 15.

<sup>2</sup> Statec, 2007. *Annuaire statistique du Luxembourg* (Luxembourg: Statec, 2008), 38, 86, 4.

<sup>3</sup> The Centre for Luxembourgish Studies at the University of Sheffield set up by Gerald Newton who is also the author of *Luxembourg and Lëtzebuergesch: language and communication at the crossroads of Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). Kristine Horner, at the University of Leeds has a growing list of publications, including: 'Language and Luxembourgish national identity: ideologies of hybridity and purity in the past and present', in *Germanic language histories 'from Below' (1700–2000)*, ed. Stephan Elspaß et al. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 363–378. Note also Jean-Jacques Weber (University of Luxembourg), *Multilingualism, education and change* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2009). The only historiographical account in English by James Newcomer (vice chancellor emeritus of Texas Christian University) is more descriptive than analytical, James Newcomer, *The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg: the evolution of nationhood: 963 A.D. to 1983* (Lanham MD and New York: University Press of America; Fort Worth TX: Texas Christian University, 1984; reed. Christnach: Borschette; Luxembourg: Le Bon Livre, 1995); J. Newcomer, *The nationhood of Luxembourg: eight essays on the Grand Duchy* (Esch-sur-Alzette: Phi; Mersch: Centre national de littérature, 1998).

in this volume. Cultural hybridity and cultural transfers are concepts which are currently very much *en vogue*,<sup>4</sup> and it could be argued that Luxembourg is an interesting case study of nation-building precisely because its emergence as a nation-state was influenced both by France, an early model of state formation, and the ‘latecomer’ Germany (*die verspätete Nation*).<sup>5</sup> Its small size may allow researchers to examine closely phenomena which are experienced by larger states, but which are more difficult to analyse due to a higher degree of complexity. The on-going process of inventing the nation—defined by group identification and demarcation, by political inclusion and exclusion, by history and language politics, by the mapping of territories and the drawing of boundaries—may thus be observed first-hand.

The “curious experiment in nation-making”, as Renwick had termed it, is a social and cultural phenomenon and can thus never be studied in a laboratory-like situation. The process of ‘inventing’ a nation needs to be placed in an international context.<sup>6</sup> The production of a national ‘do-it-yourself kit’ (comprising a national history and heroes, monuments and museums, monarchy and constitution, flag and mascot, railways, and even a national airline) is part of the ‘nationalisation’<sup>7</sup> process that characterises modern times. The uses which are currently made of national symbols are symptomatic of ‘late modern’ processes of ‘de-nationalisation’ and ‘re-nationalisation’.<sup>8</sup> Though inspired by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger’s seminal *The Invention of Tradition* and firmly embedded in the constructivist paradigm, this study places emphasis on the process of producing a national ‘do-it-yourself kit’ itself. It does not seek to provide the outcome of this construction of national identity, which may be unintentional or quite different from the original intention. When ‘narrating the nation’, historical

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<sup>4</sup> Michel Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, ‘Penser l’histoire croisée: entre empirie et réflexivité’, *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 58/1 (2003): 7–36.

<sup>5</sup> See the development of this idea in Helmuth Plessner, *Die verspätete Nation. Über die politische Verführbarkeit bürgerlichen Geistes* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1959), later disregarded as teleological.

<sup>6</sup> Anne-Marie Thiesse, *La création des identités nationales* (Paris: Seuil, 2001), 13–14.

<sup>7</sup> ‘Nationalisation’ is used in this book neither in the sense of the state taking over ownership, nor in the sense of people taking up (a new) nationality. Instead, we use the term to refer to ethnocultural ‘nationalisation’, directed at spheres of practice, such as history or language politics, and involving dissimilation as well as assimilation.

<sup>8</sup> The terms “late modernity” (Anthony Giddens), “second modernity” (Ulrich Beck) or “liquid modernity” (Zygmunt Bauman) emphasise the continuity between the emergence of modern nation-states and current trends, whereas “postmodernity” implies that the page has been turned.

contingency is often disregarded in order to achieve an ideal unity of people, territory and language.<sup>9</sup> The title of this volume, *Inventing Luxembourg*,<sup>10</sup> implies the construction of a new concept (one cannot invent something existing) based on extant elements (one cannot invent something *ex nihilo*). The term ‘inventing’ also implies an objective, in this case, the establishment of a social and political order. The process of ‘nationalisation’ is not atavistic, but linked to (defensive) modernisation and democratisation processes, and is often accompanied by important social reforms. To be competitive and to exert social control, the state pursues homogeneity (the creation of one language and one ‘imagined community’) without eliminating structural economic inequalities. Attempts to effect ‘social cohesion’—one of the political slogans of our times—involve social engineering as well as mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. The concept of the nation, as it imposed itself in Europe in the second half of the nineteenth-century, presupposes two voluntary acts, first on behalf of those who wish to create or promote the ‘nation’ as a model and secondly, on behalf of those who rally to it. The interactions between both are often difficult to discern.

### *The Master Narrative*

To give a brief historical overview in this introduction would be to undermine this study’s aim of offering an analysis of the construction of Luxembourg’s past, territory and language. The past is gone,

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<sup>9</sup> The most recent comprehensive study of the literature on nation-building is: Stefan Berger, Linas Eriksonas and Andrew Mycock, eds., *Narrating the Nation. Representations in History, Media and the Arts* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2008), a product of the European Science Foundation project NHIST (*Representations of the Past: The Writing of National Histories in Europe*) which is also publishing a six-volume book series (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008–), URL: <http://www.esf.org/nhist>. The classic studies remain John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1985).

<sup>10</sup> For similar approaches see Guy P. Marchal and Aram Mattioli, eds., *Erfundene Schweiz. Konstruktionen nationaler Identität* (Zurich: Chronos 1992); Schweizerisches Landesmuseum, ed., *Die Erfindung der Schweiz 1848–1998. Bildentwürfe einer Nation. Sonderausstellung im Schweizer Landesmuseum in Zürich* (Zurich: Chronos, 1998); Els Witte, *La construction de la Belgique, 1828–1847*, trans. Anne-Laure Vignaux (Brussels: Complexe, 2005); Sébastien Dubois, *L’invention de la Belgique* (Bruxelles: Racine, 2005); Klaus Wiegrefe and Dietmar Pieper, eds., *Die Erfindung der Deutschen. Wie wir wurden, was wir sind* (München: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2007).



irretrievably. How it is viewed, narrated and interpreted depends on present concerns as well as future projects. This is true for scholarly perceptions of the past, i.e. historiography, geography and linguistics, as well as for the perceptions of the past expressed in other, more popular media, such as postcards, films and *Wikipedia*, and in pedagogical resources such as text books. Despite the important differences between the forms in which these various perceptions are expressed, they nevertheless all tend to adhere to a common vision of the past. This ‘master narrative’ has evolved quite significantly over time and is malleable enough to adapt to changing significations and internal contradictions, inherent for instance to the representation of Luxembourg-city as a ‘fortress’, seen both as oppressive and protective.

The ‘master narrative’ is characterised by its positivist approach: history and past are placed on an equal footing; there is no methodological distance, no discussion of different historiographical strands or theoretical concepts. Moreover, the narrative is linear, starting from clearly defined origins and aiming at the construction of a close-knit community with a common destiny (*communauté de destin*, *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*). It does not allow for multiple perspectives, but uses temporality for the production of fictive continuity. Its end is the ideological use of history. In the words of Etienne Balibar,

the history of nations... is always already presented to us in the form of a narrative that attributes to these entities the continuity of a subject. The formation of the nation thus appears as the fulfilment of a ‘project’ stretching over centuries, in which there are different stages and moments of coming to self-awareness, which the prejudices of historians will portray as more or less decisive.<sup>11</sup>

Broadly speaking, Luxembourg’s master narrative goes as follows:<sup>12</sup> In 963, a count named Sigefroid constructed a castle which gave its name to the capital and, later, the country. The Middle Ages marked the birth and the glory of Luxembourg, as four of its counts or dukes became Holy Roman Emperor. In 1443, the duke of Burgundy seized the capital and forcefully exacted the rights he had acquired from the remaining members of the House of Luxembourg, the male line of

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<sup>11</sup> Etienne Balibar, ‘The Nation Form: History and Ideology’, in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, ed. Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallenstein (London: Verso, 1995), 86.

<sup>12</sup> This is largely based on the overview by Michel Margue, ‘Histoire et représentations. Le passé détermine l’unité du passé’, *Transilvania* 8–9 (2007): 73–76.

which had become extinct. This was the beginning of what national historiography has commonly termed the ‘foreign dominations’, the rule of the Burgundians, Spanish, French and Austrians—all of whom were legitimate princely heirs (except for Louis XIV, king of France), but were nevertheless retrospectively deemed ‘foreigners’. In 1795, the duchy was dismantled and became part of the French Republic, later the Napoleonic Empire. At the Congress of Vienna in 1815, Luxembourg was ‘reborn’ as a political entity. It was made a grand duchy under the personal rule of the king of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, William I of Orange-Nassau, who treated Luxembourg as a Dutch province. In 1839, the country ‘finally’ became independent. It now formed not only a political but also a linguistic (and, for some, even a racial) entity. This date has acquired so much significance—notably as a result of the celebrations surrounding the anniversaries of 1939 and 1989—that it is worth exploring its construction a little more closely.<sup>13</sup>

Since 1830, possession of Luxembourg had been disputed between the Dutch crown and the newly-founded kingdom of Belgium. A solution was found in 1839, when the Belgian Parliament (including some members representing Luxembourg) accepted the division of the grand duchy into a western part, which was to remain with Belgium, and an eastern part (the rump grand duchy), which was to remain under the rule of the House of Orange-Nassau. This partition is generally portrayed as the last of three ‘dismemberments’: the first one being the ‘loss’ of some southern areas to Louis XIV in 1659,<sup>14</sup> and the second being the drawing of new borders along the rivers Our, Sûre and Moselle in 1815, which gave certain eastern parts (with the exception

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<sup>13</sup> Claude Wey, ‘Le Centenaire de l’Indépendance et sa commémoration en 1939’ *Hémécht* 41 (1989): 29–53; Yvan Staus, ‘La célébration du centenaire de l’indépendance du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg en 1939 dans sa signification historique’ (Unpublished master thesis, Université Marc Bloch, 2000); Sonja Kmec, ‘1839’, in *Lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg*, ed. Sonja Kmec, Benoît Majerus, Michel Margue and Pit Péporté (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 2007); Sonja Kmec and Yvan Staus, ‘Les monuments de l’indépendance, 1839’, in *Die Warte*, 7 January 2010. The latter lists 47 commemorative elements in the centenary celebrations in 1939 for the and 102 from the anniversary of 1989.

<sup>14</sup> One of the many clauses in the Franco-Spanish peace treaty (Treaty of the Pyrenees) stipulated that the strongholds of Thionville, Damvilliers and Montmédy and the provostships of Marville and Yvois were to pay tribute and taxes to the king of France rather than the duke of Luxembourg, who was at the time also the king of Spain.

of Vianden) to the kingdom of Prussia. Though regrets are sometimes expressed that the rump grand duchy was only a quarter of the size of the old duchy, it is often emphasised that the partition gave the country a greater cultural homogeneity. The idea that ‘two races’ cohabited prior to 1839 is based on the early-modern administrative distinction between German and French-speaking areas.<sup>15</sup> As a consequence, as Victor Molitor put it bluntly, the 1839 partition was a “supreme blood letting” (*saignée suprême*), which gave Luxembourg an ethnic unity which it had previously lacked:

From this moment onwards, this Luxembourg people, less numerous, but more substantial, forms one nation, of the same descent, the same language, in short a historical race.<sup>16</sup>

The image of ‘one race’ is based on a supposed linguistic unity, although the linguistic border did not coincide exactly with the political frontier established in 1839: the German-speaking region of Arlon was integrated into Belgium and some French-speaking villages became part of Luxembourg.<sup>17</sup> Gilbert Trausch has argued that linguistic unity and the emergence of Luxembourgish literature illustrate the birth of a national consciousness.<sup>18</sup> Given the prominence of this historian, it is hardly surprising that his reasoning has been taken up by more popular works, published by the Information and Press Office of the government of Luxembourg,<sup>19</sup> and is mentioned in political speeches.<sup>20</sup>

As the master narrative continues, the country was declared neutral in 1867, the fortress of the capital was dismantled and the last of the Prussian garrison left the country. Having once more gained its inde-

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<sup>15</sup> Albert Calmes, *Naissance et débuts du Grand-Duché 1814–1830. Le Grand-Duché de Luxembourg dans le Royaume des Pays-Bas*, rev. ed. (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 1971), 12.

<sup>16</sup> Victor Molitor, *Histoire de l'idéologie politique dans le Grand-Duché de Luxembourg de 1841 à 1867* (Luxembourg: Worré-Mertens, 1939), 10–11: “A partir de ce moment, ce peuple luxembourgeois, moins nombreux, mais plus substantiel, forme une seule nation, de même descendance, de même langue, bref une race historique.”

<sup>17</sup> Joseph Reisdorfer, ‘Les patois romans du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg: état des recherches et perspectives’, *De Familjefuerscher* 15 (1988): 41.

<sup>18</sup> Gilbert Trausch, *Le Luxembourg à l'époque contemporaine (du partage de 1839 à nos jours)* (Luxembourg: Bourg-Bourger, 1975), 89; G. Trausch, ‘Comment faire d'un Etat de convention une nation?’ in *Histoire du Luxembourg. Le destin européen d'un 'petit pays'*, ed. Gilbert Trausch (Toulouse: Privat, 2003), 234.

<sup>19</sup> *A propos... de la littérature au Luxembourg* (Luxembourg: SIP, 2004).

<sup>20</sup> One notable example is a speech given by Léon Bollendorf, the Speaker of the Parliament, on the 150th anniversary of independence, 19 April 1989, *ChD. Session ordinaire 1988–89* (Luxembourg, 1989), 3295.

pendence, Luxembourg stood fast despite attempts by various nations to annex its territory. Furthermore, the boom in the steel industry from the late nineteenth century to the 1970s, and the later growth of the financial centre—made possible by the constant flow of foreign capital and labour force from the 1960s onwards—ensured economic prosperity and remarkable political stability. Alternative narratives, based, for instance, on the worldview of Socialist Internationalism, were rarely articulated and did not achieve wide recognition.

This book seeks to show that the dominant narrative is highly contingent and depends on the social context of its writing. It points at a variety of interpretations of the past and opens thus a field of possibilities. The question as to *why* certain narratives prevailed over others can only be touched upon very lightly, as it would necessitate much further research into social relations of power, notably the influence of institutions such as the Catholic Church, the educational system, legislation etc.

The master narrative has evolved quite a lot over the years with respect to migration. While emphasis was put on Luxembourgian emigration to Transylvania or the United States in the nineteenth century, early twentieth-century literature warned of foreign influences gaining the upper-hand. At the end of the 1970s, in the context of increasing immigration and decreasing birth rates, Prime Minister Gaston Thorn of the Democratic Party (DP) wondered about a possible ‘demographic suicide’ and the Liberal-Socialist government asked a foreign specialist for a report on the issue.<sup>21</sup> The editor of the liberal newspaper *d’Lëtzebuurger Land*, Lucien Thiel, spoke about the “ethnic impoverishment” (*ethnische Verarmung*) of Luxembourg.<sup>22</sup> In the 1980s, the director of the National Office for Statistics (STATEC) also recommended an increase in “natural” reproduction rates and a reduction of immigration rates.<sup>23</sup> These three examples, representing three very different political standpoints, reveal a deep anxiety based on an ethnic vision of the nation-state. In this context, history and language were used to postulate a national identity in need of rescue.

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<sup>21</sup> Gerard Calot and Jean-Claude Chesnais, *La démographie du Luxembourg: passé, présent et avenir. Rapport au Président du Gouvernement*. STATEC—Cahiers Economiques 56 (Luxembourg: Statec, 1978).

<sup>22</sup> Lucien Thiel, ‘Kollektiver Selbstmord auf Raten?’, *Journal*, 23 February 1982, 3.

<sup>23</sup> Georges Als, ‘Des menaces contre l’identité nationale?’ *forum* 58 (1982): 2–4; Als, ‘Evolution démographique et identité luxembourgeoise’, *Les cahiers luxembourgeois* 5 (1988): 15–34.

This upsurge of interest in representations of the past (both memory and history) were reflected in the language law of 1984, the reconstruction of the National Monument of Remembrance (*Gëlle Fra*) in 1985, the rechristening of the State Museums and the State Archives as National Museums and National Archives in 1988, and the large-scale celebrations of the 150th anniversary of Luxembourg's 'independence' in 1989. This rise of state-driven nationalism was not only a reaction to the social and economic crisis which had been affecting the country since the mid-1970s, but was also an attempt to renew social bonds that seemed threatened by the changes in moral standards, ways of life and political models.

An alternative strand of historiography stresses the continuity of Luxembourg as part of a larger political and/or economic entity. Until 1795, the county (and, in later years, the duchy) belonged to the Holy Roman Empire, and then—from 1815 to 1866—to the German Confederation. In 1842, the grand duchy became a member of the German Customs Union, under pressure from its powerful eastern neighbour, the kingdom of Prussia. After World War I, economic ties with Belgium were forged. The trading agreement of the *Union économique belgo-luxembourgeoise* has lasted until today and became the foundation of Benelux in 1958 and paved the way for Luxembourg to become a founding member of the European Economic Community in 1957. Schengen, a tiny Luxembourgian village at the German and French border, has come to symbolise the abolition of internal European borders and the mobility of EU citizens.<sup>24</sup>

With regards to immigration, this narrative is embedded in the universalising discourse of Human Rights and stresses the economic benefits of immigration and, increasingly, the cultural diversity it offers. It is rarely mentioned that the Schengen space also represents the reinforcement of external borders and the construction of 'fortress Europe', nor is it common to observe that borders were not abolished, but simply shifted. Luxembourg's membership of the European Union is represented as delivering a form of protection from the covetousness of its neighbours and as a guarantee of its national independence. Stress is placed on the *active* participation of Luxembourg politicians

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<sup>24</sup> Cédric Sangaletti, 'Schengen', in *Lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg* (see note 13), 221–226.

(from Joseph Bech to Jean-Claude Juncker) in the European integration process to defuse growing criticisms of this process as being rather passive and distant.<sup>25</sup>

At the same time, in the course of the process of European regionalisation and decentralisation, economic and cultural cooperation with neighbouring regions has been encouraged by Luxembourg politicians—at least in their discourse. Power relations are now represented in a very flattering way for the micro-state: Luxembourg is no longer a tiny wedge between overbearing neighbours, but a sovereign state dealing with various sub-national entities. The picture was less clear when the area of cooperation was limited to Saar-Lor-Lux (Saarland-Lorraine-Luxembourg). As it expanded to form the so-called Great Region (including Wallonia, the French and German speaking communities of Belgium, and the Rhineland-Palatinate), it acquired a centre: Luxembourg. This is reflected by *Luxembourg and the Great Region, European Capital of Culture 2007* and—at a more symbolic level—by the Great Region's logo.<sup>26</sup> On one hand, this may compensate for the loss of centrality following the enlargement of the EU which allowed Vienna or Berlin to present themselves as being 'at the heart' of Europe. At least Luxembourg is 'at the heart' of the Great Region. On the other hand, Luxembourg and/or the Great Region are replaced into a European context and often declared to be a 'testbed' or 'model' for EU crossborder cooperation.

This book sets out to examine whether this more recent supranational narrative meshes with the classical national master narrative or whether it represents a paradigm shift. Has an exclusive narrative been replaced by an inclusive one? Has the Luxocentric viewpoint given way to a Eurocentric outlook? What elements of (dis)continuity are there between the traditional and the new strands of the master narratives? Both seem to rely on two central concepts: particularism and *Mischkultur* (mixed culture).<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> See the arguments presented in favour of the European Constitution in 2005 analysed by Patrick Dumont, Fernand Fehlen, Raphaël Kies and Philippe Poirier, *Le référendum sur le Traité établissant une Constitution pour l'Europe. Rapport élaboré pour la Chambre des Députés* (Luxembourg: STADE, 2007), 19–78.

<sup>26</sup> See for instance, URL: <http://www.granderegion.net> (last accessed 16 December 2009).

<sup>27</sup> Rolf Parr has found a similar duality of systems of collective symbols, centring on the image of island and fortress on the one hand and on the image of Luxembourg

*Particularism*

Particularism involves the teleological belief that Luxembourg followed a *Sonderweg* in the early modern period which rendered it distinct from the other parts of the Netherlands and explains why it became a nation-state in its own right. It is conceded that every province of the Spanish—later Austrian—Netherlands was particular, but it is nevertheless held that Luxembourg was more particular than others. This uniqueness is said to survive four centuries of ‘foreign dominations’ and to form the basis of a proto-national consciousness. The continuity between early-modern élite behaviour and national ‘mentality’ has been contested since the 1930s,<sup>28</sup> but it may be found in the most diverse interpretations of national character. Thus the writer and founder of the Society of Luxembourgian Writers of the French Language (*Société des écrivains luxembourgeois de langue française*, SELF) Marcel Noppeney commented in 1934:

Having lived as serfs of foreign nations for four centuries, the Luxembourgers still have the mentality of terrorised slaves, but are called to freedom... They have only the weapons of the weak and of children: cautious hints, roundabout means, with a false air of innocence.<sup>29</sup>

National victimisation and the image of Germans as ‘the other’ grew stronger after the Second World War. These ideas hark back to botched attempts at ‘germanisation’ in the 1840s, when the Dutch administration sought to reform Luxembourg’s educational system in order to cast Luxembourg as ‘non Belgian’ and justify the new borders.<sup>30</sup> Although these attempts failed, the economy was successfully reoriented towards the German Customs Union, of which Luxembourg

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at the heart of Europe on the other hand. See Rolf Parr, ‘Wie konzipiert die (Inter-)Diskurstheorie individuelle und kollektive (nationale) Identitäten?’, *forum* 289 (2009): 11–16.

<sup>28</sup> Nicolas Margue, ‘Die Entwicklung des Luxemburger Nationalgefühls von 1780 etwa bis heute’, *Ons Hémecht* 43/3 (1937): 188–204.

<sup>29</sup> Marcel Noppeney, *Luxembourg 1830. La révolution belge et la presse luxembourgeoise* (Luxembourg: J. Beffort, 1934), 158: “Depuis quatre siècles serfs de nations étrangères, les Luxembourgeois ont une mentalité encore d’esclaves terrorisés mais que la liberté sollicite... Ils n’ont que l’arme des faibles et des enfants: l’allusion précautionneuse, le détour, avec un air hypocritement candide.”

<sup>30</sup> Marie-Paule Jungblut, ‘Das Hassenpflug-Bild in Luxemburg’, in *Le Luxembourg en Lotharingie: Mélanges* Paul Margue, ed. Paul Dostert, Michel Pauly, Pol Schmoetten and Jean Schroeder (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 1993), 259–276.

was a member from 1842 to 1918. The ‘Prussian’ (*Preiss*)<sup>31</sup>—both the soldier stationed in the federal fortress of Luxembourg (until its dismantlement in 1867) and the customs officer stationed at the Moselle checkpoint to the Kingdom of Prussia until 1918—was constructed as ‘the other’, a figure of hatred and ridicule. The same was true for the figure of ‘the Prussian’ in the Rhineland and the two may have been linked, particularly given the cultural influence of the Rhineland, and notably Rhenish Catholicism, on Luxembourg in the nineteenth century. During World War II, when Luxembourg was occupied by Nazi Germany, the stereotype of the ‘Prussian’ had its heyday and acquired a multilayered character that still has resonance today, having become a common figure of speech for many people. It is linked to the *topos* of ‘occupation’, which is projected back in time and often links the federal (Prussian) garrison with military occupation during World War I and the Nazi regime. Together with the ‘four centuries of foreign domination’,<sup>32</sup> the threat to Luxembourg’s independence forms the basis of its particularism.

As we shall see, particularism is also linked to ‘monarchical loyalty’, which is considered to have rendered Luxembourg truly distinct from the other provinces, and to the notion of an organic culture, expressed by the image of a strongly rooted tree. This has been qualified as a “conservative myth” by Salman Rushdie, who noted that:

We know the force of gravity, but not its origins; and to explain why we become attached to our birthplaces we pretend that we are trees and speak of roots. Look under your feet. You will not find gnarled growths sprouting through the soles. Roots, I sometimes think, are a conservative myth, designed to keep us in our places.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Emile Hengen and Marius Remackel, ‘De Preiss’, in *Lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg* (see note 13), 279–284.

<sup>32</sup> Gilbert Trausch, ‘1798–1942, deux dates, deux régimes d’occupation: Faut-il les comparer?’, *Les Cahiers luxembourgeois* 32/3 (1964): 163–173.

<sup>33</sup> Salman Rushdie, *Shame* (London: Vintage, 1983), 86. Quoted by Jeanne E. Glesener, ‘La récupération de l’espace perdu par l’acte de l’écriture. Etude comparée de trois auteurs immigrants: Kazuo Ishiguro, Jean Portante et Zafer Şenocak’ (PhD thesis, Université de Provence I, 2009), 268.



## Mischkultur

*Mischkultur* (mixed culture), a concept introduced by the writer Batty Weber in 1909,<sup>34</sup> is a different way of construing Luxembourg's particularity, and points not to cultural rootedness or demarcation from 'the other', but to linguistic and cultural exchanges at the crossroads of France and Germany. This idea was taken up by a host of Luxembourgian authors in the inter-war period and has enjoyed a certain popularity since the late twentieth century.

Viewing Luxembourgian culture as a mixture of different cultures does not, however, cancel out reification. France and Germany are seen as two essentially incompatible and distinct entities, while Luxembourg is regarded as a separate entity which nevertheless seeks to forge connections with its two neighbours. Projected back in time, the particularity of the Luxembourgian nation consists in its role as a mediator, as a bridge connecting France and Germany, without either effecting or undergoing alteration in the process.

As a historiographical concept, the idea of *Mischkultur* is based on changes in the linguistic make-up of Luxembourg over time. Throughout the Middle Ages, the duchy was divided into French and German-speaking areas. In 1684, however, Louis XIV established French as the sole administrative language and French remained the dominant language even after Luxembourg returned to Habsburg rule in 1698. This changed in 1815 and especially after 1839, when the country was divided following more or less the linguistic border. An attempted germanisation policy failed and the administrative and educational system 'remained' bilingual. In essence, however, Luxembourg was said to be neither French nor German, but to combine elements of both to form a third entity. Batty Weber noted "how Germans remark that there is something French about Luxembourg [and] French people that there is something German."<sup>35</sup> Far from questioning French and German stereotypes (i.e. hedonism and discipline), exponents of the

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<sup>34</sup> Gilbert Trausch, 'Un créneau étroit entre l'Allemagne et la France: Le Luxembourg à la recherche d'une conscience nationale (1839-1945)', in *Europa und das nationale Selbstverständnis. Imagologische Probleme in Literatur, Kunst und Kultur des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*. Aachener Beiträge zur Komparatistik 8, ed. Hugo Dyserinck and Karl Ulrich Syndram (Bonn: Bouvier, 1988), 402. See also: Claude Conter, 'Mischkultur', in *Lieux de mémoire* (see note 13), 23-28.

<sup>35</sup> Batty Weber, 'Über Mischkultur in Luxemburg', *Luxemburger Zeitung*, 11-12 February 1911, quoted by G. Trausch, 'Un créneau étroit', 404: "wie dem Deut-

notion of *Mischkultur* reproduced them in representing Luxembourgian mentality as a mixture of both clichés. They rejected the racist perception of cultural mixing as something decadent and unnatural, but nevertheless continued to emphasise that there was an intrinsic link between cultural characteristics and ethnicity.

The image of Luxembourg as a bridge between Germany and France remains in usage and has been fully integrated into the discourse of Luxembourg's role in the EU.<sup>36</sup> Luxembourg's borderland situation has also been transformed from being a merely geographical condition to a psychological condition. This is both frustrating and enriching for the writer Corina Ciocârlie, who considers Luxembourgian authors to be "tightrope walkers".<sup>37</sup> Asked by Ciocârlie about the specificity of the Luxembourg cultural landscape, the writer Jean Portante replied:

There is no doubting the fact of being situated on the dividing line between the Germanic and the Latin worlds. This multiplies the number of devices used for orientation. Influences come from different directions. This is of great consequence, especially for a country which has experienced rapid socio-economic development: in a few decades, it has moved from a rural to a post-industrial stage without cultural 'values' having had the time to catch their breath. Thus, despite the small size of the country, several languages have established themselves. There is, of course, the national language—*Lëtzebuergesch*—but there is also German and French. Moreover there are those languages which have been introduced by the flow of migrants: Italian and Portuguese. The result: one can live in Luxembourg, work there, have a social, cultural life without speaking the country's language.<sup>38</sup>

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schen im Wesen Luxemburgs ein französischer, dem Franzosen ein deutsch geartetet Anstrich sich auffällig macht."

<sup>36</sup> Benoît Majerus, 'Le petit Européen parfait. L'Europe, le Luxembourg et la construction nationale', in *L'Europe de Versailles à Maastricht*, ed. N. Beaupre and C. Moine (Paris: Seli Arslan, 2007), 225–235.

<sup>37</sup> Jean Portante and Corina Ciocârlie (interview), 'Vauban est resté, Molière est parti... Le paysage littéraire luxembourgeois', *Secolul 21. Luxembourg o capitală în Europa 7–12* (2007): 206.

<sup>38</sup> J. Portante and C. Ciocârlie, 'Vauban est resté Molière est parti', 204–205: "Sans doute le fait de se trouver sur la ligne de partage entre l'univers germanique et latin. Cela multiplie les boussoles. Les influences viennent d'horizons distincts. Ce n'est pas rien, surtout pour un pays qui a connu un développement socio-économique fulgurant: en quelques décennies, il est passé du stade rural au postindustriel sans que les 'valeurs' culturelles aient eu le temps de respirer. Une des conséquences en est que, malgré l'exiguïté du pays, plusieurs langues s'y sont installées. La nationale bien entendu, le *lëtzebuergesch*, mais aussi l'allemand et le français. S'y ajoutent celles venues par les flux migratoires, l'italien le portugais. Résultat: on peut vivre au Luxembourg, y travailler, avoir une vie sociale, culturelle, sans parler la langue du pays."

This perceived (and experienced) liminality may lead to a reconsideration of Luxembourgian ‘identity’<sup>39</sup> which seeks to incorporate ‘the other’. In this sense, it is not *Mischkultur* that offers an escape from an homogenising view of society, but the concept of ‘hybridity’ as it has been developed by scholars such as Homi Bhabha and Stuart Hall.<sup>40</sup> Rather than maintaining distinctive cultural entities, the notion of the ‘third space’ calls the constitutive parts of *Mischkultur* themselves into question. As current processes of globalisation both unsettle and interconnect people in unprecedented ways, ‘cosmopolitisation’ may also be a concept that could be applied to the Luxembourgian context.<sup>41</sup> Cosmopolitanism, however, tends to obscure the fact that citizenship is very restricted and that less than fifty percent of inhabitants currently have the right to vote.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, the phenomenon of cultural hybridisation is not altogether new: social space has never been stable and is always determined by human interrelations. In that sense, everybody is a ‘hybrid’, not just migrants, minorities... or Luxembourgers.<sup>43</sup>

To a certain extent, the concepts of particularism and *Mischkultur* reflect the two main strands of the master narrative: the national and the supranational: the question this book addresses is whether they are contradictory or not. The main focus of this study is on the ‘classical’ master narrative and, as far as language is concerned, on Luxembourgish rather than trilingualism. This does not mean that we consider Luxembourgish to be more important than trilingualism—quite the opposite—but we believe that the connection between nationalisation and language (and, in the past, history) is so significant for the evolu-

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<sup>39</sup> In this study, we seek to avoid the term ‘identity’, as we do not want to define its content. Indeed, we think that it is impossible to define what Luxembourgers ‘are’ since there always remains a difference between what they are supposed to be, in terms of values and norms, what they say they are or want to be (multiple, transitory, overlapping and contradictory identities) and what they do in practice, for which see Jürgen Straub, ‘Identität’, in *Handbuch der Kulturwissenschaften*, vol. 1, *Grundlagen und Schlüsselbegriffe*, ed. Friedrich Jaeger and Burkhard Liebsch (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2004), 277–301.

<sup>40</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 218–219; Stuart Hall, ‘Cultural Identity and Diaspora’, *Framework* 36 (1989): 68–82.

<sup>41</sup> Ulrich Beck, ‘Kosmopolitisierung ohne Kosmopolitik’, in *Die Macht des Lokalen in einer Welt ohne Grenzen* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2006), 252–270.

<sup>42</sup> Denis Scuto, ‘Qu’est-ce un luxembourgeois?’, *Hémecht* 58/1 (2006): 73–96.

<sup>43</sup> See Andreas Pott, ‘Identität und Raum. Perspektiven nach dem Cultural Turn’, in *Kulturelle Geographien*, ed. Christian Berndt and Robert Pütz (Bielefeld: transcript, 2007), 47.

tion of society in the present that it seems appropriate to prioritise its analysis. Nonetheless, we are aware that we are not detached from historiographical discourse, but are a part of it.

*The Research Context / About this Book*

This book is the end-product and further development of a research project entitled *History, Memory and Identities*, conducted at the University of Luxembourg between 2004 and 2007 with the financial support of the National Research Council (*Fonds national de la recherche—FNR*).<sup>44</sup> Although established as a historical project, this research was accepted as part of a forward-looking programme entitled ‘Living tomorrow in Luxembourg’ (*Vivre demain au Luxembourg—VIVRE*), on the basis that the country’s “identity crisis” posed a potential danger to “social cohesion”. Our proposal addressed a research topic, which the *VIVRE* research programme considered crucial:

For Luxembourg, even more than for other countries of western Europe, finding a solution to the question of the definition of a collective identity, which rallies people in the present (for instance around the monarchy, the constitution or a shared ethic) while being open to the future, constitutes an absolute necessity in terms of social cohesion.<sup>45</sup>

Rather than setting out to define a new collective identity—the establishment of identity always involving exclusion—we proposed a study of *lieux de mémoire* in Luxembourg and their role in the nation-building process.<sup>46</sup> Inspired by the research initiated by Pierre Nora,<sup>47</sup> we set out to examine the changing associations of highly symbolic elements (places, events, figures and concepts). The aim was to show how

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<sup>44</sup> For more details, see: Sonja Kmec, ‘Lieux de mémoire and the (de)construction of “identities”’, *Hémecht* 58/1 (2006): 483–497.

<sup>45</sup> Annexe 3. Description détaillée du programme *Vivre demain au Luxembourg*, 6: “Pour le Luxembourg plus encore que pour d’autres pays d’Europe occidentale, trouver une solution à la question de la définition d’une identité collective à la fois fédératrice dans le présent (ralliée p.ex. à la monarchie, la constitution, une éthique partagée) et ouverte sur le futur, constituera une nécessité absolue en termes de cohésion sociale.” URL: <http://www.fnr.lu> (last accessed 16 December 2009).

<sup>46</sup> Sonja Kmec, Benoît Majerus, Michel Margue and Pit Péporté, ed., *Lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg. Usages du passé et construction nationale* (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 2007).

<sup>47</sup> Pierre Nora, ed., *Les lieux de mémoire*. 7 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1984–1992).

‘myths’—in a Barthesian sense—are made ‘natural’, to uncover what they are trying to blend out and to reveal what meanings they embody.<sup>48</sup>

The present book is interested mainly in the ‘genealogy’ of representations rather than the mechanisms of discourse, and thus stands at some remove from other studies inspired by Michel Foucault.<sup>49</sup> Given the somewhat different methodological approaches that such themes would require, the scope of this work does not extend to the examination of the power relations, interconnections and subject positions of individual and institutional actors who produce the discourse, nor to the analysis of the actual ‘productivity’ of their discourse (the way it shapes others and translates into political programmes). Nevertheless, we hope that this book will give an impetus to new research rather than provide any ready-made answers.

This project has presented certain challenges, particularly with respect to vocabulary and the translation of institutional names. Luxembourg has attracted so little scholarship in English that there is no consensus as to the predicative adjective. Is it ‘Luxembourgish’ or ‘Luxembourgian’ or simply ‘of/from Luxembourg’? Since linguistic studies consistently use ‘Luxembourgish’ to refer to the language, this has term has been used throughout this book. The adjective ‘Luxembourgian’, however, is used to describe other things pertaining to Luxembourg. Thus, people are called ‘Luxembourgian’ (adjective) or ‘Luxembourgers’ (noun). In addition, the adjective ‘Luxembourg’ may be used when referring to official matters: the Luxembourg constitution, the Luxembourg state etc. Similar challenges, however, are attendant upon a wide range of terms. The word ‘discourse’, for example, is used here in a broad sense, comprising all forms of semiotic activity connected with social, cultural and historical patterns and changes in usage. What is traditionally understood by language is but one form of discourse.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Paris: Seuil, 1957).

<sup>49</sup> Michel Foucault, *L’archéologie du savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969); Rainer Diaz-Bone, ‘Probleme und Strategien der Operationalisierung des Diskursmodells im Anschluss an Michel Foucault’, in *Das Wuchern der Diskurse*, ed. Hannelore Bublitz, Andrea D. Bührmann, Christine Hanke and Andrea Seier (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1999), 119–135; Sybille Bauriedl, ‘Räume lesen lernen: Methoden zur Raumanalyse in der Diskursforschung’, *Forum Qualitative Social Research* 8/2/13 (2007)—URL: <http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs/> (last accessed 16 December 2009).

<sup>50</sup> In his later works, Foucault differentiates between discursive and non-discursive practices that together form “dispositives”, for which see Isabelle Lorey, ‘Macht und

As Keith and Pile have stressed, identity politics are not some kind of surface froth that floats around on top of important social processes, but are the very expression of power relations in that they articulate objects in order to make sense of the world, ourselves and each other.<sup>51</sup> These practices and representations, appropriations and attributions of identity are currently being analysed by a multidisciplinary research project at the University of Luxembourg which has provided a great source of inspiration.<sup>52</sup> This book represents a collective effort, although some of the research and initial writing has been done individually over a lengthy period. Thus, the part dealing with language was completed at the end of 2006 and does not deal with more recent legal and political developments, such as the laws on integration and nationality, and the *Offensive fir d'Sprooch*. Nonetheless, it appears that the political promotion of the Luxembourgish language, as examined in this book, is not declining, but—quite on the contrary—gaining momentum.

The book is divided into three main parts, dealing with historical narration, territory and language. Historical narrations have played a key role in 'inventing' national, gendered, ethnic and racial identities, and in presenting deterministic and essentialist conceptions of time and human action. The importance of (abstract and social) space in the production of history and the equal importance of the temporal dimension in the production of geography have been underlined by Doreen Massey. Her concept of 'space/time' abolishes the binary opposition of time and space and defines them as inter-related.<sup>53</sup> This double process of spatial and temporal construction of identity is analysed here in a diachronic way from the late nineteenth to the early twenty-first century, comprising the period traditionally considered

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Diskurs bei Foucault', in *Das Wuchern der Diskurse*, ed. Hannelore Bublitz, Andrea D. Bühmann, Christine Hanke and Andrea Seier (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1999), 87–96.

<sup>51</sup> Michael Keith and Steve Pile, 'The politics of place', in *Place and the Politics of Identity*, ed. Michael Keith and Steve Pile (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 29; Jacques Levy and Michel Lussault, ed., *Dictionnaire de la Géographie* (Paris: Belin, 2003), s.v. 'identité spatiale'.

<sup>52</sup> *IDENT. Identités socio-culturelles et politiques identitaires au Luxembourg* (2007–2010). URL: [http://www.uni.lu/recherche/flshase/ident\\_identites\\_socio\\_culturelles\\_et\\_politiques\\_identitaires\\_au\\_luxembourg/](http://www.uni.lu/recherche/flshase/ident_identites_socio_culturelles_et_politiques_identitaires_au_luxembourg/) (last accessed 16 December 2009).

<sup>53</sup> Doreen Massey, 'Politics and space/time', in *Place and the Politics of Identity*, ed. Michael Keith and Steve Pile (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 141–161.

as key to nation-building processes as well as current trends towards de—and renationalisation. The scale of this study is limited to discourse in Luxembourg and concerns the production of internal and external borders.

Part One will first retrace the ‘genealogy’ of the master narrative from the early modern period and will examine its absorption into public expressions of political self-identity after 1919. It will then look at the dissemination of the master narrative by means of textbooks, celebrations, literature and popular culture. Finally, it will highlight the transformations of this narrative, the opening of fields of possibilities and new trends.

Part Two examines how representations of space complement the master narrative by embedding past experiences in a certain territory and within certain defined borders. Territorial delimitations are projected back in time and legitimised by reference to the same bounded space in the past. Two different discursive strategies for the creation of ‘collective identity’ are distinguished: the centripetal and the centrifugal. The former characterises the national master narrative, while the latter has more of a supranational, Great Regional or European focus.

Part Three traces the evolution of Luxembourgish, which still is in full nationalisation mode. Once again, the watershed here seems to have come in 1919, when the language began to be seen not as a mere dialect of German, but as a distinctly different tongue. On first sight, a native language seems to be a constant of human existence, in the sense both of history and of an individual’s life. As its title indicates, however, this book seeks to deconstruct the notion of a natural language and focuses on the act of creation and on the social actors involved in this process.<sup>54</sup> The evolution of the language is, moreover, placed in a broad context. The gradual codification of Luxembourgish was part of a larger movement which aimed to give the comparatively young state a sense of substance and meaning. As in most European nation-states, the state of Luxembourg existed before any systematic attempts

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<sup>54</sup> On the results of this process and the actual everyday practices of the languages, see Kristine Horner, ‘Negotiating the Language-Identity Link: Media Discourse and Nation-Building in Luxembourg’ (Unpublished PhD thesis, State University of New York at Buffalo, 2004); Fernand Fehlen, *Une enquête sur un marché linguistique multilingue en profonde mutation / Luxemburgs Sprachenmarkt im Wandel* (Luxembourg: SESOPI, 2009); Melanie Wagner, *Lay linguistics and school teaching: an empirical socio-linguistic study in the Moselle-Franconian dialect area* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 2009).

at nation-building were undertaken. It was—and still is—heavily involved in this process. Thus, in recent years, Luxembourg has created new national institutions, such as the Central Bank in 1998, the University of Luxembourg in 2003, and the establishment of several Luxembourg-related research institutes between 1995 and 2008. This book investigates whether this nationalisation tendency may be confirmed by the study of the representations of the past, the territory and the language from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day.





PART ONE

NARRATING THE PAST



## INTRODUCTION

### MAKING SENSE, PRODUCING MEANING: TIME, MEMORY AND HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

“Whether it stands for the lived experience of past people or for the *a posteriori* writing about that experience, history always has ‘an irreducible temporal dimension’.”<sup>1</sup> Although the ‘category of time’<sup>2</sup> is essential for scholarly history, it has only lately caught historians’ attention, with the exception of some ‘classics’ such as Fernand Braudel’s work on the three temporalities and Reinhart Kosellek’s on the semantics of historical times.<sup>3</sup> In 1987, Michel de Certeau still referred to time as something the discipline does not think about (*l’impensé*), while using it incessantly as a taxonomic instrument.<sup>4</sup> Since the late 1980s, reflections on time have gained in importance.<sup>5</sup> Luxembourgian

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<sup>1</sup> Jean Leduc, *Les historiens et le temps. Conceptions, problématiques, écritures*, Collection Points H 259 (Paris: Seuil, 1999), 7: “Qu’on l’entende au sens d’expérience vécue par les hommes du passé ou à celui d’écriture a posteriori de cette expérience, l’histoire a toujours ‘une dimension temporelle irréductible’”, quoting Antoine Prost, *Douze leçons sur l’histoire*, Collection Points, H 225 (Paris: Seuil, 1996), 255.

<sup>2</sup> See Maria Todorova, ‘The Trap of Backwardness: Modernity, Temporality, and the Study of Eastern European Nationalism’, *Slavic Review* 64/1 (2005): 140–164; reprinted as *Die Kategorie Zeit in der Geschichtsschreibung über das östliche Europa. Oskar-Halecki-Vorlesung 2003* (Leipzig: Universitätsverlag, 2007). See also Todorova, ‘Der Balkan als Analyse-kategorie: Grenzen, Raum, Zeit,’ *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 28 (2002): 470–492.

<sup>3</sup> Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l’époque de Philippe II*, 2 vols. (Paris: Armand Colin, 1949); English translation: New York, 1975; F. Braudel, *Ecrits sur l’histoire* (Paris: Flammarion, 1969), esp. 9–133; English translation: (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Reinhart Kosellek, *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979). See also: Kosellek, *Zeitschichten. Studien zur Historik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000). For a good overview of the historiography and existing literature on this subject, see Kosellek, ‘Zeit’, in *Lexikon Geschichtswissenschaft. Hundert Grundbegriffe*, ed. Stefan Jordan (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2002), 331–336.

<sup>4</sup> Michel de Certeau, *Histoire et psychanalyse entre science et fiction* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987), 89.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Krzysztof Pomian, *L’Ordre du temps* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984); Jacques Le Goff, *Histoire et mémoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988); Paul Byers and Margaret Mead, ed., *Périodes. La construction du temps historique. 5<sup>e</sup> colloque d’histoire au présent* (Paris: EHESS, 1991); Daniel S. Milo, *Trahir le temps. Histoire* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1991); Horst Günther, *Zeit der Geschichte. Welterfahrung und Zeitkategorien in der Geschichtsphilosophie* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1993); François

historiography, however, has not taken up the issue and still adheres to a linear (and, to some extent, even teleological) conception of the flow of time. By contrast, our studies on the relationship between memory, history and identities have started to tackle the role time plays in constructions and representations of identity.<sup>6</sup> While accepting this latter aspect as the underlying rationale of the study of *lieux de mémoire*, we will try to illustrate it through a study of Luxembourgian historiography and other media of collective memory.

“Historical thinking makes sense of time”<sup>7</sup>—the study of history converts time into meaning. This poignant formulation by Jörn Rüsen skilfully explores two meanings of the word ‘time’: the *measured* time<sup>8</sup> of nature, clocks and daily routine, and the *perceived* time of culture and history. The latter experience of time is defined by its confrontation with the past, the present and the future. Historical time constitutes

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Hartog, ‘Temps et histoire. “Comment écrire l’histoire de France?”’, *Annales. Histoire, Sciences sociales* (1995): 1219–1236; Yan Thomas, ‘La vérité, le temps, le juge et l’historien’, *Le Débat* 102 (1998): 17–36; J. Leduc, *Les historiens et le temps*; François Hartog, *Régimes d’historicité. Présentisme et expériences du temps* (Paris: Seuil, 2003); Jörn Rüsen, ed., *Time and History: The Variety of Cultures*, Making Sense of History 10 (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2007); Christian Delacroix, François Dosse and Patrick Garcia, ed., *Historicités* (Paris: La Découverte, 2009). See also the other studies by Jörn Rüsen cited below.

<sup>6</sup> Michel Margue and Sonja Kmec, ‘Introduction’, in *Lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg*, ed. Sonja Kmec, Benoît Majerus, Michel Margue and Pit Péporté (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 2007), 5–14; Michel Margue, ‘Nationale Identitätskonstruktionen durch fiktive Kontinuität. Einige Bemerkungen zum “nationalen” Vergangenheitsbild’, *forum* 271 (2007): 33–37; Pit Péporté, ‘The creation of medieval history in Luxembourg’ (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2008); Michel Margue and Pit Péporté, ‘The discovery of the Middle Ages. Medieval Myths and the Building of national identity: the example of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg’, *The Uses of the Middle Ages in Modern European States. History, Nationhood, and the Search for Origins*, ed. Robert Evans and Guy Marchal (Basingstoke: Palgrave, forthcoming).

<sup>7</sup> Jörn Rüsen, *Zeit und Sinn. Strategien historischen Denkens* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1990), 11: “Historisches Denken macht aus Zeit Sinn.” See also *Ibid.*, 157–171.

<sup>8</sup> A conscious decision has been made to omit reference to the concept of ‘absolute time’, a concept which is rejected by physics, biology and experimental psychology, and even more so by sociology and philosophy, disciplines that have generally come to agree about time’s complex, multiple and relative aspects. On the social dimension of time, see, for example, Rudolf Wendorff, *Zeit und Kultur. Geschichte des Zeitbewußtseins in Europa* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1980); Norbert Elias, *Über die Zeit. Arbeiten zur Wissenssoziologie II* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984); Roger Sue, *Temps et ordre social* (Paris: PUF, 1994); Jean Chesneaux, *Habiter le temps. Passé, présent, futur: esquisse d’un dialogue politique* (Paris: Bayard Centurion, 1996); Robert Levine, *A Geography of Time* (New York: Basic, 1997); Etienne Klein, *Les tactiques de Chronos* (Paris: Flammarion, 2004), Simonetta Tabboni, *Des temps sociaux* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2006).

an attempt to interpret the past by putting it into relation and by putting it into writing. History fundamentally consists of (re)constructing meaning by using a scholarly approach.

### 1. *The Meaning of History*

The three concepts of time, meaning and historical narration are inevitably linked. Jörn Rüsen defines the meaning of history as a “quality of the course of time (*Zeitverläufe*) in the human world, which links its objective occurrence to the subjective intentions of the people acting in it and, further, to the historiographers that interpret it.”<sup>9</sup> History thus has a double meaning: the meaning attributed to past events by the people involved and, the meaning that the current act of remembering bestows on elements of the past.<sup>10</sup> In other words, we need to distinguish between the meaning of the time of the historical past and that of the time of historical narration.

The creation of meaning by historians (*historische Sinnbildung*)<sup>11</sup> does not aim to find in History (with a capital ‘H’) a profound, absolute and objective meaning, but to put historical events into an ‘order’ and thus to integrate them into a historical process. History therefore has a narrative meaning that is multiple and diverse in nature and, in some cases, in competition with other narrative meanings. In most western countries, the production of narrative meaning has tended to be heavily guided by religion, moral values, the idea of progress, or ideologies. The latter has certainly included nationalism. Nowadays, scholarly ‘producers of meaning’ (*Sinnstifter*) are probably less heavily

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<sup>9</sup> Jörn Rüsen, ‘Sinn (historischer)’, *Lexikon Geschichtswissenschaft* (see note 3), 263: “Qualität von Zeitverläufen in der menschlichen Welt, mit der ihr objektives Geschehen auf die subjektiven Absichten der in ihr handelnden (...) Menschen, aber auch der sie deutenden Historiographen bezogen ist.”

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Jörn Rüsen, ‘Historische Sinnbildung durch Erzählen’, *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 18 (1996): 501–544; Klaus E. Müller and Jörn Rüsen, ed., *Historische Sinnbildung—Problemstellungen, Zeitkonzepte, Wahrnehmungshorizonte, Darstellungsstrategien* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1997); Jörn Rüsen, *Zerbrechende Zeit. Über den Sinn der Geschichte* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2001); Rüsen, *Kultur macht Sinn. Orientierung zwischen gestern und morgen* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2005), esp. 191–225; Rüsen, *Historische Orientierung. Über die Arbeit des Geschichtsbewusstseins, sich in der Zeit zurechtzufinden* (Schwalbach/Ts.: Wochenschau, 2008). For a summary, see Rüsen, ‘Sinn (historischer)’, 263–265. See also Rüsen, ed., *Meaning and Representation in History*, *Making Sense of History* 7 (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2006).

influenced by official ideologies, but they nonetheless remain closely linked to a political, academic and cultural context, which is no less influential. Historians have hence attempted to approach history from below, to study the history of subaltern or dominated groups, or to enlarge their perspective and choose a transnational or even larger (e.g. European) framework.<sup>12</sup> In these cases, the search for meaning is closely linked to the contemporary context and its needs.<sup>13</sup> In this first part of the book, we shall analyse these ‘producers of meaning’ through the prism of the narratives they create(d) and the historical contexts they live(d) in.

## 2. *The Time of the Historian*

By producing meaning, the practice of history has a problematic relationship with time. On the one hand, all historians are part of their time and their own field of experience. On the other hand, they aim to distance themselves from the past they work on and to be a ‘director of time’: The historian “is the by-passer who proceeds with the inscription of the past in the present, thus establishing a bridge to the future and legitimising an indefinite rereading of sources in search of meaning”.<sup>14</sup> Paul Ricoeur has shown how historians introduce a temporal structure into their narratives, which moves from a “prefigured time” to a “configured time” and on to a “refigured time” when the narrative is read.<sup>15</sup> He stressed the link between the knowing subject and his object of study, both necessarily belonging to the same temporal field.

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<sup>12</sup> For such examples in Luxembourgian historiography, see Lucien Blau, “Gute Zeiten, schlechte Zeiten”—que faut il retenir du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle à l’échelle luxembourgeoise?, *Lëtzbuerger Almanach vum Johonnert*, ed. Guy Binsfeld (Luxembourg: Binsfeld, 1999), 6–34; Michel Pauly, ‘Questions autour d’une parure en coquillages trouvée à Waldbillig. Plaidoyer pour une perspective trans—ou meta-nationale de l’histoire luxembourgeoise’, *Hémecht* 58 (2006), 9–33; Michel Margue and Jean Schroeder, ed., *Un itinéraire européen. Jean l’Aveugle, comte de Luxembourg et roi de Bohême (1296–1346)* (Brussels: Crédit Communal / Luxembourg: CLUDEM, 1996).

<sup>13</sup> J. Rösen, *Zeit und Sinn*, 157: “Der Sinngehalt des historischen Erzählens verdankt sich dem Sinnbedürfnis der Gegenwart.”

<sup>14</sup> François Bédarida, ‘L’historien régisseur du temps?’, *Revue historique* 605 (1998): 23: “régisseur du temps: Il est le passeur qui procède à l’inscription du passé dans le présent, établissant ainsi un pont vers l’avenir et légitimant une relecture indéfinie des sources, à la recherche de sens.”

<sup>15</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Temps et récit. I. L’intrigue et le récit historique*. Collection Points Essais 227 (Paris: Seuil, 1983), 128–129.

Emplotment is the practice that transforms a diversity of events into a temporarily unified story:

the act of emplotment combines in variable proportions two temporal dimensions, one chronological and the other not. The former constitutes the episodic dimension of narrative. It characterizes the story insofar as it is made up of events. The second is the configurational dimension properly speaking, thanks to which the plot transforms the events into a story. This configurational act consists of ‘grasping together’ the detailed actions... It draws from this manifold of events the unity of a temporal whole.<sup>16</sup>

When it comes to the practice of history, this ‘totality’ is a construction whose specific character emerges from its aim to approach as closely as possible the ‘reality’ of the past. In this sense, the time of historical narration distinguishes itself from the ‘time of memory’, which is functional in nature.

### 3. *The Time of Memory*

The time of memory is shaped by memories and oblivion. It is the result of a process of selection and of an act of remembering past times. Memory is marked by the ability to choose between recollection and forgetting; it is a compass to make decisions for the future, linking thus closely past, present and future.<sup>17</sup> In this sense, memory—i.e. our subjective view of the past—is based more on the present or even the future, than the past itself. Only a retrospective, all-encompassing, yet constantly changing view of the ‘self’ conveys the impression of a personal identity to the individual. It is this view that shapes a person’s sense of identity, based on a representation of coherence and cohesion, or of a ‘one’ and ‘unique’ character unaffected by different life-phases. It is in this sense that one can say that a personal and subjective representation of the past has the objective of giving a ‘meaning’ to life, more so for the future than for the past.

The discrepancy between the infinite time of nature, the world and its virtual possibilities on the one hand, and the limited time span of

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<sup>16</sup> P. Ricoeur, *Temps et récit*, vol. 1, 127–129. For this translation, see Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 1: 66–67.

<sup>17</sup> Harald Welzer, ‘Wozu erinnern wir uns? Einige Fragen an die Geschichtswissenschaften’, *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften* 16 (2005): 12–35.



human life on the other—*Weltzeit* and *Lebenszeit*, as Hans Blumenberg calls them<sup>18</sup>—pushes people to search for temporal points of reference on a ‘medium’ scale, such as family history or the history of a more or less institutionalised community. Turning to a relatively ‘near’ collective time has the advantage of providing reference points that are not only manageable and familiar, but also shared by the people one feels close to. It is a matter of ‘shared time’. The production of shared representations of the past allows one to move from ‘individual’ to ‘collective’ time, and also from the ‘time of memory’ to the ‘time of history’. The first shift, i.e. from the individual to the collective (and vice-versa), is not a mere addition of two levels. It results rather from complex interactions, themselves variable in time and space, and closely related to the social conditions of the production of collective representations. In the second shift, from memory to history, the interrelations are no less complex, since memory feeds on history, “as if it were captured by history”.<sup>19</sup> As Ricoeur has put it, history is the matrix of memory.<sup>20</sup> The theory of social, or collective, memory was originally developed in the 1920s by Aby Warburg and Maurice Halbwachs and has attracted much attention since. It sheds light on the mechanisms and interactions of memory and collective representations. While the latter derive from shared historical narratives, the production of memory is also due to internal communication and the interactions of the members of the collective. Memory and collective representations crystallise in common points of reference, such as ‘heroes’, events, dates or well-known images. Pierre Nora has metaphorically named them *lieux de mémoire*. In order to ‘function’, they require a deeper symbolic meaning which—though far from immutable—enables them to serve as rallying cry for integration and as a screen on which to project a group identity. *Lieux de mémoire* aim to provide a common narrative. Here memory links up with history, dominant discourse and linear temporality. Even though it feeds on historical elements, this narrative owes more to memory than to scholarly history. Jan Assmann labelled it ‘inhabited history’ (*bewohnte Geschichte*), implying an appropriation of the past. This appropriation is an act of subjectivisation of and

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<sup>18</sup> Hans Blumenberg, *Lebenszeit und Weltzeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986).

<sup>19</sup> François Dosse, *Paul Ricoeur, Michel de Certeau. L'Histoire entre le dire et le faire* (Paris: L'Herne, 2006), 89: “elle est comme saisie par l'histoire.”

<sup>20</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* (Paris: Seuil, 2000), 106.

embedding into the present; it is thus situated at the opposite end of the activity of the historian, who tries to set himself at a distance from the past in order to explore the 'historical past', i.e. the past as experienced by the people involved. In contrast to scholarly history, collective memory—as a social construction and in its function to bestow meaning (*sinnstiftend*)—attributes time a role as an identifier.

#### 4. *The Crossing of the Times of History and Memory*

Collective memory and scholarly history must not be interpreted as strict antinomies. Even though history and memory possess distinct ultimate objectives (a search for 'truth' in the case of the former, and for 'identity' in the case of the latter), they are often complementary and maintain a very complex relationship. Particularly whenever historians enter the public space, they inevitably contribute to the production of memory.

The analysis of historiography (in the sense of 'the history of history-writing') allows us to (auto-)reflect on the links between history and memory, as historians have contributed to the construction of a national master narrative, to national commemorations, as well as to counter-discourses since the emergence of history as a discipline in the nineteenth century. This process can be distressing, since it reveals to what considerable extent historians participate in memorial practices and constructions, depending on their social, cultural or institutional framework. Certain historical 'genres' are particularly susceptible in this respect: public speeches during festivities or anniversaries, and government-sponsored works, particularly schoolbooks, which will be analysed recurrently in this part of the book. These all share one characteristic: they force historians to develop a coherent narrative based on a strict selection or structure in the search of the meaning of time. National historiography, or simply official historiography is obviously highly important to the construction of a community, considering the 'legitimising' weight of the past. Origin myths, conceptions of continuity or rebirth, the aura of the eternal, the unchanging and the inherent are powerful factors in the construction of identities. The analysis of how this narrative has been created over the past two centuries allows us to grasp how meanings have changed as history and memory intersect and time has been appropriated.



## CHAPTER ONE

### THE MASTER NARRATIVE OF LUXEMBOURG'S HISTORY

#### 1. *The Master Narrative as Presented by Arthur Herchen*

The twelve months between the autumns of 1918 and 1919 was as decisive a year in the history of Luxembourg as it was for the whole of Europe.<sup>1</sup> At the end of the Great War, the country's monarchy was questioned, its political independence threatened and its firmly-established economic union with Germany shattered.<sup>2</sup> During this tumultuous year, a publication appeared which would shape most historical representations in Luxembourg for many decades and which symbolised the culmination of a historiographical process which led to the writing of a national history at the same time. This book was Arthur Herchen's *Manuel d'histoire nationale*.<sup>3</sup> Herchen (1850–1931) was a history teacher in the capital's oldest and most prestigious secondary school, the Athenaeum, and an active participant in the network of local historians.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, he had been the tutor of the young princesses at the grand-ducal court. He may have partly owed this position to his very conservative Catholic background, which was shared by the Dowager Grand Duchess Marie-Anna of Bragança.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For the European context, see Francis L. Carsten, *Revolution in Central Europe: 1918–1919* (Aldershot: Wildwood House, 1988); Wolfgang J. Mommsen, 'The German revolution 1918–1920: Political revolution and social protest movement', in *Social Change and Political Development in Weimar Germany*, ed. Richard Bessel and E.J. Feuchtwanger (London: Croom Helm, 1981), 21–54.

<sup>2</sup> See Christian Calmes, 1919. *L'étrange referendum du 28 septembre* (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 1979); Auguste Collart, *Sturm um Luxemburgs Thron. 1907–1920* (Luxembourg: Bourg-Bourger, 1959). See also below.

<sup>3</sup> The 1947 edition of the *Manuel* (see chapter 2) was translated into English by A.H. Cooper-Prichard as *History of the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg* (Luxembourg: P. Linden, 1950).

<sup>4</sup> On Herchen, see Tony Kellen, 'Die luxemburgische Geschichtsschreibung: ein Rückblick und ein Ausblick', *Jonghémecht. Blätter für heimatliches Schrift- und Volkstum* 7 (1933): 159; Nicole Sahl, 'Herchen Arthur (Charles-Joseph-Philippe-Arthur)', *Luxemburger Autorenlexikon*, ed. Claude Conter and Germaine Goetzinger (Mersch: Centre national de littérature, 2007), 256.

<sup>5</sup> Herchen's sympathy for the monarchy, and particularly the ancestry of the dowager grand duchess, is also reflected by his biography of King Miguel I of Portugal.

Herchen's textbook did not present many new or unknown insights, but its structure was as meaningful as the perspective which it adopted. The book reached a large public: although initially a tool for teaching the most educated members of Luxembourgian society at the *Cours Supérieur*,<sup>6</sup> it was to become the main reference work<sup>7</sup> for the wider population and was on the secondary school curriculum until 1972. It was to present the nation with a master narrative of its past.

Herchen's view on history is rigorously political and his 'national' past structured around four periods.<sup>8</sup> First came 'ancient times': the time before the foundation of Luxembourg in 963, national pre-history, so-to-speak. The second age was the 'feudal period' stretching from 963 to 1443, a period in which the state was founded and subsequently ruled by its 'native' counts and dukes. The third period was a phase of hardship: the 'foreign dominations' that started with the conquest of the principality by the dukes of Burgundy in November 1443 and only ended after the Napoleonic Wars. The fourth and current period was that of 'national independence', which began with the Treaty of Vienna in 1815.

Herchen considered 'ancient times' only briefly. To some extent this reflects how little was known about the distant past. His opening pages implicitly suggest that he believed that humanity had only come into existence in about 4000 BC.<sup>9</sup> He then went on to set the stage for what follows. The arrival of Celtic tribes represented a special moment: "With the invasion of the Celts begins... the history of our country."<sup>10</sup> He left it unclear how he came to that conclusion. It seems, however, that he identified the Celts as the ethnic forefathers of later Luxembourgers and thus their arrival heralded the establishment of the cultural space that was to define the coming centuries. Interestingly, only

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Arthur Herchen, *Dom Miguel I. König von Portugal, sein Leben und seine Regierung* (Luxembourg: M. Huss, 1908). On Herchen's Catholic background see Albert Steffen, 'Professor K. Arthur Herchen †', *Ons Hémecht* 37/4 (1931): 5.

<sup>6</sup> The *Cours Supérieur* was a one-year study programme for all students intending to study at university level. The programme included a course on 'national history' taught at the time by Arthur Herchen. Subsequent editions of his *Manuel* were later integrated into the general secondary school curriculum (at the latest by 1952).

<sup>7</sup> See chapter 2.

<sup>8</sup> See also Michel Margue, 'Nationale Identitätskonstruktionen durch fiktive Kontinuität. Einige Bemerkungen zum "nationalen" Vergangenheitsbild', *forum* 271 (2007): 33–36.

<sup>9</sup> Arthur Herchen, *Manuel d'histoire nationale* (Luxembourg: Soupert, 1918), 7.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 11: "Avec l'invasion des Celtes commence, à proprement parler, l'histoire de notre pays."

a few pages were devoted to the Roman past that had fascinated so many of his early-modern predecessors.<sup>11</sup>

It was only during the second period, Herchen believed, that Luxembourg properly came into being. "It is from this year [963]," he wrote, "that *the existence of our country as a distinct and autonomous state started.*"<sup>12</sup> For Herchen, the medieval period (or 'feudal period' as he called it) was characterised by several different themes that themselves formed part of yet another, internal, narrative structure, including the foundation of Luxembourg, its growth especially during the thirteenth century, its zenith in the fourteenth century and a sharp decline during the early fifteenth century.

The first decisive moment, Luxembourg's 'date of birth', was the year 963, when Count Sigefroid acquired the rock of Luxembourg from St. Maximin's Abbey in Trier.<sup>13</sup> From then on the territory grew steadily: every positively-described medieval count or countess is depicted as having attracted many new vassals—an act that to Herchen represented a form of a territorial enlargement. An important moment during this period of growth occurred during the thirteenth century, during the reign of Countess Ermesinde, when the principality underwent administrative reform and the relationship between ruler and the emerging towns was regulated by 'letters of enfranchisement'. The apogee of Luxembourg's fortunes during the fourteenth century started with the election of Count Henry VII as King of the Romans in 1308, his coronation as Emperor in 1312 and the election of his son John as King of Bohemia in 1310. These moments marked the first appearance of the counts of Luxembourg on the larger European political stage. Even though John of Bohemia was Herchen's favourite monarch, he claimed that the apogee culminated in the reign of John's son, Emperor Charles IV, who reigned over a vast collection of lands. Some of the more 'unfortunate' events during the period were cast in a positive light. Instead of presenting the battles in which counts of Luxembourg were killed—Worringen (1288) and Crécy (1346)—as major disasters, Herchen managed to present them as moments of glory in

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Jean Bertels, *Historia Luxemburgensis seu Commentarius* (Cologne: Conrad Butgen, 1605; reprint: Luxembourg: V. Buck, 1856).

<sup>12</sup> A. Herchen, *Manuel* (1918 edition), 27: "C'est à partir de cette année [963] que commence l'existence de notre pays comme Etat distinct et autonome."

<sup>13</sup> This date has since been called into question, for which see Michel Margue and Michel Pauly, 'Saint-Michel et le premier siècle de la ville de Luxembourg', *Hémecht* 39 (1987): 5–83.

the fashion of a chronicler of chivalry: while counts may have died on both occasions, they did so fighting fiercely, garnering a glory that was to be passed on to the dynasty and the inhabitants of the county at large.<sup>14</sup>

Herchen made the end of the Middle Ages coincide with the extinction of the local dynasty in direct male line. The youngest son of Charles IV, Emperor Sigismund, died in 1437, leaving only a daughter, who inherited and passed on the ducal title of Luxembourg to her Habsburg husband and their heirs. The duchy, however, had been pawned by its titular lords for many decades and it was Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, who owned the rights over the duchy at the time and who used them to take possession of the entire territory in November 1443. According to Herchen, the principality now fell under 'foreign dominations' and was to remain so until the Congress of Vienna 1815. Because the ducal title of Luxembourg changed hands between different European crowns, Herchen distinguished between a total of four different dominations: the Burgundian (1443–1506), Spanish (1506–1714), Austrian (1715–1795) and French dominations (1795–1814).

Herchen's depiction of the modern period was similarly framed around an inner narrative structure. The Burgundian conquest represented a fundamental break, not only because Herchen believed that it symbolised the loss of Luxembourg's autonomy, but because he saw it as having engendered a decline and heralded the beginning of a period of less glittering fortune. The two dukes of Burgundy, Philip the Good and Charles the Bold were presented as stereotypical villains.<sup>15</sup> Although the conquest itself was an 'unhappy' moment,<sup>16</sup> Herchen nevertheless appreciated that the country's customs and its institutions were left intact and only central administration replaced.<sup>17</sup> This situation was to change for the worse with the advent of Spanish rule. Interestingly, this started with the accession of (the very Netherlandish) Charles V, who also inherited his mother's Spanish crown.<sup>18</sup> The following sec-

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<sup>14</sup> A. Herchen, *Manuel* (1918 edition), 40–41 and 51–52.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 68–69. See also the illustration of Philip the Good (68). His narrow eyes, hooked nose and small lips make him appear like a comic-book villain rather than the glorious ruler with his mild and kind expression depicted in surviving copies of the portrait by Rogier van der Weyden.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

tions are largely filled with reports on wars, including the disastrous Thirty Years War and the French conquest and occupation of Luxembourg (1685–98). They led Herchen to conclude that it was “the most agitated and the most tragic period of our history”; the period of Spanish dominance, indeed, was “only a source of misery and calamity.”<sup>19</sup> This was succeeded by a moment of relief under Austrian rule. A time of “peace and reparation”, Herchen saw the eighteenth century as a brief ‘golden age’ in otherwise gloomy times.<sup>20</sup> It is also within these pages that the greatness of the fortress of Luxembourg was lauded and taken pride in by Herchen, even though much of the fortifications went back to Spanish initiatives with additional French alterations carried out in the seventeenth century. The French Revolutionaries troops which invaded in 1795 brought further distress: as Herchen put it, “the French occupation was to last for twenty years; it was for our ancestors a period of discomfiting ordeals and cruel tribulations.”<sup>21</sup> While Herchen’s feelings about Napoleon were mixed, his assessment of the previous Revolutionary regime was entirely negative. To Herchen, it seemed that after four hundred years of disaster, the country was waiting for a fundamental change.

The fourth period of Luxembourg’s history commenced with the treaties of the Congress of Vienna in 1815, which declared the principality officially independent. Now ruling both the United Kingdom of the Netherlands and the grand duchy of Luxembourg in a personal union, the accession of the Dutch monarch heralded the renewal of the ‘national independence’ which extended until Herchen’s own day.<sup>22</sup> Although Herchen was aware that this renewal of national independence did not happen instantly, and noted that King-Grand Duke William I treated Luxembourg as his eighteenth province rather than

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 98: “la période la plus mouvementée et la plus tragique de notre histoire. (...) qu’une source de misère et calamités.”

<sup>20</sup> For a detailed analysis of the ‘golden age’ of the eighteenth century in Luxembourgian historiography, see Jean-Paul Lehnens, ‘Das Herzogtum Luxemburg im 18. Jahrhundert: ein “Goldenes Zeitalter”?’, in *Le Luxembourg en Lotharingie. Luxemburg im Lothringischen Raum. Mélanges Paul Margue. Festschrift Paul Margue*, ed. Paul Dostert, Michel Pauly, Pol Schmoetten and Jean Schroeder (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 1993), 369–390; Guy Thewes, ‘Wie “beliebt” war Maria Theresia? Zur Popularität der österreichischen Herrscherin damals und heute’, *forum* 262 (2006): 50–52.

<sup>21</sup> A. Herchen, *Manuel* (1918 edition), 112: “L’occupation française devait durer vingt ans; ce fut pour nos ancêtres une période de pénibles épreuves et de cruelles tribulations.”

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 125.



honouring its complete independence,<sup>23</sup> he nevertheless believed that the Congress of Vienna had finally left Luxembourg in an enduringly positive situation. After William I's efforts to repair the damage of the wars which had preceded his accession, the reign of his son William II resulted in even greater benefits: his constitution of 1841 "consecrated, so to say, our political emancipation", thus restoring the independence of the Luxembourgers.<sup>24</sup> Finally, the death of William III in 1890 "broke the last link that still attached our country to Holland,"<sup>25</sup> and paved the way for the accession of the dynasty of Nassau-Weilburg. Herchen's greatest praise was, however, reserved for the reigning monarch, Grand Duchess Marie-Adelaide, a former pupil of his. At this point in his analysis, historical interpretation is mixed with Herchen's own memories and emotions.<sup>26</sup>

Although published in 1918, the narrative of the first edition of Herchen's work ended in 1912. This decision helped the author to avoid discussing the decisions that were damaging to the reputation of the young grand duchess. It was in the summer of 1912 that she refused to sign a major education law under the pressure from the Church. Likewise, the book ends before the German occupation of the First World War, the tumultuous politically-charged disputes between socialists, liberals and conservatives that accompanied it, and the subsequent questions which were raised about monarchical rule in general. While the chronological restriction of his scope allowed Herchen not to take a direct position on these quarrels, the entire book revolved around precisely these questions. Herchen's personal position is made perfectly clear in his final paragraph:

It is in the mutual attachment of the head of state and the people, in their reciprocal trust and their joint collaboration that the wealth and the future of a nation reside... Marie-Adelaide will follow the example of the great sovereigns of her house... As for the Luxembourgian people, in these tragic complications and in the anxieties of the moment, it feels that there is a greater need to unite around the throne than ever before,

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 125, n. 3. See also chapter 4.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 134: "Cette mesure consacra, pour ainsi dire, notre émancipation politique." See also *ibid.*, 137.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 147: "rompit le dernier lien qui rattachait encore notre pays à la Hollande."

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 152: "la jeune et gracieuse souveraine fit son entrée dans la capitale. C'était une journée de soleil radieux. La ville était en fête."

which is the best and surest guarantee of its free institutions and its independence.<sup>27</sup>

A year later, Marie-Adelaide abdicated. Accused of many things, she was far from being seen as a “guarantee of [the Luxembourgian people’s] free institutions and independence”. Her government having failed to denounce the German occupation of a neutral country, and having personally welcomed the *Kaiser* during the war, Marie-Adelaide was accused of collaborating with the enemy both by Luxembourgers and by outside observers.<sup>28</sup> These accusations provided additional fuel for those in France and Belgium who called for the annexation of the grand duchy. Later in 1919, Luxembourgers voted in a referendum to keep monarchic rule and maintain national independence.<sup>29</sup>

## 2. Arthur Herchen’s Narrative Strategies

After this brief summary of the contents of his book, it is worth pointing out the techniques Herchen used to shape his narrative. Many of these belong, of course, to the standard repertoire of nationalist historiography.

### 2.1. Teleology and Continuity

The first technique which Herchen employed was a teleological interpretation of the past. This can be observed with respect to the narrative as a whole—a point we shall return to—but equally applies to very specific moments and events. Some of these are granted a tremendous importance in the text, for the sole reason that Herchen recognised

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 154: “C’est dans le mutuel attachement du chef de l’Etat et du peuple, dans leur confiance réciproque et dans leur collaboration commune, que résident le bonheur et l’avenir d’une nation... Marie-Adélaïde suivra l’exemple des grands souverains de sa Maison... De son côté le peuple luxembourgeois, dans les tragiques complications et les angoisses de l’heure présente, ressent plus que jamais le besoin de se serrer étroitement autour du trône, qui est la meilleure et la plus sûre sauvegarde de ses libres institutions et de son indépendance.”

<sup>28</sup> On the government’s awkward position during World War I, see Gilbert Trausch, ‘La stratégie du faible. Le Luxembourg pendant la Première Guerre mondiale (1914–1919)’, *Le rôle et la place des petits pays en Europe au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. Gilbert Trausch (Baden-Baden: Nomos / Brussels: Bruylant, 2005), 45–176.

<sup>29</sup> C. Calmes, 1919. *L’étrange referendum du 28 septembre*; Ben Fayot, *Les quatre référendums du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg: essai* (Luxembourg: Éd. de la Petite Amérique, 2006).

them as the origins of far-reaching developments that were to happen decades or even centuries later. In many cases, the actual intentions of the people involved were very much the opposite of those which Herchen wished to ascribe to them.

The best example is certainly Count Sigefroid, whom Herchen—following an historiographical tradition extending back to the sixteenth century—depicted as the founder of Luxembourg and its political independence.<sup>30</sup> Despite its pedigree, this judgement is highly misleading. Sigefroid had never styled himself ‘count of Luxembourg’. Moreover, the count was neither a territorial ruler, nor did the place that would later become the town of Luxembourg constitute a political or cultural centre. Yet Herchen’s teleological view of history nevertheless allowed him to follow earlier historians in depicting Sigefroid as Luxembourg’s founding father. As the ancestor of later counts who were to establish a distinct principality, and with Sigefroid’s paternal forebears lost to history, Herchen felt justified in designating the count as the founder of Luxembourg and in seeing in his reign the beginning of ‘national’ history.

A further example is provided by Herchen’s willingness to blame late medieval dukes for allowing the duchy to fall into Burgundian hands. Again, the picture which Herchen painted of Luxembourgian history on the basis of his teleological inclinations is contradicted by today’s scholarship. Although Emperor Sigismund did almost everything he could to prevent this from happening,<sup>31</sup> Herchen condemned his actions harshly for the supposedly bleak future they brought. As such, Herchen perceived the conquest of 1443 not simply as an important dynastic break but as a disaster because of the four centuries of hardship that seemed to result from it.

Exactly the same pattern is evident in Herchen’s description of the marriage of Philip the Handsome and Joan of Castile, which he deplored because of the misery supposedly brought by their successors two and more generations later. A final important example that merits mention is the year 1815, when Luxembourg was declared indepen-

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<sup>30</sup> Pit Péporté, ‘Le “premier” comte de Luxembourg vu par les premiers historiens du Luxembourg’, *Hémecht* 60 (2008): 285–299. See also chapter 3.

<sup>31</sup> See Pit Péporté, ‘Emperor Sigismund and the Land of his Forefathers’, *Sigismund von Luxemburg: ein Kaiser in Europa. Tagungsband des internationalen historischen und kunsthistorischen Kongresses in Luxemburg, 8.–10. Juni 2005*, ed. Michel Pauly and François Reinert (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2006), 61–70.

dent. In retrospect, 1815 is presented as a clear break, even though Herchen expresses his dissatisfaction with most of King William I's reign and the politics of the period receive the same treatment as the preceding 'foreign dominations'.

Herchen's teleology was manifested through a variety of different techniques, perhaps the most obvious of which is rhetorical tendency of using the first person pronouns 'we' and 'our' to refer to the distant past. Writing about 'our country' when referring to a territory several millennia ago, Herchen demonstrated his identification with the past while at the same time giving the impression of continuity with the present: the territory had always been Luxembourg, because that's what it was destined to become. Similarly, Herchen often referred to 'our ancestors', and hence conveyed a sense of continuity between contemporary Luxembourgers and those who inhabited the territory in the past. This habit reflects an appropriation of the past. Rather than trying to view it with the benefit of scholarly detachment, Herchen placed himself in close relation to the past.

This approach is also evident in Herchen's unwillingness to take any of the shifting political frameworks into account. His description of Philip the Handsome marriage is, once again, a good example. This wedding was not simply an event which heralded the advent of bad times for Luxembourg; it was "a misfortune for our country, as it was for Belgium".<sup>32</sup> It is clear that Herchen distinguished between Luxembourg and Belgium even when writing about the early years of Habsburg rule. Neither country existed at the time, yet Luxembourg was generally considered part of the 'Belgian Provinces', an alternative name for the Southern Low Countries.

There is no question that Herchen intended to present the nation as part of a perennial order. The stylistic devices which Herchen used in propounding his teleological arguments not only reflect his personal convictions, but also invite the reader to join him in identifying past with present and future. These devices thus constitute a rhetorical technique that links reader, author and the past which Herchen set out to describe.

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<sup>32</sup> A. Herchen, *Manuel* (1918 edition), 72: "Ce mariage fut un malheur pour notre pays, comme pour la Belgique parce que les héritiers de Philippe, préférant l'Espagne à leurs autres possessions, finirent par s'y fixer et abandonnèrent l'adm[i]nistration des Pays-Bas à un gouverneur-général."

Herchen's teleology, however, also found expression through a range of other—more direct and less rhetorical—techniques. Ascribing contemporary motivations to historic individuals, Herchen further emphasised a sense of continuity between contemporary Luxembourgers and those who inhabited the territory in the past. Thus, when some local nobles rebelled against the Burgundian duke, Herchen attempted to depict their rising as that of a 'national party' fighting a 'Burgundian' faction.<sup>33</sup> While he could have simply observed rising rivalries, or attributed rather mundane objectives to the two sides, Herchen instead viewed the rising through a nationalist lens. In this respect, it is noteworthy that Herchen quietly ignored the many fifteenth-century nobles who regularly switched sides in the various struggles of the period, which further revealed their rather conventional motivations.<sup>34</sup>

Just as the attribution of contemporary motivations to figures of the distant past manifested Herchen's outlook, so did his willingness to focus on the relationship between Luxembourg's rulers and Luxembourgers themselves serves to bind past and present closely together. Although it is no doubt partly a reflection of long-standing historiographical trends, it is significant that Herchen divided his book not according to wars, crises, international treaties or intellectual and cultural developments, but according to reigns.<sup>35</sup> While it is true that the change of monarch regularly engendered major upheavals in the political and social spheres, Herchen's decision to structure his book around Luxembourg's monarchs underlines his commitment to viewing history from a clearly political perspective. Presenting the mon-

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 64–5.

<sup>34</sup> More recent research has indeed suggested that the noblemen involved had a rather different set of aims, ranging from the simple urge for power, to the desire to honour older alliances or family ties. See Pit Péporté, 'The 1453 conflict in Luxembourg. Was it a local rebellion or a struggle between imperial princes?' (MA thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2000).

<sup>35</sup> See for instance Richard de Wassebourg, *Premier [et second] Volvme des Antiquitez de la Gaule Belgique, Royaume de France, Austrasie, & Lorraine. Avec l'origine des Duchez & Comtez, de l'ancienne & moderne Brabant, Tôgre, Ardenne, Haynau, Mozelane, Lotreich, Flandre, Lorraine, Barrois, Luxembourg, Louvain, Vvaudemont, Iainuille, Namur, Chiny. Et autres Principautez extraites sous les Vies et Euesques de Verdvn, ancienne Cité d'icelle Gaule* (Paris: Sertenas, 1549); Eustache de Wiltheim, *Kurzer und schlichter Bericht und Beschreibung des Hauses, Schlosses und Landes Luxemburg sammt dessen Fürsten und Herren Ursprung und Herkommen was sich auch bei deren Regierung im gemelten und anderen ihren Landschaften verlaufen und zugetragen* [1648], ed. and trans. Jacques Grob, *Ons Hémecht* 6 (1900). See also chapter 2.

arch as the main agent of historical change throughout Luxembourg's history, and as the figure in whose image each age was shaped, Herchen conveys a clear political point: the rulers became the leaders of the nation and their fate was shared with their subjects throughout history.

Herchen's teleology had a definite purpose. One of the major objectives of his book and of the master narrative he sought to communicate was to create a sense of continuity between the 'native' rulers of the glorious Middle Ages and contemporary monarchs. This emerges the most clearly in his description of Grand Duchess Marie-Adelaide, who was frequently linked with various medieval counts.<sup>36</sup> Especially given the precarious situation in which it found itself in the wake of the First World War, Herchen's aim was to provide the dynasty of his own day with greater legitimacy. He had set out to demonstrate that the late medieval period had been a time of 'national' grandeur: the counts and dukes of Luxembourg had become the rulers of vast territories and were endowed with prestigious titles. By comparing the rulers of his own time with those of the medieval past, he hoped that they would share in some of their predecessors' glory.

## 2.2. 'Nationalising' certain Rulers

There is, however, more to this last point. In order to present the modern state as a resurrection of the medieval county, Herchen had to add some additional interpretations. In obliging himself to distinguish between 'natural' and 'foreign' rulers, Herchen first had to 'nationalise' medieval dynasties. From Herchen's point of view, the House of Ardenne—the first family to produce 'counts of Luxembourg'—was by definition 'Luxembourgian'. As its 'founders', Luxembourg owed its existence to the dynasty. But when it died out in the male line,<sup>37</sup> another dynasty inherited their claims through marriage. Duke Waleran of Limburg acquired the county by marrying Countess Ermesinde, the heiress of Luxembourg.<sup>38</sup> From a strictly dynastic point

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, A. Herchen, *Manuel* (1918 edition), 152.

<sup>37</sup> The last count of Luxembourg from the House of Ardenne was Conrad II (†1136).

<sup>38</sup> On Waleran, see Mike Richartz, 'Waleran de Limbourg (c. 1165–1226). Le devenir d'un grand politique entre Meuse et Rhin' (unpublished MA thesis, Université de Liège, 2000).

of view, their descendants were members of the House of Limburg—a perspective shared by these descendants themselves.<sup>39</sup> In order to distinguish between them and the older branch ruling Limburg, nineteenth-century historians referred to them as the ‘House of Limburg-Luxembourg’. Herchen, however, inverted the name, and referred to the dynasty as the ‘House of Luxembourg-Limburg’.<sup>40</sup> In addition, he largely ignored the role of Waleran, focusing instead almost exclusively on his wife Ermesinde. This helped to reinforce the impression of dynastic continuity between the alleged founders of Luxembourg and their Limburg heirs.<sup>41</sup> The result was the construction of entirely ‘Luxembourgian’ Middle Ages and Herchen’s assertion that “the end of our national dynasty [at the death of Emperor Sigismund in 1437] soon brought the end of our independence”<sup>42</sup> speaks volumes.

For Herchen, however, medieval monarchs were not merely symbols of the nation, but were its protectors. Again, this reveals Herchen’s belief that the monarch should fulfil a strong, central role. A similar tendency to ‘nationalise’ rulers is applied to the nineteenth-century monarchs. Herchen’s willingness to see the Dutch kings as ‘indigenous’ demonstrates an equally selective approach to ‘nationalising’ Luxembourg’s history. There was no objective reason to see them as less foreign than the previous Habsburg rulers, since they not only ruled Luxembourg from afar and by proxy, but also had no dynastic claims to the principality, neither through the Habsburgs, nor through the House of Limburg-Luxembourg. On the contrary, the fifteenth-century ancestors of the House of Orange-Nassau were in fact fervent supporters of the reviled dukes of Burgundy, something deliberately forgotten by Luxembourg’s national historiography.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>39</sup> See P. Péporté, ‘The creation of medieval history in Luxembourg’, 122–127.

<sup>40</sup> A. Herchen, *Manuel* (1918 edition), 37.

<sup>41</sup> The attribution of a key role to Waleran’s wife Ermesinde had many precedents in local historiography, such as Eustache de Wiltheim, *Kurzer und schlichter Bericht*, 577–9; Jean Bertholet, *Histoire Ecclésiastique et Civile du Duché de Luxembourg et Comté de Chiny*, 8 vols. (Luxembourg: André Chevalier, 1741–1743), 4: *passim*.

<sup>42</sup> A. Herchen, *Manuel* (1918 edition), 65: “La fin de notre dynastie nationale ne tarda pas à amener aussi la fin de notre indépendance.”

<sup>43</sup> In the late sixteenth century, the House of Orange-Nassau would take a leading role in the uprising against the king of Spain, himself a descendant of the dukes of Burgundy. As a consequence of this rising, the northern parts of the Low Countries split politically from the South and were ruled independently with the House of Orange-Nassau as *stadhouders*.

### 2.3. *The Foreign Dominations*

At the same time as he 'nationalised' certain rulers of Luxembourg, Herchen argued that the 'foreign dominations' separated the medieval and the nineteenth-century dynasties.<sup>44</sup> Between 1443 and 1815, the people of Luxembourg were not ruled by their 'natural' sovereign, as they supposedly were before, but dominated by a range of different 'foreign' intruders. The latter receive their 'foreign' character by virtue of the fact that they sprang from a different territory, ruled from far away through governors appointed to rule Luxembourg in their place. Of course, Herchen tacitly ignored the fact that the House of Limburg-Luxembourg could have been described as 'foreign' with no less validity: with ancestors from the duchy of Limburg, they resided mainly in Prague and Buda after the acquisition of their Central European lands, and similarly tended to put noblemen in charge of the duchy of Luxembourg.<sup>45</sup> The notion of 'foreign dominations' further rests on an essentialist or perennialist conception of the nation (to use Anthony Smith's terminology) based on the notion of the existence of some historic group identity of 'Luxembourgers'.<sup>46</sup> Almost all recent research insists that a collective national sentiment in Luxembourg was only formed decades after the creation of the political state and then only gradually

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<sup>44</sup> For an analysis of this concept in Luxembourgian historiography, see Guy Thewes, 'Dominations étrangères et fidélité dynastique. Deux mythes de l'historiographie luxembourgeoise', *forum* 199 (2000): 39–43; Michel Margue, 'Dominations étrangères', in *Lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg*, ed. Sonja Kmec, Benoît Majerus, Michel Margue and Pit Péporté (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 2007), 29–34. For the concept in a wider European context see Christian Koller, *Fremdherrschaft: Ein politischer Kampfbegriff im Zeitalter des Nationalismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2005).

<sup>45</sup> It must, however, be noted that many of the noblemen appointed to key positions by the medieval counts had held lands in the county for some generations. See Michel Margue and Michel Pauly, 'Luxemburg vor und nach Worringen. Die Auswirkungen der Schlacht von Worringen auf die Landesorganisation sowie die Territorial- und Reichspolitik der Grafen von Luxemburg', *Jahrbuch für westdeutsche Landesgeschichte* 16 (1990): 111–174; Winfried Reichert, *Landesherrschaft zwischen Reich und Frankreich. Verfassung, Wirtschaft und Territorialpolitik in der Grafschaft Luxemburg von der Mitte des 13. bis zur Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts*. Trierer Historische Forschungen 24, 2 Parts (Trier: Trierer Historische Forschungen, 1993). Later governors generally (but not always) tended to come from further away. Whether this made the earlier noblemen more 'Luxembourgian' is an anachronistic debate. Most people involved in administration at the time did indeed stem from the duchy, for which see Gilbert Trausch, ed., *Histoire du Luxembourg. Le destin européen d'un 'petit pays'* (Toulouse: Privat, 2003), 155.

<sup>46</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). See his introduction for the different conceptions of the nation.



spread across society from the 1850s onwards.<sup>47</sup> Consequently, if there were no Luxembourgers (in a 'national' sense of the word) in the early modern period, there could also be no 'foreigners'. During rebellions, for example, it is noticeable that contemporaries never justified their actions with reference to any 'national oppression' as a result of foreign intrusion. As has already been mentioned, local nobles tended to stand on both sides, and, far from being united by a common 'identity', were undeniably separated by diverging and generally mundane interests. Overall, the legitimacy of early-modern rulers was beyond doubt for contemporaries and their rights were recognised and generally approved by the duchy's Estates.<sup>48</sup>

Having presented them as a succession of 'dominations', Herchen further attributed an implicit sense of illegitimacy to early-modern ruling dynasties. Unlike 'autonomy' or 'independence', the word 'domination' itself implies a dichotomy between rulers and people, quite distinct from the unity that Herchen so eagerly defended as a political ideal. Likewise, the plural 'dynasties' indicates a succession of different ruling houses, hinting further at their diverse (foreign) origins. In this vein, Herchen attempted to portray constant discontinuities within the early-modern dynasties in order to deprive them of any impression of legitimacy. Once again, Herchen's analysis flies in the face of more balanced analysis. It could, for example, be argued—as several Belgian scholars have indeed done—that Burgundian-Habsburg rule in the Souther Low Countries embodied a certain continuity. Initially a conquest, Burgundian rule legitimised itself through negotiations with the heirs of the ducal title over the following two decades. Herchen, however, passed over the legitimate character of the Burgundian take-over of the duchy in silence. By the same token, the House of Habsburg ultimately inherited most of its territories in the region from the House of Limburg-Luxembourg as a result of marriage. After the death of Emperor Sigismund in 1436, any titular claims fell to his daughter Elizabeth and her husband Albert of Habsburg, who became the second King of the Romans of that name. After his son Ladislas died

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<sup>47</sup> See Daniel Spizzo, *La nation luxembourgeoise. Genèse et structure d'une identité* (Paris: CIEMI / L'Harmattan, 1995). His view is in line with Hobsbawm's modernist interpretation of the idea of nationhood only arising with the French Revolution.

<sup>48</sup> G. Trausch, *Histoire du Luxembourg. Le destin européen d'un 'petit pays'*, 155–156. See also Michel Margue, 'Dominations étrangères', 29–34.

without issue, his cousin Emperor Frederick III inherited the claims. At this point, the Luxembourg question had long been resolved in favour of Burgundy, but from a dynastic point of view, one could have presented the marriage of Maximilian of Habsburg (son of Frederick III) to Mary of Burgundy as the moment that Burgundy's legal rights over Luxembourg were united with those of the House of Habsburg. As pointed out above, with the exception of the French conquests and their aftermath, the duchy of Luxembourg remained a Habsburg possession until the reorganisation of the whole of Europe at the Congress of Vienna. To recognise the continuity and legitimacy of Habsburg rule, however, would also mean to stress Luxembourg's shared past with the remainder of the Southern Low Countries, i.e. most of what later constituted Belgium. This would certainly present a serious problem for a master narrative dedicated to presenting Luxembourg's past as distinct. It is for this reason that Herchen complicated his representation of history by separating the Burgundian dukes from their direct Habsburg successors. A further symptom of this is Herchen's conscious avoidance of some Belgian historians' tendency to celebrate Archduke Albert and Archduchess Isabella.<sup>49</sup> While the archdukes ruled the Southern Low Countries as an independent state for more than two decades in the early seventeenth century, Herchen instead lumped them into the period of Spanish dominance.

Herchen's somewhat artificial fragmentation of the 'modern period' further adds to the impression that Luxembourg was a mere pawn in the game of the greater European powers and brings the image of these four hundred years as a collective ordeal for Luxembourgers to its conclusion. Herchen thus transformed the nation into a victim and did so for a very precise reason. The hardships endured helped to justify the 'independence' that followed the period of foreign oppression. Herchen's narrative is essentially a tale of redemption. The sins of the last medieval rulers led to years of suffering, which themselves ended in deliverance and salvation. This structure is not only part of a standard western repertoire, but may additionally reflect Herchen's

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<sup>49</sup> On the changing roles of Archduke Albert in Belgian historiography, see Denis Diagre, 'L'Archiduc Albert, souverain-modèle ou ange exterminateur?', in *Les grands mythes de l'histoire de Belgique de Flandre et de Wallonie*, ed. Anne Morelli (Brussels: Vie Ouvrière, 1995), 117–128.

deep Christian beliefs.<sup>50</sup> The story ends with today's ruling dynasty. The overarching teleological structure of Herchen's narrative presents them as the successors of the medieval counts after four dark centuries. History had elected them. It was their destiny to assume the mantle of leaders of the nation as local rulers for the first time since Sigismund.

The past two sections of this chapter have provided an overview of the national master narrative of Luxembourg's history. The tenor of this narrative has been set by Arthur Herchen's text, but—as we will see—it is taken up by other authors, whose accounts differ only slightly. Operating entirely within a 'national' paradigm, i.e. based on the idea of the 'nation' as an age-old and unified community, which is clearly distinct from its neighbours, the master narrative is highly teleological. It aims at today's independent grand duchy and seeks to create continuities between the medieval period and the recent past. It identifies strongly with the past inhabitants of today's territory and therefore avoids seeing them with scholarly detachment; many values held by the authors are transposed back into the past. The national master narrative is thus written with contemporary needs in mind. It contains a particular political message, which is in this case both resolutely conservative and fervently monarchist.

### 3. *Emergence of the Master-Narrative*

Arthur Herchen is the central figure of this chapter, because his version of the national master narrative was more comprehensive than that of any of his predecessors. It integrated more historical events than previous accounts and it took up concepts, such as the 'foreign dominations', that were to re-emerge in every consecutive retelling of that same narrative. It is important to note though that Herchen was a member of a certain milieu and his story a culmination of multiple traditions. This section will examine precisely the historiographical traditions on which his writings were based. It will first look at what historians wrote about Luxembourg prior to the existence of the

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<sup>50</sup> Herchen was convinced of history's providential character. See A. Steffen, 'Professor K. Arthur Herchen †', 5.

nation-state. The aim is to see how novel the national master narrative really was and on what *topoi* and arguments it fell back on. Second, we will examine the extent to which Herchen himself represents a turning point in the writing of history in Luxembourg. It will be argued that he was among the first to take up several existing traditions and combine them in a narrative structure. The merging of what were separate ideological strands made them into what became the ideological mainstream, particularly amongst the monarchist elements of the conservative-liberal bourgeoisie that dominated the nineteenth century and the Catholic viewpoint of the broader population. It would be wrong, of course, to attribute this process solely to Herchen: rather, he should be seen as part of larger trends which include the decline of Liberalism in most of Europe,<sup>51</sup> and the expression of the willingness of Catholic political forces to embrace a national ideology that helped to secure their political authority throughout the twentieth century.<sup>52</sup> The following sub-sections will set out to examine how and in what context the master narrative combined those two strands.

### 3.1. *Before the Nineteenth Century*

Luxembourg lacked a medieval historiography that could set a precedent for early-modern, or even later authors. Although the principality had a high density of religious houses, no monastic chronicles from the historic duchy of Luxembourg have survived. Not even the prestigious abbey of Echternach, which had a large scriptorium, had a chronicle. Similarly, unlike nearby Metz, Luxembourg had no urban chroniclers.<sup>53</sup> Although noted patrons—and even authors—of the genre, its rulers omitted to leave posterity any works of history

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<sup>51</sup> For the very similar situation in the Netherlands, see Henk te Velde, *Gemeenschapzin en plichtsbefef. Liberalisme en Nationalisme in Nederland 1870–1918* (The Hague: SDU, 1992).

<sup>52</sup> See D. Spizzo, *La nation luxembourgeoise*, 247–274.

<sup>53</sup> It must, however, be noted that the entire Limburg-Luxembourg dynasty plays a central role throughout the Metz chronicle, which was written by one of their political supporters in that city. The burghers had a traditional connection with the dynasty, providing them with loans in exchange for support against the local bishop. However, the source views the dynasty from an imperial perspective; its aim was to promote the standing of Metz, rather than to describe events in the neighbouring county of Luxembourg. Jacques D'Aix, *Die Metzzer Chronik des Jaique Dex (Jacques D'Esch) über die Kaiser und Könige aus dem Luxemburger Hause. Quellen zur lothringischen Geschichte 4*, ed. Georg Wolfram (Metz: G. Scriba, 1906).

dealing with Luxembourg itself. The medieval dynasty of Limburg-Luxembourg, who ruled as counts of Luxembourg from the 1230s, rose to imperial glory with the election of Henry VII as king of the Romans in 1308. At the same time, the dynasty managed to secure important territories in Central Europe with the acquisition of Bohemia under Henry's son John. He and his successors added Silesia, Hungary, Croatia and—briefly—Tyrol, Brabant and Brandenburg to these possessions. Despite their political significance, the House of Limburg-Luxembourg initially left the writing of history to outside observers, and instead bestowed their patronage on the practitioners of other arts, such as Guillaume de Machaut.<sup>54</sup> With much of the dynasty's focus on Bohemia, rather than on their ancestral possessions further to the west, most narrative sources on its reign stem from Bohemian chroniclers. Peter of Zittau (c. 1275–1339) is a good example. A chronicler and later abbot of Zbrastlav, Peter wrote as John was acquiring the Bohemian crown and was in fact himself partly responsible for attracting the counts of Luxembourg to Bohemia.<sup>55</sup> Peter's own political aims and ideals increasingly came to differ from those of his king, while his chronicle took an ever more negative stance on the royal household.<sup>56</sup> The situation changed during the reign of Charles IV, who financed the chronicle of Benes of Weitmil (†1375). Benes's work, however, is largely an adaptation of Peter of Zittau's narrative to suit the requirements of his patron and once again remained focused on Bohemia.<sup>57</sup> Although there were other medieval authors who mentioned members of the dynasty, such as Jean Froissart (1337–1405),<sup>58</sup> none came close

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<sup>54</sup> On the dynasty's patronage of literature, see Nigel Wilkins, 'A pattern of patronage: Machaut, Froissart and the houses of Luxembourg and Bohemia in the fourteenth century', *French Studies* 37 (1983): 257–284; Michel Margue, 'Jean de Luxembourg, prince idéal et chevalier parfait: Aux origines d'un mythe', *Mediaevalia Historica Bohemica* 5 (1998): 11–26.

<sup>55</sup> Peter of Zittau, *Chronicon Aulae Regiae*, Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum 4, ed. Josef Emler (Prague: Nadání Františka Palackého, 1882).

<sup>56</sup> See Peter Hilsch, 'Johann der Blinde in der deutschen und böhmischen Chronistik seiner Zeit', in *Johann der Blinde. Graf von Luxemburg, König von Böhmen. 1296–1346. Tagungsband der 9es Journées lotharingiennes. 22.–26. Oktober 1996. Centre Universitaire de Luxembourg*, ed. Michel Pauly, PSH 115 and Publications du CLUDEM 14, (Luxembourg: Section historique de l'Institut grand-ducal, 1997), 21–35.

<sup>57</sup> Benes of Wetmil, *Chronica*. Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum 4, ed. Josef Emler (Prague: Nadání Františka Palackého, 1882), 514.

<sup>58</sup> See especially his first book. Jean Froissart, *Chroniques*. Complete edition by: Ker-ryn de Lettenhoven, ed., *Oeuvres de Froissart*, 25 vols. (Brussels: V. Devaux, 1867–77).

to providing a record of events in the duchy of Luxembourg. The existing medieval sources for the principality are primarily administrative in nature, and the only exceptions are odd references in the chronicles of a neighbouring region, such as the deeds of the archbishops of Trier (*Gesta Treverorum*).<sup>59</sup>

The first 'histories' of Luxembourg only started to appear at around the turn of the seventeenth century.<sup>60</sup> Contrary to common belief, the first of this kind was not Jean Bertels's *Historia Luxemburgensis* (1605), but Jean d'Anly's *Recueil*, which is about two decades older and served as Bertels's inspiration.<sup>61</sup> These early works took their information from medieval or early-modern chroniclers, such as Jean Froissart or Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini. Their other sources included historians such as Richard de Wassebourg (†1567), who produced works on the genealogies of noble dynasties, including the counts of Luxembourg.<sup>62</sup> Historiography slowly started to take primary source material into account, such as the medieval charters kept in the archives of the Provincial Council of Luxembourg, a tendency that can be clearly observed in Eustache de Wiltheim's (1600–1678) writings or later those of François Pierret (1673–1713) and Jean Bertholet (1688–1755).<sup>63</sup> Nonetheless, all these authors profited immensely from the input of historians

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Books 1 and 2 of the New York manuscript edited by Peter F. Ainsworth and George T. Diller (Paris: Livres de poche, 2001). Book 1 of the Amiens manuscript edited by George T. Diller, *Jean Froissart, Chroniques. Livre I. Le manuscrit d'Amiens. Bibliothèque municipale n. 486*, 5 vols. (Geneva: Droz, 1991–1998).

<sup>59</sup> *Gesta Treverorum*, ed. Johannes H. Wyttenbach and Michael F.-J. Müller, *Gesta Treverorum integra*, 6 vols. (Trier: J. J. Lintz, 1836–1839). Translated in Emil Zenz, *Die Taten der Trierer. Gesta Treverorum*, 8 vols. (Trier: Paulinus Verlag, 1955–1965).

<sup>60</sup> See also: Claude Loutsch, 'Bertels et les historiens luxembourgeois du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle', in *Hémecht* 58/4 (2006): 461–482.

<sup>61</sup> J. Bertels, *Historia Luxemburgensis seu Commentarius*; Jean d'Anly, *Recueil ou Abrégé de plusieurs histoires contenant les faitz & gestes des Princes d'Ardenne, spécialement des Ducs & Comtes de Luxembourg et Chinÿ avec d'autres entremesléz, dignes de memoire & remarquables* (1585), ANL FD 100/125.

<sup>62</sup> Richard de Wassebourg, *Premier [et second] Volvme des Antiquitez de la Gaule Belgique, Royaume de France, Austrasie, & Lorraine. Avec l'origine des Duchez & Comtez, de l'ancienne & moderne Brabant, Tôgre, Ardenne, Haynau, Mozelane, Lotreich, Flandre, Lorraine, Barrois, Luxembourg, Louuain, Vvaudemont, Iainuille, Namur, Chinÿ. Et autres Principautez extraites sous les Vies et Euesques de Verdÿn, ancienne Cité d'icelle Gaule* (Paris: Sertenas, 1549).

<sup>63</sup> Eustache de Wiltheim, *Kurzer und schlichter*; François Pierret, *Essay de l'Histoire de Luxembourg*, ANL A-X-34; Jean Bertholet, *Histoire Ecclésiastique et Civile du Duché de Luxembourg et Comté de Chinÿ*, 8 vols. (Luxembourg: André Chevalier, 1741–1743; latest reprint Bastogne: Musée en Piconrue, 1997).

based outside the duchy, such as Nicolas Vigner (1530–1596) and André Duchesne (1584–1640), both working in Paris.<sup>64</sup>

The structure of these early-modern accounts appears rather unspectacular compared to more recent attempts. Bertels, for instance, wrote his account in continuous Latin prose, without any subdivisions. Although the eighteenth-century historians Pierret and Bertholet introduced clear structures to their narratives, they were straightforward and purely political. In Pierret's *Essai*, each chapter follows the reign of a different ruler of the principality. Bertholet structured his account along the status of the principality, as it moved from a county to a duchy. While the first two of his eight volumes describe the 'pre-history' of the county, its Roman and Frankish past, volumes three to six present the history of the county "since Sigéfroy, the first count of Luxembourg". The last two volumes start in 1353, the eighth year of Wenceslas's reign, when the county was made a duchy by Emperor Charles IV. In all these cases, it is noteworthy that the take-over of the duchy by the dukes of Burgundy in 1443 is neither a decisive, nor a tragic moment, as in the case of national historiography.

Bertholet's history of Luxembourg was nevertheless of fundamental importance for later authors, since it remained the highest authority on the land's history until the late-nineteenth century. There are several reasons for this. First, no historian had ever produced such a detailed work before; all previous histories from d'Anly through Bertels to Wiltheim and Pierret are dwarfed by the sheer size of Bertholet's eight-volume oeuvre. Second, Bertholet's work was printed and thus became widely available. Its near contemporary and inspiration, François Pierret's *Essai*, by contrast, remains in manuscript form to this day. In both these cases it was probably crucial that Bertholet's publication was supported by all major authorities in Luxembourg. The author had the backing not only of the Provincial Council, but also that of the Church and his Jesuits colleagues in Luxembourg. Third, Bertholet wrote on a relatively high scholarly level for his times. Following the critical tradition of Mabillon, Papenbroek or the Bollandists, he

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<sup>64</sup> Nicolas Vigner, *Histoire de la maison de Luxembourg* (Paris: Thiboust, 1617); André Duchesne, *Histoire généalogique des maisons de Luxembourg et de Limbourg. Ivstifiée par chartes de diuerses Eglises, Tiltres, Histoires, & autres bonnes Preuves* (Paris: S. Cramoisy, 1631). See also P. Péporté, 'The creation of medieval history in Luxembourg'.

published many of his primary sources as evidence (*preuves*) in the appendices of his text. The fourth reason is more political in nature. From the late eighteenth century until the 1840s, Luxembourg lacked a coherent central authority that could have encouraged historiographical production. There was no monarch residing in Luxembourg, no university and no ecclesiastical centre. Previous structures, such as the Provincial Council or the Jesuit school were abolished during the French regime in 1795.

For a century after Bertholet, the historiography of Luxembourg produced little new and little as such. Most early nineteenth-century histories were short and relatively unoriginal. Written by local teachers for use in schools, these 'histories' read like brief summaries of Bertholet that had been updated chronologically.<sup>65</sup> What was new about these histories was the purpose which their authors envisaged they should fulfil: these works, it was believed, should also provide its readers with a love of their fatherland.<sup>66</sup> The roots of later nationalist thinking can be discerned in this historiographical patriotism.

One should avoid giving the impression that early-modern historiography had no impact on the national interpretation of history in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The tendency to structure histories around reigns, for instance, remained unquestioned and came to dominate historical writing from the sixteenth century until well into the twentieth century. More important, however, is the fact that early Luxembourgian historiography came to set the stage for some of the later national *lieux de mémoire*. The origins of these *lieux de mémoire* are instructive and some brief examples repay study. Count Sigefroid is a useful first case study. By the sixteenth century, this ruler had been enshrined as the 'first count of Luxembourg'.<sup>67</sup> By Bertholet's time, he had acquired a decisive role in (re)building the castle of Luxembourg and laying the foundations of the surrounding city. It was a comparatively small step for national historiography to turn him into the founder of country and nation. Another pertinent

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<sup>65</sup> See Jean-Pierre Mäysz, *Chronologische Übersicht der Geschichte der Stadt und des Großherzogtums Luxemburg. Nebst einer Topographie. Zum Gebrauche der vaterländischen Elementar-Schulen des Mittel-Unterrichts* (Luxembourg: Schmit-Brück, 1819); Joseph Paquet, *Die Hauptthatsachen der Luxemburger Geschichte, zur Grundlage bei seinem Unterrichte* (Luxembourg: J. Lamort, 1838).

<sup>66</sup> See chapter 4.

<sup>67</sup> P. Péporté, 'Le "premier" comte de Luxembourg vu par les premiers historiens du Luxembourg'.



example is provided by depictions of John of Bohemia. The origins of his fame can be traced back to Guillaume de Machaut and Jean Froissart,<sup>68</sup> and no early-modern historian failed to mention his 'heroic' death at the battle of Crécy. As a result, it was once again only a small step for later historians to cast him as a 'national hero'. It took a little longer for the pivotal figure of Countess Ermesinde to be invested with her familiar role. It was only with Eustache de Wiltheim and Jean Bertholet that she was regarded as a precursor to the strong female leaders that both authors had witnessed in their own times.<sup>69</sup> It was on this foundation that her central position in the national interpretation of medieval history was constructed.

It is not difficult to see even from these selected examples that many of the key elements of the national master narrative were derived from a long historiographical tradition. Most prominent amongst these are the foundation myth which is based on the role of Count Sigefroid, and the myth of Luxembourg's late-medieval grandeur based on the figure of John of Bohemia. Yet at the same time, it is important to stress that some elements of the national master narrative have no precedent in early-modern historiography. The most important of these are the complete absence of a 'national community' (or any other 'community of fate' (*Schicksalsgemeinschaft*), for that matter) as the central point of the historical narrative. As a result, neither the concept of the 'foreign domination', a key ingredient to the national master narrative, nor the negative image of the dukes of Burgundy feature in texts from before the nineteenth century. By the same token, nineteenth- and twentieth-century historians differed from their early-modern predecessors with respect both to their use of evidence and to their willingness to compress their evidential base. Historians before the nineteenth century tended to gather as much information on the past as they possibly could. Although they may have seen certain events in a very particular light or may have shown an affinity for a specific type of source, their analysis was limited primarily by the available sources and the methods of the time. Bertholet's eight-volume history is, once again, the best example of this. By shortening and simplifying the existing

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<sup>68</sup> P. Péporté, 'The creation of medieval history in Luxembourg', 138–150.

<sup>69</sup> In Wiltheim's case this was Archduchess Isabella, in Bertholet's *Empress Maria-Theresa*. See *ibid.*, 129–130.

corpus of historiographical material, Luxembourgian historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries stressed the role of specific figures and key moments. Later historians, such as Arthur Herchen, and artists, such as Michel Engels,<sup>70</sup> drew succour from this array of *topoi* and integrated them into a narrative structure.

### 3.2. *The Orangist Heritage and its Catholic Future*

During the 1830 Belgian Revolution, most of Luxembourg sided with the insurrection and only a small but powerful minority in the capital stayed loyal to the House of Orange. With the Treaty of London (1839), the grand duchy was split: the territorially larger western part joined the kingdom of Belgium, while the more populous eastern part remained a grand duchy under Orange rule. With most of the pro-Belgian élite having wandered off to Brussels,<sup>71</sup> the loyalists remained in power in Luxembourg. Not only did they fill all the important positions in the grand-ducal government and administration, but their shared background also induced them to found scholarly circles. One such initiative was the Archaeological Society, whose successor organisation—the Historical Section of the Grand-Ducal Institute—dominated historiographical production in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>72</sup> The writing of history was thus shaped by a few figures who controlled political institutions and administration. The most influential historian of this period was certainly François-Xavier Würth-Paquet (1801–1885).<sup>73</sup> He began his career as a lawyer, but then rose quickly through the ranks of the judicial system, and ultimately became prosecutor general. For some time, he was even a

<sup>70</sup> See chapter 2.

<sup>71</sup> See, for example, the figure of Jean-Baptiste Nothomb. Nothomb started his career as a lawyer in Luxembourg, but became one of the leading politicians in Brussels after 1830. See Gilbert Trausch, 'Jean-Baptiste Nothomb et la question du Luxembourg', in *Jean-Baptiste Nothomb et les débuts de la Belgique indépendante. Actes du Colloque international de Habay-la-Neuve 5 juillet 1980 organisé par les archives de l'État à Arlon*, ed. Roger Petit (Brussels: Archives générales du royaume, 1982), 34–51.

<sup>72</sup> For the history of the Archaeological Society and its successor, the Historical Section of the Grand-Ducal Institute (*Section historique de l'Institut grand-ducal*), see Joseph Goedert, *De la Société archéologique à la Section historique de l'Institut Grand-Ducal. Tendances, méthodes et résultats du travail historique de 1845 à 1985, Luxembourg*. PSH 101 (Luxembourg: Beffort, 1987).

<sup>73</sup> On François-Xavier Würth-Paquet, see Jules Mersch, 'François-Xavier Würth-Paquet', *Biographie Nationale* (Luxembourg: V. Buck, 1967), 15: 299–330.

member of the government as Minister (*Directeur Général*) of Justice and the Interior. Alongside his study of legal documents, he developed a taste for historical sources. He was the first Luxembourgian historian to edit these in the 'scientific' spirit that was emerging in Germany at the time.<sup>74</sup> He became a founding member of the Archaeological Society and acted as its second president. Despite playing a central role in the writing of Luxembourgian history, Würth-Paquet shied away from producing a global account of the country's past. His discovery, editing and precise reading of numerous sources, however, allowed him to create the basis on which most political and institutional history was to be based. His successors took over the task of creating a chronological account, amongst whom Jean Schoetter probably stood out most.

Despite the scholarly precision of these historians, their political background and ideology did leave a mark on the history of Luxembourg, which received a noticeable Orangist flavour. Its most important constitutive part was the eminently positive role in the development of local political that was attributed to the House of Orange. The figure of William II was especially exalted, a tradition starting in his own days and continuing until the later twentieth century.<sup>75</sup> In contrast to historiographical depictions of his father, William II was portrayed as a liberal king who helped Luxembourg to develop its own democratic institutions.<sup>76</sup> This glorification of the Dutch monarchs was also expressed in comparisons between with medieval dynasts, particularly John of Bohemia. This tendency reflects the principal aim of Orangist historiography, which was to legitimise the rule of Orange-Nassau.<sup>77</sup> As has already been seen, this strategy was to be emulated by Herchen with reference to the House of Nassau-Weilburg, prolonging thus the myth of a national renaissance well into the twentieth century.

A further consequence of the Orangist tradition of historiography was the willingness to view Luxembourg's past as radically distinct

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<sup>74</sup> See, for example, Wolfgang J. Mommsen, ed., *Leopold von Ranke und die moderne Geschichtswissenschaft* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1988); John Burrow, *A History of Histories. Epics, chronicles, romances and inquiries from Herodotus and Thucydides to the twentieth century* (London: Allen Lane, 2007), 457–466.

<sup>75</sup> Christiane Huberty, 'Guillaume II, Roi des Pays-Bas et Grand-Duc de Luxembourg (1840–1849). Construction et évolution d'un lieu de mémoire', *Hémecht* 58 (2006): 107–118.

<sup>76</sup> This view has been challenged in recent decades, see *ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Christiane Huberty, 'La vie politique du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle dans l'historiographie: bilan et perspectives', *Hémecht* 58 (2006): 551.

from that of its political neighbours, particularly Belgium. The Orangists in Luxembourg owed their social and political standing to their opposition to the newly-founded kingdom in the west; their denial of a common past with Belgium only seems logical. This rationale seamlessly entered nationalist discourse. In the national master narrative, it is reflected in the manner in which Luxembourg's past is set apart from that of the rest of the Low Countries. Reflecting on the independence in 1815, Herchen, for example, remarked that "for our fatherland [began] an entirely new epoch: as a hereditary land of the House of Orange-Nassau... without becoming a part neither of Holland, nor of Belgium."<sup>78</sup>

While neighbouring Belgium was founded on a compromise between liberal and Catholic political forces,<sup>79</sup> liberalism had kept the upper hand in Luxembourg in most of nineteenth-century politics and thought. Although the country was traditionally Catholic and rural, Catholic forces initially lacked political power. The politically-centralised grand duchy belonged to a set of different dioceses that all had their sees outside the country's borders, while its abbies had been demolished by French Revolutionary troops in 1795/6. Likewise, the House of Orange—a champion of both Protestantism and Freemasonry—did not have any interest in supporting Catholic institutions. At the same time, Orangists occasionally welcomed Catholics within their ranks, due to their loosely-defined and rather stratified liberal ideals. While some were radically anti-clerical, others were generally open and tolerant, and others again were socially rather conservative and pro-clerical. It is therefore not surprising to find ordained Catholic priests amongst Orangist historians, such as Jean-Pierre Mäysz, who wrote the first local history schoolbook, or Jean Engling, the first president of the Historical Section. As a consequence, it took a long time for an independent and more resolutely Catholic scholarship to emerge. The gradual establishment of a bishopric in the course of the central decades of the nineteenth century went along with the rise of Ultramontanism.

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<sup>78</sup> Arthur Herchen, *Kleine Vaterländische Geschichte. Ein Leitfaden für Luxemburger Volksschulen mit einer geschichtlichen Karte des Luxemburger Landes* (Luxembourg: M. Breisdorff, 1883), 78: "Damit begann für unser Vaterland eine völlig neue Epoche: als nunmehriges Erbland des Hauses Oranien-Nassau... ohne darum weder ein Bestandtheil weder von Holland noch von Belgien zu werden."

<sup>79</sup> See, for example, Carl Strikwerda, *A House Divided. Catholics, Socialists and Flemish Nationalists in Nineteenth-Century Belgium* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997).

As in most other European countries, this resulted in culture wars that created a certain amount of polarisation within the public world, and especially, the political sphere.<sup>80</sup> The world of historical research was not unaffected by the rising Catholic confidence and the growing number of intellectuals from this milieu.

In the years 1894–1895 a group of historians and linguists set up a new society, called *Ons Hémecht* (Our Fatherland).<sup>81</sup> It promoted itself as a patriotic society for “Luxembourgian history, literature and art” (*Verein für Luxemburger Geschichte, Literatur und Kunst*), while regrouping people from many diverse professional backgrounds, and their numbers swelled rapidly to about 300 after less than a decade. Yet the society’s pro-clerical tendencies were obvious.<sup>82</sup> Most of its presidents were ordained priests, starting with its principal initiator, Martin Blum, who remained the society’s *éminence grise* until his death in 1924. Likewise, many contributions to its journal were written by priests, and the publication regularly included articles on theology or ecclesiastical history.<sup>83</sup> Only in the 1930s under the presidency of Albert Steffen, another ordained priest, did the society itself decline in importance, while its periodical developed into a more academic journal with a stricter focus on historical topics. Despite their different origins, *Ons Hémecht* and the Historical Section should not be seen as antagonists: in fact, many individuals were members of both.<sup>84</sup> This further proves that overall the political trend among historians had become more conservative by 1900,<sup>85</sup> to which one needs to add that some of the leading Orangist, such as François-Xavier Würth-Paquet and Jean Schoetter, had died. At the same time, the Church moved closer to the traditional Orangist stance of identifying with an autonomous Luxembourg while breaking with its earlier pro-German position and adopting a more Luxembourgian national discourse.

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<sup>80</sup> For a European perspective on the role of culture wars, see Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser, ed., *Culture Wars. Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>81</sup> T. Kellen, ‘Die luxemburgische Geschichtsschreibung’, 160.

<sup>82</sup> For the first years of the society, see Joseph Maertz, ‘75 Jahre Hémecht. Gründung und Entwicklung des Vereins und der Zeitschrift “Ons Hémecht”’, *Hémecht* 22 (1970): 307–340.

<sup>83</sup> Paul Margue, ‘Ons Hémecht (1895–1939). Ihre Bedeutung für die Luxemburger Geschichte’, *Hémecht* 22 (1970): 341–360.

<sup>84</sup> Arthur Herchen was a founding member of *Ons Hémecht*, but was to become the president of the Historical Section from 1921 to 1931.

<sup>85</sup> A notable exception to this general rule of thumb is Nicolas van Werveke, whose work will be analysed in more detail in chapter 3.

Although Herchen owed a debt to both those strands of Luxembourgian historiography, his extremely conservative political outlook placed him in close relation to the intellectual climate of the period in which the rift between liberals and conservatives was well established. His mentor Jean Schoetter (1823–1881), by contrast, was still uncontested by both sides.<sup>86</sup> Although he had emerged as a historian in the liberal Orangist environment, Schoetter was himself a pious Christian and after some personal tragedies retreated into a very religious life. He could thus easily be accepted both by the liberal establishment and by the Catholic newcomers. Schoetter's relative neutrality was helped by his positivist approach. Although he simply inserted long extracts from primary sources into his works, his positivist approach nevertheless provided his research with an aura of objectivity. This gave his own chronological account of Luxembourg's history—intended for the use in schools—a somewhat revolutionary appearance, since it was the first of its type to be based on a re-reading of primary sources rather than eighteenth century scholarship.<sup>87</sup> Unfortunately, Schoetter's unexpected death in 1881 meant that it remained unfinished. Two historians were charged with completing his opus: the liberal Nicolas van Werveke, who can be seen as a disciple of Würth-Paquet, and Arthur Herchen as his conservative counterpart. The collaboration did not produce any remarkable result, since the two historians fell out, focussing instead on their own projects. Although their disagreements were to a large degree due to their incompatible ideological backgrounds, their very different personalities probably also played a role.<sup>88</sup> Schoetter's book was published posthumously with the two other historians mentioned as co-authors on the cover, but without them actually having contributed much to its content. Instead, Herchen published a history book entirely of his own one year after Schoetter's.<sup>89</sup> Although that book lacked some of the defining terms

<sup>86</sup> On Schoetter, see T. Kellen, 'Die luxemburgische Geschichtsschreibung', 152–154.

<sup>87</sup> Jean Schoetter, *Geschichte des Luxemburger Landes nach den besten Quellen bearbeitet, fortgesetzt von A. Herchen und N. van Werveke* (Luxembourg: N. Breisdorff, 1882).

<sup>88</sup> T. Kellen, 'Die luxemburgische Geschichtsschreibung', 154. For a discussion of van Werveke's approach, see chapter 3.

<sup>89</sup> A. Herchen, *Kleine Vaterländische Geschichte*. In 1910, he published a rather short booklet on the eighteenth century, which he presented as a continuation of Schoetter's textbook: Arthur Herchen, *Geschichte des Herzogtums Luxemburg während des XVIII Jahrhunderts* (Luxembourg: Bourg-Bourger, 1910), 1, n. 1. The book was published as a 'first part', although the second part never appeared.

of Herchen's later publication—most notably the notorious 'foreign dominations'—it was here that he first experimented with his interpretation of Luxembourg's past as a whole.

### 3.3. *The Foreign Origins of the 'Foreign Dominations'*

The national master narrative also borrowed from international trends. Although central to the narrative, the concept of the 'foreign dominations', for instance, is neither exclusive, nor coined in Luxembourg, but was imported from abroad.<sup>90</sup> The term had been used in historical writing in Luxembourg's neighbouring countries by the early decades of the nineteenth century. It was also deployed in Germany during the first half of the nineteenth century with respect to the Napoleonic occupation and the wars of 'liberation'.<sup>91</sup> In Belgium, the concept was in the air even before the Revolution of 1830/31.<sup>92</sup> In contrast to the concept's later usage in the grand duchy, however, it did not constitute an element within a national narrative, but was merely a formula taken up by early national historians and later schoolbooks in order to come to terms with the diverse and alternating ruling dynasties of the past.<sup>93</sup> After the Revolution of 1830/31, it was then re-adapted to include the rule of the Dutch House of Orange in the previous fifteen years, against which Belgium had rebelled. In this respect, Belgian attitudes towards the concept of 'foreign dominations' differed considerably from those found in Luxembourg.

One could argue that the term generally only developed alongside a conception of national consciousness, since it refers to an 'other'. Its relatively late emergence in Luxembourgian historiography may therefore be a further indication of the slow development of national sentiment in the grand duchy. The first schoolbook, *Chronologische Übersicht der Geschichte der Stadt und des Großherzogtums Luxemburg*, published in 1819 by the priest and teacher Jean-Pierre Mäysz, viewed the past from the perspective of 'monarchical loyalty': the inhabitants of the historic duchy remained faithful to their rulers, independently

<sup>90</sup> M. Margue, 'Dominations étrangères', 29–31.

<sup>91</sup> C. Koller, *Fremdherrschaft*, 191.

<sup>92</sup> Jean Stengers, 'Le mythe des dominations étrangères dans l'historiographie belge', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 59 (1981): 386; Jo Tollebeek, 'Historical Representation and the Nation-State in Romantic Belgium (1830–1850)', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 59 (1998): 342.

<sup>93</sup> Jean Stengers, 'Le mythe des dominations étrangères', 399–400.

of the latter's origins.<sup>94</sup> The only exploitation by 'foreigners' took place under the French Republic and the Napoleonic Empire, when "strangers sucked at our bone-marrow, prosperity was in flight, the country's children were bleeding for a foreign cause, [and] family happiness was being destroyed". The looming unhappy times already cast their shadows in 1792:

We now approach the point in time at which Luxembourg was about to cease existing as a duchy, having its own laws, possessing various liberties in a word, being the happiest little country in Europe.<sup>95</sup>

The period of the French Republic and the Napoleonic Empire (1795–1814) were later included in the concept of 'foreign dominations' as the very epitome of unlawful occupation. There is, however, a distinction between the historiographical treatment of the Republic and that of the Consulate/Empire. The 1798 peasants' rebellion against French religious reforms and military recruitment—celebrated as a patriotic insurrection—has been analysed both as a historical and a historiographical event.<sup>96</sup> The Napoleonic era, by contrast, has not received much attention in Luxembourg to-date.

Apart from the French regime of 1795–1814, the first period that came to be understood as a 'foreign domination' was the period of Spanish rule. Pierre-Dominique Joachim, professor at the Grand-Ducal Athenaeum, differentiated between Austro-Spanish 'domination', the Austro-German 'regime', French 'incorporation' and Dutch "reunion",<sup>97</sup> whereas Paquet contrasted the Austro-Spanish and Austro-German "rules" (*Herrschaften*) with the Burgundian and French

<sup>94</sup> See chapter 4.

<sup>95</sup> Jean-Pierre Mäysz, *Chronologische Übersicht der Geschichte der Stadt und des Großherzogtums Luxemburg im Gebrauch der vaterländischen Elementarschulen des Mittleren Unterrichts* (Luxembourg: Schmit-Brück, 1819), 27–28: "Fremdlinge sogen an unserem Marke, der Wohlstand floh, die Kinder des Landes bluteten für die fremde Sache, das Familienglück war vernichtet... Wir nahen jetzt dem Zeitpunkte in welchem Luxemburg aufhören sollte ein Herzogtum zu sein, eigene Gesetze zu haben, Freiheiten mancher Art zu besitzen, mit einem Worte, das glücklichste Ländchen von Europa zu sein."

<sup>96</sup> Gilbert Trausch, 'Die Luxemburger Bauernaufstände aus dem Jahre 1798', *Rheinische Vierteljahresblätter* 48 (1984): 161–237; Trausch, '1798–1942, deux dates, deux régimes d'occupation. Faut-il comparer?', *Les Cahiers Luxembourgeois* 32/3 (1964): 163–173; Sonja Kmec, 'Klëppelkrich', in *Lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg* (see note 44), 141–146.

<sup>97</sup> Pierre-Dominique Joachim, *Précis chronologique de la ville et du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, à l'usage des écoles moyennes* (Luxembourg: Schmit-Brück, 1828), 2.



“reunions” (*Vereinigungen*) and the Dutch “incorporation” (*Einverleibung*) after 1815.<sup>98</sup> Far from being viewed negatively, Paquet saw the Dutch “incorporation” as having brought a “multitude of wise measures” in 1815 and, under William II, the country “recovered its ancient independence and its ancient nationality”.<sup>99</sup> The term ‘foreign domination’ was generally avoided in the nineteenth century, because of its usage by Belgian nationalists, even after the end of the Dutch personal union in 1890.

Nonetheless, the concept of ‘foreign dominations’ did pop up in Luxembourg even before Herchen’s *Manuel*. Its first use in a local context can be found in a short tourist guide from 1861.<sup>100</sup> It appears in one single sentence with reference to the years after 1462, when Louis XI of France officially renounced his claim to major parts of the Burgundian Low Countries.<sup>101</sup> The use of the term, however, represents too isolated a case to be given much importance and it was another 27 years before the term reappeared again. The small treatise written in 1888 by Jean Joris on the historic importance of the years 1866–72 is more fundamental, since it was more widely read.<sup>102</sup> Joris refers to “the centuries” before 1815 as marked by “foreign domination”, while the period from the Congress of Vienna to 1867 is described as a “period of transition”: a time when the grand duchy had not been fully independent yet. When exactly this foreign domination started remains unclear, since Joris only refers to the medieval *county* as a time of glory and autonomy, not specifying what he thought about the *duchy* (after 1354). He does, however, provide the two periods with entirely opposing connotations:

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<sup>98</sup> Joseph Paquet, *Die Hauptthatsachen der Luxemburger Geschichte, zur Grundlage bei seinem Unterrichte* (Luxembourg: J. Lamort, 1838), 11–12.

<sup>99</sup> Joseph Paquet, ‘Esquisse historique de l’enseignement public dans le pays de Luxembourg’, *Athenaeum luxemburgense* (1845): i–xxvi, here xvi.

<sup>100</sup> Mathias Erasmey, *Le guide du voyageur dans le Grand-Duché de Luxembourg* (Luxembourg: V. Bück, 1861).

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 37: “C’est ainsi qu’un trait de plume mit fin à la nationalité du pays qui, incorporé aux domaines de Bourgogne, eut à reconnaître désormais, 350 ans durant, la domination étrangère.”

<sup>102</sup> Herchen, for example, had read—and even copied from—Joris’s writings. C. Huberty, ‘La vie politique du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle dans l’historiographie’, 552. Jean Joris (1828–1893) started his professional career as a primary school teacher, but then worked mainly as an editor and printer in Luxembourg, where he also published two newspapers from 1865 to 1871. He was an entirely self-taught historian. Frank Wilhelm, ‘Joris, Jean’, *Luxemburger Autorenlexikon*, ed. Claude Conter and Germaine Goetzinger (Mersch: Centre national de littérature, 2007), 298.

Luxembourg prospered while it was autonomous and independent, from 963 to 1354; it acquired a large extension and occupied a brilliant and happy position in history. From the day when it was placed under foreign domination, it was unhappy, it was cut into pieces. Only when it regained its independence in 1839, did it open itself to a new era of prosperity and liberty.<sup>103</sup>

By establishing the concept of the foreign dominations, Joris automatically took up many elements of the national master narrative, such as the medieval and contemporary independences, its teleological view, or its national mindset of inclusion and exclusion.

Herchen later borrowed the concept of the 'foreign dominations' for his textbook, where he combined it with the more detailed narrative that he had been experimenting with since his 1883 publication. It should be noted that Joris was a resolute Orangist from the liberal camp; one of his most famous publications is a fawning biography of King William II. It illustrates once more the degree to which Herchen owed a debt to the Orangist tradition. Interestingly, Herchen's 1918 text never cites Joris by name, nor does it include the central importance which he accorded to the years 1839 or 1867. The only author that Herchen did regularly mention was Jean-Pierre Glaesener (1831–1901).<sup>104</sup> Yet, Glaesener's structure differs greatly from Herchen's.<sup>105</sup> Likewise, he never used the term 'foreign dominations'.

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<sup>103</sup> Jean Joris, *1867–1872. Une page d'histoire du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg* (Luxembourg: J. Beffort, 1888), 436: "Le Luxembourg a prospéré, lorsqu'il était autonome et indépendant, de 963 à 1354; il a pris une grande extension et a occupé une position brillante et heureuse dans l'histoire. Dès le jour, où il a été placé sous une domination étrangère, il a été malheureux, il a été morcelé; ce ne fut que lorsqu'il recouvra son indépendance, en 1839, qu'il vit aussi s'inaugurer pour lui une nouvelle ère de prospérité et de liberté."

<sup>104</sup> Glaesener was a physician and surgeon, but no trained historian. He showed a profound interest in the history of the town of Diekirch. As a result, he became member of the Historical Section. The text quoted by Herchen is from Glaesener's 'Luxembourg historique et pittoresque', an amalgam of history, local lore and descriptions of sites of interest. Jean-Pierre Glaesener, *Le Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, historique et pittoresque* (Diekirch: J. Schroell, 1885). On Glaesener, see Ed Kayser, 'Jean-Pierre Glaesener (1831–1901)', *400 Joer Kolléisch*. Vol. 2, *L'Athénée et ses grands anciens: 1815–1993* (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 2003), 285–6. Herchen used to read from Glaesener's book during his classes, for which see T. Kellen, 'Die luxemburgische Geschichtsschreibung', 159.

<sup>105</sup> J.-P. Glaesener, *Le Grand-Duché de Luxembourg*, 77 and 118. Although Glaesener did refer to the medieval counts and dukes as autonomous rulers, he also includes Philip of Burgundy in the same chapter. While he structures the chapters according to reigns, his principal caesura takes place with the arrival of 'Modern Times', a period that stretches from the reign of Charles the Bold (1467–77) to the author's own day.

Another publication of relevance in this context is Nicolas Ries's *Essai d'une psychologie du peuple luxembourgeois* (Essay on the psychology of the Luxembourgian people), first published in 1911.<sup>106</sup> The book contains a short version of the national master narrative later found in Herchen's *Manuel*, even though its purpose was different and its author a member of the political left. Ries (1876–1941) attempted to define the Luxembourgian nation with reference to racial theory. His argument that Luxembourg represents a fusion of the Celtic and Frankish “races” was derived entirely from the emerging notion of the *Mischkultur*.<sup>107</sup> Published seven years before Herchen's landmark textbook, the structure of Ries's brief overview of Luxembourg's history resembles that of the *Manuel* in striking detail. After some pages on “The Origins”, Ries added a section on “The Golden Age (963–1467). Luxembourg under autonomous counts and dukes”, starting with the foundation of the city by Count Sigefroid, “the first autochthon Luxembourgian count”.<sup>108</sup> In the period 1443–1815 Ries also distinguished between seven ‘dominations’, although without explicitly referring to them as ‘foreign’.<sup>109</sup> While the third great period started in 1815, proper independence was only gained in 1839 after a ‘Dutch period’ and a ‘Belgian period’.<sup>110</sup> Ries's work shows the degree to which the master narrative was circulating before the publication of Herchen's *Manuel*. It would, however, be mistaken to assume that Ries had a strong influence on Herchen: indeed, rather the opposite seems to be the case. Nicolas Ries was a generation younger than Arthur Herchen,

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<sup>106</sup> Nicolas Ries, *Essai d'une psychologie du peuple luxembourgeois* (Diekirch: J. Schroell, 1911).

<sup>107</sup> See the general introduction to this volume. The concept of *Mischkultur* was most widespread among Francophile leftwing intellectuals. Like most conservatives of his time, Herchen was not too fond of the idea. Although he was a Prussophile, he was probably still more Teutonophile than Francophile. His stance can be observed in his depiction of French figures in the *Manuel*, who are practically always painted in a negative light. Similarly, the great fortress of Luxembourg is presented in the chapter on the eighteenth-century ‘Austrian domination’, rather than that dealing with the earlier French regime.

<sup>108</sup> N. Ries, *Essai d'une psychologie du peuple luxembourgeois*, 37.

<sup>109</sup> These dominations were: 1) the Burgundian domination (1443–1506), 2) the first Spanish domination (1506–1684), 3) the first French domination (1684–1697), 4) the second Spanish domination (1697–1711), 5) the Austrian domination (1714–95), 6) the second French domination (1795–1814), 7) the provisional Prussian domination (1814–1815). *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

and, while not being a historian himself, he had been taught history by Herchen at both the Athenaeum and the *Cours Supérieur*.<sup>111</sup>

### 3.4. *Reacting to a 'Crisis'*

History is written for the present. Although the national master narrative intended to suggest timeless truths, it was developed with an eye on rather immediate questions. As we will see in more detail in the next chapter, its deployment is generally linked to the political needs of the moment and some of its elements are stressed accordingly. This was no different in 1918. When Herchen wrote his textbook, one of its important underlying motivations was the feeling of crisis or being under threat. As a fervent monarchist, Herchen was witness to a moment at which both monarch and the monarchical system were severely questioned. Herchen ended his book by urging his readership that “the happiness and future of a nation” lies in the “mutual attachment of the head of state and the people, in their reciprocal trust and their joint collaboration.”<sup>112</sup> He explicitly referred to Grand Duchess Marie-Adelaide, who was to abdicate less than a year after the publication of the first edition. His call to rally around the throne points especially to what he regarded as an uncertain and potentially daunting future. This call resulted from “the tragic complications and anxieties of this very hour”, which threaten the “1000-year-old” existence of the country yet again.<sup>113</sup> Here Herchen implicitly linked back to his presentation of the year 1443. Luxembourg had just started to ‘regain’ some of its former greatness, but was again threatened by outside forces. The closing line thus reads in a hopeful tone: “*Fluctuat nec mergitur*”.<sup>114</sup> While referring to the nation, it includes the idea that the

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<sup>111</sup> This point is based on conjecture. Ries was a pupil at the Athenaeum while Herchen was one of its few history teachers; Ries further attended the *Cours Supérieur* in 1898. For an account of Nicolas Ries's life, see Claude Conter, ‘Ries, Nicolas’, *Luxemburger Autorenlexikon*, ed. Claude Conter and Germaine Goetzinger (Mersch: Centre national de littérature, 2007), 507–508.

<sup>112</sup> A. Herchen, *Manuel* (1918 edition), 154: “C’est dans le mutuel attachement du chef de l’Etat et du peuple, dans leur confiance réciproque et dans leur collaboration commune, que résident le bonheur et l’avenir d’une nation.”

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> The phrase can be translated as “it flows and does not sink”, or as “it is tossed about, but does not sink,” depending on the strength one wants to attributed to the verb ‘*fluctuare*’ in this context. This Latin phrase is probably best known as the motto of the city of Paris.

people of Luxembourg would not succumb to any foreign masters. The second edition of the textbook, published two years before Herchen's death, takes up where the first edition had stopped. Implicitly referring to the 1919 referendum, Herchen was able to claim that: "the inflexible wish of the Luxembourgian people is to maintain their independence".<sup>115</sup> None of the foreign dominations "could annul its national character, its ethnic entity, sacred and inalienable storage, which the generations transmitted religiously to each other, while the flag of foreign lands waved on our conquered cities."<sup>116</sup> We see early glimpses of what would later be developed into the concept of 'particularism'.

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<sup>115</sup> A. Herchen, *Manuel* (1929 edition), 176: "*La volonté inflexible du peuple luxembourgeois est de maintenir son indépendance.*"

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 177. "Depuis près de cinq siècles, notre pays a été la victime de parfois le champ de bataille de nos grands voisins, et c'est miracle qu'il ait pu garder son existence nationale jusqu'à ce jour. Ni les princes de la Maison de Bourgogne, ni les Habsbourg d'Espagne et d'Autriche, n'ont pu annuler son caractère national, son entité ethnique, dépôt sacré et inaliénable, que les générations se transmettaient religieusement, alors que le drapeau de l'étranger flottait sur nos cités conquises."

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE DISSEMINATION, RECEPTION AND PUBLIC USE OF THE NATIONAL MASTER NARRATIVE

The previous chapter presented the national master narrative, largely on the basis of Arthur Herchen's *Manuel d'histoire nationale* and attempted to retrace its multiple origins. Although not introducing many new ideas, Herchen's work represented a pivotal stage in its development. We shall now turn to expressions of the national master narrative in other media. Given the immense number of such manifestations, it would be impossible to provide an exhaustive analysis. This chapter will therefore present an overview of some particularly telling examples. The first part will examine the manner in which the national master narrative continued to be developed and modified by focusing on the positive reception of Herchen's work by fellow historians. The second part will look at the arts, and will analyse the work of the painter Michel Engels. The third section studies the role of the master narrative during one of the largest mass celebration ever to take place in Luxembourg: the centenary of Luxembourg's independence in 1939. The final part looks specifically at the political use of the national master narrative, and demonstrates how the ruling dynasty used it to its own advantage.

#### 1. *Continuing the Master Narrative in Historiography*

Arthur Herchen's vision of national history was to survive its author. One of the main reasons for this longevity was that his textbook not only remained in print, but also stayed on the school curriculum for more than five decades. As has been explored in the previous chapter, Herchen himself prepared a second edition, which was published in 1929, and thereafter, two other prominent historians undertook the expansion, up-dating and re-edition of what was to be a classic textbook until 1972.

It is always debatable how important a medium schoolbooks are.<sup>1</sup> At first sight, it is tempting to postulate that they play a fundamental role in disseminating their contents among the masses. A history textbook, such as Herchen's, has the potential to shape the historical consciousness of several generations. It is, however, impossible to quantify their usage precisely and some factors suggest that such textbooks—and Herchen's *Manuel* in particular—were actually employed less widely than one might expect. As seen in the previous chapter, Herchen taught 'national history' only to the *Cours Supérieur*, while lower classes followed a more general history curriculum until the Second World War.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, many textbooks were not used directly by pupils, but were instead intended for use only by the teacher, who then passed on his knowledge. It remains impossible to determine the degree to which teachers using such textbooks remained faithful to their contents, and the extent to which they allowed themselves the freedom to diverge from their reference works. Nevertheless, there is still good reason to suppose that Herchen's *Manuel* remained a powerful medium. First, even though the book was initially only used for the *Cours Supérieur*, it had an impact on people who were to become influential politicians, artists, scholars, and journalists. Second, as a result of its impact on important agents of public discourse, its content was to re-appear in other media, such as political speeches, literature and art. The restatement of Herchen's contribution to the national master narrative in this manner not merely reflected the influence of his work, but also served to further its dissemination in a broader socio-cultural sphere. Third, 'national history' was put on the general secondary school curriculum in 1952 and Herchen's book was the set textbook.<sup>3</sup> Even if pupils did not have to read and memorise the book directly, it probably served as a major source of inspiration for those teaching the course. Finally, the textbook became a reference tool for the wider population, partly because it had very few rivals. Jean Schoetter's 1881 history of Luxembourg remained unfinished and its narrative stopped

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<sup>1</sup> On schoolbooks in Luxembourg, see Rolf Wittenbrock, Gérard Michaux, and Paul Dostert, eds., *Schule und Identitätsbildung in der Region Saar-Lor-Lux* (Saarbrücken: Ottweiler, 1994). See especially the following contributions: Jacques Maas, 'Ziele und Inhalte des Geschichtsunterrichts in Luxemburg (1815–1941)', 25–44; Paul Dostert, 'Der Geschichtsunterricht in Luxemburg 1918–1944', 103–117; Armand Thill, 'L'enseignement de l'histoire au Luxembourg depuis 1945', 119–133.

<sup>2</sup> See chapter 1.

<sup>3</sup> See A. Thill, 'L'enseignement de l'histoire au Luxembourg depuis 1945', 122.

before the eighteenth century; Nicolas van Werveke's *Kulturgeschichte* (1923–26) eschewed both a political approach and a chronological structure.<sup>4</sup> Not until 1939 did another synoptic history appear in the shape of Joseph Meyers' *Geschichte Luxemburgs*, which was nevertheless less detailed and supported by fewer references.<sup>5</sup> As we shall see, this publication also promoted the national master narrative, probably even borrowing directly from Herchen's publication.

The first historians to re-edit the *Manuel* was Nicolas Margue (1888–1976). Margue studied history in Munich, Fribourg, Strasbourg and Paris.<sup>6</sup> After completing a doctoral thesis on the early nineteenth century, he started work as a teacher in the capital's Athenaeum from 1916. Margue was a devout Catholic, whose beliefs led him to become politically active at a time when Catholic intellectuals were far from the centre of mainstream political life. He entered politics for the Conservative Party (*Partie de la Droite*) in the 1920s. In the mid-1930s, he became a member of the government led by a friend from his student days, Pierre Dupong. He acted as the Minister of Education and Agriculture. While this powerful position helped him disseminate his vision of the past, it also had the disadvantage of allowing him less and less time to dedicate to proper scholarship.

When he first took up the task of re-editing Herchen's textbook in 1934, Margue did not introduce any major modifications. Nonetheless, his efforts to review the text went beyond purely cosmetic changes. Most notably, Margue further subdivided Herchen's 'foreign dominations' by inserting additional subtitles: following his modifications, the early-modern period was divided into a Burgundian domination, two Spanish dominations, two French dominations and one Austrian domination. In this manner, Margue not only—and rightly—separated the two French conquests, but also distinguished between Spanish

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<sup>4</sup> Jean Schoetter, *Geschichte des Luxemburger Landes nach den besten Quellen bearbeitet, fortgesetzt von A. Herchen und N. van Werveke* (Luxembourg: N. Breisdorff, 1882); Nicolas van Werveke, *Kulturgeschichte des Luxemburger Landes*, 3 vols., (Luxembourg: Soupert, 1923–26; reprint: Esch-sur-Alzette: Schortgen, 1983). On Nicolas van Werveke, see chapter 3.

<sup>5</sup> Joseph Meyers, *Geschichte Luxemburgs* (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 1939).

<sup>6</sup> For biographical details on Nicolas Margue, see Mathias Thinnes, 'Nicolas Margue, 1888–1976', *Nouvelle Revue Luxembourgeoise* 2–3 (1977): 9–14. This text served as the principal source for a more recent biographical note: Paul Dostert, 'Nicolas Margue (1888–1976)', in *400 Joer Kolléisch*. Vol. 2 *L'Athénée et ses grands anciens: 1815–1993* (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 2003), 57–9.



rule before the first French conquest and that which was established after the duchy was revived fourteen years later. Margue succeeded in strengthening Herchen's representation of a 'national' past fragmented by foreign incursions, and gave further credence to the implications of the notion of 'foreign dominations', particularly the image of Luxembourgers as historical 'victims'.

Margue's edition shares a belief with Herchen's original text that Luxembourg was in danger and a sense that there was an urgent need for the nation to unite. This is particularly pointedly expressed in the final paragraphs of the new editions. While Margue first (1934) kept the final paragraph of the second edition, he extended it in the fourth edition (1937) so as to incorporate more recent developments:

The bloody drama that has upset the world [i.e. the Great War] has ceased. The peace has been signed, but calm and concord are far from having been re-established. Our small country, situated at the crossroads of nations, participates in the universal agitation.<sup>7</sup>

This passage links Herchen's fears expressed in 1918 with the anxiety caused by Nazi Germany's increasingly aggressive stance: the occupation of the Rhineland had taken place only a year before Margue rewrote the concluding paragraph of the *Manuel*. Although Germany was certainly seen as the most direct threat to Luxembourg, Margue's comments also reflect worrying developments on the wider international stage. Mussolini had invaded Ethiopia less than twelve months before Margue's re-edition was published in 1937. The Spanish Civil War was raging and the German bombing of Guernica had happened only a few months earlier.

The rise of fascist aggression was not, however, the only international issue which Margue sought to address in the 1937 edition of Herchen's text. In the same year, the conservative Prime Minister Joseph Bech also proposed a referendum on banning the Communist Party of Luxembourg (KPL).<sup>8</sup> His decision was largely based on internal political calculations, but justified the proposal as a means of appeasing the fiercely anti-Communist Germany, even though the

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<sup>7</sup> Arthur Herchen, *Manuel d'histoire nationale* (Luxembourg: G. Soupert, 1937), 205–206: "Le drame sanglant qui a bouleversé le monde est fini. La paix est signée, mais le calme et la concorde sont loin d'être rétablis. Notre petit pays, situé au carrefour des nations, participe à l'universelle agitation."

<sup>8</sup> Gilbert Trausch, 'Il y a cinquante ans... le "Maulkueref"', *d'Letzeburger Land*, 19 August 1977, 6–8.

KPL was ultimately permitted to continue operating. Although not yet a member of the government, Margue used the closing paragraphs of his edition of the *Manuel* to comment on these events, mixing historical interpretation with partisan aims, while again evoking the spirit of Herchen's 1918 conclusion:

It is true that the coercive measures envisaged against deliberately revolutionary tendencies and parties have found the Luxembourgian people hesitant and uncertain. The result of a referendum organised in June 1937 on the question of Communism has even led to a political crisis, and the people to whom the destinies of the country have been entrusted must yet resolve many grave and urgent problems.<sup>9</sup>

The closing paragraphs of these textbooks thus show once again that 'national history' was far from being a lofty scholarly exercise, but exploited as part of a highly political discourse.<sup>10</sup>

Nicolas Margue was certainly not beyond criticism. He expanded Herchen's textbook by putting on his hat as a historian. As Minister of Education (*Ministre de l'Instruction Publique*), he took the decision to keep the textbook as part of the high-school curriculum. This conduct was criticised during a public row in 1939, instigated by the minor left-wing newspaper *Die Neue Zeit* and supported by a debate in parliament.<sup>11</sup> Although it had practically no resonance in society at large (not being taken up the main newspapers) and had thus little impact on schoolbook policy, this dispute represents one of the extremely rare occasions that Luxembourg's history education was discussed outside the Ministry and secondary schools. Margue was accused for his enduring opposition to another schoolbook by his colleague Pierre Biermann.<sup>12</sup> Biermann's textbook was intended to replace a German book by zur Bensen which had been used for the lower classes since

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<sup>9</sup> A. Herchen, *Manuel* (1937 edition), 209: "Il est vrai que des mesures coercitives envisagées contre les tendances et les partis délibérément révolutionnaires ont trouvé le peuple luxembourgeois hésitant et incertain. Le résultat d'un référendum organisé en juin 1937 sur la question du communisme a même conduit à une forme de crise politique et les hommes auxquels seront confiées les destinées du pays auront à résoudre encore bien de problèmes graves et urgents."

<sup>10</sup> For a direct comparison of the final paragraphs in all editions, see Marc Schoentgen, 'Staatsbürgerliche Erziehung und Geschichtsunterricht in Luxemburg', *Hémecht* 58 (2006): 535–536.

<sup>11</sup> *Compte rendu des séances de la Chambre des députés du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg. Session ordinaire de 1939–1940* (Luxembourg, 1940), col. 878–885.

<sup>12</sup> See P. Dostert, 'Der Geschichtsunterricht in Luxemburg 1918–1944', 111–112.

1927,<sup>13</sup> and which had attracted criticism for passages containing German nationalist and Francophobe sentiments.<sup>14</sup> Biermann's replacement textbook had been approved by most of his colleagues.<sup>15</sup> A first volume on early medieval history was published in 1935, a second one on the late Middle Ages followed in 1939.<sup>16</sup> Several schools had recommended the first volume to their teachers. But even before the second volume was published, resistance against the book had been rising. Having become Minister of Education in 1937, Nicolas Margue seemed very reticent in endorsing Biermann's textbook. His reasons were largely political: Biermann was a declared leftist who saw himself as a liberal humanist and pacifist, and who did not shy away from criticising the political influence of the Church.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, Margue did not appreciate certain passages in the book,<sup>18</sup> and he may also have objected to Biermann's outspoken personality.<sup>19</sup> Although Margue certainly did not approve of zur Bonsen's German nationalist tone, he did not consider it a serious obstacle to the education of local pupils. When questioned about the textbook in parliament, he suggested that there were only a few problematic passages, and pointed out that these portions of the work were so extreme that "our pupils laugh about them and our teachers do justice to them with a brief word".<sup>20</sup> Yet the fact that Margue did not take a firmer stance on the issue right away (he did give in after the debate), brought him harsh criticism

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<sup>13</sup> Pierre Biermann, *Die Geschichte des Mittelalters von Luxemburg aus gesehen, Teil 1* (Luxembourg: Cahiers Luxembourgeois, 1935); *Teil 2* (Grevenmacher: Biermann-Schock, 1939).

<sup>14</sup> See 'Instruction Publique. Réformes du cours d'histoire 1926–27', ANL IP614.

<sup>15</sup> P. Biermann, *Die Geschichte des Mittelalters. Teil 2*, 121–122.

<sup>16</sup> For an analysis of Biermann's view of history, see chapter 2.

<sup>17</sup> On Biermann see Michel Raus, 'Ein Gläubiger des Unglaubens. Erinnerungen an Professor Pierre Biermann', *d'Lëtzeburger Land*, 2 October 1981, 15; Gast Mannes, 'Biermann, Pierre', in *Luxemburger Autorenlexikon*, ed. Claude Conter and Germaine Goetzinger (Mersch, 2007), 56. On Biermann's own views, see 'Gespräch mit Professor Biermann', *Clec. Bulletin d'information* 4 (1974): 15–18, and 5 (1975): 7–12.

<sup>18</sup> Biermann later commented that the fact that he dared mentioning the children's crusade was considered risqué. See 'Gespräch mit Professor Biermann', *Clec. Bulletin d'information* 4 (1974): 18.

<sup>19</sup> After the failure of his book, Biermann criticised the Ministry for Education publicly in a newspaper interview and the appendix of his own textbook, amongst others. See 'Interview mit Professor P. Biermann', *Die Neue Zeit* 34, 1 April 1939, 3; P. Biermann, *Die Geschichte des Mittelalters. Teil 2*, 119–122.

<sup>20</sup> *Compte rendu des séances de la Chambre des députés du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg. Session ordinaire de 1939–1940*, col. 880–882: "nos élèves en rient et nos professeurs par un petit mot en font justice."

from the leftwing press and the parliamentary opposition. Articles in the leftwing and anti-clerical magazine *Die Neue Zeit*—orchestrated by Biermann<sup>21</sup>—targeted his editions of Herchen’s textbook: the “party-fanatic” Margue’s additions to the schoolbook were seen as expressing “reactionary and party-political tendencies”.<sup>22</sup> This last point was mainly based on the book’s pro-monarchical interpretation of events during and after the Great War, the positive view given of Grand Duchess Marie-Adelaide and the almost complete neglect of democratic forces, especially the role of Prime Minister Eyschen during all these years. Eyschen was a towering figure in Luxembourgian politics for almost three decades and was the last great liberal leader. As seen above, Herchen’s last couple of pages were on the whole left relatively unchanged by Margue, who only changed its final paragraph, using the same style as his predecessor. Yet these last pages expressed the book’s political message most explicitly. Finally, during the parliamentary debate, MP Georges Govers attacked Margue for deliberately sabotaging Biermann, given Margue’s desire to lend his support to Joseph Meyers’ almost completed textbook project.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, Meyers was not only Margue’s colleague, but also a former student, a personal friend and both men shared similar political opinions. As a consequence, Biermann’s book did not survive on the curriculum for long. It was not re-edited, nor was the author given the opportunity to finish the project and cover all historical periods.

Joseph Meyers (1900–1964) did indeed publish his own textbook on Luxembourgian history in 1939. Introduced in 1946, Meyers’s book remained on the school curriculum until 1972;<sup>24</sup> from 1952 both

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<sup>21</sup> Pierre Biermann published his articles in that magazine under the pseudonym of ‘Peter Forsch’. G. Mannes, ‘Biermann, Pierre’, 56.

<sup>22</sup> *Die Neue Zeit*, 1 April 1939, 1–4.

<sup>23</sup> See *Compte rendu des séances de la Chambre des députés du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg. Session ordinaire de 1939–1940*, col. 878–879. It remains impossible to guess Govers’s motivations for his intervention. He was one of few independent MPs. Considering his professional background as a lawyer based in the capital, it seems unlikely that he stood for Socialist political ideals; instead, it appears to suggest that he may have entertained a more liberal mindset. Did he instigate the debate to increase his own (independent) profile? Or was Govers maybe a personal friend of Biermann’s?

<sup>24</sup> P. Dostert, ‘Der Geschichtsunterricht in Luxemburg 1918–1944’, 114. The extent to which a specific schoolbook is used in the classroom remains questionable. Indeed, the Luxembourg school system left it up to history teachers themselves to determine the use which they wished to make of the recommended texts. However, even if various generations of pupils did not read the Herchen’s *Manuel* or Meyers’s *Geschichte*

his and Herchen's books were used alongside for different classes in secondary school.<sup>25</sup> Meyers's was remarkably similar to Herchen's textbook with respect to political history and to periodisation. Apart from the language used—German in this case<sup>26</sup>—the main overall difference was the comparatively large amount of space Meyers gave to cultural and economic issues. Although Meyers did engage with the period prior to 963, it was nevertheless again at that precise date that he believed that Luxembourg came into existence. Labelled as “The period of autonomy in the Middle Ages”, the chapter begins by presenting Count Sigefroid as the builder of the castle of Luxembourg, and as the founder of the city which represented the centre of a new principality.<sup>27</sup> Meyers offered the reader a reprise of the traditional foundation myth. Like his predecessors, Meyers is full of praise for the reign of Countess Ermesinde, who was again depicted as one of the central figures in medieval history.<sup>28</sup> He also applied the traditional perspective to the fourteenth century. Again, John of Bohemia features as the most prominent figure of the time. Meyers focused particularly on the benefits which John's rule brought to Luxembourg, including territorial expansion, urban privileges, the construction of a third wall in the city of Luxembourg and the foundation of a trade fair. This sense that the period was characterised by general well-being, was tempered by the belief that it was destroyed in the fifteenth century. At this point Meyers takes a firmer stance than his predecessors. His chapter on the last direct descendants of John of Bohemia is entitled “The Decline” (*Der Niedergang*).<sup>29</sup> The term seems to refer to the decline of both the dynasty and Luxembourg's independence. Meyers made the last ‘medieval’ monarchs directly responsible for the subsequent Burgundian rule by laying particular blame on their policy

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*Luxemburgs* first hand, these books nonetheless shaped the minds of those by whom they were taught.

<sup>25</sup> A. Thill, *L'enseignement de l'histoire au Luxembourg depuis 1945*, 122.

<sup>26</sup> This was, of course, required by the school curriculum: Meyer's textbook was to be used during the first two years of secondary education, when history teaching was undertaken in German. Thereafter, history was to be taught in French on the basis of later editions of Herchen's textbook.

<sup>27</sup> J. Meyers, *Geschichte Luxemburgs* (1939 edition), 47–49.

<sup>28</sup> Meyers made a pilgrimage to her tomb in Clairefontaine in 1939 and wrote a biography of the countess in 1953. Joseph Meyers, ‘Clairefontaine’, *Letzebuurger Illustré'ert* 16, 1948, 448–449; Meyers, *Ermesinde 1186–1247* (Luxembourg: V. Buck, 1954).

<sup>29</sup> J. Meyers, *Geschichte Luxemburgs* (1939 edition), 98.

of pawning parts or the entire principality. Every ruler involved in this policy was criticised by Meyers. He even pointed out that the heroic John of Bohemia was in fact not entirely without blemish, since he engaged—to a smaller extent—in the same despicable type of policy.<sup>30</sup> Although this represents a deviation from Herchen's model, Meyers's still operated within the framework of the national master narrative and with all its implications.

For Meyers, as for Herchen, the modern age was marked by 'foreign dominations' (*Fremdherrschaft*),<sup>31</sup> although he largely copied Margue's more exacting subdivisions. Unlike Margue, however, he considered the reigns of Philip the Handsome and Charles V as the rule of the House of Habsburg and as distinct from the House of Burgundy. The 'first' period of Spanish rule began, in Meyers' eyes, only with the accession of Philip II. This was then followed—as usual—by the first period of French rule, the second Spanish domination, and so on. Again the Burgundian annexation of the duchy was the most crucial moment for Meyers: "under Philip of Burgundy, Luxembourg ceased being an autonomous state."<sup>32</sup> Meyers's reasoning was identical to that propounded by Herchen:

[Luxembourg] had no princes of its own anymore. Instead it was integrated into a foreign state (*Staatengebilde*), the so-called Low Countries,<sup>33</sup> and obeyed foreign rulers. Its history was from now on that of the Low Countries.<sup>34</sup>

Meyers was in no doubt that this was generally a change for the worse: Luxembourg, he wrote, "was pulled into every European struggle. This brought terrible misery to the country." An addition to later editions further emphasised that the responsibility lay with the foreign rulers:

Luxembourg was mainly ruled by foreign (*landfremde*) governors who did not even understand the language of the people. Some of them

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 73–74.

<sup>31</sup> Note that the use of the German singular lends *Fremdherrschaft* more encompassing connotations.

<sup>32</sup> J. Meyers, *Geschichte Luxemburgs* (1939 edition), 89: "Unter Philipp von Burgund hörte Luxemburg auf, ein selbstständiger Staat zu sein."

<sup>33</sup> The actual word used is *Niederlande*, which historically means 'Low Countries', but also designates today's 'Netherlands'.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 89: "[Luxembourg] hatte keinen eigenen Fürsten mehr. Dagegen wurde es in ein fremdes Staatengebilde eingegliedert, die sogenannten Niederlande, und gehorchte fremden Herrschern. Seine Geschichte war fortan die der Niederlande."

exploited this people, or protected it only insufficiently against foreign (*auswärtige*) enemies.<sup>35</sup>

While this makes the consequences of the Burgundian conquest seem rather dreadful, Meyers distanced himself from his predecessors by suggesting that it also had some positive results. After having written about the general “terrible misery”, Meyer went on to state that “under Burgundy and Habsburg, Luxembourg experienced happy years. Trade blossomed and thus prosperity spread among the burghers (*Bürger-tum*).”<sup>36</sup> His stance on Burgundy therefore tends to be almost schizophrenic. Buying into the master narrative with its teleological view as a whole, Meyers had to regard this period as generally bad, yet his scholarly precision required him to list numerous examples that seem to disagree with the grander scheme.

In order to understand this approach, it is necessary to look at Meyers’s earlier publications. In his early works, Meyers demonstrated that his mixed feelings on Burgundy’s impact were based on his positive interpretation of the political and cultural repositioning of Luxembourg in the aftermath of the Burgundian conquest. Since the early 1930, Meyers had been arguing that the dukes of Burgundy brought French language and culture to their conquered territories, while at the same time separating them from the German Empire.<sup>37</sup> This helped to create “Luxembourgian particularism” (*luxemburgische Sonderart*). The French-German character of this ‘particularism’ also reflects that the idea of Luxembourg as a *Mischkultur* was entering the mainstream discourse. This foundation of contemporary Luxembourgian identity did, however, come at a price. The cultural break with its medieval past also meant a break with Luxembourg’s glorious political role. By alienating itself from Germany, it “sank to the level of a province”.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> J. Meyers, *Geschichte Luxemburgs* (1969 edition), 85: “In Luxemburg geboten meist landfremde Statthalter, die nicht einmal die Sprache des Volkes verstanden. Manche beuteten dieses Volk aus, oder schützten es nur ungenügend gegen die auswärtigen Feinde.” The word ‘*landfremd*’ means foreign not only in the sense of ‘coming from elsewhere’, but also connotes a lack of knowledge about a country.

<sup>36</sup> J. Meyers, *Geschichte Luxemburgs* (1939 edition), 93: “Unter Burgund und Habsburg verzeichnete Luxemburg glückliche Jahre. Da Gewerbe und Handel blühten, verbreitete sich Wohlstand im Bürgertum.” Note that the word *Bürgertum* can also refer to ‘middle classes’.

<sup>37</sup> Joseph Meyers, ‘Geschichtliche und geographische Grundlagen für das kulturelle Sonderleben Luxemburgs’, *Jonghemecht* 6 (1931): 5.

<sup>38</sup> Joseph Meyers, ‘Die Folgen der Burgundischen Herrschaft für Luxemburg’, *Les Cahiers luxembourgeois* 10 (1933): 415: “Das Herzogtum war auf die Stufe der Provinz herabgesunken.”

In other words, the peace brought by Burgundy came at the heavy cost of oppression, or as Meyers's own words put it, Burgundy introduced "the French paradigms" of centralisation and "absolutist forms of government".<sup>39</sup> Worst of all, peace and stability were only very temporary: the rule of Charles the Bold demanded "ever increasing monetary and human sacrifices".<sup>40</sup> Despite the odd positive aspect, Meyers believed that Burgundian rule gave rise to a rather despicable development. The rest of his chapters on the 'foreign dominations' remain entirely in line with the traditional version of the master narrative. The Spanish rule of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is presented as the worst moment in Luxembourgian history: "endless wars" raged continually, agriculture was in a "hopeless" state, and trade was hampered by "a general lack of security", while people were "carried off by military campaigns and epidemics".<sup>41</sup> Likewise, Meyers took up the idea of a Golden Age in the eighteenth century under Austrian rule. "Decades of peace" improved living conditions by stimulating trade, which blossomed "like never before".<sup>42</sup>

Apart from publishing his own textbook, Meyers was also involved in up-dating and editing Herchen's *Manuel* from 1947. Nicolas Margue continued to be credited as a co-editor on the cover, but this was probably to honour his earlier additions rather than any continuing involvement in the project. By 1947, politics was consuming so much of his energy that Margue hardly had any time for scholarly research, let alone to contribute seriously to the ongoing revisions to Herchen's textbook.<sup>43</sup> The end of the Second World War, however, demanded that a new edition be issued. Meyers expanded Herchen's work greatly by adding new chapters, but he made only very few changes within the existing body of text. An exception to this are those passages dealing with the First World War, for which Margue had been criticised so

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 412, 416 and 417.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 417: "immer grössere Geld- und Blutopfer."

<sup>41</sup> J. Meyers, *Geschichte Luxemburgs* (1939 edition), 103: "Endlose Kriege verheerten das Land im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert, während die Friedensperioden nur von kurzer Dauer waren. Die Landwirtschaft lag hoffnungslos darnieder. Kriegszüge und Seuchen rafften Menschen wie Vieh immer wieder dahin; der Ackerbau ging erschreckend zurück. Handwerk und Gewerbe in den Städten litten gleichfalls unter den Kriegswirren; die allgemeine Unsicherheit hemmte dauernd Handel und Verkehr."

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 117: "Lange Jahrzehnte des Friedens und die wohltätige österreichische Herrschaft förderten das Wirtschaftsleben in ungeahnter Weise. Gewerbe und Handel blühten wie nie zuvor."

<sup>43</sup> This conjecture is based on the small amount of scholarly publications that Margue published after the war and the important political offices he continued to hold.



heavily in Parliament, and which underwent some striking revisions. Paul Eyschens's political role was, for example, cast in a much more favourable light,<sup>44</sup> and Herchen's markedly negative attitude towards the republican agitators of 1919—previously described as “unpatriotic” and “destructive”—was toned down.<sup>45</sup> Likewise, Herchen's interpretation of Marie-Adelaide's abdication as a heroic deed and a personal sacrifice was removed.<sup>46</sup> The remainder, however, was largely Herchen's text, which Margue had approved of before. Although Meyers's own textbook disagreed with Herchen's chronological schema, he retained the original contention that the ‘Spanish domination’ began with the accession of Charles V. The main entirely new additions dealt with pre-history, an area Meyers knew better than his predecessors; before becoming director of the State Museum, he had received supplementary training in archaeology.<sup>47</sup> Herchen had remained very brief on this period and his overview was replaced. The impact on the national master narrative was small, since this part only affected the time before the supposed ‘foundation’ of Luxembourg in 963. Meyers also expanded the section dealing with the very recent past, but stopped with the German invasion in 1940.

Meyers's revisions to the text were to prove almost definitive. Indeed, Herchen's textbook was to change only very slightly in later editions. The only entirely new section added after the 1947 edition described the suffering during the German occupation (1940–1944), and even the last edition from 1972 stopped with the liberation of the country in 1944/45. A few more brief additions made in 1952 and 1972 mainly referred to the First World War. In both cases the changes were added

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<sup>44</sup> A. Herchen, *Manuel* (1947 edition), 201: “Le gouvernement du pays pendant cette période et bien au-delà fut aux mains sûres et expérimentés du plus connu de nos hommes d'Etat, *Paul Eyschen*, directeur général depuis 1876, président du gouvernement de 1888–1915. Avec une sagesse supérieure et une habileté diplomatique il dirigea les affaires du pays, profitant d'une époque tranquille pour améliorer les conditions d'existence de toutes les classes de la population, cherchant à éviter des fluctuations politiques trop dangereuses, réussissant à sauvegarder la prospérité et l'indépendance du pays jusqu'au moment de la première grande guerre, qui éclata en 1914.” A photo of Eyschen was even added on page 208.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 213 and 220.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 215: “Puis par un geste de suprême abnégation et s'offrant elle-même en holocauste à la Patrie, elle quitte sa famille, son pays, qu'elle aime de toute son âme, et elle s'en va, héroïque et douce, sans une plainte, étant d'une race qui ne connaît pas de défaillance (28 janvier 1919).”

<sup>47</sup> The authors are indebted to Paul Margue for this information.

in order to present the nation more clearly as a victim and thus to reinforce the idea that independence was well deserved.<sup>48</sup> During the First World War, Luxembourg's support for Belgium and France is pointed out: the grand duchy offered both nations food and clothing despite its own economic problems and thousands of Luxembourgers joined the ranks of the French army.<sup>49</sup> Economic collaboration with Germany is passed over in silence. Similarly, the Nazi occupation entered the master narrative as a national ordeal and was depicted as being worse than any previous 'foreign domination':

There are only few examples in history of such stupid and brutal politics than that pursued by Simon [the head of the German occupational administration] and his executioners during four years against our populations. It will be to the eternal shame of Hitler's Germany to have committed a series of nameless crimes against a small neighbour in the midst of the twentieth century.<sup>50</sup>

In addition and very typically for national historiography, the passage shows an extreme Luxembourg-centric attitude in its description of the Nazi occupation. At no moment did the author of these added lines contextualise the events by pointing towards the invasion of other countries, or the (possibly greater) suffering in these; nothing is said about the Holocaust or the fate of persecuted minorities. The discussion concentrates exclusively on the suffering of the Luxembourgian nation and its mounting resistance against the enemy, while collaborationism is completely ignored.<sup>51</sup> As for the pre-war editions of the textbook, the last paragraphs reflect a message adapted the changing

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<sup>48</sup> There were basically no changes to the final 1972 edition of the textbook, partly because Joseph Meyers had died in 1964. It must, however, be assumed that these changes were again undertaken by Nicolas Margue.

<sup>49</sup> A. Herchen, *Manuel* (1972 edition), 228.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 247: "Il y a dans l'histoire peu d'exemples d'une politique aussi stupide et aussi brutale que celle de Simon et ses bourreaux poursuivirent pendant plus de quatre ans contre nos populations. Ce sera éternellement la honte de l'Allemagne hitlérienne d'avoir commis en plein XX<sup>e</sup> siècle contre un petit voisin une série de crimes sans nom."

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 248: "Mais plus les Allemands sévirent, plus le peuple se raidit. Il soutint les déportés et les prisonniers, cacha les déserteurs, mit sur le pied toutes sortes d'organisations clandestines de secours et de résistance." On collaborationism in Luxembourg, see: Archives nationales Luxembourg, ed., *Collaboration: nazification?—le cas du Luxembourg à la lumière des situations française, belge et néerlandaise: actes du colloque international, Centre culturel de rencontre Abbaye de Neumünster, mai 2006* (Luxembourg: ANL, 2008).

political world. From 1952 onwards, it expresses the lessons to be drawn from the experience of war and occupation:

The inflexible will of the Luxembourgian people is to maintain its independence and its national character, while collaborating, in the measure of its feeble means, to the common defence of Europe and Christian civilisation.<sup>52</sup>

The first phrase was taken over from previous editions, but the second half of the sentence was entirely new. The stress remains on Luxembourg's political independence and the unquestionable strength of national identity. The European unification process is equally acknowledged as a way to overcome previous rivalries. The passage also contains allusions to the Cold War. The reference to "the common defence of Europe and Christian civilisation" once more reflects the Catholic background of the authors and can further be interpreted as a conscious decision to identify Luxembourg with the Western powers against the Communist East.

On the whole, Luxembourgian historians defended the master narrative as expressed by Herchen until the 1970s. It was to a very large degree left unchanged. None of the historians analysed here doubted that the Middle Ages constituted a glorious epoch, that the modern period was marked by oppression and hardship, and that independence was regained in the nineteenth century. Changes were rather minor. On the one hand, the representation of the 'foreign dominations' was rendered more complex over time. On the other hand, historians disagreed over various details. While Herchen saw the Burgundian regime in an entirely negative light, Meyers had more mixed feelings about it. Similarly, the changing dates of the start and end of the 'Spanish domination(s)', shows that the concept was not entirely rigid.

## 2. *The Master Narrative and the Arts*

So far we have only analysed historiographical sources. It would be wrong, however, to perceive historical writing as the sole major medium through which the national master narrative was expressed.

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<sup>52</sup> A. Herchen, *Manuel* (1972 edition), 250: "La volonté inflexible du peuple luxembourgeois est de maintenir son indépendance et son caractère national tout en collaborant, dans la mesure de ses faibles moyens, à la défense commune de l'Europe et de la civilisation chrétienne."

The visual arts, for instance, had an important share in both disseminating its content and in shaping the main *lieux de mémoire*, adding to their iconic status. There is an enormous wealth of artistic material that could be presented and analysed here, yet the repetitive content of the numerous works of art allows analysis to focus on one particularly representative example: the painter Michel Engels.

Michel Engels (1851–1901) shared much with Arthur Herchen: only a year younger than the historian, he was born in the capital, and was first a student and later a teacher of art at Luxembourg's Athenaeum.<sup>53</sup> He was thus firmly rooted in the capital's public life and was recognised as one of the most prominent local artists, being a member of *Ons Hémecht* and acting for two years as president of the artists' society (*Cercle artistique*).<sup>54</sup> More importantly, he stemmed, like Herchen, from a deeply religious Catholic background and showed a strong sense of patriotism. His Catholicism and his patriotic sensibilities are both clearly reflected in his art. Most of his paintings have some religious content and it was this tendency that brought him most acclaim from fellow artists during his lifetime.<sup>55</sup> Other artworks show views of Luxembourg's intact fortress<sup>56</sup> or idyllic scenes from the grand duchy's landscape, subjects which reflected a Romantic attachment to his native soil.<sup>57</sup> Some of his best-known paintings, however, depict elements from the 'national' past and the themes which he chose to represent complemented the emerging master narrative perfectly.

In 1885, he presented his 'Allegory of the *patria*'. (Fig. 1) Engels places his female allegory on a throne constructed from the ruins of the former fortress, adding a panoramic view of the capital in the background.<sup>58</sup> The throne is surrounded by sitting or reclining soldiers

<sup>53</sup> On his life, see the lengthy obituary published in *Ons Hémecht*: Jacques Meyers, 'Michel Engels. Gedenkblätter', *Ons Hémecht* 8 (1902): 337–343, 423–427; *Ons Hémecht* 9 (1903): 66–70; *Ons Hémecht* 10 (1904): 43–46, 124–126; see also René Kockelkorn, 'Die Kunst des Michel Engels. Eine kunsthistorische Betrachtung', in Ville de Luxembourg, ed., *mir welle bleiwe wat mir sin. Michel Engels. 1851–1901. Sa vie et son Oeuvre* (Luxembourg: Villa Vauban, 2000), 27–29.

<sup>54</sup> Jean-Pierre Kunnert, 'Luxembourg 1839–1914: Ein Überblick', in *mir welle bleiwe wat mir sin* (see note 53), 24.

<sup>55</sup> See: J. Meyers, 'Michel Engels. Gedenkblätter', *Ons Hémecht* 10 (1904): 124–126. For a catalogue of his *oeuvre*, see: *mir welle bleiwe wat mir sin* (see note 53).

<sup>56</sup> The fortress was demolished after 1867, when Engels was only sixteen years of age. Many of his drawings of the fortress were completed later and probably reflect nostalgic feelings for that impressive architectural and military structure.

<sup>57</sup> See Michel Engels's preface to his *Le Luxembourg pittoresque* (Luxembourg: M. Huss, 1901; reprint, Luxembourg: Kutter, 1973).

<sup>58</sup> See R. Kockelkorn, 'Die Kunst des Michel Engels', 33.

of different origins: a Roman, a Celt, a Spaniard, a French, an Austrian and a Prussian. While they look up to the allegoric figure on her throne, their coats of arms lie shattered on the ground.<sup>59</sup> This work clearly reflects the idea of the ‘foreign dominations’. The *patria* emerges unscathed from centuries of foreign rule, and is now crowned with laurel by the goddess of victory. Luxembourg’s coat of arms is the only crest standing upright and it figures prominently on the base of the throne in the exact centre of the image. The same emblem covers the allegorical *patria*’s dress. A chronogram at the bottom of the image gives the date as 1867, when the capital’s fortress was demolished and the Prussian garrison left the grand duchy. Engels presents this as a moment of liberation, symbolised by the tearing down of the city’s fortified walls in the background. The message of Engels’s drawing shows remarkable parallels to Jean Joris’s essay published three years later.<sup>60</sup> Not only did he work with the idea of the foreign oppression during the early-modern period, but he also emphasised the year 1867, which would later lose its importance in most historical writing. The allegorical scene also implies that Luxembourg was politically autonomous in the medieval epoch. The only figure who is able to approach the enthroned figure of Luxembourg—apart from Victory holding the laurel wreath above her head—is Melusine, a literary figure who entered Luxembourgian mythology as the wife of Count Sigefroid.<sup>61</sup> Apart from expressing a very particular view of Luxembourg’s history, the image also contains religious elements. The child in the arms of the figure of Luxembourg seems implicitly to forge a link between the personified grand duchy and the Virgin Mary with Child. By pointing

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<sup>59</sup> The largest of all the coat of arms lying on the ground remains rather mysterious. Since it is unscathed, Kockelkorn has speculated that it could represent the different municipal emblems of the grand duchy. However, this seems unlikely because the different crests are repetitive, without conforming to any town emblems. The coat of arms seems to show the crest of Castille-Leon and adds some Aragonese elements. It is therefore closest to that of the *reyes católicos*, Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, despite some inaccuracies in the two Aragonese quarters. This, however, does not make much sense in context, since the two monarchs never reigned over Luxembourg. Their offspring, who did rule the duchy, used different heraldic emblems.

<sup>60</sup> Jean Joris, 1867–1872. *Une page d’histoire du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg* (Luxembourg: J. Beffort, 1888). See chapter 1.

<sup>61</sup> On Melusine in Luxembourg, see Michel Margue, ‘La fée Mélusine. Le mythe fondateur de la Maison de Luxembourg’, in *Bestiaires d’Arlon. Les animaux dans l’imaginaire des Gallo-Romains à nos jours*, ed. André Neuberg (Bastogne: Musée en Piconrue, 2006), 129–137; Pit Péporté, ‘The creation of medieval history in Luxembourg’ (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2008), ch. 2.



Fig. 1. Michel Engels, *Allegorie de la Patria*.

at sacred motherhood it lends an aura of sacredness to the fatherland. What is more, Engels also depicted a faint image of the *Consolatrix Afflictorum*—Our Lady of Luxembourg as the consoler of the afflicted, the patron saint of the grand duchy venerated in an annual pilgrimage—in the top right-hand corner of the picture.<sup>62</sup> Although the figure is only very faintly depicted in the skies above the city, the Virgin is positioned higher even than the *patria*. It is under her watchful and protective eye that the nation achieved its political liberation.

During the last decade of the nineteenth century (and his life), Engels began a series of paintings depicting scenes from national history, of which only two were finished. The first shows a group of mounted knights with the castle of Luxembourg standing in the background. (Fig. 2) The castle's high walls and round towers suggest a late-medieval setting and thus contrast with the knights in the foreground, who wear rather simple chainmail armour. The main figure represents Count Sigefroid riding out from his magnificent new castle, inspecting the wild surroundings, on which he would soon build a city. The striking size and strength of the castle represent not only the solid foundations on which Luxembourg was constructed, but also its glorious start. At the same time, Engels creates a sense of continuity running through the medieval period: the title of the painting is 'The Luxembourg [castle] on the Bock Rock. 963–1549' (*Die Lützelburg auf dem Bockfelsen. 963–1549*)—the two dates representing the moments at which the medieval castle was supposedly built and later destroyed. The castle as a symbol of steadfastness and strength are associated with the entire medieval period.

The second of these painting is entitled 'The foundation of Clairefontaine. 1214' (*Die Gründung von Clairefontaine. 1214*). Clairefontaine was a Cistercian Abbey which was destroyed in 1795 and which was the main burial place for the Limburg-Luxembourg dynasty. (Fig. 3) According to legend, it was founded after Countess Ermesinde of Luxembourg had a miraculous vision of the Virgin Mary with the Christ child and a flock of white sheep close to a small creek. Engels took this vision as the subject for his painting and appended a lengthy

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<sup>62</sup> There was renewed interest in the pilgrimage during this period. See Sonja Kmec, 'L'Octave: changements et continuités', in *Kalbasslamettanationalpilgeralbum*, ed. Centre national de l'audiovisuel (Dudelange and Luxembourg: CNA, 2006), 10–19.



Fig. 2. Michel Engels, Die Lützelburg auf dem Bockfels.





Fig. 3. Michel Engels, Die Gründung von Clairefontaine.

explanatory note detailing the story in the bottom right-hand corner. Ermesinde wears blue robes—a colour often associated with Our Lady—and lies sleeping below a large tree next to a creek that runs through a forest. In the top left of the painting, the towers of a nearby castle can be discerned; according to the legend, this castle was the place from which the countess was supposed to have wandered into the forest; it provides the scene with a distinct medieval atmosphere. Virgin and Child—both in shining white robes—appear standing further up the creek. In Luxembourg, there was a strong Orangist tradition of regarding the countess as a liberal ruler.<sup>63</sup> By the end of the century, she also started to be represented as a profoundly pious princess by Catholic proponents, such as Engels. The image of her miraculous vision is frequently seen in this context, since it stresses the countess's saintly side.

All in all, Engels's art contains many key elements of the national master narrative. Put together, his historical paintings reflect the teleologically-oriented view of Luxembourg which involves the medieval foundation myth of Sigefroid, the national glory of the Middle Ages, and the *topoi* of foreign oppression and national liberation. The preference given to medieval themes is fully in line with the veneration of this epoch in Luxembourgian national discourse, although one should not forget its central position in many European movements of the time, such as the Romantic tradition and German Historicism—both of which had an impact on Engels<sup>64</sup>—or even the Pre-Raphaelite movement in England. Furthermore, his oeuvre illustrates the growing Catholic impact on mainstream representations. It remains, however, difficult to discern the impact of Engels's art precisely, due to a lack of existing scholarship. Thus it is unclear, for example, who commissioned his paintings or where they were shown. The fact that Engels was held in great esteem even during his lifetime as well as that his paintings can be found in the capital's museums points towards a wide-spread awareness of his art.

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<sup>63</sup> See: P. Péporté, 'The creation of medieval history in Luxembourg', ch. 3.

<sup>64</sup> R. Kockelkorn, 'Die Kunst des Michel Engels', 33–34.

### 3. *The Master Narrative in Popular Culture: The 1939 Pageant*

In 1939, the nation celebrated the centenary of its independence. The very fact of this celebration being staged reflects a willingness to attribute the origins of Luxembourg's independence not to the Congress of Vienna (1815), but to the 1839 partition. This was something of a new development. Until the centenary celebrations, the year 1839 had rarely been recognised as the defining moment of national independence.<sup>65</sup> The motivation both for staging celebrations and for marking the occasion with festivities on such a scale was the increasing danger of German invasion and the resulting need for a display of national unity.<sup>66</sup> Although clearly a celebration of an event only one hundred years past, it is telling that the festivities also gave considerable prominence to medieval themes.

Many festivities took place across the grand duchy throughout spring and summer. The grand-ducal family made a tour of their lands, visiting eleven out of twelve cantons. The largest celebrations took place in the capital in April and one of the central elements was a long parade representing great moments in national history. It is this pageant that we shall focus on. The parade took place on 22 April 1939, exactly one hundred years after the signing of that Treaty of London that partitioned Luxembourg. The procession featured hundreds of people in historical costume, dozens of horses and much old weaponry. Touring through the streets of the capital, it passed thousands of curious and cheering spectators.<sup>67</sup> The distribution of the historical figures is telling. A group of Celts appeared at the head of the parade. Romans were entirely absent. Next followed the missionary St. Willibrord and a group of Carolingians, including Pippin the Short and Charlemagne. Then came Sigefroid with a retinue of knights, craftsmen and peasants. Ermesinde, her son Henry V, Emperor Henry VII, John of

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<sup>65</sup> Paul Eyschen had attempted to celebrate the event in 1889, but this initiative was a rather isolated case and never received much in the way of public support. Gilbert Trausch, 1839. *La signification historique de la date de 1839. Essai d'interprétation, Ministère d'Etat, Commission gouvernementale pour la commémoration du 150<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de l'Indépendance du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg* (Luxembourg: Les publications mosellanes, 1989). See also chapter 3.

<sup>66</sup> Claude Wey, 'Le Centenaire de l'Indépendance', *Hémécht* 41 (1989): 29–31.

<sup>67</sup> On the pageant, see *ibid.* See also the booklet specially printed for the occasion and distributed to the spectators: *1839–1939. Centenaire de l'Indépendance. Cortège Historique. Luxembourg 22 avril 1939* (Luxembourg, 1939).

Bohemia—all on horseback—followed, again with a large entourage of knights, crusaders, burghers. Indeed, half of all figures portrayed in the procession were medieval figures.<sup>68</sup> While Renaissance scholars, such as Mameranus and Latomus, were celebrated, none of the Burgundian dukes, Habsburg emperors or Spanish kings were present at all. Instead, spectators could witness the passing of Governor Peter Ernst von Mansfeld (1545–1604), famous for the splendid Renaissance palace he had built (of which only a few ruins remained by the twentieth century). Native Luxembourgers dominated: the generals Aldringer and Beck, who fought on the imperial side during the Thirty Years' War, representatives of the Provincial Council and the higher clergy, as well as local voluntaries in the fortress garrison. A troupe of peasants who had fought in the so-called *Klëppelkrich* rebellion against French troops in 1798 marched by. More recent history was more meagerly represented. King William II figured as the only crowned head of the modern period; he was followed by his son Prince Henry and his wife Amalia, who were the governors of Luxembourg. The ending was marked by a battalion of late-nineteenth-century army voluntaries.

A specially printed illustrated booklet was distributed at the celebration and helped the spectators to make sense of what they witnessed.<sup>69</sup> The accompanying text reinforced the impressions left by the parade. It started by describing the message of the pageant quite explicitly. The readers were reminded that “Luxembourg dates not merely from 1839; it has much more distant origins; its independence was only eclipsed during long centuries of foreign domination, to reappear rather timidly in 1839”.<sup>70</sup> The procession recounted “in an impressive and multicolour form, the main events, from the distant beginnings...until today, by passing from the *grandeurs* of medieval Luxembourg and the misfortunes of foreign domination.”<sup>71</sup> The (anonymous) authors

<sup>68</sup> C. Wey, ‘Le Centenaire de l’Indépendance’, 40.

<sup>69</sup> 1839–1939. *Centenaire de l’Indépendance*. Compared to photos from the actual parade, the booklet overstates some of the costumes.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. [n.p.n.]: “le Luxembourg ne date pas de 1839 seulement; il est d’origine beaucoup plus lointaine; son indépendance n’a fait que s’éclipser pendant de longs siècles de domination étrangère, pour reparaître un peu timidement en 1839.”

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.: “sous forme impressionnante et multicolore les principaux épisodes, depuis les débuts lointains, qui se confondent avec la légende, jusqu’au présent, en passant pas les grandeurs du Luxembourg médiéval et les malheurs des époques de domination étrangère.”

fervently hoped that “this evocation of the great episodes and heroes of Luxembourgian history should reinforce in the heart of the Luxembourgian people this legitimate pride, which is one of the foundations of national sentiment.”<sup>72</sup>

The parade moved entirely within the paradigms of the national master narrative. Its perspective was resolutely limited to the territory of the grand duchy and it reflected many elements of the teleological narrative developed by historiography. It is for this reason that the procession included not merely medieval rulers in large numbers, but also the Celts. By the same token, this Luxembourgian focus explains the presence of members of the Provincial Council, and the complete absence of early-modern monarchs. There was no space whatsoever for those perceived as ‘foreigners’. In this vein, Governor Mansfeld and the two members of the nineteenth-century Dutch royal family were not seen as foreigners, but as great local benefactors instead. The ‘foreign dominations’ were thus woven into the very fabric of the procession. The early-modern monarchs were not considered worth showing and celebrating, unlike the medieval counts or the peasants of the *Klëppelkrich*. The nation was celebrated as a practically closed ‘community of fate’ (*Schicksalsgemeinschaft*) that had marched together through times both of glory and of hardship.

#### 4. *A Public Deployment of the Master Narrative: Legitimising Dynastic Rule*

The controversy about the use of different schoolbooks which erupted in parliament in 1939 not only demonstrates that the teaching of history has an inescapably political dimension, but also that ideas of Herchen and his successors were adopted by the wider conservative milieu that these historians had stemmed from. Although their position was not uncontested, it had become part of the dominant discourse in Luxembourg at the time.

As has already been seen, the national master narrative was established largely on the basis the Orangist tradition, yet also combined

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.: “Cette évocation des grands épisodes et des héros de l’histoire luxembourgeoise puisse-t-elle renforcer dans le coeur du peuple luxembourgeois cette fierté légitime qui est une des bases du sentiment national.”

this with more conservative and Catholic elements. The success of the master narrative was aided to no small degree by timing. Herchen's textbook was published at a moment at which conservative ideas had become an established part of the intellectual landscape. This scholarly development was later paralleled in politics. The Conservative Party (*Parti de la Droite*) came to power in 1917 and—with the brief exceptions of 1925–6 and 1974–9—governed Luxembourg as the senior partner in all coalition governments until the present day.<sup>73</sup> Although care needs to be taken to avoid adopting an excessively teleological perspective, it is nevertheless true that the Conservative Party's rise to ascendancy in 1917 marked the emergence of a new trend in Luxembourgian politics. The Liberals and Socialists failed to secure majorities in parliament in the years of upheaval which followed the First World War. Ironically, it seems that the conservatives stabilised their position by taking the revolutionary step of introducing universal suffrage for both men and women, which undermined the liberals' dominance of previous decades. The reason of their success is not that the conservatives had somehow gained the undying gratitude of the population for establishing universal suffrage, but that many of the new voters tended to vote in their favour, such as peasants and women.<sup>74</sup>

This ideological shift to the right affected not only the balance of electoral power, but also the grand-ducal family. When the House of Nassau-Weilburg assumed the throne in 1890, it had long been divested of its traditional territorial base, the duchy of Nassau, which Prussia had seized in punishment for its opposition during the Austro-Prussian War of 1866. In contrast to the dynasty of Orange, the House of Nassau-Weilburg had to establish a more pro-active attitude to their Luxembourg lands: they had no other territories (and certainly no more important ones) to fall back upon or to which they could give priority. The members of the new ruling house made a conscious effort

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<sup>73</sup> During the German occupation of 1940 to 1944, the government continued to function in exile, but had no impact whatsoever on local politics. For a history of the Christian Social Party (CSV), which succeeded the *Partie de la Droite*, see Gilbert Trausch, ed., *CSV Spiegelbild eines Landes in seiner Politik? Geschichte der Christlich-Sozialen Volkspartei Luxemburgs im 20. Jahrhundert* (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 2008).

<sup>74</sup> Alfred Bové, 'Die Rechtspartei in der Zwischenkriegszeit (1919–1940)', in *CSV Spiegelbild eines Landes in seiner Politik?* (see note 73), 185–186; Ben Fayot, 'Repères historiques', in *100 Joër sozialistesche Partei zu Lëtzebuerg: LSAP 1902–2002. Le LSAP hier et aujourd'hui* (Luxembourg: La Mémoire Socialiste, 2003), 20.

to integrate themselves culturally, and as part of this endeavour, slowly converted to Catholicism, the religion of the overwhelming majority of Luxembourg's population. While the family had traditionally been Protestant, Crown-Prince William (later the fourth grand duke of that name) boldly married Marie Anne of Bragança, a princess with a devoutly Catholic background. The couple further decided that their daughters should be raised as Catholics. This conversion and the piety with which religion was practiced did not come without the potential for conflict. The day Grand Duchess Marie-Adelaide ascended to her throne—on 25 July 1912—she refused to sign a new School Law because it restrained the role of Catholic priests in the educational system.<sup>75</sup> Although she eventually gave her assent to the law under growing public pressure, arguments with the liberal governments of the time reappeared. The monarchs' conversion, however, allowed the grand-ducal family to participate in religious public ceremonies, such as the Octave, the annual pilgrimage in honour of Our Lady of Luxembourg. The latter underwent a great revival in the second half of the nineteenth century and was one of the few regular, large-scale processions in the capital.<sup>76</sup> Participation provided the ruling dynasty with an opportunity for public display, while forging a connection with the Catholic population.

Despite these efforts, the very existence of the monarchy was the subject of heated controversy after the First World War. The young Grand Duchess Marie-Adelaide was accused of having shown too much sympathy for the German occupiers. These allegations arose largely because she did not condemn the military occupation and even seemed to endorse it when she publicly welcomed the *Kaiser* to Luxembourg.<sup>77</sup> In January 1919, the Grand Duchess abdicated and left the throne to her sister Charlotte.<sup>78</sup> For both liberals and socialists, however, justice had not been done, and many of them demanded the complete abolition of the monarchy. Both parties were, indeed, still smarting from their treatment during the war. Despite the fact

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<sup>75</sup> See chapter 6.

<sup>76</sup> S. Kmec, 'L'Octave: changements et continuités', 10–19.

<sup>77</sup> For an analysis of collaboration and opposition in Luxembourg during World War I, see Gilbert Trausch, 'La stratégie du faible. Le Luxembourg pendant la Première Guerre mondiale (1914–1919)', in *Le rôle et la place des petits pays en Europe au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. Gilbert Trausch (Baden-Baden: Nomos / Brussels: Bruylant, 2005), 45–176.

<sup>78</sup> Auguste Collart, *Sturm um Luxemburgs Thron. 1907–1920* (Luxembourg: Bourgo-Bourger, 1959).

that it lacked parliamentary support, Marie-Adelaide had appointed a conservative government and, in the face of a vote of no confidence, simply dissolved parliament. Although her behaviour was not strictly unconstitutional, it was politically maladroit and probably reflected the extent of her inexperience. The result of these decisions was the referendum of 1919 mentioned before.<sup>79</sup>

The crisis of 1918–19 forced the dynasty to seek a means of reasserting and strengthening their legitimacy. They did so by accelerating the process of ‘integration’. Part of this involved symbolic decisions, such the burial of deceased members in Luxembourg Cathedral rather than in their former German territories.<sup>80</sup> Charlotte was also among the first generation of rulers to learn to speak the Luxembourgish language.<sup>81</sup> Perhaps more importantly, however, the family increasingly made use of Luxembourg’s history and its national narrative, which presented them as the successors of the medieval counts. Although monarchs had referred to Luxembourg’s medieval past prior to 1919, their references never went beyond vague allusions.<sup>82</sup> After 1919, Luxembourgian history became a much clearer and more obvious part of the dynasty’s public image. Care, however, needs to be taken not to over-emphasise the role of the ruling family in the development of the connection between past and present: parallels drawn between the House of Nassau-Weilburg and their medieval antecedents were not entirely the result of independent grand-ducal initiatives, but were in fact largely the product of conscious interactions with indigenous art, literature and historiography.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> See chapter 1 and Christian Calmes, 1919. *L'étrange referendum du 28 septembre* (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 1979).

<sup>80</sup> Adolph and William IV are buried in Weilburg. Jean Schoos, ‘Die Herzöge von Nassau als Großherzöge von Luxemburg’, *Nassauische Annalen. Jahrbuch des Vereins für Nassauische Altertumskunde und Geschichtsforschung* 95 (1984): 184. Their decision was probably not only based on a preference for their ancestral lands, but also on the lack of a prestigious Protestant church in Luxembourg. The family’s conversion to Catholicism would thus also provide access to a burial ground within the Luxembourg’s cathedral.

<sup>81</sup> See chapter 7.

<sup>82</sup> Both William IV and Marie-Adelaide briefly referred to the medieval counts in their coronation speeches. Jean Schoos, *Wilhelm. Grossherzog von Luxemburg. Herzog zu Nassau. 1852–1912 (Zum 100. Geburtstag und 40. Todestag)* (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 1952), 36; A Herchen, *Manuel* (1918 edition), 152–153.

<sup>83</sup> See, for instance, the redecoration of the grand-ducal palace under the guidance of Nicolas van Werveke, Charles Arendt and Michel Engels, see chapter 3.



Nonetheless, the grand-ducal family sometimes took the initiative. Born only two years after the referendum, Crown-Prince John (*Jean*) received a name that had never before been given to a member of his family, but which was intended as a direct allusion to the medieval past.<sup>84</sup> Inviting Pope Benedict XV to become his son's godfather, Prince Felix explained that the name had been chosen specifically to refer to John of Bohemia.<sup>85</sup> Even later in his life, John could not escape the association with his medieval counterpart. It is often said that John of Bohemia held the motto "*Ich Dien*" ('I serve'). That there was no evidence for him ever having used this motto had been known to scholarship since the late nineteenth century,<sup>86</sup> but the story nevertheless continued to exercise a strong hold in wider society for some time.<sup>87</sup> In the central decades of the twentieth century, the motto was regularly associated with Crown-Prince John, even though the latter never used it in his own right. In 1948, two heraldicists presented him with a new personal coat of arms. They added the motto beneath a crest showing the traditional colours of Nassau, Luxembourg and Bourbon.<sup>88</sup> Another even more symbolic artefact is the first Luxembourgian coin minted after the Second World War, which shows Prince John on the obverse and John of Bohemia on the reverse, together with a Latin translation of the motto.<sup>89</sup> The continual links which were drawn appears to have led Grand Duke John to identify himself with his antecedent by

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<sup>84</sup> The name John (Johann / Jean) was not used by the Houses of Bourbon-Parma, Nassau-Weilburg and Orange-Nassau. John of Bohemia himself most likely inherited the name from his maternal grandfather John of Brabant, since the name had never been used among the wider Limburg dynasty, nor even in the families of Ardenne and Namur.

<sup>85</sup> "Le peuple désire beaucoup le nom de Jean, en souvenir de Jean de Luxembourg mort à la bataille de Crécy 1346." Quoted by Georges Hellinghausen, 'Naissance et baptême du Prince Jean (1921)', *Hémecht* 43 (1991): 187.

<sup>86</sup> See, for example, Jean Schoetter, *Johann, Graf von Luxemburg und König von Böhmen* (Luxembourg: V. Bück, 1865), 2: 282, n. 4.

<sup>87</sup> Philippe Knaff, *Johann der Blinde. König von Böhmen und Graf von Luxemburg* (Luxembourg: V. Bück, 1872), 8–9; A. Herchen, *Manuel* (1918 edition), 50; (1972 edition), 87.

<sup>88</sup> Jean-Claude Loutsch, 'Les armoiries de Son Altesse Royale le Grand-Duc de Luxembourg', *Hémecht* 54 (2002): 9. Note that Grand Duke John never officially accepted any coat of arms or motto different from the traditional emblems of the House of Nassau-Weilburg.

<sup>89</sup> Robert Probst, 'Le centenaire de notre dynastie raconté par les monnaies', in *Le centenaire de notre dynastie raconté par les monnaies et médailles*, ed. BCEE (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 1990), 33.

choice. On the 650th anniversary of John of Bohemia's death in 1996, the grand duke attended an academic conference on his namesake. At the same time, he supported the building of a new mausoleum for the medieval monarch, although the project ultimately failed to materialise.<sup>90</sup>

While Grand Duke John had been identified with his homonymous medieval antecedent when still in his cradle, it took until the 1930s for his mother, Grand Duchess Charlotte, to be linked to the Middle Ages. The 700th anniversary of Countess Ermesinde of Luxembourg's first charter of enfranchisement, handed to the town of Echternach, was celebrated in 1936. While this could have been the occasion for a purely local event, the anniversary was given a much grander character. The central element of the celebration also moved away from the smallish town of Echternach to the monarch. This could be seen in the speech by Prime Minister Joseph Bech, who found it "wonderful" that a newly inaugurated plaque united the names of both Ermesinde and Charlotte:

In the name of our country, I can only confirm the profound sense of this link and relationship: that today as well, in these severe times, our princess only lives for the good of the country! She is our best charter of enfranchisement and the guarantee so that we remain what we are: a free country, a country of freedom!<sup>91</sup>

The passage contains two principal ideas; both attempt to create continuity between medieval and contemporary times. First, Bech asserted that both at the beginning of Ermesinde's reign and in the 1930s the country experienced hardship. The early thirteenth century was indeed a crucial moment in the history of the county of Luxembourg. Ermesinde being still an infant at her father's death, she had to have her lands wrested from a rival nobleman by her two husbands.<sup>92</sup> In 1936, the international situation was highly unstable, and was marked both by the rise of fascist regimes in Germany and Italy, and by the

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<sup>90</sup> Michel Pauly, 'Ein Grab für Johann den Europäer', *forum* 211 (2001): 35.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 4–5: "Im Namen des Landes kann ich den tieferen Sinn dieser Bindung und Verbindung bestätigen: Daß auch heute in dieser schweren Zeit unsere Fürstin nur lebt für das Glück des Landes! Sie ist unser bester Freiheitsbrief und die Gewähr dafür, dass wir bleiben was wir sind: eine freies Land, ein Land der Freiheit!" See also "700. Jahrfeier in Echternach", *Luxemburger Wort*, 28 July 1936, 4.

<sup>92</sup> Michel Margue, 'Ermesinde Gräfin von Luxemburg (1186–1247)', in *Rheinische Lebensbilder*, ed. Franz-Josef Heyen (Cologne, 1995), 15: 23–41.

outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. Bech's reference to thirteenth-century liberty was in line with both the nineteenth-century Orangist tradition of interpreting Ermesinde's politics as 'liberal',<sup>93</sup> and the perception of the Middle Ages as a period of national autonomy. Second, the Prime Minister expressed the hope that yet again the ruler would save the people with her goodwill. Grand Duchess Charlotte was presented almost as a modern-day incarnation of Ermesinde. Later in the festivities, the organisers staged a re-enactment of the issuing of the medieval charter. Interestingly the dressed-up countess handed the charter's replica not to the townsmen of Echternach, but to the grand duchess, as the representative of all the people of Luxembourg.<sup>94</sup> The well-being of Luxembourgers was placed into the hands of Ermesinde's 'successor'.<sup>95</sup>

The degree to which the connection between the Middle Ages and the contemporary rulers of Luxembourg was passed on to the following generations is debatable. John's decision to name his eldest son Henry (*Henri*) in 1955, was intended as a reference to the most common name in the medieval Limburg-Luxembourg dynasty and particularly to the Emperor Henry VII.<sup>96</sup> It was, however, also a reminder of the very popular Prince Henry of Orange, who represented his brother King William III in Luxembourg in the nineteenth century. Again, the name 'Henry' was not common amongst the prince's (today's grand duke) direct ancestors. Fewer attempts have also been made to connect Henry symbolically to the medieval ruler as in the case of his predecessors. This can be explained by both the changing role and the expressions of nationalism towards the end of the twentieth century.<sup>97</sup> We notice, however, that the monarch himself showed clear signs of identification with the grand duchy and its medieval rulers. In 2005, the National Museum in Luxembourg organised a large-scale exhibi-

<sup>93</sup> See P. Péporté, 'The creation of medieval history in Luxembourg', 93–96.

<sup>94</sup> Henri Trauffer, 'Aux origines de l'affranchissement de la ville de Luxembourg: Ermesinde et Echternach', in *Ermesinde et l'affranchissement de la ville de Luxembourg. Etudes sur la femme, le pouvoir et la ville au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. Michel Margue, Publications du Musée d'Histoire de la Ville de Luxembourg, Publications du CLUDEM 7, (Luxembourg: CLUDEM and MHVL, 1994), 224–225.

<sup>95</sup> This connection between Countess Ermesinde and Grand-Duchess Charlotte persisted in historiography. See, for example, Gilbert Trausch, *Ermesinde et Charlotte. Deux grandes souveraines du Luxembourg* (Luxembourg: Banque de Luxembourg, 1990).

<sup>96</sup> *Luxemburger Wort*, 18 April 1955, 1.

<sup>97</sup> See chapter 3 for more on this.

tion on the late-medieval Emperor Sigismund, the last male member of the Limburg-Luxembourg dynasty. Grand Duke Henry contributed a dedication to the official exhibition catalogue, written in his own hand and accompanied by his photograph. It reads: “With my great appreciation for the remarkably accomplished historical evocation in memory of one of the most prestigious representatives of our house.”<sup>98</sup> The last two words arouse the historian’s suspicion. Technically speaking, Grand Duke Henry is neither a member of the medieval House of Limburg-Luxembourg, nor did he inherit his title from the medieval dukes. They show the degree to which the message expressed by the national narrative has penetrated the grand-ducal family.<sup>99</sup> Interestingly this drive for a cultural (rather than simply legal) naturalisation, increasingly took predominance over the dynastic memory of Nassau-Weilburg.

Originally the house had stressed its Nassau origins. Grand Duchess Charlotte was the last representative of the House of Nassau, if one accepts the strictly patrilineal definition traditionally found among the European nobility. Her son John, however, decided to uphold the name of Nassau-Weilburg, even though his father was a member of the House of Bourbon-Parma.<sup>100</sup> There had been precedents for this decision, as for instance in the Netherlands, where the name of Orange-Nassau has survived through three generations of female monarchs. A similar resolution seems to be taken in the United Kingdom, where the name ‘Windsor’ will probably survive Queen Elizabeth II. The symbolic marker of John’s decision was to maintain the family’s traditional coat of arms, which had combined the heraldic lions of Nassau and of Luxembourg since the reign of Grand Duke Adolph.<sup>101</sup> His motivation could well have been based on the desire to establish a strong

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<sup>98</sup> Imre Takács, ed., *Sigismundus Rex et Imperator. Kunst und Kultur zur Zeit Sigismunds von Luxemburg 1387–1437* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2006) [opening pages / n.p.n.]: “Avec haute mon appréciation pour la remarquable évocation historique accomplie à la mémoire de l’un des plus prestigieux représentants de notre Maison.”

<sup>99</sup> There is no reason to assume that the monarch deliberately attempted to bend the facts for political purposes. The authors know that the grand duke was initially unaware of his blunder and that it was pointed out to him after the catalogue had been printed.

<sup>100</sup> The decision to uphold the name Nassau was confirmed by grand-ducal orders in 1986 and 1995, for which, see René Klein, ‘Réflexions sur les armoiries de la famille grande-ducale’, *Hémecht* 52 (2000): 318.

<sup>101</sup> Jean-Claude Loutsch, *Armorial du pays de Luxembourg* (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 1974).

connection with his great-grandfather Adolph, or even with the House of Orange. Another reason could have been respect for his mother, who was greatly venerated among the population, especially after the hardship of the Second World War.<sup>102</sup> The coat of arms represented the family only, the 'national' coat of arms being different. The three different dimensions in which the Nassau-Weilburg coat of arms could be represented—small, medium and large—all give dominance to the Nassau origins; the large coat of arms for instance included the heraldic emblems of the family's former territories. Shortly after ascending the throne in 2001, Grand Duke Henry changed the existing order.<sup>103</sup> On the small and medium arms, the Luxembourg emblem now occupied the more prestigious first and fourth quarters, while the arms of Nassau changed to the second and third quarters. On the great coat of arms, the reminders of the ancient family lands were removed and replaced by the national flag of Luxembourg. In addition, however, the large coat of arms also contains the arms of Bourbon.<sup>104</sup> Although the personal coat of arms of the reigning grand duke, it represents a symbiosis of dynastic elements and national symbolism.<sup>105</sup> While the older arms emphasised the dynastic origins and tradition, the new ones give precedence to their function as rulers of a specific territory.

By figuring as a central element of the national master narrative, the monarchy was also one of its main beneficiary. On the whole, this means that over the past century, the grand-ducal family of Luxembourg has increasingly mixed the dynastic symbols of Nassau with the memory of the House of Limburg-Luxembourg, which went along with progressively making use of the emblems of the state of Luxembourg. While reflecting a change in dynastic self-perceptions, these actions helped to root and integrate the ruling dynasty firmly into Luxembourg. The grand-ducal family became an integral part of the nation.

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<sup>102</sup> Paul Margue, 'Grande-Duchess Charlotte', in *Lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg*, ed. Sonja Kmec, Benoît Majerus, Michel Margue, and Pit Péporté (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 2007), 121–126.

<sup>103</sup> The new coats of arms were fixed and made public in *Mémorial A*, 114 (2001): 2384–2387.

<sup>104</sup> René Klein, *à propos...des armoiries de S.A.R. le Grand-Duc de Luxembourg* (Luxembourg: Service information et presse, 2002). See also J.-Cl. Loutsch, 'Les armoiries de Son Altesse Royale le Grand-Duc de Luxembourg', 5–18.

<sup>105</sup> The older coat of arms is still borne by the eldest member of the dynasty.

## CHAPTER THREE

### DIFFERENT NARRATIVES?

The aim of this chapter is to investigate whether any different narrative structures have been employed in the construction of Luxembourg's history. It does so by investigating scholars who stand in opposition to most initiators of the national master narrative, either because they did not share their political intent, or because they objected to its (flawed) scholarly approach. This chapter is therefore divided into two parts. First, more twentieth-century historians will be examined to determine whether the master narrative was indeed the only point of reference before c. 1970. Were there any counter-discourses? How did they manifest themselves? Second, we will examine if and to what extent historians distanced themselves from the national master narrative in recent decades, once the generation of Nicolas Margue and Joseph Meyers stopped propagating it. Here the main question is whether more recent historians have developed any new narratives or whether they simply filled new bottles with old wine.

#### 1. *Attempts at Counter-Discourses (c. 1890 to 1970)*

Chapter 2 has shown the extent to which the national master narrative dominated representations of Luxembourgian history in different media. At the same time, however, some historians and authors disagreed with some fundamental messages of the national master narrative, often as a result of different political ideas or goals. This section explores whether their representations of Luxembourg's past managed to question and go beyond the national master narrative. As we will see, however, even historians with very diverse intentions did not manage to distance themselves much from the main narrative current. The section is structured around three major cases. First, the historian Nicolas van Werveke, who wrote within the liberal tradition of the nineteenth century, while standing in opposition to the conservative current that came to dominate after World War I. Second, Nazi authors writing during the German occupation of Luxembourg.

Third, we will look at the politician and journalist Jean Kill, who was one of very few communist authors to write a narrative account of the country's past in this period.

### 1.1. *The Last Days of the Liberal Tradition: Nicolas van Werveke*

One reason for the success of the national master narrative was that it fused elements from existing traditions. While some of its most striking elements were derived from earlier historiography, the ideological basis of the national master narrative nevertheless rested on the successful combination of a resolutely national mindset with the liberal and Catholic strands of thought which dominated nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century political thought in Luxembourg. The majority of those who propounded the national master narrative came from a predominantly conservative background. The underlying question of this section is how their ideas were received by those of other political persuasions, particularly left-leaning liberals.

Although there were a small number of historians who were in the liberal camp at the turn of the twentieth century, perhaps the most prominent was Nicolas van Werveke (1851–1926). Like many historians of his time, he had received most of his training in Luxembourg. After finishing school in 1870, he left for the University of Bonn and was thus the first academically-trained historian from Luxembourg. But after only one year abroad, he was called back to his native country. The capital's Athenaeum was in desperate need of a teacher and van Werveke was seen as the best candidate for the position.<sup>1</sup> Despite returning to the grand duchy, he continued to be influenced by the scholarly attitudes which he had encountered in Bonn and his interest in cultural history was directly inspired by Karl Lamprecht,<sup>2</sup> who would later take up a position at Bonn.<sup>3</sup> Van Werveke had started his scholarly career as the main disciple of the leading Orangist historian François-Xavier Würth-Paquet, who initiated him in the art of

<sup>1</sup> Nicolas Ries, 'La vie et l'œuvre d'un historien', *Les cahiers luxembourgeois* 2 (1924–25): 513–514.

<sup>2</sup> See Luise Schorn-Schütte, *Karl Lamprecht: Kulturgeschichte und Politik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984).

<sup>3</sup> See Tony Kellen, 'Die luxemburgische Geschichtsschreibung: ein Rückblick und ein Ausblick', *Jonghémécht. Blätter für heimatliches Schrift- und Volkstum* 7 (1933), 155. It is sometimes claimed that van Werveke attended Lamprecht's lectures; this however is not possible since Lamprecht arrived in Bonn after van Werveke's departure.

source-editing. Following Würth-Paquet's death in 1885, he continued his mentor's work alongside his other projects. On the basis of this background, van Werveke consciously attempted to rewrite Luxembourg's history using new readings of primary source materials.<sup>4</sup> As a student of some of the main Orangist scholars, he perceived himself very much as their inheritor and a perpetuator of their liberal ideas.<sup>5</sup>

Around the turn of the century, van Werveke gradually became more isolated within the world of historical research. This isolation was not only due to an ideological shift away from liberalism and towards conservatism, but was also the consequence of more personal factors. Van Werveke's long-standing and conscious efforts to steep himself in the available primary source material appears to have led him to develop a somewhat superior attitude towards his colleagues, who quite naturally bridled at such treatment. Not surprisingly, arguments arose, and these seem to have taken their toll on van Werveke. The frequent disputes not only led him to withdraw from the Historical Section, but also led to the radicalisation of the two academic camps.<sup>6</sup> Although collaboration between van Werveke and Herchen had been mooted, the possibility was shattered following Schoetter's death, and the two men rapidly found themselves adopting dramatically different positions in almost every respect. While both van Werveke and Herchen worked together for a while at the Athenaeum, van Werveke pointedly left in order to join the industrial school.<sup>7</sup> While Herchen taught the young princesses at court, van Werveke devoted himself to

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<sup>4</sup> In an early publication, he specifically rejected Bertholet's eighteenth-century *opus*—which had until then served as a standard work of reference for most historians—as “incomplete... imprecise and confused” because the author lacked “the necessary documents”. Nicolas van Werveke, *Definitive Erwerbung des Luxemburger Landes durch Philipp, Herzog von Burgund. Beitrag zur Geschichte des Luxemburger Landes während der Jahre 1458–1462* (Luxembourg: P. Brück, 1886), 3. Later he condemned everything that was “written before the second half of the nineteenth century”, while repeating his critique of Bertholet. Nicolas van Werveke, *Kurze Geschichte des Luxemburger Landes mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Kulturgeschichte. Urgeschichte bis Ende des XIV. Jahrhunderts* (Luxembourg: Worré-Mertens, 1909), 5. Although he was right to highlight the less advanced methods used by most of his predecessors, one gets the impression that van Werveke made these comments in order to stress his own contribution.

<sup>5</sup> Van Werveke dedicated his first attempt at cultural history to Würth-Paquet, whom he honoured as “the father of Luxembourgian history”. N. van Werveke, *Kurze Geschichte*, 3.

<sup>6</sup> T. Kellen, ‘Die luxemburgische Geschichtsschreibung’, 154.

<sup>7</sup> N. Ries, ‘La vie et l'œuvre d'un historien’, 515.



establishing a secondary school for girls staffed mostly by the laity.<sup>8</sup> In their academic outlooks, they were similarly opposed. Herchen's perspective on history was strictly top-down, while van Werveke turned towards cultural history and investigated the life of ordinary people. Politically, the two men gradually drifted apart. Although van Werveke began with rather moderate views on the monarchy and the clergy, he increasingly became an opponent of everything 'conservative'.<sup>9</sup> The question remains how this translated into his perception of Luxembourg's past: did Nicolas van Werveke create a fundamentally different narrative of Luxembourgian history?

Unlike Herchen, van Werveke never wrote a lengthy chronological account of the country's history. Although the majority of his output consists of editions of sources, institutional histories of specific periods or—like his *magnum opus*—of cultural history, a narrative conception of the past nevertheless emerges from his writings, most notably when he attempted to set a particular topic in a broader context by providing a short, but broad overview. In the dedication to a work on the grand-ducal palace published in 1897, for example, van Werveke displayed his then-monarchist views. This short piece reflects some traditional Orangist tendencies—including a glorification of the medieval past—of which Herchen would surely have approved. Van Werveke portrayed Sigefroid as Luxembourg's founder, and went on to describe the country's path to statehood in the Middle Ages. This process, he believed, culminated in the fourteenth century. Although van Werveke held that the reign of Henry VII of Luxembourg heralded a "new era... filled with glory and power", however, he felt that this period of prosperity and strength had serious consequences for Luxembourg's future, a notion which Meyers was later to develop.<sup>10</sup> Their increased

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<sup>8</sup> Joseph Tockert, 'Die Gründung des Mädchenlyzeums in Luxemburg', *Les cahiers luxembourgeois* 2 (1924–25): 543; Henri Wehenkel, 'Une page d'histoire nationale: La création du premier Lycée de Jeunes Filles', *tageblatt* 36, 1973, 5. The founding of this girls' school was very much a liberal affair. The project was supported by liberal politicians such as Victor Thorn and liberal industrialists such as the Mayrisch family. It was also fervently opposed by conservative politician who wanted to maintain the church's monopoly on girls' education.

<sup>9</sup> T. Kellen, 'Die luxemburgische Geschichtsschreibung', 154.

<sup>10</sup> Nicholas van Werveke, *Das Großherzogliche Palais zu Luxemburg. Festschrift zur Feier des achtzigjährigen Geburtstages S.K.H. des Großherzogs Adolph von Luxemburg* (Luxembourg: V. Bück, 1897), 9: "Mit Heinrich VII. beginnt für Luxemburg eine neue Ära, voll des Ruhmes und der Macht, doch nicht ohne die schlimmsten Folgen für die Zukunft."

power made Luxembourg's rulers neglect their ancestral territory, which they pawned in order to fill their purse.<sup>11</sup> Unlike Herchen and Meyers, van Werveke largely blamed this avaricious exploitation of Luxembourg and not the loss of 'national independence' for the chaos and violence which followed. At this point in his life, van Werveke did not regard early-modern rulers as foreigners, even though he remained critical of their policies.<sup>12</sup> They were as much part of the national past as Luxembourg's medieval rulers and the House of Nassau was consequently an equally legitimate successor of the Houses of Valois and Habsburg. Van Werveke further argued that the House of Nassau was actually superior to its predecessors for having acquired the throne in the most peaceful manner ever.<sup>13</sup>

Van Werveke's 1897 dedication was written to mark the palace's recent renovation and expansion. This had become necessary as a result of the fact that the new dynasty of Nassau-Weilburg—in contrast to the Dutch monarchs—had made Luxembourg its principal residence.<sup>14</sup> Van Werveke was asked to oversee the construction as a historian and was therefore involved in choosing the motifs.<sup>15</sup> Some architectural elements included in the new wing of the complex contain the same message as the publication. The façade shows the (purported) mottoes of Emperor Henry VII and King John, while the *Salle d'Armes* boasted two large frescoes depicting the coats of arms of those knights from the county of Luxembourg that had died in two decisive battles of the medieval period: Worringen (1288) and Crécy (1346). The latter fresco was set around the fireplace in the room, which in turn was crowned with a metal relief of John of Bohemia. Medieval history thus occupied a very prominent place. The grand-ducal palace, however, also includes features which refer to later rulers, such as the cross of St. Andrew—a traditional emblem of the dukes of Burgundy—with the

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 11–12.

<sup>12</sup> See his comment on Spanish rule after the treaty of Ryswick (1697): "Damit kehrte der alte Schlendrian, die spanische Mißwirtschaft mit all ihren Missbräuchen zurück." Ibid., 24.

<sup>13</sup> He claimed that not even Ermesinde managed to claim the county with such ease. See *ibid.*, 3.

<sup>14</sup> Roland Baldauff and Alex Fixmer, eds., *Le Palais grand-ducal* (Mersch: F. Faber, 1997); Simone Weny, 'De Palais', in *Lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg*, ed. Sonja Kmec, Benoît Majerus, Michel Margue and Pit Péporté (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 2007), 185–190.

<sup>15</sup> He was joined by the architect Charles Arendt and the painter Michel Engels.

inscription 1440. Likewise, one can detect bas-reliefs of Burgundian and Spanish soldiers.

We observe that both van Werveke's publication and the architecture of the palace share a similar view of Luxembourg's past. The Middle Ages are a defining moment, yet they do not stand in opposition to the centuries that followed. This is a clear difference to the national master narrative that relies heavily on the concept of the 'foreign dominations'. Even though van Werveke's chosen view is linear, it is not teleological. It may, however, be interesting to compare van Werveke's narrative of 1897 with how he presented the national past after the First World War.

Van Werveke's main *oeuvre* was his multi-volume cultural history of Luxembourg, which remained unfinished at his death in 1926.<sup>16</sup> The book almost seems to have been composed in opposition to Herchen's works. It describes, for example, local customs and institutional changes; the life of ordinary people stands at its centre, while crowned heads appear only occasionally. Likewise, the overall structure is thematic rather than chronological. Van Werveke could not, however, avoid including a brief chapter on the political past. The narrative in this chapter is summed up by the following passage:

For 480 years, from 963 to 1443, Luxembourg was an independent region; then it became a simple province, and remained so uninterruptedly for nearly 400 years, and it was not until the year 1831 that it once more became an independent country, at least in name and outward appearance, after it had been neglected for almost the entire intervening period by its rulers first in favour of the Belgian provinces of Burgundy, Spain and Austria, and then properly plundered by Holland for Holland's own benefit.<sup>17</sup>

Here, van Werveke showed himself to be remarkably close to the master narrative: he structures the history of Luxembourg around a cycle

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<sup>16</sup> Nicolas van Werveke, *Kulturgeschichte des Luxemburger Landes*, 3 vols. (Luxembourg: Soupert, 1923–26; reprint: Esch-sur-Alzette: Schortgen, 1983).

<sup>17</sup> N. van Werveke, *Kulturgeschichte des Luxemburger Landes*, (1983), 1: 60–61: "Während 480 Jahren, von 963 bis 1443, war Luxemburg ein unabhängiges Gebiet gewesen; jetzt wurde es eine einfache Provinz, um es während nahezu 400 Jahren ununterbrochen zu bleiben, bis es erst im Jahre 1831, nachdem es fast während dieser ganzen Zeit von seinen Herrschern zu Gunsten zuerst der belgischen Provinzen Burgunds, Spaniens und Österreichs vernachlässigt, dann durch Holland zu Gunsten diese selben Hollands förmlich ausgeplündert worden war, wieder ein unabhängiges Land wurde, wenigstens dem Namen und dem äusseren Anscheine nach."

of birth, victimhood and resurrection. Even though he does not mention the 'foreign dominations' by name,<sup>18</sup> they are implicitly present in his assertion that Luxembourg lacked the political 'independence' which he believed it had enjoyed during the Middle Ages, and in his contention that the principality also moved from being a political centre to becoming part of a neglected periphery.<sup>19</sup>

Where van Werveke seems to differ from the national master narrative is with respect to the negative role which he attributes to Holland. This critique is most specifically directed against King William I, who had ruled Luxembourg in an autocratic fashion by appointing a governor responsible directly to him and by imposing the same basic law as for the United Kingdom of the Netherlands.<sup>20</sup> Within the liberal Orangist tradition, disapproval of William I was certainly possible, especially as it allowed his successor, William II, to be cast in a better light.<sup>21</sup> The suggestion that van Werveke's critique is directed against William I would also explain why he opted for the unusual date of 1831. It was at that moment that the grand duchy stood largely under the control of pro-Belgian forces, a situation that in the long run obliged the Dutch monarch to make substantial concessions to the country and heralded its first distinct constitution a decade later. On the other hand it may also be interpreted as an oblique critique of monarchical rule in general, which he disapproved of at this point of his life.

Despite attempting to rebel against much of what the national master narrative of history stood for, Nicholas van Werveke ultimately failed to escape from the dominant views of his age sufficiently to erect a distinct narrative interpretation of Luxembourg's past. This section thus shows the degree to which the rather nationalist idea of medieval 'independence' and the loss of autonomy in the early-modern period transcended the political and ideological differences of the time and seemed acceptable even to a liberal like van Werveke.

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<sup>18</sup> Van Werveke never seems to have used the term of 'foreign dominations'.

<sup>19</sup> For more on spatial constructions, see the next two chapters.

<sup>20</sup> Since Luxembourg was declared to be the personal possession of the Dutch monarch, this decision was entirely proper. To many historians, however, this seemed to contradict the political independence Luxembourg was given by the Congress of Vienna at that very same time.

<sup>21</sup> See Christiane Huberty, 'Guillaume II, Roi des Pays-Bas et Grand-Duc de Luxembourg (1840–1849). Construction et évolution d'un lieu de mémoire', *Hémecht* 58 (2006): 107–118.

### 1.2. *The German View during the Second World War*

The occupation of Luxembourg by Nazi Germany from May 1940 to September 1944 disrupted the production of national representations of the past for four and a half years. It will serve here as a second case on whose basis we want to study possible diverging views from the national narrative of history. During this period most of Luxembourg's national symbols were outlawed and 'desecrated'. Hoisting the national flag, for example, was penalised, while the grand-ducal palace was transformed into a café with an adjacent cultural centre, and the principal monument for those who had fought for the Allies in the First World War was torn down.<sup>22</sup>

National Socialist propaganda tried to convince the inhabitants of Luxembourg that it was their historic destiny to be part of Germany. It re-used some of the arguments developed in German academic circles of the 1930s, particularly by the *Westforschung*, who explored the culture and history of the 'Germanic' people in the west, (the area today covered by Benelux).<sup>23</sup> While Luxembourgian national historiography had emphasised Luxembourg's uniqueness, the German counter-discourse attempted to underline its historically German character: as Frid Muth put it, "in its thousand-year history, Luxembourg was united with Germany for almost 850 years through treaties, familial relationships between ruling dynasties and economic ties."<sup>24</sup> The Middle Ages played an essential role in this vision. During this period, Luxembourg was seen to have been an integral part of the 'German' Empire, which in turn was implicitly regarded as a predecessor of the Third Reich. Thus, Sigefroid and the Abbey of Echternach were "pioneers" (*Vordenker*) and "strongholds" (*Hochburgen*) of German "Imperial belief" (*Reichsgesinnung*).<sup>25</sup> By later giving four emperors

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<sup>22</sup> Paul Lenners, 'Le Palais grand-ducal de 1895 à nos jours. Les années noires d'une résidence désaffectée', in *Le Palais grand-ducal*, ed. Roland Baldauff and Alex Fixmer, 111; Benoît Majerus, 'Gëlle Fra', in *Lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg* (see note 14), 291–296. Monuments referring to the independence celebrations of 1939 were equally forbidden. See Sonja Kmec, '1839', in *Lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg* (see note 14), 147–152.

<sup>23</sup> For more on the *Westforschung* and its impact on Luxembourg, see Bernard Thomas, 'Westforschung und die luxemburgische nationale Identität' (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Paris IV-Sorbonne, 2009). See also chapter 4.

<sup>24</sup> Frid Muth, 'Altes deutsches Kernland Luxemburg', *Deutschlands Erneuerung* 11 (1941): 601: "In seiner tausendjährigen Geschichte war Luxemburg fast 850 Jahre durch Verträge, verwandtschaftliche Beziehungen der Herrscherhäuser und wirtschaftliche Bindungen mit Deutschland vereint."

<sup>25</sup> Paul Hermann Ruth, *Luxemburg* (Breslau, 1942), 15.

to the Empire, Luxembourg was its “political power source” (*politische...Kraftquelle*).<sup>26</sup> One author even suggested that the Emperor Sigismund was one of the main reasons for German greatness: since he had handed Brandenburg to the Hohenzollerns as a fief, he was also responsible for the rise of Prussia and the triumph of the Third Reich.<sup>27</sup> As a result, the year 1443 was once again crucial in that it signalled the arrival of “foreign domination and Frenchness” (*Fremdherrschaft und Franzosentum*).<sup>28</sup> The concept of ‘foreign dominations’—so fundamental to the Luxembourgian master narrative—was here used to express how Luxembourg seemingly distanced itself from its German heritage.

It seems likely that these pro-Nazi authors had read the most important Luxembourgian authors, such as Herchen and Meyers.<sup>29</sup> Rather than changing their narrative structure and terminology, the German scholars adapted it to their own—quite different—ends. The moments of continuity are striking. Despite the fact that they were attempting to use Luxembourgian history for a different end, German scholars sympathetic to Nazism shared with the Luxembourgian historians a teleological belief that the past should serve only the present. Most striking of all, however, is the fact that some of the main features of the narrative of Luxembourgian history were taken over. To pro-Nazi scholars, Luxembourg’s medieval history showed that it was a willing and important player in a ‘greater’ Germany, a role which—it was felt—the grand duchy was on the brink of regaining after years of having been estranged from its true nature by the ‘foreign dominations’. As a result, the Nazi occupation was “no journey to new lands” for Luxembourg, but “a return, a homecoming from foreign lands.”<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> F. Muth, ‘Altes deutsches Kernland Luxemburg’, 601.

<sup>27</sup> Emil Glass, *Luxemburg und das Reich. Briefe über eine erste Begegnung* (Luxembourg: Gaupropaganda- und Presseamt, 1941), 24. In Luxembourgian historiography, this causal link is of course, open to some question, on which see, for example, Christian Calmes, *Gründung und Werden eines Landes. 1815 bis heute* (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 1989), 331.

<sup>28</sup> F. Muth, ‘Altes deutsches Kernland Luxemburg’ 601. Interestingly, one author saw the beginnings of this encroaching Frenchness from the thirteenth century: P. H. Ruth, *Luxemburg*, 16.

<sup>29</sup> Their publications were the most widely-known histories of Luxembourg available.

<sup>30</sup> Frid Muth, ‘Luxemburg’, *Westermanns Monatshefte*, July 1941, 686: “keine Reise in Neuland, sondern eher einer Umkehr, einer Heimkehr aus der Fremde gleicht.”

On the whole, publications of this type were rather few and it is doubtful that many read them. Moreover, these representations of Luxembourg's history were even more short-lived than the Third Reich itself. After 1942, no author proclaimed such ideas, either in Luxembourg or in Germany.<sup>31</sup> The exact reason for this remains unclear. Did the occupying Germans realise that those who had not yet been won over had to be convinced by other means? Or did they hope that time would slowly destroy all remains of Luxembourgian national sentiment?

### 1.3. *Views of the Far-Left*

While there was a certain tradition of politically liberal historians writing accounts of Luxembourg's history, their numbers declined markedly after the death of Nicolas van Werveke in 1926. A yet smaller number of scholars, however, were from the far-left, largely as a result of the comparatively late arrival of socialism in Luxembourg. The conventional seedbed of socialism—heavy industry—only developed in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Only with the advent of the First World War did socialist and communist parties as well as large trade unions emerge in Luxembourg.<sup>32</sup> Having put down shallow roots only in the recent past, the far-left initially had little impact on the writing of history, and the few historians who came from its ranks remained largely outside the academic world. The only member of the far-left who attempted to write a synoptic overview of Luxembourg's history was Jean Kill. He is a striking illustration of the extent to which the national master narrative had penetrated communist thinking in the period after the Second World War.

Jean Kill (1903–1969) was born in the industrial south of Luxembourg and a communist from an early age: he had been part of the republican movement in 1919 that led to the abdication of Grand Duchess Marie-Adelaide, joined the Socialist Youth and was a founding member of the Communist Party (KPL).<sup>33</sup> Although he started his career as a primary school teacher, he became the editor of the

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<sup>31</sup> See also Paul Dostert, *Luxemburg zwischen Selbstbehauptung und nationaler Selbstaufgabe* (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 1985).

<sup>32</sup> See B. Fayot, 'Repères historiques'.

<sup>33</sup> The authors are indebted to Henri Wehenkel for sending extended biographical information on Jean Kill.

communist daily newspaper. During the Nazi occupation, Kill joined the *résistance*. While there can be no doubt about his political commitment in the first half of the twentieth century, however, it is notable that Kill never sought election to political office and committed himself to writing alone. Kill's *1000 jähriges Luxemburg* was first published as a series of articles in the communist newspaper in 1963 and was reprinted later that year as a monograph.<sup>34</sup> These articles were clearly intended to coincide with the one thousandth anniversary of Luxembourg, but were also designed to mark a special congress of the KPL that was scheduled to be held at the same time. Although the congress was ultimately delayed,<sup>35</sup> it had been convened to address the crisis into which the KPL had been thrown by Russian de-Stalinisation and to propound a new and more democratic programme of political action which Kill had been instrumental in composing.<sup>36</sup>

In his introductory remarks, Kill stressed that *1000 jähriges Luxemburg* not merely represented his own interpretation of history, but also reflected the perspective which the KPL as a whole had come to adopt as a result of experience gained in a forty-year struggle.<sup>37</sup> The book's communist credentials are written into every page. Kill denounced most historic forms of government using classic Marxist terminology: the burden of feudalism oppressed Luxembourgers until the French Revolution, which brought about the rise of capitalism and the emergence of the bourgeoisie. Unlike most proponents of the national master narrative, Kill had mixed feelings about the medieval monarchs, and about the social and political reforms made by the Empress Maria-Theresa and her son.<sup>38</sup> Although the reforms could be regarded as political achievements, their initiators stood after all for a disreputable political system.

Kill acknowledged that he had drawn much of his information from Herchen, Margue and Meyers and, indeed, his narrative structure was very similar to theirs. Like Herchen, Kill viewed the period 963–1443

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<sup>34</sup> Jean Kill, '1000 jähriges Luxemburg: Woher?—Wohin? Ein Beitrag zum besseren Verständnis der Geschichte des Luxemburger Landes', *Zeitung vom Lëtzebuurger Vollek*, 12 January 1963, 2 February 1963 and 9 February 1963; Jean Kill, *1000 jähriges Luxemburg: Woher?—Wohin? Ein Beitrag zum besseren Verständnis der Geschichte des Luxemburger Landes* (Luxembourg: C.O.P.E., 1963).

<sup>35</sup> J. Kill, *1000 jähriges Luxemburg*, 5.

<sup>36</sup> Henri Wehenkel, 'Der Abschied von Stalin. Die Wende in der KPL 1962–1964', *Zeitung vom Lëtzebuurger Vollek*, 11 December 1999, 4.

<sup>37</sup> J. Kill, *1000 jähriges Luxemburg*, 5.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 38–39, 62.



as that of Luxembourg's 'first autonomy',<sup>39</sup> an autonomy that was subsequently lost:

With the Burgundian occupation (1443), the duchy of Luxembourg lost its autonomy for almost 400 years and became a part, a province of the Netherlands. Only the Treaty of Vienna in 1815 freed us from these ties, although initially only imperfectly, and we gradually became a proper state once again. Our traditional historiography distinguishes a set of different foreign dominations between 1443 and 1815...<sup>40</sup>

As this extract demonstrates, Kill was more than willing to accept the broad outlines of what he called 'traditional historiography'. Kill's Marxist analysis was for the most part framed by the historical scheme of the national master narrative: his comments on feudalism and capitalism exist in the context of the familiar tale of Luxembourg's rise, fall, and resurrection. Similarly, Kill shared with Herchen and Meyers a linear, teleological view of history and a strong sense that Luxembourgers of the past and present were part of the same, unique group.

This is not, of course, to say that Kill did not aver from diverging from the national master narrative when it suited his Marxist interests to do so. For Kill, the 'Second French domination', for example, should not be regarded as a 'foreign domination', since it brought an end to the 'feudal order'.<sup>41</sup> He also differed in his opinion about when exactly Luxembourg was to be considered independent again. In Kill's view, 1815 actually brought the "double foreign domination" of the Dutch monarchy and the German Confederation, both of which were "children of the same mother: the counter-revolutionary restoration".<sup>42</sup> For Kill Luxembourg's independence was only truly regained with the departure of the Prussian garrison in 1867, which—true Marxist

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 41: "Mit der Besetzung durch die Burgunder (1443) verlor das Herzogtum Luxemburg seine Selbstständigkeit für fast 400 Jahre und wurde zu einem Bestandteil, einer Provinz der Niederlande. Erst der Wiener Vertrag von 1815 löste uns aus diesen Bindungen, allerdings zuerst nur unvollkommen, und wir wurden etappenweise wieder zu einem eigenen Staate. Unsere traditionelle Geschichtsschreibung unterscheidet von 1443 bis 1815 eine Reihe verschiedener Fremdherrschaften..." Note again that only one German word is used to refer to the Netherlands in both its present and its historic senses.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 41, 73.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 89: "Wir unterstanden einer doppelten Fremdherrschaft: der des holländischen Königs und der des Deutschen Bundes. Aber beide waren Kinder einer und derselben Mutter: der konterrevolutionären Restauration."

that he was—he viewed as a victory of ordinary people who had long resisted attempts to germanise the country from within and from without.<sup>43</sup> These moments of divergence from the national master narrative, however, are comparatively minor, and the rare occasions on which he ventured from the well-trodden path laid by Herchen and Meyers only serve to illustrate the extent to which Kill was prepared to defend Luxembourg’s independence as strongly as his communist ideals, rather than his willingness to stride forward in an entirely new historiographical direction. Even taking into account these minor differences, *1000 jähriges Luxemburg* illustrates that Kill was perfectly prepared to paint the national master narrative in communist colours, without questioning the merit of the picture as a whole.

## 2. *New Variations on an Old Theme (c. 1963 to 1989)*

The continuity of the traditional representation of national history after the Second World War was assured by two factors. First, there was no pressing reason to reconsider the national master narrative. As shown in chapter 2, the war confirmed rather than undermined the underlying teleology and monarchical tendencies of the narrative. The Nazi occupation was integrated in the existing structure as a recent echo of the ‘foreign dominations’, as a time of collective hardship during which the nation once again had to prove itself against a foreign oppressor. The monarchy and the conservative-led government managed to present themselves as symbols of national resistance and unity. Second, there was an element of personal continuity. Despite the disappearance of Meyers (†1964) and Margue from the academic scene, many leading historians remained in place. To take just one example, Joseph Goedert (\*1908)—a Catholic in the same mould as Meyers and Margue—continued his career in academic history and served as director of the National Library of Luxembourg and, later, of the State Archives in the 1960s.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 141: “[Unser Volk] hatte sich jahrzehntelang gegen die alle Germanisierungsbestrebungen von innen und von außen das Recht auf nationale Unabhängigkeit, auf eine nationale Existenz schwer erkämpft.”

<sup>44</sup> Goedert’s best known publication is his *La formation territoriale du pays de Luxembourg depuis ses origines jusqu’au milieu du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle. Exposition documentaire organisée par les Archives de l’Etat. Septembre–octobre 1963* (Luxembourg: Archives de l’Etat, 1963). As its title suggests, he presents Luxembourg’s territorial development

A new generation of historians, however, gradually began to emerge in the post-war period, a generation which is best represented by Paul Margue (\*1923) and Gilbert Trausch (\*1931). Despite coming from the same Catholic and conservative background as their predecessors, and initially following their lead, they underwent a slow emancipation from earlier scholarly tendencies. A growing sense of the international dimensions of Luxembourgian history was at the heart of this emancipation. The internationalism which Paul Margue and Gilbert Trausch were to embrace concerned both methodological approaches and historical perspectives. At a methodological level, earlier historians had often been unwilling fully to acknowledge the importance of international developments in the writing of history. While Meyers, for example, had showed a greater interest in socio-economic issues than Herchen, largely as a result of his acquaintance with the *Annales* School, he never sought to put these issues at the heart of his analysis in the manner of contemporary *Annales* historians. At the level of historical perspectives, much Luxembourgian historiography before 1970 refused to see Luxembourg's political past within the larger context of European affairs. Herchen only ever referred to 'international' events if they had a direct impact on political developments in Luxembourg itself. Similarly, when analysing the period of Burgundian rule, Meyers persisted in examining Luxembourg in isolation without ever putting it into the broader context of the Burgundian lands as a whole.

### 2.1. *Continuing the Tradition*

Like most twentieth-century historians, Paul Margue, the son of Nicolas, started his career as a secondary school teacher.<sup>45</sup> Until the late 1970s, he also taught at the Athenaeum. In addition, he was asked by the Ministry of Education to take over a number of courses at the *Cours Universitaire*, which offered one year of higher education in Luxembourg.<sup>46</sup> There he taught social history at the Faculty of Law and

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during the Middle Ages. Although of good scholarly quality, the book operates within the master narrative, presenting Luxembourg's medieval expansion from Sigefroid's 'foundation' to its apogee in the fourteenth century.

<sup>45</sup> The authors are grateful to Paul Margue for sharing this biographical information in an interview on 22 January 2009.

<sup>46</sup> This was the direct successor of the *Cours Supérieur*, which had existed in the period 1817–1837 and 1848–1968. It was re-baptised *Centre Universitaire de Luxembourg* in 1974, which was integrated into the University of Luxembourg in 2003. See

Economics, mainly to lawyers, and was head of the faculty from 1968 to 1987.<sup>47</sup> From 1979 until his retirement in 1987, Margue additionally served as president of the *Centre Universitaire*.

His career as a historian outside the walls of secondary school education took off in 1963—the year of the one thousandth anniversary of Luxembourg's supposed foundation. Two new factors contributed to this. First, he joined the board of the journal *Hémécht*. Following the untimely death of its long-serving editor-in-chief, Albert Steffen, in 1962, Joseph Maertz set up an editorial board composed of several historians, including Paul Margue.<sup>48</sup> Two decades later, he would himself become editor-in-chief of the journal and remains so today. Second, he played a central role in planning a major exhibition on the city of Luxembourg's thousand-year history.<sup>49</sup> Although a committee of historians and representatives from cultural institutions made collective decisions on the content of the exhibition, Paul Margue was responsible for its implementation, and he actively co-ordinated with a team of architects and artists in accomplishing this task. The impact of the exhibition was considerable. It presented exciting and rarely-seen objects such as medieval and early-modern armour. It presented an innovative sound and light show based around the city's foundation in 963, its enfranchisement by Countess Ermesinde in 1244, and the siege of the fortress in 1684. Despite the new media it deployed, the exhibitions had a rather conventional message. Since it was seen by thousands of people in the summer of 1963, it communicated this message to a broad social range of visitors.

Gilbert Trausch has his roots in the same traditional structures. After finishing his studies abroad, it was through his encounter with Paul Margue, while both taught at the same secondary school in the late 1950s, that he started to publish his first scholarly articles.<sup>50</sup> At the same time, he benefited from the support of Joseph Goedert and

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Joseph A. Massard, 'La vie scientifique', *Mémorial 1989: la société luxembourgeoise de 1839 à 1989* (Luxembourg: Les publications mosellanes, 1989), 412–413.

<sup>47</sup> The Faculty of Law and Economics ran its own history programme in parallel to that of the Faculty of Humanities and Literature.

<sup>48</sup> The other members of the board were Gérard Thill, Paul Weber (teacher at the seminary, not to be confused with his namesake, who was an economist and historian), Paul Medernach, Paul Spang, Joseph Thein and Gilbert Trausch.

<sup>49</sup> See the exhibition catalogue *Luxembourg. Histoire d'une ville millénaire. 30 juin-15 août 1963* (Luxembourg: J. Beffort, 1963).

<sup>50</sup> The authors are indebted to Gilbert Trausch for providing us with information on his life during an interview on 1 October 2007.

remained close to the CSV.<sup>51</sup> He became firmly placed within the academic world, taking up leading positions at the *Centre Universitaire de Luxembourg* and the National Library of Luxembourg, while also lecturing in Liège and Bruges. He became one of the very few post-war Luxembourgian historians to write detailed chronological accounts of Luxembourg's history. This further contributed to establishing him as the best-known Luxembourgian historian of his generation.

## 2.2. *A Slow Emancipation*

While both Paul Margue and Gilbert Trausch initially continued to tread in the footsteps of their predecessors, they slowly went beyond the limits of traditional scholarship. Both actively sought exchange with foreign scholars, often transferring their questions or results to a Luxembourgian setting. Gilbert Trausch criticised previous generations of scholars for having focused purely on politics, thus his early research was devoted to long-term structures in agriculture, showing the marked influence of the *Annales* School. Another early consequence of this new approach was his analysis of the *Klëppelkrich*—a late-eighteenth-century peasant uprising during French Revolutionary rule. Trausch considerably revised the traditional view of this movement as a national uprising against foreign rule, and went to particular lengths to establish its inter-regional dimensions.<sup>52</sup> While initially focusing on the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, he later redirected his attention to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Here the European unification movement and Luxembourg's role and place in creating the EU figured as a central theme. In was in the same vein that Paul Margue helped to found the *Journées Lotharingiennes* in the early 1980s—a series of conferences dedicated to bringing international comparative history to bear on medieval Lotharingia

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<sup>51</sup> Trausch edited Goedert's Festschrift in 1983. He never got directly involved in party politics. His involvement in the 1989 celebrations (see below) stemmed largely from his proximity to the CSV leaders, particularly Jacques Santer. In 2008, he edited a large history of the CSV and contributed two major articles to the publication. The volume was officially endorsed and sponsored by the party. Gilbert Trausch, ed., *CSV Spiegelbild eines Landes in seiner Politik? Geschichte der Christlich-Sozialen Volkspartei Luxemburgs im 20. Jahrhundert* (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 2008).

<sup>52</sup> See above all Gilbert Trausch, 'À propos du "Klepelkrich": la répression des soulèvements paysans de 1798 dans le Département des Forêts', *PSH* 82 (1967): 7–245. See also chapter 1.

every two years in Luxembourg.<sup>53</sup> The result of working much more internationally than their predecessors further helped presenting Luxembourg to a wider international readership. These new initiatives were accompanied by tentative attempts to question the traditional narrative.

The effect can be shown with the help of a few examples. Although Paul Margue never wrote an extended synoptic history of Luxembourg, his narrative conception of Luxembourgian history is evidenced by a short, general booklet written for the government's press service in 1970.<sup>54</sup> This booklet clearly illustrates how Margue attempted to revise the national master narrative while writing from within its tradition. It begins in a straightforward and uncontroversial manner which repeats certain established elements of the national master narrative: Count Sigefroid is described as "the founder of Luxembourg" and the charter of his acquisition of Luxembourg as "the birth of the castle, the city and the country of Luxembourg".<sup>55</sup> But despite these familiar comments, the booklet broke with the national master narrative in several important respects. Paul Margue was among the first to reject the concept of the 'foreign dominations'. This rejection automatically entailed an abandonment of the idea of a medieval autonomy and the teleological oriented narrative that saw the nation's fulfilment in nineteenth-century independence—as seen both aspects formed the backbone of the national master narrative. In the author's view, it was further possible to discern a thread of continuity in Luxembourgian history extending from the dukes of Burgundy to the end of Habsburg rule in 1795. The only divide is marked by the coming of the Enlightenment.<sup>56</sup> Again this opinion went against the grain of previous traditions, which preferred to depict Luxembourg as suffering from regular incursions and numerous changes of political rule.

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<sup>53</sup> See also chapter 5.

<sup>54</sup> Paul Margue, *Histoire sommaire du Luxembourg* (Luxembourg: Service information et presse, 1970). The same booklet was re-edited several times over the following two decades. He took up many of the same ideas in Paul Margue, 'Histoire et art', in *Luxembourg, cadre naturel, histoire, art, littérature, langue, économie, traditions populaires*, ed. Christine Bonneton (Le Puy, 1984), 5–56.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 10: "le fondateur du comté de Luxembourg... La charte... est l'acte de naissance du château-fort, de la ville et du pays de Luxembourg."

<sup>56</sup> Paul Margue may have taken this from his colleague Gilbert Trausch, see below.

Even more crucial is another project from the same time that combined the ideas of both authors. In about 1970, the Ministry of Education commissioned a series of four new schoolbooks to replace those by Herchen and Meyers from Paul Margue, Gérard Thill and Gilbert Trausch. The series was called *Manuel d'histoire luxembourgeoise*. Gérard Thill, then director of Luxembourg's State Museum, compiled the first volume on pre- and ancient history, while Paul Margue dealt with the Middle Ages and the early-modern period in the second volume.<sup>57</sup> Gilbert Trausch wrote the two final volumes, the first covering the period 1715–1839, the second covering 1839 to the 1960s. That Luxembourgian history was divided in this manner seems to reflect a willingness to break with certain traditional interpretations, although the periods had been determined partly as a result of the authors' areas of expertise.<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, it is worth remarking that the second volume takes up the thread right before 963, the traditional date of 'foundation', illustrating the survival of traditional elements. Likewise, Paul Margue gives great importance to the fourteenth century, by spending, for example, many more pages on the times of John of Bohemia than any other ruler, or by pointing out that Luxembourg was largest under his son Wenceslas I. The textbook, however, also tried to break rather explicitly with its predecessors. Again, the authors avoided the notion of 'foreign dominations' both explicitly and implicitly.<sup>59</sup> The authors further rejected the dynastic approach of their predecessors. In one of his introductions, Trausch contended that the earlier tendency to structure Luxembourgian history around reigns was old-fashioned and obsolete, and instead expressed his intention to focus more on socio-economic, demographic and intellectual developments.<sup>60</sup> As a consequence, Trausch introduced the idea of an 'era

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<sup>57</sup> Gérard Thill, *Vor- und Frühgeschichte Luxemburgs*. Manuel d'histoire luxembourgeoise 1 (Luxembourg: Bourg-Bourger, 1973); Paul Margue, *Luxemburg in Mittelalter und Neuzeit (10. bis 18. Jahrhundert)*. Manuel d'histoire luxembourgeoise 2 (Luxembourg: Bourg-Bourger, 1974).

<sup>58</sup> Gérard Thill felt ready to cover the ancient past up until the ninth century, but not beyond. At the time, Trausch had undertaken most of his research in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries and felt uncomfortable dealing with earlier periods. Paul Margue thus ended up covering the remaining period, but without considering himself an expert on it at the time. Interview with Paul Margue on 22 January 2009.

<sup>59</sup> Trausch later openly criticised the concept for its misleading connotations, see Gilbert Trausch, ed., *Histoire du Luxembourg. Le destin européen d'un 'petit pays'* (Toulouse: Privat, 2003), 155–156.

<sup>60</sup> Gilbert Trausch, *Le Luxembourg sous l'Ancien Régime*, Manuel d'histoire luxembourgeoise 3 (Luxembourg: Bourg-Bourger, 1977), 7.

of the great reforms (1750–1830)’ encompassing important caesuras in traditional historiography such as the years 1795 and 1815.<sup>61</sup>

These examples show how the representation of the country’s past changed from the late 1960s and the early 1970s. Some elements of the national master narrative did survive, such as the foundation of Luxembourg in the tenth century, or its apogee in the fourteenth. But on the whole, a fundamental change in approach had taken place, which laid the basis for much of later research in that field.

### 2.3. *The 1989 Anniversary: A Return to a National Model*

An important point where Gilbert Trausch differs remarkably from most predecessors is the central importance he accorded to the year 1839. Few earlier historians had stressed the importance of 1839, and it appears in many books merely as the occasion for the lamentable partition of the grand duchy, but for Trausch, it was a critical year for the primary reason that it was then that Luxembourg became independent and the modern state was born. Although 1815 appears as an important date in many of his works, he considers it of secondary importance on the grounds that Luxembourg remained merely “a pawn on the chessboard of diplomacy” until 1839.<sup>62</sup>

Trausch presents 1839 as a fundamental break mainly because of the change which followed. In the aftermath of the Belgian Revolution, the rebellious inhabitants of the grand duchy were given greater independence from the Dutch crown.<sup>63</sup> Administration and government was established at a more local level, the process of democratisation slowly began, and a degree of self-government—albeit under the leadership of Orangist elements faithful to the Dutch crown—was permitted. This process was aided by the fact that King William I handed the reins of power to his son in 1840. The word ‘process’ is of considerable importance in understanding the emphasis Trausch places on 1839. Trausch does not see 1839 as having been a moment of sudden change, but rather as a symbol of the processes of change which were

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>62</sup> Gilbert Trausch, 1839. *La signification historique de la date de 1839. Essai d’interprétation*, Ministère d’Etat, Commission gouvernementale pour la commémoration du 150<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de l’Indépendance du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg (Luxembourg: Ministère d’Etat, 1989): “est utilisé comme un simple pion sur l’échiquier de la diplomatie.”

<sup>63</sup> Gilbert Trausch, *Le Luxembourg à l’époque contemporaine: de 1839 à nos jours*, Manuel d’histoire luxembourgeoise 4 (Luxembourg: Bourg-Bourger, 1975), 17.



set in motion that year. “The true miracle of 1839,” Trausch has written, “resides in its duration,”<sup>64</sup> while its “true meaning...resides in what Luxembourgers achieved thereafter.”<sup>65</sup>

This is not to say, however, that Trausch has emphasised the importance of 1839 with consistent force. In the 1970s, he presented it as having been a crucial year, but nevertheless expressed himself rather cautiously, stressing that its significance rested largely on twentieth-century perceptions.<sup>66</sup> By 1989, however, he eagerly declared it to have been a moment of fundamental change in the country’s history. There are two reasons for this shift in emphasis. Not only was 1989 the occasion of the 150th anniversary celebrations, but Trausch himself played an important role in organising these celebrations.

The idea of celebrating the 150th anniversary of Luxembourg’s independence was born in a circle of well-to-do burghers to which Trausch belonged.<sup>67</sup> They approached the Prime Minister of Luxembourg, Jacques Santer, with their idea, and received an accord that the government would sponsor and finance the initiative.<sup>68</sup> In September 1987, the government established a commission to oversee the official celebrations; a month later a sub-committee was created to organise a large-scale exhibition for the event that was later named ‘From State to Nationhood, 1839–1989. 150 Years of Independence’ (*De l’État à la Nation, 1839–1989. 150 ans d’indépendance*). Both were chaired by Trausch. He realised himself that the 1989 celebrations also owed a debt to the failure to establish alternative ‘dates of independence’. 1815 could never be publicly celebrated: in 1865 Luxembourg was still too closely bound into the German Confederation to motivate the inhabitants to mark the occasion.<sup>69</sup> Likewise, German forces occupied the grand duchy in 1915, and suffocated any possible initiatives. The 50th anniversary of 1867 equally fell into the First World War, while its

<sup>64</sup> G. Trausch, 1989. *La signification historique de la date*, 20: “Le vrai miracle de 1839 réside dans la durée.”

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 21: “La véritable importance de 1839 réside dans ce que les Luxembourgeois ont fait *après*.”

<sup>66</sup> G. Trausch, *Le Luxembourg à l’époque contemporaine*, 17: “Avec le recul, la date de 1839 est apparue aux Luxembourgeois comme l’acte de naissance du Luxembourg indépendant.”

<sup>67</sup> The other members were Jules Christophory, Jean-Jacques Kasel and Christian Calmes.

<sup>68</sup> Kasel and Trausch both knew Santer personally at that stage.

<sup>69</sup> It must, however, be said that at that time, the concept of a national anniversary did not quite exist yet in the same way.

150th jubilee was too close to the celebrations of 1963. The commemoration of 1839, by contrast, took place within a much longer tradition. In 1888, the then prime minister, Paul Eyschen, proposed a public celebration for the following year, but this was ultimately undermined by the bad health of King William III and the resulting prospect of his impending death and dynastic change. As seen in chapter 2, a very large celebration was held in 1939. Trausch saw the 1989 anniversary also as a memorial to “this rare moment, when an entire people harmonised together”.<sup>70</sup>

The festivities reached their culmination on Luxembourg’s National Day on 23 June 1989. This was preceded by a large exhibition on Luxembourg’s past which was opened by a formal ceremony on 18 April. Trausch regarded this exhibition as the centrepiece of the year and it gave him an opportunity to promote his view of history to a wide audience. Although the exhibition was intended to focus on the previous 150 years of Luxembourgian history, considerable space was allocated to the period before 1839, and particularly to the medieval past. In his speech at the inauguration ceremony, Trausch presented his interpretation of Luxembourgian history, which went, of course, far beyond the date of 1839: he presented a full narrative from Luxembourg’s ‘origins’ to the present epoch. It must be noted that Trausch’s view of the country’s past had by now gained more of a national tone; many aspects that he stressed in 1989 were in fact taken over from his predecessors. His speech focused on the four great dates of 963, 1443, 1815 and 1839.<sup>71</sup> Although his particular emphasis on 1839 distinguishes him from the vast majority of his precursors, the choice of other dates is rather traditional. In fact, a closer look at how he presented these dates reveals the extent to which he took over a rather ‘national’ view of Luxembourg’s history.

First, he insisted on the momentous importance of the year 963:

The Luxembourgian State exists and it must have had a beginning. 963 is inescapable. That year has entered the Luxembourgers’ collective memory as the founding moment. Its old age provides Luxembourg with a certain nobility, so to speak...The geographical place that came into

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<sup>70</sup> “Il est évident qu’en 1989 les Luxembourgeois fêteront aussi 1939, ce moment rare où tout un peuple a vécu à l’unisson.” G. Trausch, 1989. *La signification historique de la date*, 6.

<sup>71</sup> The speech was reprinted in Luxembourg’s daily newspapers and re-printed in a special brochure, see note 62.

existence in 963 would bestow its name on the principality that formed around it. It is not common that a city baptises a state. How could one then dissociate them?<sup>72</sup>

We notice first that many key ingredients of national historiography are present, such as the perception of Luxembourg as a unity, a lack of detachment from the past and the proximity to contemporary political discourse. Secondly, the speech includes a search for the origins of the nation-state, which are to be found in 963. Thirdly and in consequence, the passage hints at an intrinsic link between the medieval county and the modern grand duchy, in the tradition of most nineteenth and twentieth-century historiography.

Trausch's second defining moment in Luxembourg's history is the year 1443, which also serves as a defining break in all of his synoptic publications. 1443 marks the duchy's entrance into the Burgundian Low Countries, a transition which was to define the political (and to a certain degree cultural) character of Luxembourg for centuries. As pointed out, Trausch had openly criticised the concept of the 'foreign dominations', and in the 1970s he used phrases such as "transfer of sovereignty" and "changes of sovereignty" instead.<sup>73</sup> Over time, his representation of early modern times indicated a latent and lingering continuity of the much-loathed 'foreign dominations' within his own discourse. He claimed for example that: "In 1839 the Luxembourgers had, for the first time in their history, to rely on themselves, on their [own] space and their own means."<sup>74</sup> Although the phrasing (correctly) implies that the medieval rulers should not be regarded as 'Luxembourgers' in the modern sense, it also suggests that local people previously had no share in their government and that they had indeed been ruled by foreigners. Similarly, the rhetorical references to

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<sup>72</sup> G. Trausch, 1839. *La signification historique de la date*, 7: "L'Etat luxembourgeois existe, il faut bien qu'il ait un début. Dès lors 963 devient incontournable. L'année est entrée dans la mémoire collective des Luxembourgeois comme l'acte fondateur. Par son ancienneté elle offre pour ainsi dire au Luxembourg ses lettres de noblesse... Le lieu géographique mis en valeur en 963 donnera son nom à la principauté qui se forme autour de lui. Ce n'est pas courant, une ville qui baptise un Etat. Comment dès lors les dissocier?"

<sup>73</sup> G. Trausch, *Le Luxembourg sous l'Ancien Régime*, 16: "transfert de souveraineté... changements de souveraineté."

<sup>74</sup> G. Trausch, 1989. *La signification historique de la date*, 21: "En 1839, les Luxembourgeois, pour la première fois dans leur histoire, se trouvent réduits à eux mêmes, à leur espace et à leur propres moyens."

‘the Luxembourgers’ and ‘their history’ evokes the sense of continuity which Herchen and Meyers had attempted to express. Additionally, it also implicitly ignores the fact that most ‘Luxembourgers’ were actually in favour of joining Belgium during these years. Finally, Trausch’s phrasing suggests that—in contrast to earlier times—Luxembourgers had to rely on ‘their [own] space’, providing 1839 again with a momentous importance.<sup>75</sup> In a similar vein Trausch perpetuated the idea of Luxembourg as a passive pawn of other, larger, foreign European powers. As recently as 2003, he characterised the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as being the period in which Luxembourg was “in the game of the [great] powers”.<sup>76</sup> It is under this heading that he describes the rivalry between Habsburg and France for supremacy over Luxembourg’s strategically located fortress. The idea of Luxembourg having been part of a European game of power politics continues the tradition of underlying the duchy’s powerlessness and victimisation by external forces. By denoting this particular period in such a manner, Trausch implies that in previous times ‘Luxembourg’ had been an active subject, rather than a passive object in power politics—again the phrasing seems to hint at a continuity between the Middle Ages and contemporary times, as found in national historiography.

The notion of Luxembourgian ‘particularism’ is perhaps the most important concept for an understanding of Trausch’s view of early-modern history.<sup>77</sup> Although the lack of any clear expression of local ‘identity’ immediately following the creation of the grand duchy in 1815 led Trausch to suggest that national sentiment was developed only gradually in the nineteenth century, he nevertheless presented this late-flowering national sentiment as building upon an earlier sense of group consciousness in the same territory. With the solitary exception of the period 1795–1839, during which Luxembourgers were held to have somehow forgotten their distinctive character,<sup>78</sup> Trausch argues

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<sup>75</sup> One could argue that, from a structural and economical point of view, not much had changed, apart from the fact that a large chunk of the principality had been separated from the other. Politically, the grand duchy was still governed by the Dutch crown, whose central position was hardly diminished by the constitutions the country was given in 1841 and in 1848.

<sup>76</sup> G. Trausch, *Histoire du Luxembourg. Le destin européen d’un ‘petit pays’*, 173: “Le Luxembourg dans le jeu des puissances”.

<sup>77</sup> See also chapter 4.

<sup>78</sup> E.g. G. Trausch, *Le Luxembourg sous l’Ancien Régime*, 163. This idea overlaps with that of Nicolas Margue, see chapter 2.

that the inhabitants of the country were conscious of their particularism for the majority of the modern age. This, he argues, is a hang-over from the medieval past: as he claimed in his *Histoire du Luxembourg*, the country's "long illustrious past has posed a dilemma since 1443: how to live within a larger framework while retaining one's identity and while marking one's difference?"<sup>79</sup> The question contains three underlying assumptions. First, Trausch implies that early-modern inhabitants of the duchy identified with the late medieval dynasty and its achievements ("long illustrious past"), otherwise it would not pose a 'dilemma'. Second, he considers the quest for a distinct identity as one of their preoccupations during this period. Third, he implies that Luxembourgers did not identify with their Burgundian and Habsburg rulers. Given the small amount of first-hand evidence for these three assumptions, one must question the degree to which this interpretation is based on existing traditions in national historiography.<sup>80</sup> Indeed, the quoted passage reveals that Trausch's historical views share much with those of his predecessors. The Middle Ages are elevated, early modern rule seen as alien and both perceptions are projected onto past inhabitants of Luxembourg.

This new narrative—in the formation of which Trausch probably played the greatest role—became part of an official discourse, accepted and welcomed by the ruling government, as seen during the 1989 celebrations. It struck the right balance between glorifying and victimising Luxembourg's past, while providing it with a long history. All these elements can be discerned in the other dominant narratives of the twentieth century. This 'new' narrative thus represents a 'facelift' rather than a revolution. To understand this change towards a more

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<sup>79</sup> G. Trausch, *Histoire du Luxembourg. Le destin européen d'un 'petit pays'*, 157: "Son long passé illustre est un dilemme qui se pose depuis 1443: comment vivre dans un ensemble plus vaste tout en gardant son identité et en marquant sa différence?" The very same idea of a glorious medieval past underpinning early modern particularism can be found in Meyers: "Das Eigenbewußtsein der Luxemburger war im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert zu sehr weiterentwickelt worden, als daß man diese burgundische Politik, die dann das Haus Habsburg weiter verfolgen sollte, stillschweigend hingenommen hätte. Gerade in der Zeit der Fremdherrschaft wurde es offenbar, welch gute Arbeit die Grafen und Herzöge aus dem Haus Luxemburg geleistet hatten..." Joseph Meyers, 'Die Entwicklung des luxemburgischen Sonderbewusstseins unter den Burgundern und Habsburgern', *Ons Hémecht* 43 (1937): 169.

<sup>80</sup> For a critique of Trausch's conception of Luxembourgian particularism, see Henri Wehenkel, 'Quelques compléments à l'histoire nationale du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg', *Cahiers marxistes* 201 (1996), esp. 147–151.

national tone, it is necessary to look at the larger political context of the 1980s, and that of the 1989 celebrations in particular. Several landmark moments for the European integration process took place at around the same time: the Single European Act came into effect in 1987, the goal of achieving monetary union had just been established, and the Schengen agreement was being discussed. In several countries, however, this development of European integration was counter-balanced by an increased identification with a national past, often expressed in the form of official celebrations. In 1989, France celebrated the 200th anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, and Germany commemorated the 40th anniversary of its Fundamental Law. Since 1984, Luxembourg had witnessed a tendency to promote national self-esteem alongside its general commitment to European integration. To give just a few examples of these initiatives, it is worth noting that the law on the national languages was passed in 1984,<sup>81</sup> and that the State Archives and the State Museum were renamed the National Archives and the National Museum. Furthermore, a General Election took place in June 1989. The ruling coalition clearly saw the celebrations as an opportunity to boost its support.

### 3. *Epilogue: New Trends since the 1980s and 1990s*

Writing about 'national histories', Mark Bevir remarked that

master narratives fell out of favour during the twentieth century for various reasons. One reason might be that the academic discipline of history became increasingly professional: historians demanded greater rigour, and adopted narrower temporal and topical foci. Another reason might be that the wider public lost interest in the past, at least as a guide to identity or action...<sup>82</sup>

Luxembourg is no exception to this. Over the past thirty years, four developments can be observed that shall be detailed on the coming pages. First, scholarly history turned away from a national mindset,

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<sup>81</sup> See chapter 7.

<sup>82</sup> Mark Bevir, 'National Histories: Prospects for Critique and Narrative', in *Narrating the Nation. Representations in History, Media and the Arts*, ed. Stefan Berger, Linas Eriksonas and Andrew Mycock (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2008), 56.

thus slowly undermining the teleological master narrative. Second, different spatial frames of reference emerged in both history and politics. The national framework has increasingly been replaced by larger contexts, such as Europe and the 'Great Region'. Third, many traditional *lieux de mémoire* do survive, though largely in popular media. Fourth, history has gradually lost its position as the primary source for models of the nation to language.

At an academic level, the entire national master narrative has been questioned with increasing frequency and to a fundamental extent, a process that started with Paul Margue and Gilbert Trausch's rejection of the concept of the 'foreign dominations' in the 1970s. The alleged foundation of Luxembourg in 963 is an excellent example of this myth-busting trend. In contrast to their predecessors, historians slowly moved away from according Sigefroid his conventionally pivotal role in Luxembourgian history, and came to stress that his famed castle in Luxembourg was of only minor importance among his numerous possessions. Even the date of 963 has been questioned.<sup>83</sup> Contemporary scholars have thus come to dispense with the view that Sigefroid was in any way the founder of the city, country and nation of Luxembourg. Other—hitherto poorly regarded—moments have instead been proposed as more significant steps in the development of the medieval county and its status as a political and cultural centre, such as, for example, the reign of Count Conrad I (†1086).<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, historical research has increasingly distanced itself from studying merely political dimensions of the past.

Attempts have also been made to create entirely new narratives which go beyond traditional perspectives. The left-wing historian Henri Wehenkel revisited 'national history' in a paper published in 1996.<sup>85</sup> Although Wehenkel structured his paper around a number of familiar moments in a manner reminiscent of many earlier, conservative scholars, he sought to undermine the traditional conformism and legitimising objectives of their narratives. Instead, he set out to prove that subversive and republican elements had been present at all

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<sup>83</sup> Michel Margue and Michel Pauly, 'Saint-Michel et le premier siècle de la ville de Luxembourg', *Hémecht* 39 (1987): 5–83.

<sup>84</sup> Michel Margue, 'Du château à la ville: les origines', in *La Ville de Luxembourg*, ed. Gilbert Trausch (Antwerp: Mercator, 1994), 55.

<sup>85</sup> H. Wehenkel, 'Quelques compléments à l'histoire nationale du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg'.

levels of Luxembourgian society at least since 1795, by stressing the French revolutionary roots of some nineteenth-century Orangists, questioning the extent of popular support for Luxembourgian independence at different moments and emphasising events such as the 1921 steel workers' strike, which had been quietly ignored by conservative-minded scholars.<sup>86</sup> Three years later, in 1999, Lucien Blau attempted to apply a similar approach to the history of twentieth-century Luxembourg and by taking politically marginalised groups into account.<sup>87</sup> Although structured largely around political events, Blau's article placed strong emphasis on economic structures and made a conscious effort to refute the implication of national unity which underlay the traditional narrative.<sup>88</sup> Both Blau and Wehenkel see themselves as part of a left-wing counter-discourse; their views have not (yet) entered the more common representations of history.

A more widely-accepted recent trend is to place emphasis on larger spatial frameworks. The national master narrative tended to examine Luxembourg's entire past largely from within the boundaries of the contemporary grand duchy alone. Although this introspectiveness has been questioned for some time, it has been criticised with increasing frequency in recent years. In 1996, for instance, the politics of the 'national' hero John of Bohemia were placed into a European context.<sup>89</sup> More recently Michel Pauly has asserted that Luxembourg's past can only be understood by viewing its history through a "trans-national" lens.<sup>90</sup> This shift to a larger spatial framework is mirrored—in a less reflected way though—by political discourse, which sees Luxembourg's opportunities for economic and political success on the level of the Great Region around Luxembourg and that of the European Union.

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 155–157, 169, 171; see also Denis Scuto, *Sous le signe de la grève de mars 1921* (Esch-sur-Alzette: editpress, 1990).

<sup>87</sup> Lucien Blau, "Gute Zeiten, schlechte Zeiten"—que faut-il retenir du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle à l'échelle luxembourgeoise?, in *Lëtzbuerger Almanach vum Johonnert*, ed. Guy Binsfeld (Luxembourg: Binsfeld, 1999), 6–34.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 8. "Ma propre démarche privilégiera les aspérités, les contradictions, le dissensus et s'opposera au concept conservateur de la nation dont la matrice a été élaborée par l'intelligentsia nationaliste (Nicolas Ries, Lucien Koenig) et conservatrice de l'école des Nicolas et Paul Margue."

<sup>89</sup> Michel Margue and Jean Schroeder, ed., *Un itinéraire européen* (Brussels: Crédit Communal / Luxembourg: CLUDEM, 1996).

<sup>90</sup> Michel Pauly, 'Questions autour d'une parure en coquillages trouvée à Waldbillig. Plaidoyer pour une perspective trans- ou meta-nationale de l'histoire luxembourgeoise', *Hémecht* 58 (2006): 9–33.



This change in the spatial perspective shall be the major theme of Part Two of this book and will be explored in detail in chapter 5.

Another clear trend in recent Luxembourgian historiography is that narrative overviews of the country's 'entire' past have become rare, while the few that are published tend to address a very general audience. Although they go beyond the teleology of their predecessors, these works tend to adopt the structure of the traditional narrative.<sup>91</sup> While contentious concepts such as the 'foreign dominations' are rarely found in contemporary works, large-scale narratives are still structured around political issues and familiar dates of traditional importance (e.g. 963, 1443, 1815).

Over the past thirty years, the distance between scholarly history and popular representations of Luxembourg's past has also grown. While most academic research has abandoned and even undermined a 'national' approach to Luxembourg's history, most of the old myths remain in place on a more popular level. In the *Superjhemp* comic books—the most widely read Luxembourgish publication<sup>92</sup>—for example, the national master narrative still provides historical points of reference. The foundation myth of Sigefroid (and his legendary wife Melusine),<sup>93</sup> and the 'foreign dominations',<sup>94</sup> to name just two major *topoi* of the national master narrative, both appear prominently. More recently, John of Bohemia even became the central protagonist of a new series of comic books.<sup>95</sup> The depiction of the king repeats many of the stereotypes developed in traditional historiography.<sup>96</sup> Primary school textbooks, however, are among the most influential vehicles for the survival of a number of 'national' representations of Luxembourg's past. Generally written by non-specialist schoolteachers, they continued to promote the national master narrative until the end of the

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<sup>91</sup> E.g. Jean-Marie Kreins, *Histoire du Luxembourg: des origines à nos jours*. 4th ed. (Paris, 2008); Paul Feltes, 'Une histoire mouvementée. D'un petit pays au Coeur de l'Europe', in *L'art au Luxembourg: de la Renaissance au début du XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Brussels: Fonds Mercator, Esch-sur-Alzette: Schortgen, 2006), 9–44.

<sup>92</sup> See also chapter 7.

<sup>93</sup> Roger Leiner and Lucien Czuga, *De Superjhemp. Dynamit fir d'Dynastie* (Luxembourg: Revue, 1989), 20–25.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>95</sup> Lucien Czuga and ND! Genen, *De leschte Ritter. De Schatz vun Draachesteen* (Luxembourg: Revue, 2005); Czuga and Genen, *De leschte Ritter. De Schwuer vun den Tempelritter* (Luxembourg: Revue, 2007).

<sup>96</sup> See also Pit Péporté, 'The creation of medieval history in Luxembourg' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2008), 208–209.

1990s. These textbooks sustained the earlier importance attributed to the ‘foreign dominations’ in particular. As one textbook put it: “Luxembourg was occupied for almost 400 years by foreign rulers. Apart from a few nice and calm, but short periods, this brought terrible suffering to our land”.<sup>97</sup> More recent textbooks, by contrast, have radically changed their approach, focussing instead on social rather than political history and practically ignoring key elements of the national master narrative.<sup>98</sup> It illustrates that the new political frameworks and different priorities of contemporary scholarly research have also entered primary school teaching, albeit with a delay of a generation.

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<sup>97</sup> Ed. Kirsch and René Worré, *Geschichte 2. 6. Schuljahr. Vom späten Mittelalter bis zum zweiten Weltkrieg* (Luxembourg: FGIL, 1994), 1. “Luxemburg wurde fast 400 Jahre durch fremde Herrscher besetzt. Das brachte, außer einigen schöneren und ruhigeren, aber kurzen Zeiten, entsetzliches Leid über unser Land.”

<sup>98</sup> See Education nationale, ed., *Die Zeitmaschine. Lëtzebuurger Geschichtsbuch* (Luxembourg: MENFPS, 2002).



## CONCLUSIONS

The central theme of the first part of this book concerned the manner in which the national master narrative of Luxembourg's history presented the past, how it spread through society and how it developed over time. Although Arthur Herchen's *Manuel*—published in 1918—constituted an authoritative statement of this national master narrative, it expressed few ideas that were actually new. The same can be said about the national master narrative's underlying characteristics. First, it reflects a sense of continuity with a past which is not seen as a different world. This identification of the past and the present led to the elision of the reality of the past and historical representations. The past is seen through the lens of the present, rather than in its own terms. Second, the national master narrative is marked by a distinct teleology. Every aspect of the past, regardless of its antiquity, is seen as having led inevitably to the present. It is a strictly linear view of history that requires a starting point in the form of a foundation myth and an endpoint in the present. This endpoint is defined by the vision of Luxembourg as an independent country headed by a constitutional monarchy, united around a central identity, and resistant to outside invaders. Third, as a result of the identification of past and present, and a pervasive teleology, the national master narrative tends to simplify the past in its quest to defend the idealised representation of contemporary Luxembourg which it seeks to legitimise and propound.

The national master narrative's view of the past—focused, above all, on a desire to rally the nation around the monarch and to defend the country's independence—found expression in many different media: history books, art, monuments, large-scale celebrations, architecture and literature. The paucity of counter-discourses until the late twentieth century, however, remains surprising. Most representations of the past somehow adopted many of its features, even if their objective was entirely different from that of the master narrative's proponents. Nazi interpretations and Communist perspectives shared the teleological character of the national master narrative, despite their divergent ends. Interestingly these two rival discourses repeated some of its structural features, including the tenth-century foundation myth and

the grandeur of the fourteenth century, foreign oppression from the fifteenth century and the arrival of independence in the nineteenth.

This overall trend has only been broken in the past three or four decades, although emancipation from the national master narrative has been relatively slow. Historians began to bring wider heuristic frameworks to bear on interpretations of the past, thus ridding the traditional master narrative of some of its teleological features. At the same time, the general public and the state continued to accept history as a major contributor to the sense of national identity, especially in 1989, and thus encouraged the survival of history's national character. The latter still dominates much of popular culture nowadays. A more radical re-interpretation of Luxembourg's past has been made possible in more recent years only as language has come to supplant history as the principal determinant of conceptions of national identity. The decline in the 'national' status of history has thus led to an ever-increasing internationalisation of scholarly representations of the past.

PART TWO

DRAWING THE BOUNDARIES



## INTRODUCTION

### FROM BORDER PATROL TO BORDER PETROL STATIONS?

Narratives of ‘common belonging’ use implicit spatial frames of reference to make sweeping judgements about people living in or coming from a certain area. Tending to favour homogenous, ‘completed’ conceptions of identity, such narratives often ignore the multiple, simultaneous and hybrid nature of lived spaces, as defined by Henri Lefebvre, Doreen Massey and Ernest Laclau.<sup>1</sup> As a result of the ‘spatial turn’ they have taken since the 1990s, however, the humanities and social sciences have moved away from viewing space merely as an empty vessel waiting to be filled by social events and towards a more dynamic understanding of the relationship between space and social actors.<sup>2</sup> While some theorists have been accused of veering too close towards a deterministic conception of space, Henri Lefebvre’s work manages to avoid that pitfall, as Christian Schmid has shown.<sup>3</sup> Lefebvre’s tripartite model of practices of space (the perceived), representations of space (the conceived) and spaces of representation (the lived) remains highly influential. For Lefebvre, space *per se* has no independent existence distinct from social actors: instead, it is produced by practices, medial representations and social life. Lefebvre’s notion of representations of space is particularly important for our present purpose. In Lefebvre’s

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<sup>1</sup> Spatialities are here understood as interactions of the social and the spatial as realised and experienced by thinking, feeling, and doing individuals. Michael Keith and Steve Pile, ‘The politics of place’, in *Place and the Politics of Identity*, ed. Michael Keith and Steve Pile (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 6 (on spatiality), 16 (on homogenisation); Brigitte Hipfl, ‘Mediale Identitätsräume. Skizzen zu einem “spatial turn”’, in *Identitätsräume. Nation, Körper und Geschlecht in den Medien. Eine Topografie*, ed. Brigitte Hipfl, Elisabeth Klaus and Uta Scheer (Bielefeld: transcript, 2004), 28.

<sup>2</sup> Andreas Pott, ‘Identität und Raum. Perspektiven nach dem Cultural Turn’, in *Kulturelle Geographien. Zur Beschäftigung mit Raum und Ort nach dem Cultural Turn*, ed. Christian Berndt, Robert Pütz (Bielefeld: transcript, 2007), 27.

<sup>3</sup> Christian Schmid, *Stadt, Raum und Gesellschaft. Henri Lefebvre und die Theorie der Produktion des Raumes* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2005), 294–300; Benno Werlen, ‘Körper, Raum und mediale Repräsentation’, in *Spatial Turn. Das Raumparadigma in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften*, ed. Jörg Döring and Tristian Thielmann (Bielefeld: transcript, 2007), 370.



words, conceived space is the space of scholars, of town planners and technocrats. It is the dominant space in society, a mode of production (of meaning) that is verbally and intellectually constructed.<sup>4</sup> Existing territories or social relations are not longer thought simply to be depicted, but actively (co)produced by means of representing space, such as cartography.<sup>5</sup>

Following Lefebvre, it is possible to see that space informs social, political and economic decisions not as a result of its physical characteristics, but as a consequence of the manner in which that space is conceived of, enacted and performed. It is not necessary to think of a river, for example, as *either* a natural border *or* a natural means of communication: it can be both, according to the way it is being used and described or ‘naturalised’. Significantly, the meaning of a river can change over time, as obvious discontinuities of discursive practices clearly demonstrate.<sup>6</sup> The meaning of spaces can, moreover, be multiple and contradictory: petrol stations near Luxembourg’s state borders may be described in positive terms (a ‘petrol paradise’ for the user, a job market for the area and an important source of tax income), in a derogatory manner (a ‘petrol tourist’ destination, as opposed to ‘real’, i.e. cultural, tourist attractions) or pejoratively (a sin against the environment, or a crime against the Kyoto agreement). These judgements do not exist in a semantic void, but are embedded in distinctive discursive fields, such as economics, tourism or ecology. At the same time, petrol stations—like rivers—are also living spaces: for one of the truck drivers interviewed by filmmaker Geneviève Mersch, the border petrol station is part of the “road”, his “space of freedom”.<sup>7</sup>

Although liminal (in-between) spaces have gained in importance as recent globalisation processes interconnect humans on an unprecedented scale, it is important to note that social space has never been stable. Medieval and early-modern spaces were not limited to face-to-face communities. Peddlers, vagrants, day labourers, seasonal workers, journeymen, students, soldiers and pilgrims crossed borders routinely,

<sup>4</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *La production de l'espace*. 3rd ed. (Paris: Anthropos, 1986), 48–49.

<sup>5</sup> Jörg Dünne, ‘Die Karte als Operations- und Imaginationsmatrix. Zur Geschichte eines Raummediums’, in *Spatial Turn* (see note 3), 50–51; David Pinder, ‘Mapping Worlds. Cartography and the Politics of Representation’, in *Cultural Geography in Practice*, ed. Alison Blunt et al. (London: Arnold, 2003), 172–187.

<sup>6</sup> Lucien Febvre’s 1935 work on the Rhine is a pioneering study: Lucien Febvre, *Le Rhin. Histoire, mythes et réalités*, ed. Peter Schöttler (Paris: Perrin, 1997).

<sup>7</sup> Geneviève Mersch, *Plein d'essence*. DVD. (Bertrange: Samsa Film, 2007).

while vast networks were spun by merchants, aristocrats and members of the virtual ‘Republic of Letters’.<sup>8</sup> The king-in-council was itinerant until the seventeenth century and the court a ‘moveable feast’. These observations lead us to be somewhat sceptic about the evolutionary models developed by Lefebvre, and later by Benno Werlen, with regards to the changing representations of space. For Lefebvre, the ‘absolute space’ of face-to-face societies progressively developed into the ‘abstract space’ of modern nation-states.<sup>9</sup> Examining late modernity—a concept borrowed from Anthony Giddens—Werlen has argued that globalisation has ‘de-anchored’ (*entankert*) representations of spatial identity and has ripped apart the deep ontological unity of space and culture/society. This unity—previously “embodied” or “reified” in face-to-face societies, and later “territorialised” in the nation-state paradigm—has now lost all meaning.<sup>10</sup> Since these models do not do justice to medieval and early-modern complexities, the process they describe should not be seen as a linear evolution, but rather as synchronous and overlapping stages of development. These models are relevant to the following chapters, as they underline that high social mobility often contrasts starkly with constructions of fixed space and group identity, where the fictitious homogeneity of the former reinforces the supposed unity of the latter, and vice versa. Our hypothesis is that this paradox is not rooted in a particular time, such as (late) modernity, but that it emerges with more or less strength in specific social circumstances. For instance, in times of social upheaval (wars, financial and economic crises), when community ties were under duress, the ontological unity of space and culture/society is stressed more forcefully.<sup>11</sup> Werlen himself points to contemporary spatial constructions such as the ‘axis of evil’,<sup>12</sup> but one could also mention ‘the Turks at the gates of Vienna’, which challenged the idea of Europe as the realm of Christianity. The amalgamation of space and culture/

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<sup>8</sup> Sylvia Hahn, *Migration—Arbeit—Geschlecht. Arbeitsmigration in Mitteleuropa vom 17. bis zum Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen: V&R, 2008), 71–72.

<sup>9</sup> H. Lefebvre, *La production de l'espace*, 265–336.

<sup>10</sup> Benno Werlen, *Globalisierung, Region und Regionalisierung. Sozialgeographie alltäglicher Regionalisierungen*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2007), 25–6; Werlen ‘Körper, Raum und mediale Repräsentation’, in *Spatial Turn* (see note 3), 371 (*tiefenontologisch*), 372–379 (phases).

<sup>11</sup> According to Peter Weichhart, a fixed spatial frame of reference may be sought or offered precisely when territorial attachments dissolve, as a kind of compensation, Weichhart, *Raumbezogene Identität* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1990), 25–9.

<sup>12</sup> B. Werlen, ‘Körper, Raum und mediale Repräsentation’, 365.

society has always been a social construct and did not necessarily reflect social reality. What has changed in (late) modernity, are the emergence of new media and the scale of 'other-ing', not the process as such. Moreover, recent studies point to a revival of the local which both reacts to and draws legitimacy from the global.<sup>13</sup>

The following chapters will examine the manner in which the conceived unity of a culture/society and a given space functioned as a narrative of identity formation from the nineteenth century onwards by using Luxembourg as a case-study. As Lefebvre has pointed out, 'abstract space' does not need to be homogeneous; heterogeneity is no obstacle for a space to be categorised as 'one'.<sup>14</sup> Thus, Luxembourg's regions are differentiated from one another, but their separate nature mostly serves to underline the fact that all regions complement each other as part of a quasi-organic whole. It is, for example, possible to contrast the rural and wooded Northern Oesling with the heavy industry, the Moselle vineyards and the fertile of Gutland,<sup>15</sup> but these apparently divergent images of regional identity often contribute to the construction of a national whole. In the national anthem, *Ons Hémécht* (Our Homeland), Luxembourg's topographical diversity is even emphasised as a means of demonstrating the country's overarching unity. These stereotypical, highly idealised landscapes may also be found in the semantic fields of tourism and the arts. Since landscapes, however, operate on a different level than representations of territory and borders,<sup>16</sup> they will not be taken into account in this study. What is interesting, as far as border delimitations are concerned, is that some internal differences are naturalised and inscribed in land-

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<sup>13</sup> Roland Robertson, 'Glocalisation: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity', in *Global Modernities*, ed. Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash and Roland Robertson (London: Sage, 1995), 25–44; Doreen Massey, 'Keine Entlastung für das Lokale', in *Die Macht des Lokalen in einer Welt ohne Grenzen*, ed. Helmuth Berking (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2006), 25–31.

<sup>14</sup> H. Lefebvre, *La production de l'espace*, 330–331.

<sup>15</sup> For an analysis of various Luxembourgian landscapes, see Myriam Sunnen, 'D'Musel', in *Lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg. Usages du passé et construction nationale*, ed. Sonja Kmec, Benoît Majerus, Michel Margue and Pit Péporté (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 2007), 235–240; Sunnen, 'D'Éislek', in *ibid.*, 241–246; Sunnen, 'De Minett', in *ibid.*, 247–252; Sunnen, "'Den Zolverknapp as kê Parnas". Le paysage dans la littérature luxembourgeoise', in *Identitäts(de)konstruktionen. Neue Studien zur Luxemburgistik*, ed. Claude D. Conter and Germaine Goetzinger (Esch-sur-Alzette: Phi and CNL, 2008), 33–52.

<sup>16</sup> Michel Lussault, *L'homme spatial. La construction sociale de l'espace humain* (Paris: Seuil, 2007), 135–140.

scape, while others (between nationals and non-nationals, citizens and non-citizens, privileged and non-privileged) remain less visible. Such social distinctions may be discussed in relation to language, but they are rarely cast in terms of territory, even though spatial segregation is observable in everyday practice. As we shall see, these lines of division are stamped out in representations of space, since the unity between space and culture presupposes a unity of culture.

For pragmatic reasons, the evidential corpus analysed in this part has been limited to a few select fields and it is important to state clearly what can and cannot be taken into consideration in such a study. In that they offer a somewhat different perspective on the construction of identity to political discourse, literary appropriations of space—for instance—constitute a valuable area of investigation. Corina Mersch's *Laissez-passer* or Gilles Ortlieb's stories of travelling and by-passing, for example, question the notion of bounded space and establish a 'third space' defined by a lack of territorial specificity, and the co-mingling of traditions and social relationships.<sup>17</sup> Despite the importance of such tropes, this chapter does not propose to encroach on the territory of literary scholars and will—for reasons of scope and practicality—provide only a brief look at some of the most pertinent examples. By the same token, 'senses of place'—that is to say the affinities and personal associations by which individuals feel linked with a certain place—are certainly relevant to the purpose of this section, but are nevertheless excluded from the analysis on practical grounds. A thorough study of 'senses of place' would have to be based on interviews designed to ascertain individuals' constructions of belonging. Interviews of this nature would involve significant methodological difficulties. Although the necessary interaction of appropriation ('identification with') and attribution ('identification of') has been stressed,<sup>18</sup> research tends to

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<sup>17</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 218–219. Cf. Marion Colas-Blaise and Jalel El Gharbi, ed., *Identités: incursion tunisienne dans les lettres luxembourgeoises* (Esch-sur-Alzette: Phi, 2006); Jeanne E. Glesener, 'La littérature de l'(im)migration au Luxembourg', *Identitäts(de)konstruktionen. Neue Studien zur Luxemburgistik*, ed. Claude D. Conter and Germaine Goetzinger. (Esch-sur-Alzette: Phi and CNL, 2008), 111–129.

<sup>18</sup> A useful overview of earlier debates with important influence on subsequent authors is provided by Peter Weichhart, *Raumbezogene Identität* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1990).

concentrate on either appropriation or attribution, and empirical studies of the relationship between the two are still rare.<sup>19</sup>

Historiographical and cartographical descriptions of Luxembourg from the mid-nineteenth to the early twenty-first century will constitute the evidential focus of this section. Although it is true that early-modern representations of the duchy of Luxembourg, and cartographical and narrative attempts to place it in relation to larger entities (the Holy Roman Empire, the Habsburg Netherlands and France, for example) certainly deserve closer attention, this chapter will focus on writings *about*—rather than *from*—the period before the nation-state. In the last twenty years, the manner in which early-modern maps have been both selected and displayed has changed considerably. In 1980, Emile van der Vekene's ground-breaking edition of early-modern maps of Luxembourg was restricted to representations of the duchy of Luxembourg as a named and geographically defined item. The fact that these maps were original included in atlases of larger entities (*Orbis Terrarum*, *Germaniae Imperium*, *Royaume de France* or *Burgundisch und Niederländischer Crais*) was hardly mentioned. By contrast, the 2007 exhibition *Magna Regio. Luxembourg et Grande Région, cartes, atlas, vues (XV<sup>ème</sup> au XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle)* showed maps of the entire Netherlands and of Central Europe. Whether this example of a shift of focus from the national to the transnational reflects a change of paradigm is the central question to be addressed by the following two chapters.

The working hypothesis is that there are two—competing or overlapping—discourses that determine and legitimise what Luxembourg is. The first discourse is 'centripetal' and holds that the territory of the sovereign nation-state is the outcome of a long process of territorial formation. The second discourse is 'centrifugal' and seeks the opening of national borders, based again on historical precedence. Chapter 4 will examine the 'centripetal' discourse and the nationalisation of Luxembourgian territory and its inhabitants. The subsequent chapter will focus on processes of de- and renationalisation. It will examine how mainstream political discourse has sought to give Luxembourg a distinct position in the context of the European integration pro-

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<sup>19</sup> The interaction between the two processes is the focus of a research project entitled IDENT—*Identités socio-culturelles et politiques identitaires au Luxembourg* (2007–2010) at the University of Luxembourg. URL <http://www.ident.ipse.uni.lu> (last accessed 28 September 2008).

cess. It placed Luxembourg first ‘at the heart’ of Europe (being one of the founding member states of the European Economic Community), then—after the enlargement of the EU, when its centre moved eastwards—‘at the heart’ of the so-called Great Region. Chapter 5 will look at what historical models were sought to provide past legitimacy and future guidance for Luxembourg as part of the Great Region. It will examine the interactions of the scientific community and political decision makers to shed light on the resulting interdiscourse.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Jürgen Link has developed Foucault’s theoretical model of scientific discourses and differentiates between disciplinary *Spezialdiskurse* and *Interdiskurse* in popular culture. Jürgen Link, ‘Dispositiv und Interdiskurs. Mit Überlegungen zum “Dreieck” Foucault-Bourdieu-Luhmann’, in *Foucault in den Kulturwissenschaften. Eine Bestandsaufnahme*, ed. Clemens Kammler and Rolf Parr (Heidelberg: Synchron, 2007), 219–238.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE 'CENTRIPETAL' DISCURSIVE STRATEGY: NATIONALISING THE TERRITORY

How can a sense of the unity of culture and space be reconciled with Luxembourg's complex history of belonging to a selection of larger entities, including the Holy Roman Empire, France and the Low Countries under Spain and Austria? This question was felt most strongly in times of intensified nation-building, and particularly during the second half of the nineteenth century and the inter-war period (1918–1939). At those times emerged the 'centripetal' discourse, which—for analytical reasons—may be broken down into four distinct strands. The first two follow apparently contradictory lines of argument. The first argument is based on the contention that fidelity to the monarch has been an historical constant, while the second rests on the belief that the period from the fifteenth century to the early nineteenth century was marked by the 'foreign dominations' of non-native rulers and administrators. The genealogy of these two discursive strands must be examined in order to find out when and why they come into being and how they are combined or supersede one another.

The 'centripetal' strategy is made up of two further strands, seeking to link physical space and its inhabitants: the 'reification' and the 'territorialisation' of space. The third strand examined in this chapter 'reifies' the notion of 'homeland', rendering it static in time and space. 'Reification' has its hey-day in the inter-war period, when 'homeland' was constructed as a time-honoured connection of ancestry/blood and soil. The Luxembourgish term *Heemecht* denotes both the 'homeland' and the 'fatherland'. There is no equivalent of the German *Vaterland*, and no distinction between *petite patrie* (the place where one is born) and *grande patrie* (the Republic), as in the Roman and later French tradition. This linguistic peculiarity would merit further investigation. It may be linked to the tardy process of nation-building and/or to the late development of Luxembourgish as a language regarded as appropriate for serious or solemn topics (see Part Three). The term *Heemecht* has been translated here by 'homeland', except when it clearly relates to the Luxembourgian state or nation.



The final strand, ‘territorialisation’, emerges much later and links space to statehood, citizenship and political borders. This strand is particularly tricky to analyse, since it represents a highly potent inter-discourse, that is a popular appropriation of a specific (historiographical) discourse. In the 1980s, some historians set out to examine the discursive construction of national consciousness. They concluded that this feeling of group belonging had not developed *ex nihilo*, but was based on a pre-existing narrative of particularism, along the lines of ‘monarchical fidelity’ and ‘foreign domination’. Though this historiographical discourse is part of the *centrifugal* tradition, which gained impetus around that time, it was rapidly translated into a variety of popular media, such as monuments, exhibitions and newspaper articles. It thereby lost its focus on the continuity of *discourse* between Old Regime particularism and late nineteenth-century nationalism. Instead, a quasi-organic continuity between national consciousness and pre-existing particularism was proclaimed and was embedded in the physical configuration of space, notably in the construction of the foothills of the Ardennes as a natural border. As we shall see, what makes ‘natural borders’ effective is not their actual importance but their suitability as a symbol.<sup>1</sup>

### 1. *The topos of ‘Monarchical Loyalty’*

Just as in most European countries, state-building preceded nation-building in Luxembourg and, just as elsewhere, learned societies were founded to dig up historical ‘roots’ that would explain and foster the people’s attachment to their ‘homeland’ and to the political entity now conceived as the ‘fatherland’. While the notion of ‘homeland’ was locally bound but otherwise not clearly defined, ‘fatherland’ referred to a political nation. In the first half of the nineteenth century, however, there was some ambiguity as to which nation this was. Luxembourg belonged at that time to the German Confederation (1815 to 1866) and pan-Germanism was not absent from the public debate. In 1848, some politicians declared Germany to be the ‘fatherland’, but with

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<sup>1</sup> Werner Köster, *Die Rede über den ‘Raum’. Zur semantischen Karriere eines deutschen Konzeptes* (Heidelberg: Synchron, 2002), 83.

rather less success than in other member states of the Confederation.<sup>2</sup> Even there, the emerging historical societies tended to be more interested in the local and regional past than in national (pan-German) history.<sup>3</sup> By contrast, the *Société pour la recherche et la conservation des monuments historiques dans le Grand-Duché de Luxembourg*, founded in 1845, made no distinction between the local past and the national (Luxembourgian) past, which became an ever more important frame of reference. In 1874—when the political ties to Germany had been severed—Jean Engling, the president of what had become the *Section historique* of the Grand-Ducal Institute, declared that the prime goal of the association was to bear witness to Luxembourg as fatherland, nationality and civilisation:

The fatherland is the land of [our] fathers. Without [historical] monuments we would have a native country, but we would not know that this country is also our fatherland, i.e. the soil cultivated by our ancestors... It is also thanks to their history that Luxembourgers take pride in having a fatherland, a common fatherland; it is thanks to their monuments that they are certain that their country has been inhabited by their fathers *almost exclusively and without interruption* from their first count to the noble dynasty that constitutes their current happiness.<sup>4</sup>

Continuity is thus traced not only through time, but also through the continuity of spatial occupation. The members of the Historical Section were confronted with the delicate task of reconciling the search for an 'authentic' Luxembourg past with loyalty to the sovereign (grand duke of Luxembourg and king of the Netherlands), whose patronage the

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<sup>2</sup> Norbert Franz, 'Nation oder Partikularismus: Die Revolution von 1848/49 in Luxemburg', in *Der schlimmste Punkt in der Provinz: demokratische Revolution 1848/49 in Trier und Umgebung* (Trier: Städtisches Museum Simeonstift Trier, 1998), 644–661.

<sup>3</sup> Gabriele B. Clemens, *Sanctus amor patriae. Eine vergleichende Studie zu deutschen und italienischen Geschichtsvereinen im 19. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2004), 400.

<sup>4</sup> Jean Engling, *La philosophie des monuments historiques. Discours prononcé à la séance publique de l'Institut le 19 novembre 1874* (Luxembourg [1874]), 3–4: "La patrie, c'est le pays des pères. Sans les monuments nous aurions bien un pays natal, mais nous ne saurions pas que ce pays est aussi notre patrie, c-à-d. le sol cultivé par nos ancêtres... C'est aussi grâce à leur histoire que les Luxembourgeois se glorifient d'avoir une patrie, une patrie commune; c'est par leurs monuments qu'ils sont certains que leur pays a été habité par leurs pères et même *assez exclusivement et sans discontinuation* depuis leur premier comte jusqu'à l'auguste Dynastie qui fait aujourd'hui leur bonheur." (emphasis added)

Institute enjoyed. The concept of ‘monarchical fidelity’ was at the heart of this balancing act: continual loyalty to the monarch throughout the ages was defined as a characteristic feature of the people of Luxembourg, one that set them apart from the other—more unruly—provinces of the Netherlands. The threat that fervent nationalism might lead to demands for independence in a manner similar to that seen in a number of European conflicts during the nineteenth century was thus defused by reference to a consensual past.

The *topos* of monarchical loyalty was not invented by Engling. It is interesting to note that he explained loyalty to the House of Orange-Nassau by reference to an older loyalty, sworn to their then political enemies, the Spanish Habsburgs. The concept was first used with reference to the province of Luxembourg during the Eighty Years’ War (1568–1648), it was mobilised during the Brabant Revolution against Emperor Joseph II (1789–1790) and during the Belgian Revolution against King William I (1830–1831). Each time, the embattled ruler was keen to hold up the faithfulness of a small number of his subjects as an example for others. Although these ‘loyal’ subjects were ready to trade political moderation for certain privileges, their concessions were couched in the language of chivalry. These declarations of fidelity are part of the tugging for power, as are the original narrations or inscriptions that vouch for this fidelity. As we shall see, they have been taken at face value and have been integrated into the national master narrative, recounted in history textbooks and tourist guides. The stereotypical narrations of ‘monarchical fidelity’ examined here are the 1598 oath of allegiance, the testimony of Erycius Puteanus, the Town Hall inscription and the loyalty the local élites showed in the Brabant and Belgian revolutions. Their analysis will show what elements of the past have *not* been integrated into the master narrative and how this selection contributes to establishing a continuity between Luxembourgian patriotism in the Old Regime and today, notwithstanding the fact that the political borders have considerably shifted since.

### 1.1. *The 1598 Oath of Allegiance*

The first episode traditionally mentioned in connection with monarchical fidelity is the oath of allegiance the delegates of the Provincial Estates of Luxembourg swore to the Infanta Isabella, represented by her future husband and co-ruler Archduke Albert, in Brussels on 22

August 1598.<sup>5</sup> The story was first recounted by Jean Bertholet in his *Histoire ecclésiastique et civile du Duché de Luxembourg et Comté de Chiny*, published between 1741 and 1743:

the deputies of the Luxembourg Estates explained that in such ceremonies, they were in the habit of not sitting down, but staying upright with the officers of the court, to the right side of the Prince, immediately after the Knights of the Golden Fleece, and of being the only ones to pay homage in a loud voice and in German.<sup>6</sup>

The Jesuit author emphasised the rights and prerogatives of the Luxembourg Estates and offered to dedicate this volume to the Estates, whose financial support had allowed his work to be published. Despite Bertholet's efforts to please the provincial Estates, however, several members came to regret an "expenditure that profits neither the country nor the Republic of Letters".<sup>7</sup> By contrast, Jean Tellot, a priest in the service of the baroness of Eltz, whose *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire civile et ecclésiastique de la province de Luxembourg* were published posthumously in 1750, considered that the 1598 episode "merits reporting here as true praise of the province of Luxembourg".<sup>8</sup> It is probably for similarly patriotic reasons that Joseph Paquet chose to reproduce the Latin text, which Tellot had dug up in the "archive of the province", in his 1838 textbook.<sup>9</sup> Since Paquet also mentions that

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<sup>5</sup> Isabella was to receive the "sermon of fidelity, faith, homage, promise and obligation," according to the '*Abandon et transport des Pays-Bas*', signed by King Philip II on 6 May 1598, reproduced in Mariette Wildgen, '*Le pays et duché de Luxembourg et comté de Chiny 1555–1598*', 2 vols. (Unpublished MA thesis, University of Strasbourg, 1988), vol. 2, 456.

<sup>6</sup> Jean Bertholet, *Histoire ecclésiastique et civile du Duché de Luxembourg et Comté de Chiny*, 8 vols. (Luxembourg: André Chevalier, 1741–1743), vol. 8, 54: "Les Députés des Etats de Luxembourg représentèrent que dans de pareilles cérémonies, ils avoient coutume de ne pas s'asseoir, mais d'être debout avec les Officiers de la Cour, à la droite du Prince, immédiatement après les Chevaliers de la Toison d'or, & de prêter seuls foi & hommage à voix haute, & en langue Allemande."

<sup>7</sup> Quoted by Jean-Claude Müller, 'Jean Bertholet SJ (1688–1755) umstrittener Historiker des Herzogtums Luxemburg', *Hémecht* 46 (1994): 98.

<sup>8</sup> [Joh. Tellot], *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire civile et ecclésiastique de la province de Luxembourg*, 3 vols. [1750], vol. 1, 47–48. The manuscript is held by the Archives nationales du Luxembourg, Section historique Abt. 15 (mss) n°51. The authors would like to thank Nadine Zeien for locating this item.

<sup>9</sup> Joseph Paquet, *Die Hauptthatsachen der Luxemburger Geschichte zur Grundlage bei seinem Unterrichte dargestellt* (Luxembourg: J. Lamort, 1838), 58. The cover of this book bears the quote "It is dishonourable for a Luxembourgger to ignore the affairs of his country" (*Turpe est hominem Luxemburgensem res domesticas ignorare*), taken from the original 1634 preface of Alexander Wiltheim, *Res Munsteriensium*, ed. Jules

the oath was delivered in German, it is safe to assume that he takes this detail from Bertholet, since Tellot did not refer to the choice of language. The narrative gains weight in Jean Schoetter's 1882 textbook. He translated the Latin quote Paquet had given in a footnote into German and placed it into the main body of the text:

the Archduke said in a slightly irritated tone: 'Why are you surprised at this mark of favour? You have risen against God and the King, while the Luxembourgers stayed true to God and their King, like a bulwark of faith. One finger or even a wink of their eyes will be an adequate sign of their loyalty.'<sup>10</sup>

The use of direct speech and the interpretation of the tone ("in the tone of a sovereign", according to Tellot; "slightly irritated" for Schoetter and "not without bitterness" for Massarette)<sup>11</sup> renders the Archduke's defence of the Luxembourgian delegates' non-conformism particularly vivid and poignant. It becomes the defining moment of the relationship between the Archduke and the Luxembourgian people in the illustrated 'Who's Who' of Luxembourgian history published by Charles Arendt at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>12</sup>

The issue at stake here is the independence enjoyed by Luxembourg's Provincial Estates—and thus the continuity of 'national' independence throughout the ages. Indeed, the 1598 'one-finger-oath' is sometimes conflated with the *lettres de non préjudice* request made

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Wilhelm (Luxembourg: Beffort, 1923), 1. See Jacques Maas, 'Ziele und Inhalte des Geschichtsunterrichts in Luxemburg 1815–1914', in *Schule und Identitätsbildung in der Region Saar-Lor-Lux*, ed. Rolf Wittenbrock, Gérard Michaux, and Paul Dostert (Saarbrücken: Ottweiler, 1994), 25–44; Marc Schoentgen, 'Staatsbürgerliche Erziehung und Geschichtsunterricht in Luxemburg', *Hémecht* 58 (2006): 525–547.

<sup>10</sup> Jean Schoetter, *Geschichte des Luxemburger Landes nach den besten Quellen, herausgegeben und fortgesetzt von A. Herchen and N. van Wervecke* (Luxembourg: M. Breisdorff, 1882), 232: "Sprach Albert in einem etwas gereizten Tone: 'Was wundert ihr Euch über diese Auszeichnung? Ihr habt Euch gegen Gott und den König empört, die Luxemburger aber, welche wie ein Bollwerk des Glaubens Gott und ihrem Könige treu blieben, können mir mit einem Finger, ja selbst mit einem Winke ihrer Augen ein hinlängliches Zeichen ihrer Treue geben'."

<sup>11</sup> [Joh. Tellot], *Mémoires*, 1: 47: Joseph Massarette, *Der Luxemburger Gouverneur Graf & Fürst Peter Ernst von Mansfeld (1517–1604). Ein Beitrag zur luxemburgisch-belgischen Geschichte im 16. Jahrhundert* (Luxembourg: Ch.-Léon Beffort, 1925), 219: "D'un ton de souverain"; "nicht ohne Bitterkeit".

<sup>12</sup> The episode is even recounted in the notice dedicated to the Infanta, although she was not present in 1598, Charles Arendt, *Porträt-Galerie hervorragender Persönlichkeiten aus der Geschichte des Luxemburger Landes*, ed. and prefaced by Paul Margue (Luxembourg: Verlag Edouard Kutter, 1972), 46 (Infantin Isabella von Spanien), 94 (Erzherzog Albert von Oesterreich).

two years later, when the Provincial Estates demanded a guarantee that the financial aid and the homage they were willing to pay would not constitute a precedence for the future. Joseph Massarette, whose biography of the count of Mansfeld, the late sixteenth-century governor of Luxembourg, was published in the 1920s, concluded that the Luxembourg Estates won the tug-of-war.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, Jules Mersch, the biographer of the Infanta Isabella, explains that the Estates participated in the ceremony on the condition that the act of transfer would not call into question the ancient franchise, liberty and sovereignty of the country, that Archduke Albert would conclude a peace with Holland and Zeeland, and that he would convoke a general assembly of the Estates after his marriage. Mersch insists that "the duchy of Luxembourg—notwithstanding what some of our Belgian friends think—remained autonomous after 1443 (it had its own governor and its provincial Council, which enjoyed special privileges)".<sup>14</sup>

This view has been challenged by Gilbert Trausch, who has suggested that the *lettres de non préjudice* were a mere formality and that the Luxembourgian élites had no leverage after the dissolution of the Estates General. Trausch's 1984 article 'Aux origines du sentiment national luxembourgeois: histoire et coup de pouce, ou mythes et réalités' has been summarised in his textbook, *Histoire du Luxembourg. Le destin européen d'un 'petit pays'*, set apart in a piece of text entitled 'A beautiful myth' (*Un beau mythe*).<sup>15</sup> In this article, he gives the material and political reasons why 'monarchical fidelity' was referred to by the Spanish authorities and the Luxembourgian Provincial Council and Estates during the War of Devolution (1667–1668), as well as by the emperor and the Luxembourgian élites during the Brabant Revolution (1789).<sup>16</sup> Since Trausch's *Histoire du Luxembourg* is the current standard work, it is worth having a look at how it explains the genesis of the 'beautiful myth'. Apart from the 1598 oath, the myth is based

<sup>13</sup> J. Massarette, *Mansfeld*, 218–219.

<sup>14</sup> Jules Mersch, 'L'infante Isabelle 1566–1633. Princesse souveraine des Pays-Bas, Duchesse de Luxembourg etc.', in *Biographie nationale*, vol. 7 (Luxembourg: V. Bück, 1966), 412: "le duché de Luxembourg—quoiqu'en pensent certains de nos amis belges—éta[il] resté autonome depuis 1443 (il avait son propre gouverneur et son Conseil provincial jouissant de privilèges spéciaux)".

<sup>15</sup> Gilbert Trausch, 'Comment rester distinct dans le filet des Pays-Bas?', in *Histoire du Luxembourg. Le destin européen d'un 'petit pays'*, ed. Gilbert Trausch (Toulouse: Privat, 2003), 169.

<sup>16</sup> Gilbert Trausch, 'Aux origines du sentiment national luxembourgeois: histoire et coup de pouce, ou mythes et réalités', *Nos Cahiers* (1984), 96.

on two sources cited in Latin: Erycius Puteanus and the Town Hall inscription.

### 1.2. *Erycius Puteanus*

In 1616, the historian Erycius Puteanus (Hendrik van der Putte, 1575–1646) was about to take up a teaching position at the Luxembourgian *collegium* at the University of Louvain, founded by Mylius, presided over by Vernulaeus (both from the duchy of Luxembourg) and overseen by the Estates of Luxembourg.<sup>17</sup> In the dedication of his *Promulsis epistolarum Atticarum* to the Three Estates of the duchy of Luxembourg, Puteanus writes:

In short, you are Belgians and worthy of the emperor's praise; Belgians, calm amidst the storm of life, constant in obedience. Dear to God and the king, you stayed upright unwavering, and without being in safety, you were without trouble. Just as we have seen rocks in your regions, so we understood that they were in your hearts. To be shaken without moving, to be attacked without being conquered, that is your role. Your spirit is stronger than mountains and rocks.<sup>18</sup>

This letter of dedication was unearthed by Joseph Paquet, who altered it to give it a more patriotic ring: he removed the first half sentence and the word “*Belgae*”.<sup>19</sup> This gives the whole passage a whole different sense: in the original text, there is no mention of ‘Luxembourgers’ being praised; rather, the Estates of a province of *Belgica* are being flattered.<sup>20</sup> Copied unwittingly by Schoetter,<sup>21</sup> the truncated quote also appears on a monument dedicated to the “heroes of the armed forces

<sup>17</sup> See Felix Nève, *Mémoire historique et littéraire sur le Collège des Trois-Langues à l'Université de Louvain* (1856), 181.

<sup>18</sup> Erycius Puteanus, *Promulsis epistolarum Atticarum* (Cologne: Louis Elzevier, 1636), f<sup>o</sup>6r–6v: “Ad summam, Belgae estis et elogio Caesaris digni; Belgae, et in rerum tempestate quieti, in obsequio constantes. Deo et Regi cari, stetistis inconcussi, et cum tuti non essetis, tamen securi. Rupes in locis illis uidimus, in pectoribus illis intelleximus. Quati non moueri, oppugnari non uinci, uestrum est. Amplius animi quam montes et rupes ualere”. I am indebted to Claude Loutsch for locating this citation and for translating this and the following quotes from Latin. The original 1616 edition, with a personal dedication to Abbot Pierre Richardot of Echternach, is held by the Bibliothèque nationale du Luxembourg, Réserve précieuse, LP 2432.

<sup>19</sup> J. Paquet, *Hauptthaten*, 1st ed. (1838), 56; 2nd ed. (1839), 50.

<sup>20</sup> The *topos* of the ‘brave Belgians’ is based on Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*, I, 1: “Horum [sc. Gallorum] omnium fortissimi sunt Belgae”, to which the reference to the ‘Caesar’ alludes.

<sup>21</sup> J. Schoetter, *Geschichte des Luxemburger Landes nach den besten Quellen*, 248.

who died for their country 1940–1945". The stone relief by Auguste Trémont represents a lion protecting the national flag, placed above the following inscription: "*luxemburgensium amplius animi quam montes et rupes ualuerunt*" (The spirit of the Luxembourgers is stronger than mountains and rocks). The adjective "*luxemburgensium*" is a later addition to stress *whose* "soul is stronger than mountains and rocks". The monument, inaugurated in 1948, is part of the memorial site of the *Kanounenhiwel* ("canon hill"), which includes a stele dedicated to the memory of the grand-ducal guard and the central war memorial: a chapel with an eternal flame, known as the *Monument de la Solidarité Nationale* (Monument of National Solidarity). Trémont's monument is thus part of a larger setting, which seeks to embed monarchical, patriotic and military values in the past.

Paquet's version of Puteanus did not only serve the makers of the war memorial, but was also copied by the curators of the 1989 exhibition.<sup>22</sup> In that great exhibition celebrating the 150th anniversary of Luxembourg's independence, Puteanus is cited as proof of the enduring myth of 'monarchical fidelity' on a panel entitled '*Les Luxembourgeois fidèles / Königstreue Luxemburger*' (Loyal / Royalist Luxembourgers). Next to Puteanus's (truncated) quotation is a picture of the war monument and the following message, with slight differences in French and German:

A dynastic sentiment inherited from the *Ancien Régime* and constantly revived since. / The legendary loyalty to the dynasty, dating back to the sixteenth century, has been recalled time and again.<sup>23</sup>

The usage of 'legendary' (*legendär*) in the German title is ambiguous. Meaning both 'famous'/'admired' and 'based on an old story, not necessarily true', the term allows the panel to be interpreted in two ways: it either shows the persistence of monarchical loyalty or the persistence of representations of monarchical loyalty. The latter is the interpretation Trausch seeks to give in the textbox entitled '*Un beau mythe*', where he states that Puteanus praised "the Luxembourgers [as

<sup>22</sup> Archives nationales du Luxembourg, Exposition 1989, Planche C50. The source is cited as Schoetter (1876). Since that book only deals with Antiquity, it must refer to J. Schoetter, *Geschichte des Luxemburger Landes nach den besten Quellen*, 248.

<sup>23</sup> Archives nationales du Luxembourg, Exposition 1989, Planche C50: "Un sentiment dynastique hérité de l'Ancien Régime et constamment ravivé depuis / Die schon im 16. Jahrhundert legendäre Treue zur Dynastie wurde bis heute immer wieder in Erinnerung gebracht".



remaining] calm in the storm of events, constant in obedience”.<sup>24</sup> One can see that—no matter how ‘mythical’ the phrase is said to be—it nevertheless conveys the idea that ‘even then’ the Luxembourg people were loyal to their monarch. Trausch provides a second Latin quotation that reinforces (Paquet’s reading of) Puteanus: an inscription that is said to have adorned the Town Hall in the eighteenth century which stresses continuity by uniting the past reputation, current fame and future endurance of monarchical fidelity:

Live, Luxembourgers; an old reputation proclaims your fidelity throughout the world and posterity will learn about your fidelity. You, a people that does not know how to betray, have always respected the laws and your oath of fidelity, in dealing with your allies, your king and God.<sup>25</sup>

The text is a staple feature of historiography, cited on innumerable occasions, though rarely with a translation. Paquet makes it immediately precede his quotation of Puteanus and embeds it in the sixteenth century (“the time of the inviolable loyalty of our ancestors”).<sup>26</sup> Engling goes one step further. To him, these “beautiful words” represent a “concrete truth” (*vérité de fait*), according to which Luxembourgers were acting “at all times”.<sup>27</sup> On this atemporal truth rests the belief that Luxembourgers were defined as a community by their loyalty to the monarch. This view could have challenged the perceived unity of people and territory, since ‘loyal’ Luxembourgers were excluded from this community as the borders shifted in 1795, 1815 and 1839. Instead, the ‘province’ was set up to prefigure the nation-state and the allegiance of the local élites was extended to include the people as a whole. The equation of ‘monarchical fidelity’ and ‘patriotism’ allowed nineteenth and early twentieth-century historiography to defuse the notion of popular sovereignty.

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<sup>24</sup> G. Trausch, *Aux origines du sentiment national*, 96: “In [rerum] tempestate quieti, in obsequio constantes”; See also G. Trausch, ‘Comment rester distinct’, 168.

<sup>25</sup> G. Trausch, ‘Comment rester distinct’, 168: “Vivite, Lux[em]burgi, fidos vos prisca per orbem / Fama vocat, fidos posteritasque leget / Nescia gens verti sociiis Regique Deoque / Servastis semper foedera, jura, fidem”.

<sup>26</sup> J. Paquet, *Hauptthatsachen* (1838), 55: “Zeit der unverbrüchlichen Treue unserer Vorfahren”.

<sup>27</sup> J. Engling, *La philosophie des monuments historiques*, 6.

### 1.3. *The Brabant Revolution*

A final element of Old Regime 'monarchical loyalty'—cited by Engling as a piece of evidence and by Trausch as part of the myth—is the attitude of Luxembourgian élites during the 1789 Brabant Revolution. This political and military backlash against Joseph II's attempted centralisation of authority culminated in the composition of the charter of the 'United States of Belgium', a document which was not signed by the Luxembourgian Estates. In the course of the Revolution, the fortress of Luxembourg was a major stronghold for imperial troops and became the military starting point for the reconquest of the other provinces under Emperor Leopold II. Engling insists that "Luxembourg remained... a passive and unwavering onlooker despite attempts that were made to drag it into the conspiracy of the so-called patriots".<sup>28</sup> The adjective "so-called" and the derogatory noun "conspiracy" seek to depreciate a patriotism based on opposition to the monarch, thus contrary to the notion of a Luxembourg particularism based on 'monarchical loyalty'. This was all the more important since the Brabant Revolution could be considered a forerunner of the Belgian Revolution of 1830 in its thrust against centralisation. For the Orange-Nassau rulers, and thus for Engling, it was important to stress that Luxembourg had had no part in such subversive movements.

This is a highly selective reading of the Brabant Revolution, since evidence of democratic patriotism may be found in pamphlets such as *Proclamation der Unzufriedenen Luxemburgs* and the *Manifeste de la nation luxembourgeoise*, both dated December 1789, in the *Réflexions d'un Luxembourgeois sur la Révolution de la Belgique* (15 January 1790) as well as the *Lettre d'un citoyen du Luxembourg à son ami* (22 March 1790).<sup>29</sup> The *Manifeste de la nation luxembourgeoise* was published in order to show that Luxembourg was:

united nonetheless by conviction and by affection for our brothers, the brave Belgians, and wants to protest to the face of the universe that our inactivity is only the effect of our distress and not of our indifference.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Engling, *La philosophie des monuments historiques*, 7: "Le Luxembourg en resta spectateur passif et inébranlable malgré les tentatives qui furent faites pour l'entraîner dans le complot des soi-disant patriotes".

<sup>29</sup> Daniel Spizzo, *La nation luxembourgeoise: genèse et structure d'une identité* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1995), 79–82.

<sup>30</sup> Louis Wirion, 'Quelques épisodes de l'époque autrichienne', *Jonghemecht 13* (Oct.–Dec. 1939): 232: "Unis néanmoins par conviction et par affection à nos frères,

The military leader of the insurgents, General van der Mersch, is hailed as the “illustrious defender of the nation”, for whom “the élite of our youth [is] ready to shed its blood for the sake of religion and homeland”. Religious opposition to Josephinist reforms was the main motive behind this pamphlet, but the oppression of the Third Estate by its own élites was also denounced. These pamphlets have never been reproduced in schoolbooks or other historical literature aimed at a wider readership, despite the fact that it was not unknown to specialists in the period.<sup>31</sup> The fact that these revolutionary ideas did not have a significant impact at the time is not in itself a sufficient explanation for the lack of reverberation among historians, especially since ‘nation’ is used here for the first time in the sense of a collective body representing popular sovereignty with reference to Luxembourg. The reason it has not become part of the historiographical canon may be linked to its incompatibility with the usual discursive association of patriotism and monarchical fidelity central to the master narrative.

#### 1.4. *Past Geographies*

This highly selective use of past sources may also be applied to geographical treatises. This is the case for the upholders of the monarchical order as well as for its opponents. The anonymous author<sup>32</sup> of the *Manifeste de la nation luxembourgeoise* quotes Petrus Bertius, cosmographer to Louis XIII, as follows:

The (Luxembourgian) peasants complain about the excessive harshness of the noblemen; they are indeed treated as if in serfdom, a practice that has, incidentally, not been maintained in any other parts of Belgium.<sup>33</sup>

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les généreux Belges, et voulant protester à la face de l’Univers que notre inaction n’est que l’effet de notre détresse, et non pas de notre indifférence”. A copy of the pamphlet is held by the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ref. M-36744.

<sup>31</sup> Alphonse Sprunck, ‘Les Etats de Luxembourg et la révolution brabançonne’, *PSH* 65 (1933): 333–336; idem, ‘Le Duché de Luxembourg et la révolution brabançonne’, *PSH* 73 (1953): 109ff; Nicolas Margue, ‘Die Entwicklung des Luxemburger Nationalgefühls von 1780 etwa bis heute’, *Ons Hémecht* 43/3 (1937): 190. While Sprunck insists on popular opposition to the Austrian regime, N. Margue highlights the efforts to emphasise that the Belgians and Luxembourgers were “two nations” (his italics).

<sup>32</sup> Abbé Brosius, the author of *Réflexions d’un Luxembourgeois*, declared that he was the author of the *Manifeste*: Alphonse Sprunck, ‘Le Duché de Luxembourg et la révolution brabançonne’, *PSH* 73 (1953): 114.

<sup>33</sup> “De nimio Nobilium rigore conqueruntur coloni (Luxemburgenses), habentur enim pro servis, quod alioquin in nulla Belgii parte obtinet”, quoted by the *Manifeste*, 234. The citation emanates from: Petrus Bertius, *Tabularum Geographicarum*

Bertius describes the duchy of Luxembourg as part of *Gallia Belgica* and remarks that it is distinguished not by its greater fidelity, but by the greater weight accorded to the nobility. He may have been influenced by the text accompanying the eldest known map of the duchy of Luxembourg, published by Gerard de Jode in the atlas *Speculum Orbis Terrarum* (1578):

The inhabitants are like slaves to the noble lords. They use the French and German tongues, but in a degenerate form. The region is divided into seven counties. Those are La Roche, Durbuy, Vielsalm, Chiny, 'Vandalen' or Vianden, St. John and Manderscheid. In this duchy, there are almost innumerable baronies and endless domains. For Belgium does not have a province that counts more noble seigneurs than this, noble-men whose freedom and authority over their subjects is so great that they may even be compared to little kings.<sup>34</sup>

These early-modern geographical works construct thus the province of Luxembourg as part of 'Belgium', more or less synonymous at that time with the entire Low Countries. Seeking to dissociate Luxembourg from the other provinces, the founders of national historiography have glossed over these geographical ascriptions. Moreover, the social criticism inherent to these works has been picked up by the 1789 *Manifeste*, but totally discarded by later historians. Engling's speech may be considered as typical of the selective use of the past and of past authorities:

The character of the Luxembourger, if one is to believe Guiccardini [*sic*] and Bertels, has had its dark sides; nonetheless his probity and fidelity to God and the Sovereign have stood the test. "The country", Sebastian

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*Contractarum libri septem. In quibus Tabulae omnes gradibus distinctae, descriptiones accuratae, caetera supra priores editiones politiora...sumpt. & typus Jodoci Hondii* (Amsterdam: Jodocus Hondius, 1616), 347 [BNL Réserve précieuse C.&8° Atl. 04]; cf. R.V. Tooley, *Tooley's Dictionary of Mapmakers* (New York and Amsterdam: Liss and Merian, 1979), s.v. "Bertius" (53).

<sup>34</sup> "Les habitants sont pour ainsi dire les esclaves des seigneurs nobles. Ils se servent des langues françaises et allemande, mais dans une forme dégénérée. La région est répartie sur sept comtés. Ce sont La Roche, Durbuy, Vielsalm, Chiny, 'Vandalen' ou Vianden, S. Jean et Manderscheid. Dans ce Duché se trouvent pour ainsi dire d'innombrables et des domaines à l'infini. Car la Belgique entière n'a pas une province qui compte plus de seigneurs nobles que celle-ci, des nobles dont la liberté et l'autorité sur leurs sujets est si grande qu'ils peuvent même être comparés à de petits rois", translated from Latin by; Emile van der Vekene, *Le Duché de Luxembourg sur une carte géographique publiée par Gérard de Jode en 1578* ([Luxembourg]: Lions Club Luxembourg International, 1979), n.p.

Münster wrote three centuries ago, ‘the country has good and faithful people’.<sup>35</sup>

The ‘dark sides’ remain deliberately vague and the enunciating authority is immediately called into question: “*if* one is to believe...”, implying that one may as well not believe them. The three authors are linked historiographically by the fact that Jean Bertels, abbot of Echternach, cites both Guicciardini and Münster (in French) in the preface of his 1605 *Historia luxemburgensis seu commentarius quo ducum Luxemburgensium ortus, progressus ac res gestae*.<sup>36</sup> Re-edited in 1856, the book must have been known to Engling and the ‘amateur-expert’ historians in his audience. While Lodovico Guicciardini’s *Description de tous les Pays-Bas autrement appelez la Germanie inférieure ou Basse Allemagne* mentions a long tradition of oppression by the local nobility, both in terms of extent (compared to the rest of the Low Countries) and authority,<sup>37</sup> Sebastian Münster’s *Cosmographie* underlines the respectability of the local élite. Based on the report of one Hans Christoffel Höcklin von Steineck from Bartringen, Münster describes the social order as follows:

The nobility of this country is praiseworthy and reputable, they also have beautiful freedoms. Several counts, such as Manderscheid, Arenburg, Salm, Ritterscheid, Rineck, Krichingen and Isenburg, as well as other gentlemen and a great many of the nobility, have their fiefs here. In Luxembourg City there is a high council, with a president in council. The nobility usually meets four times a year in the city. The country has many forests and small rivers, healthy, good and faithful people.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> J. Engling, *La philosophie des monuments historiques*, 6: “Le caractère du Luxembourgais, si l’on en croit Guicciardini [sic] et Bertels, a eu ses ombres; néanmoins sa probité et sa fidélité envers Dieu et le Souverain ont fait leurs épreuves. ‘Das Land’, écrit-il, y a trois siècles, Sébastien Münster, ‘das Land had gut und getreu Volk’”.

<sup>36</sup> Claude Loutsch, ‘Bertels et les historiens luxembourgeois du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle’, *Hémecht* 58/4 (2006): 471–479.

<sup>37</sup> R. H. Touwaide, ‘La Description de tous les Pays-Bas par Lodovico Guicciardini’, *Archives et Bibliothèques en Belgique* 45/1–2 (1974): 106–184; Danièle Wagener, ‘La Description di tutti i Paesi Bassi de Lodovico Guicciardini (1521–1589), un ouvrage humaniste et politique?’, in *Au seuil des Temps modernes? Luxembourg dans l’Europe de la fin du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. Marie-Paule Jungblut (Luxembourg: Musée d’Histoire de la Ville de Luxembourg, 1997), 126–127.

<sup>38</sup> Sebastian Münster, *Cosmographie: das ist Beschreibung aller Länder, Herrschaf-ten und fürnemesten Stetten des gantzen Erdbodens: sampt ihren Gelegenheiten, Eygen-schafften, Religion, Gebräuchen, Geschichten mit allerley Gedechtnuswürdigen Sachen biß ins M.DC.XIV jahr gemehret* (Basel: S. H. Petri, 1614), 355: “Es ist ein loblicher und nam(m)hafter Adel im Landt / sie habe(n) auch schöne Freyheiten. Etliche Graffen müssen ire Lehen da empfa(ng)en / alß Manderscheid / Arenburg / Salm /

Engling makes no mention of these feudal lords that he regards as outsiders to the duchy, but focuses on the quote “the country has good and faithful people”. Using Münster to underline the age-old fidelity of the Luxembourg people to God and sovereign, Engling—himself a Catholic priest—may have expressed contemporary concerns about the loyalty of a largely Catholic and increasingly politicised population to their Protestant head of state. Past geographies are thus not set in stone, but put on paper and they change according to who reads the paper and how he or she relates it. Early-modern geographers need to be placed in the context of their own times. They cast Luxembourg both as part of ‘Belgium’ and as a patchwork of fiefs ruled over by lords based elsewhere in the Holy Roman Empire. This did not prevent nineteenth-century historians to pick and chose the elements they considered valuable so as to convey a rather different idea, the idea of a direct continuity between the province’s God-fearing and loyal subjects and the inhabitants of the grand duchy. The topos of ‘monarchical fidelity’ proved thus particularly useful at times of discontent, such as the Belgian Revolution and its aftermath (1830–1839).

### 1.5. *The Belgian Revolution*

In 1829, the *Journal du Luxembourg* explained the relative absence of petitions in Luxembourg (compared to the Belgian provinces) with reference to the “character of our compatriots” opposed to extreme measures, their “fidelity” and “confidence in the good faith and justice of their sovereigns”.<sup>39</sup> “Fidelity”, however, was also invoked by one of the rare petitions from the village of Remagne:

Luxembourgers, always loyal and attached to their legitimate sovereign, have wondered how they could in the present circumstances give their good king new proof of fidelity and devotion. They have understood that they are no longer allowed to keep silent...<sup>40</sup>

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Ritterscheid / Rineck / Krichingen vn(d) Isenburg / sampt andere Herren vn(d) vom Adel ein grosse menge. Es ist zu Lüzelburg in der Statt ein hoher Rhat / ein President in Rhate(n). Ein Ritterschaft kompt gemeinlich all jar vier mal in die Statt zusam(m)en. Das Landt hat viel Wald vn(d) kleine Bächlin / gesunde(n) Lufft / vn(d) gut getrew Volck”. [Bibliothèque Nationale de Luxembourg, Réserve précieuse, LP 7088].

<sup>39</sup> *Journal de la ville et du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg* 100, 16 December 1829, quoted by Peter Hacker, *Die Anfänge eines eigenen Nationalbewusstseins? Eine politische Geschichte Luxemburgs von 1815 bis 1865* (Trier: Kliomedia, 2005), 54.

<sup>40</sup> ANL C 391/36, quoted by P. Hacker, *Anfänge*, 53–54.

By October 1830, opposition to William I, Grand Duke and King of the United Netherlands, had gained control of large parts of Luxembourg, with the notable exception of the capital, whose fortress was controlled by the German Confederation. Following the declaration of Belgian independence, the governor of Luxembourg, Jean-Georges Willmar, issued a memorandum claiming that “a distinct nationality, guaranteed by the German Confederation, is attached to Luxembourgian soil”.<sup>41</sup> Willmar’s declaration was later interpreted as the first conscious expression of an independent Luxembourgian nationality.<sup>42</sup> His prevailing argument was not based on monarchical loyalty, but on international treaties, notably the Congress of Vienna (1815). This was later expounded by Matthias Schrobilgen, who underlined the king’s willingness to grant the grand duchy more administrative autonomy.<sup>43</sup> A counter-revolution was launched by a handful of noblemen, regrouped in the *Comité des Amis de l’ordre légal*. They issued the following call-up:

Luxembourgers! Your ancestors have bequeathed you a reputation of invaluable worth, that of an unwavering fidelity towards your legitimate Sovereign. You will save this noble heritage by placing yourself spontaneously under the government of the monarch that the whole of Europe gave you in 1815.

To arms, Citizens, come join us to support the most righteous of [all] causes.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Jean-Georges Willmar, ‘Publication aux Habitants du Grand-Duché’, *Mémorial administratif du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg*, 9 October 1830, 181–185.

<sup>42</sup> Marcel Noppeney, *Luxembourg 1830 (La Révolution belge et la Presse luxembourgeoise)* (Luxembourg: J. Beffort, 1934), 62, 67; Gilbert Trausch, ‘Le Luxembourg entre Belgique et la Hollande, 1830–1839: aux origines du sentiment national luxembourgeois’, in *Acta: colloque historique sur les relations belgo-néerlandaises entre 1815 et 1945 Bruxelles 10–12/12/1980* (Gent: Rijksuniversität, 1982), 276; P. Hacker, *Anfänge*, 68.

<sup>43</sup> Matthieu Lambert Schrobilgen, *De la situation politique du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg* (Luxembourg: J. Lamort, 1833), 15 and 20–21.

<sup>44</sup> “Luxembourgeois! vos ancêtres vous ont légué une réputation d’un prix inestimable, celle d’une fidélité inébranlable à leur Souverain légitime. Vous sauvez ce noble héritage en vous replaçant spontanément sous le gouvernement du Monarque que l’Europe entière vous a donné en 1815. Aux armes donc, Citoyens, venez vous joindre à nous pour le soutien de la plus juste des causes”, *Avis aux Luxembourgeois. Nachricht an die Luxemburger* (21 Dec. 1831). Archives Nationales du Luxembourg, Ref. F 124. See Nicolas Margue, *Mouvements contre-révolutionnaires dans le Luxembourg* (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 1939); P. Hacker, *Anfänge*, 69–103.

The *topos* of traditional fidelity is here mixed with revolutionary rhetoric (*Aux armes, citoyens*) and reference to international agreements in order to galvanise 'Luxembourgers' into action. Who were these 'Luxembourgers'? While it is impossible to know whether the use of the term 'Luxembourgers' reflected a widespread sense of 'belonging', it hints at a certain group of people the counter-revolution sought to recruit: presumably male, able-bodied and loyal to the monarch, or at least discontent with the Belgian regime.

The attempt, however, to bring 'Luxembourgers' to fight for a united grand duchy under the rule of the House of Orange-Nassau failed. Another international treaty was enforced in 1839, dividing Luxembourg into a Belgian province and a rump grand duchy that remained tied in personal union to the Dutch crown until 1890. Until that date, attachment to the ruling house was a ubiquitous feature of stories of the past. After the change of dynasties, however, historiography tended to distance itself increasingly from the early-modern period and to concentrate on the Middle Ages, which were seen as having been a prelude to national autonomy and glory. The years 1443–1815 came gradually to be seen as periods of 'foreign domination'.

## 2. *Surviving the Foreign Dominations*

As seen in the previous chapters, the 'invasion of the Burgundians' in 1443 has become the symbolic beginning of the 'foreign domination'. The period between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries is subsumed under this general heading and is described as a time of political instability, and as an unhappy succession of foreign rulers from Burgundy, France, Spain and Austria at various moments of time.<sup>45</sup> After the accession of Grand Duchess Marie-Adelaide—the 'first ruler to be born on Luxembourgian soil since John of Bohemia'—in 1912, historical discourse claimed that the territorial link between monarchy and population had been re-established.<sup>46</sup> Arthur Herchen's *Manuel*

<sup>45</sup> Guy Thewes, 'Dominations étrangères et fidélité dynastique. Deux mythes de l'historiographie luxembourgeoise', *forum* 199 (2000): 39–43. See also M. Margue, 'Dominations étrangères'. Trausch also refers to the "improper" use of the term 'foreign domination': Gilbert Trausch, *Le Luxembourg. Emergence d'un Etat et d'une nation* (Bruxelles: Fonds Mercator, 1989; Luxembourg: Schortgen, 2007), 147–9.

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, Paul Lafontaine, *Unsere Dynastie* (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 1990), 73.



*d'histoire nationale* (nine editions, from 1918 to 1972) closely links the medieval 'golden age' and the contemporary nation-state, and establishes the 'four centuries of foreign domination' as the period which separated the two.

In the inter-war period, the topos of 'foreign dominations' was present, but not cited very often until the threat of a Nazi invasion brought to the fore the idea that the "sun of freedom" (*Fräiheetssonn*) was being threatened (again) by "foreign yoke" (*frieme Joch*). Both expressions stem from the national anthem, which was quoted extensively in the 1939 monuments and parades commemorating the centenary of national independence.<sup>47</sup> National Socialist historiography dealing with Luxembourg, briefly looked at in chapter 3, interpreted the early-modern period quite differently, insisting that Luxembourg belonged to the Holy Roman Empire and was thus historically part of Germany.<sup>48</sup> After the Second World War, however, the concept of 'foreign domination' was taken up again. Nazi occupation was integrated into the national narrative as both "yet another" and "the ultimate, most brutal" foreign domination. The early-modern past was reinterpreted through the prism of occupation and resistance: the 1798 Peasants' Rebellion came to be seen as a precedent for national defiance and an underlying current of national consciousness was detected throughout the four hundred years of foreign domination. This is exemplified by a short presentation of Luxembourg published by Georges Als, the director of the National Office of Statistics (STATEC): "It is true that, for the most part, these dominations did not undermine the *particularism of the Luxembourgers*, the consciousness of their national individuality".<sup>49</sup> While Als found the legacy of the early-modern period in the street names of Luxembourg City,<sup>50</sup> Georges Calteux, then director

<sup>47</sup> Claude Wey, 'Le Centenaire de l'Indépendance et sa commémoration en 1939', *Hémecht* 41 (1989), 29–53; S. Kmec, '1839', in *Lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg*, ed. Sonja Kmec, Benoît Majerus, Michel Margue and Pit Péporté (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 2007): 147–152. For a depiction of 'foreign domination' in the historical procession of 1939, see: M. Margue, 'Dominations étrangères'.

<sup>48</sup> Bernard Thomas is currently working on the publication of his Master thesis, 'Westforschung und die luxemburgische nationale Identität' (M.A. thesis, Paris IV-Sorbonne, 2009).

<sup>49</sup> Georges Als, *Le Luxembourg. Profil historique, géographique, économique* (Luxembourg: Service Information et Presse, 1980), 8: "Il est vrai que ces dominations, pour la plupart, ne portèrent pas atteinte au *particularisme des luxembourgeois*, à la conscience de leur individualité nationale." (original emphasis)

<sup>50</sup> Rue Philippe II (of Spain), rue Chimay, rue Louvigny, avenue Monterey, avenue Marie-Thérèse (of Austria), boulevard Joseph II, boulevard Napoleon I; cited by G. Als, *Le Luxembourg*, 8.

of the National Heritage Administration (SSMN), located remnants of this national spirit in the landscape and architecture, as well as in the language and the character of the Luxembourgian people. In a conference on the Luxembourgish language entitled '*Mir wëlle bleiwe wat mir sinn, mä wat si mir?*' (We want to remain who we are, but who are we?), he maintained that

When *we* drive through *our* cultural landscapes, *our* villages, *our* towns and *our* industrial sites, *we* need to be conscious that *we* grew out of this, that *we* are part of this heritage *our* ancestors built with the material they found at their feet... The names of those who have constructed the castles do not sound Luxembourgish, but in the villages in the valley, *our* language has resonated for centuries through the doors and windows... Numerous long wars, the pressures exerted by the noble lord and by foreign dominations from the early Middle Ages onwards have made *us* tough and (sometimes) stubborn people, who were clenching their fists in their pockets. It was like that in the countryside, but also in the fortified city that was later to become a fortress erected by foreign sovereigns, not to protect *us* better, but to extend their own power.<sup>51</sup>

The use of the pronoun 'we' and the determiner 'our' seeks to create a connection not only between speaker and audience (or readership), but also between the people of the past (inwardly seething) and Luxembourgers, or rather Luxembourgish-speaking people, today. The importance of language is linked to the audience that Calteux was addressing, his conference being part of a series of talks organised in 2002–2003 by the project *Moien* and the *Sproochenhaus*, the Luxembourg committee of the European bureau for lesser-used languages. It was their objective to interest a "broad public of Luxembourgers and non-Luxembourgers in certain aspects of the language [such as] its

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<sup>51</sup> The article has been published in French, Luxembourgish and German, but the original speech was in Luxembourgish, thus: "Wa mir duerch *eis* Kulturlandschaften fueren, duerch *eis* Dierfer, Stied an Industriegéigenden, da mussen *mir eis* bewusst ginn, datt *mir* do erausgewuess sinn... datt mir en Deel vun deem Patrimoine sinn, deen *eis* Virfahren dohinner gebaut hunn, an zwar aus deem Material, dat énnert hire Féiss louch... D'Nimm vunn deenen, déi Festungen a Buerge gebaut hunn, kléngen net Lëtzebuergesch, awer doënnen am Duerf huet *eis* Sprooch aus Dier a Fënster joerhonnertelaang erausgeklungen... Vill a laang Kricher, den Drock vun Här a Friemherrschaft hu vum fréie Mëttelalter un a Stad a Land aus *eis* zéi an (heiansdo) tockesch Leit gemeet, déi d'Fauscht an der Täschen zesumme gedréckt hunn. Dat war esou iwwer Land, mä och an der befestigter Stad, déi spéider eng Festung gouf, déi friem Herrscher zwar ni fir *eis*, mä fir hire Muechtapparat opgeriicht hunn", Georges Calteux, '*Mir wëlle bleiwe wat mir sinn, mä war si mir?*', in *Lëtzebuergesch: Quo vadis? Actes du cycle de conférences nov. 2002–janv. 2004* (Mamer: Melusina Conseil, 2004), 144. (emphasis added)

importance for Luxembourg identity and the integration of foreign citizens”.<sup>52</sup> The language politics seeking to develop Luxembourgish as a ‘tool of integration’ for non-Luxembourgers, while excluding residents who do not speak the language, are examined in detail in Part Three of this book. They are reflected here by Calteux’s figure of the ‘other’, which is—as his narrative develops—split into two: the resident of foreign origins and the foreign ruler. The former is included in what Calteux calls the “stratigraphy” of cultural layers and is considered part of “our culture”. What does ‘culture’ mean here? It is conceived as a set of values, knowledge and practical *savoir-faire* that is transmitted from one generation to the next, seeping through time. The metaphorical use of a geological ‘stratigraphy’ points at the reification of culture, which we will come back to in the next section. Calteux explains that ‘we’ have always mixed with ‘foreigners’, learned their language and their habits, even intermarried. Toughness, first described as a national characteristic, is applied to all: “There is a Luxembourgish saying that sums up this situation: ‘bastards are the toughest, and the country is full of them’”. Multiculturalism becomes “part of our identity”.<sup>53</sup> The foreign element that does threaten ‘our identity’ is made up of “the big cultures that surround us”, who may “eat us alive”. Within Europe, small countries in particular need to be careful not to be “swallowed” by the big ones. This is considered one of the major challenges of the European integration process.<sup>54</sup> The ‘authentic’ heritage that needs to be saved from globalisation and standardisation is “not just composed of elitist creations, but also of things innate. The former is the product of the mind, the latter a manual product. Head and hand need thus to work together”.<sup>55</sup>

What is interesting in this reading of the ‘foreign dominations’ is that it does not seek to reconcile the concept with that of

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<sup>52</sup> Jacqueline Weber-Messerich and Charel Schmit, ‘Lëtzebuergesch—Quo Vadis?’, in *Lëtzebuergesch: Quo vadis? Actes du cycle de conférences nov. 2002–janv. 2004* (Mamer: Melusina Conseil, 2004), 15: “Dëse Konferenzyklus huet als Zil, e breede Public vu Lëtzebuerg an Net-Lëtzebuerg op verschidden Aspekter vun der Lëtzebuerg Sprooch opmierksam ze maachen, [z.B.] hir Wichtigkeet fir d’Lëtzebuerg Identitéit an d’Integratioun vun den auslännesche Matbierger”.

<sup>53</sup> G. Calteux, ‘Mir wëlle bleiwe’, 146–147.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 144, 148.

<sup>55</sup> G. Calteux, ‘Mir wëlle bleiwe’, 150: “De Patrimoine besteet net nëmmen aus élitäre Kréatiounen, mä och aus Ugebuerenem. Dat eent ass e Produkt vu Geescht, dat anert ass ee Produkt vun der Hand. Kapp an Hand mussen also zesumme schaffen”.

'monarchical loyalty'. Ordinary people are considered to have been oppressed in the past and unable to speak up for themselves. Today, small countries are said to experience the same fate. Even when promoting the city and fortress of Luxembourg as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994, Calteux insisted on the 'history lesson' this site could give to the world, "teaching us how a small people has been able to survive despite numerous foreign dominations".<sup>56</sup> Empowering the people by giving them back their past has a decidedly postcolonial ring to it.<sup>57</sup> Although Calteux tries to fend off "chauvinism, nationalism and separatism",<sup>58</sup> this objective is not served by his static (geological) notion of culture and by the image of culture as a tree, rooted in a certain physical space.<sup>59</sup> This metaphor automatically excludes people who have been uprooted or who have portable roots from participating in the shaping of culture.<sup>60</sup> Calteux may be situated in the current of thought of the so-called Berkley school of cultural geography. Its main proponent, Carl Sauer (1899–1975), developed a 'superorganic' concept of 'culture' (being more than its participating members). The attribution of agency and causality to culture itself is reflected by an interest in the physical and material elements of culture rather than its social dimensions. Calteux shares the focus on culture-as-artefact (such as farmhouses) and an anti-modernist outlook.<sup>61</sup> The view of culture as an entity with independent existence and causative powers has been criticised as a 'reification' which denies that individuals or

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<sup>56</sup> "La ville et sa forteresse peuvent servir de véritable 'leçon d'histoire' qui nous enseigne comment un petit peuple a pu survivre malgré les nombreuses dominations étrangères et malgré les convoitises de nos grands voisins tout au long de notre histoire", Etat de conservation des biens du patrimoine mondial en Europe. Section II. Luxembourg. URL: <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/periodicreporting/EUR/cycle01/section2/699-summary.pdf> (last accessed 28 September 2008).

<sup>57</sup> A postcolonial approach has been explored by Catherine Thesen, "Mir Welle Bleiwen Wat Mir Sin / We Want to Remain What We Are": A Critical Study of the Small Nation-State Luxembourg' (Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Texas, 2007).

<sup>58</sup> G. Calteux, 'Mir wëlle bleiwe', 151.

<sup>59</sup> Depicted in Georges Calteux, ed., *Millenium—lieux de mémoire et d'avenir: un itinéraire à travers 2000 ans de notre histoire* (Luxembourg: Service des sites et monuments nationaux, 2000), 6.

<sup>60</sup> On the literary usage of the 'tree' metaphor in texts dealing with 'identity', see Jeanne E. Glesener, 'La récupération de l'espace perdu par l'acte de l'écriture. Etude comparée de trois auteurs immigrants: Kazuo Ishiguro, Jean Portante et Zafer Şenocak' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Université de Provence I, 2009), 268–271.

<sup>61</sup> Peter Jackson, *Maps of Meaning. An Introduction to Cultural Geography* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 14–19.

social groups can change, or be subverted or appropriated. The same may be said for the reification of space, which often goes together with the objectification of culture, as the following section sets out to demonstrate.

### 3. *Reification of the Homeland*

This section seeks to show when and how the ontological unity of space and culture/society has been introduced in scholarly and popular discourses in Luxembourg. It was absent from the first geographical textbooks to be used in Luxembourgian schools, but was developed as part of anti-modernist and ethno-cultural thought, which became mainstream in the inter-war period. Discredited by the Nazi ideology of 'blood and soil' it was only tentatively reintroduced in the 1960s and 1970s, but was firmly embedded in a national frame of references.

#### 3.1. *Teaching about the 'Homeland' and Humankind*

Nineteenth-century geography books were conceived as tools for primary school teachers to provide children with the main 'facts' about their country and the world. The first geography textbook was published in 1828 by Pierre Clomes, a teacher at the Athenaeum. Maps were introduced in primary school books as early as 1880.<sup>62</sup> A persistent feature of geography textbooks, from Jean-Philippe Wagner's *Skizzen und Bilder aus der Heimaths- und Erdkunde, und Charakterbilder aus der Vaterländischen Geschichte* (1883) to the 2003 *Lëtzebuurger Schoulatlas*, is that they explain the level of abstraction at which maps function by taking the schoolroom as a starting point and seeking to help pupils extend their comprehension from the local to the global.<sup>63</sup> J.-P. Wagner's textbook begins with '*Heimatkunde*' (literally, the study of the homeland), turns to '*Vaterlandskunde*' (study of the fatherland)

<sup>62</sup> A folded map of the grand duchy, depicting roads, cantons and a relief in cross-section was included in Jacques-Adrien Blaise, *Elementarunterricht in der Geographie: ein Handbuch mit statistischer und topographischer Beschreibung des Grossherzogtums Luxemburg* (Luxembourg: V. Bück, 1880).

<sup>63</sup> This was particularly the case in Regnard Reyland, *Geographie für die Primärschulen des Luxemburger Landes* (Luxembourg: J. Beffort, 1904); M. Huss, ed., *Text-Atlas für die Schulen des Luxemburger Landes* (Luxembourg: M. Huss, 1905); *Luxemburger Geographie. Herausgegeben von den beiden Lehrerverbänden* (s.l., 1926).

and, finally, to 'Erdkunde' (study of the world). Its objective is to "give children's convictions a religious and patriotic turn"; that is, to imbue pupils with moral values that are deemed universal.<sup>64</sup> 'Patriotism' in this sense is a sentiment linked to the sovereign (William III to whom the schoolbook is dedicated) and the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, rather than the territory of Luxembourg.

This changed with the advent of dynasty of Nassau-Weilburg in 1890. Loyalty to the monarch was now but one of many values to be transmitted. Arthur Hary's *Zeitung für kleine Leute*, a newspaper for children whose first yearbook was published in 1915, combines the glorification of the monarch,<sup>65</sup> the sacralisation of the homeland (*Heimat*)<sup>66</sup> and pacifism. While the first yearbook had proposed an anthology by Luxembourgian writers, the second one, published in 1916, offered a literary tour through the country, from Luxembourg City ("the heart of the homeland") to quaint Echternach, industrial Esch and rural Oesling. It seeks to show "how incomparably beautiful our Luxembourg is, how it should fill every bosom with holy pride and with a strong, unshakable will: We want to remain what we are."<sup>67</sup> As the Great War raged on, pacifism had a strong hold on patriotism: "Peace was the homeland. Peace will be the homeland".<sup>68</sup> The chapter entitled 'Men of the Homeland' includes not only people from, but also prominent visitors to Luxembourg such as Victor Hugo, M.L. von Munkacsy and Goethe.

Twenty years later, Marius Wagner repudiated what he called "cosmic international art".<sup>69</sup> According to Wagner, teaching was to draw its strength from the connection with "mother earth . . . , to whom we are

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<sup>64</sup> Jean-Philippe Wagner, *Skizzen und Bilder aus der Heimaths- und Erdkunde, und Charakterbilder aus der Vaterländischen Geschichte für die Luxemburger Volksschule* (Luxembourg: V. Bück, 1883), ix.

<sup>65</sup> M. Textor, 'Dem Kind der Heimat', in *Dem Kind der Heimat. Jahrbuch der "Zeitung für kleine Leute"*, ed. Arthur Hary (Luxembourg: L. Schaumburger, 1915), 86–87.

<sup>66</sup> Arthur Hary, 'Das Lied der Heimat', in *Dem Kind der Heimat* (see note 65), 72.

<sup>67</sup> Arthur Hary, 'Vorwort', in *Unser Land. Ein Heimatbuch für kleine und große Leute*. 2nd rev. ed. (Luxembourg: Soupert, 1916), 3: "Wie unvergleichlich schön unser Luxemburg ist, es soll jede Brust mit heiligem Stolz erfüllen, und mit dem festen, unerschütterlichen Willen: Mir welle bleiwe wat mer sinn". To emphasise the switch from German to Luxembourgish, the typeface changes from Fraktur to Roman.

<sup>68</sup> Arthur Hary, '2 August 1914', in *Unser Land*, 215–222: "Heimat war Friede! Heimat wird Friede sein".

<sup>69</sup> Marius Wagner, *Heimatkundlicher Erziehungsunterricht. Versuch einer neuen Schulreform* (Luxembourg: Th. Schroell, 1935), 13.

after all closely connected by an indissoluble umbilical cord”.<sup>70</sup> His proposal for a reformed school placed the ‘homeland’ thus at the centre of the curriculum, since “homeland, which has shaped us for thousands of years, is the strength, is the breeding-ground and the medium that leads us into the future”.<sup>71</sup> History was to be taught to show that the homeland/fatherland was worth fighting for. Following the examples of German teachers’ associations of Bremen, Hamburg and Fehring-Freudenthal, Wagner proposed a new way of teaching that would help the child recognise that it was a “part of a national and state entity, a community of fate in fact, to which it owes everything and has to show its gratitude by responsible work and an active profession of commitment to the community.”<sup>72</sup> Despite some parallels with the National Socialist ideology of ‘blood and soil’, Wagner did not believe in *Volkstum*, and certainly not in the superiority of the Germanic ‘race’. He was a member of both the *Luxemburger Gesellschaft für Deutsche Literatur und Kunst (Gedelit)* and the *Alliance française* and his intended school reform provided for teaching in both languages: three years in German, followed by three years in French. In his award-winning essay ‘Dualismus’, which drew inspiration from authors such as Friedrich Nietzsche and Hermann Hesse, he described every human as an explosive mixture of rational thoughts (Apollo) and his impulse-driven unconscious (Dionysus). He cast this mental dualism in ethno-cultural language: the overly rigid rational mind was equated with Frenchness, while the even more dangerously unruly, though creative, impulsive unconscious was linked with ‘the Russian’ or the ‘Asian principle’.<sup>73</sup> German features were only mentioned once, as part of the (Oriental) anarchical principle that had ‘infiltrated’ French literature and declared “war on rules, traditions,

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<sup>70</sup> M. Wagner, *Heimatkundlicher Erziehungsunterricht*, 13: “Mutter Erde... mit der wir doch durch eine unlösbare Nabelschnur auf ewig verbunden sind”.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 11: “Die Heimat, die uns durch Jahrtausende werden ließ, ist die Kraft, ist der Nährboden und das Mittel, das uns in die Zukunft führt”.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 189: “Glieder eines Volks- und Staatsganzen, einer Schicksalsgemeinschaft eigentlich, der es alles verdankt und der es in verantwortungsbewußter Arbeit, durch Tatbekenntnis zur Gemeinschaft seinen Dank zu zollen hat.” On the role played by geography teachers in the propagation of political geography in Germany after 1918, see W. Köster, *Die Rede über den ‘Raum’*, 74–77.

<sup>73</sup> Marius Wagner, ‘Dualismus’, in *Cahiers luxembourgeois* 6 (1933), 631–642. See Germaine Goetzinger and Claude Conter, ed., *Luxemburger Autorenlexikon* (Mersch: CNL, 2007), s.v. “Marius Wagner”.

genres, readership, taste".<sup>74</sup> Contrary to the proponents of the *Mischkultur*,<sup>75</sup> Wagner did not consider the ethno-cultural mixture to be a specificity of Luxembourgian identity, but rather saw the Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy as an anthropological constant.

### 3.2. *Ethno-Culturalism*

Despite its idiosyncrasies, Marius Wagner's reform programme is part of a larger anti-modernist movement, spearheaded—as far as teaching was concerned—by Joseph Meyers and Paul Staar. The fear that culture—popular culture in particular—was in danger of being lost was very prominent in the early twentieth century. To counter urban growth and moral decadence, reformist movements came into existence. In Luxembourg, this trend was exemplified by the *Landwùol*, an association created in 1923 to "save the Luxembourg homeland from bleeding to death by rural exodus".<sup>76</sup> In 1929, the historian Joseph Meyers proposed that folklore (*Volkskunde*) be introduced in schools in order to fight off modern decadence and urban melancholy.<sup>77</sup> Meyers wanted to draw new strength from the "inner life (*Seelenleben*) of our ancestors" rather than rely on "foreign" elements in the manner of contemporary historians and poets.<sup>78</sup> His objective was the establishment of *Volkskunde* as a serious academic discipline, following the example of the University of Bonn.<sup>79</sup> The latter was renowned at the time for its geo-cultural research agenda (*Westforschung*) based on ethnic belonging and differentiation. In the 1930s, it became obvious that this research was encouraged by—and lent a certain legitimacy to—Nazi ideology

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<sup>74</sup> Auguste Dupouy, *France et Allemagne. Littératures comparées*, quoted by M. Wagner, *Dualismus*, 637: "Guerre aux règles, aux traditions, aux genres, au public, au goût".

<sup>75</sup> See the general introduction for more on the concept of *Mischkultur*.

<sup>76</sup> "Zur Rettung der Luxemburger Heimat vor der Verblutung in der Landflucht", *Landwùol*. Luxemburger Verein für ländliche Wohlfahrt- und Heimatpflege, *Retour à la Terre. Statuten* (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 1923) [n.p.n.]. See also the programmatic first issue of *Landwùol* 1 (June 1924). There were about six issues per year until 1937.

<sup>77</sup> Joseph Meyers, 'Volkskunde im Unterricht', in *Luxemburgische Sprachgesellschaft. Jahrbuch* (1929) (Luxembourg: Gesellschaft für Sprach- und Dialektforschung, 1929), 133–137.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 133–134.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.



in view of the planned annexation of Luxembourg.<sup>80</sup> Although Meyers continued to use ethno-cultural terminology, he tried to prove that Luxembourg was not Germanic.<sup>81</sup> In 1936, he was invited—together with his colleagues Camille Wampach (who remained at the University of Bonn until 1942) and Nicolas Margue—to present the Luxembourgian case at a conference in Bitburg. Their papers went against the grain of the *Westforschung* and proposed a distinct Luxembourgian ‘consciousness’, based on a past that was considered quite distinct from that of the rest of the Empire, due to its cultural connections with France.<sup>82</sup> Only Nicolas Margue’s article—arguing that national sentiment had only developed in the nineteenth century—was published in *Deutsches Archiv für Landes- und Volksforschung* in 1937,<sup>83</sup> while all three articles were included the same year in the Luxembourg journal *Ons Hémecht*.<sup>84</sup>

While Meyers’ ethnic-culturalism developed thus in the late 1930s towards a Luxembourgian nationalism,<sup>85</sup> the same cannot be said for

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<sup>80</sup> See Michael Fahlbusch, *Wissenschaft im Dienst der nationalsozialistischen Politik? Die “Volksdeutschen Forschungsgemeinschaften” von 1931–1945* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1999), 377–381, 421–428, 719–21; Peter Schöttler, ‘Die historische “Westforschung” zwischen “Abwehrkampf” und territorialer Offensive’, in *Geschichtsschreibung als Legitimationswissenschaft 1918–1945*, ed. Peter Schöttler (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1999), 204–261; Klaus Freckmann, ‘Luxemburg—ein Teil des deutschen Reiches? Zur Kontinuität des landes- und volkskundlichen Kulturraumforschung und ihr Verhältnis zur kulturellen Identität Luxemburgs im 20. Jahrhundert’, in *Griff nach dem Westen. Die “Westforschung” der völkisch-nationalen Wissenschaften zum nordwesteuropäischen Raum (1919–1960)*, ed. Burkhard Dietz, Helmut Gabel and Ulrich Tiedau, 2 vols. (Münster: Waxmann, 2003), 1: 473–492. The latter work has attracted many reviews, the most notable of which were published in *Historisches Forum* 6 (2005). URL: [http://edoc.hu-berlin.de/e\\_histfor/6/PDF/HistFor\\_6-2005.pdf](http://edoc.hu-berlin.de/e_histfor/6/PDF/HistFor_6-2005.pdf) (last accessed 28 September 2008).

<sup>81</sup> Joseph Meyers, ‘Die Entwicklung des luxemburgischen Sonderbewußtseins unter den Burgundern und den Habsburgern’, *Ons Hémecht* 43/3 (1937): 167–187.

<sup>82</sup> Paul Dostert, *Luxemburg zwischen Selbstbehauptung und nationaler Selbstaufgabe: die deutsche Besatzungspolitik und die Volksdeutsche Bewegung 1940–1945*, 2 vols. (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 1985), 2: 126; B. Thomas, ‘Westforschung’, 177–183.

<sup>83</sup> Nicolas Margue, ‘Die Entwicklung des Luxemburger Nationalgefühls von 1780 etwa bis heute’, *Deutsches Archiv für Landes- und Volksforschung* 1/2 (1937): 257–272.

<sup>84</sup> Camille Wampach, ‘Die Luxemburger im Rahmen des mittelalterlichen Kaiserreiches’, *Ons Hémecht* 43 (1937): 149–166; Joseph Meyers, ‘Die Entwicklung des luxemburgischen Sonderbewusstseins unter den Burgundern und Habsburgern’, *Ons Hémecht* 43 (1937): 167–187; Nicolas Margue, ‘Die Entwicklung des Luxemburger Nationalgefühls von 1780 etwa bis heute’, *Ons Hémecht* 43/3 (1937): 188–204.

<sup>85</sup> B. Thomas, ‘Westforschung’, 179–181.

Paul Staar's exaltation of the 'homeland'.<sup>86</sup> In his preface to Wagner's reform programme, Staar, a school inspector, underlined the need "to educate towards a lasting mythical experience—one has not been wrong to say that homeland is a myth—of the inescapable connection of soil and ethnic strength".<sup>87</sup> The native soil was not limited to rural areas; young urban dwellers also needed to "unite around the homeland" to prevent their "healthy" values to be corrupted.<sup>88</sup> Staar recommended teachers to leave their stuffy classrooms behind to prevent the "withering of one's roots" and to "search the homeland with the soul, understand it with the heart, experience it in the blood and in the soil".<sup>89</sup> The pedagogical methods he advocated were based on an understanding of the past as "an experience of the soul, a mystical presence". Staar recommended that pupils be taken to a definite place and taught *in situ* about the historical events that had occurred there. Under the 'French cross' for instance,

where the river Clerf rushes and the old oaks rustle along, the child listens... deeply moved to the story of the hard fight for the homeland, which drank the sacrificial blood of its sons *at this precise place*.<sup>90</sup>

For Staar, the official meaning of the monument (dedicated to the French soldiers who had died in 1798 rather than the insurgent peasants) was thus less important than its role as a landmark linking the past to the soil. 'Homeland', however, was not only linked to 'soil', but also to language: in his preface to the 1938 anthology *Im Gegenstrom der Heimat*, Staar contrasts 'homeland' and school, the former full of soul, warmth, health and delight (expressed by the spoken language), the latter bloodless, pale, boring and composed of dead words in dusty books. He maintains that: "it is and remains

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<sup>86</sup> For a bibliography of his writings, see Paul Staar, *Auf dem Weg zum Gesamtva-terland Gedanken* (Luxembourg: M. Staar, 2005), 94–95.

<sup>87</sup> Paul Staar, 'Geleitwort', in *Heimatkundlicher Erziehungsunterricht* (see note 70), 4: "zu einem dauernden mythischen Erleben—man hat nicht zu Unrecht gesagt, daß Heimat Mythos ist—des unentrinnbaren Zusammenhangs mit Boden und Volkskraft zu erziehen".

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>89</sup> Paul Staar, 'Geschichtsunterricht im Freien', *Die Volksschule* 31/6, 15 June 1935, 185–186: "Wenn seine Wurzeln nicht verdorren sollen... Es gilt... die Heimat mit der Seele zu suchen, mit dem Herzen zu erfassen, sie bluthaft bodenständig zu erleben".

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 188: "Wo der Clerfbach mit den alten Eichen im Zwiegesang rauscht, hört das Kind... mit stiller Ergriffenheit von dem harten Kampf um die Heimat, die *eben an diesem Ort* das Opferblut ihrer Söhne trank" (emphasis added).

an outrage that the stream of bliss (*Segenstrom*) of the homeland flows past the schoolhouse... A school reform is at any rate also and not the least concern of a patriotic conviction".<sup>91</sup> Staar's continual frustration over school programmes shows that his suggestions met with some (ideological or bureaucratic) obstacles, despite the fact that the anthology he had edited contained several articles by the historian and Minister of Education Nicolas Margue and had been well received by the conservative press.<sup>92</sup> In *Die Heimat im Ganzheitsunterricht* Staar rails against public authorities and school commissions who fail to change teaching methods and he deplores the lack of geography teachers who would underline not just the past, but the present connection of soil and the people. For, he writes, "the child needs to view space in relation to its significance for the nation and understand the nation in its fateful connection to the space".<sup>93</sup> It is important to define Staar's concept of the 'nation'. Does he consider the 'homeland' he so extols to coincide with the Luxembourg nation-state? The cover of his book *Im Segensstrom der Heimat* seems to suggest as much. It depicts a map of the country and thus relates 'Heimat' visually to a territorialised entity with clear outer borders. As one reviewer noted "[t]his unmistakably shows that it is a thoroughly Luxembourgian work and that this stream of bliss of the homeland only rushes through the grand duchy".<sup>94</sup> (Fig. 4)

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<sup>91</sup> Paul Staar, 'Vorwort', in *Im Segenstrom der Heimat. Ein Buch Heimatbilder in Worten zur Belebung des Unterrichts*, ed. Paul Staar (Saarlautern: Hausen, 1938), 4: "Es ist und bleibt ein Frevel wenn der Segenstrom der Heimat am Schulhaus vorbeifließt... Schulreform ist jedenfalls auch nicht in letzter Linie eine Angelegenheit der vaterländischen Gesinnung".

<sup>92</sup> Marcel Staar, ed., *Zitate aus Rezensionen in der luxemburgischen Presse über die Werke von Paul Staar, sowie aus Zuschriften bei Veröffentlichung seiner Bücher* (s.l., s.d.), 18.

<sup>93</sup> Paul Staar, *Die Heimat im Ganzheitsunterricht. Ein Vorschlag zur inneren Umbildung des Unterrichts nach dem Grundsatz volkhaft-organischer Bildung in Lebens- und Lehreinheiten* (Clervaux: W. Geisbusch, 1939), 34: "Das Kind muss den Heimatraum in seiner Bedeutung für das Heimatvolk erblicken und das Heimatvolk in seiner Schicksalverbundenheit mit dem Heimatraum verstehen".

<sup>94</sup> *Luxemburger Wort*, 28 June 1938: "Damit ist äußerlich unverkennbar angedeutet, daß es sich um ein urluxemburgisches Werk handelt und daß dieser Segenstrom der Heimat nur das Großherzogtum durchrauscht", cited by: M. Staar, *Zitate aus den Rezensionen*, 18.

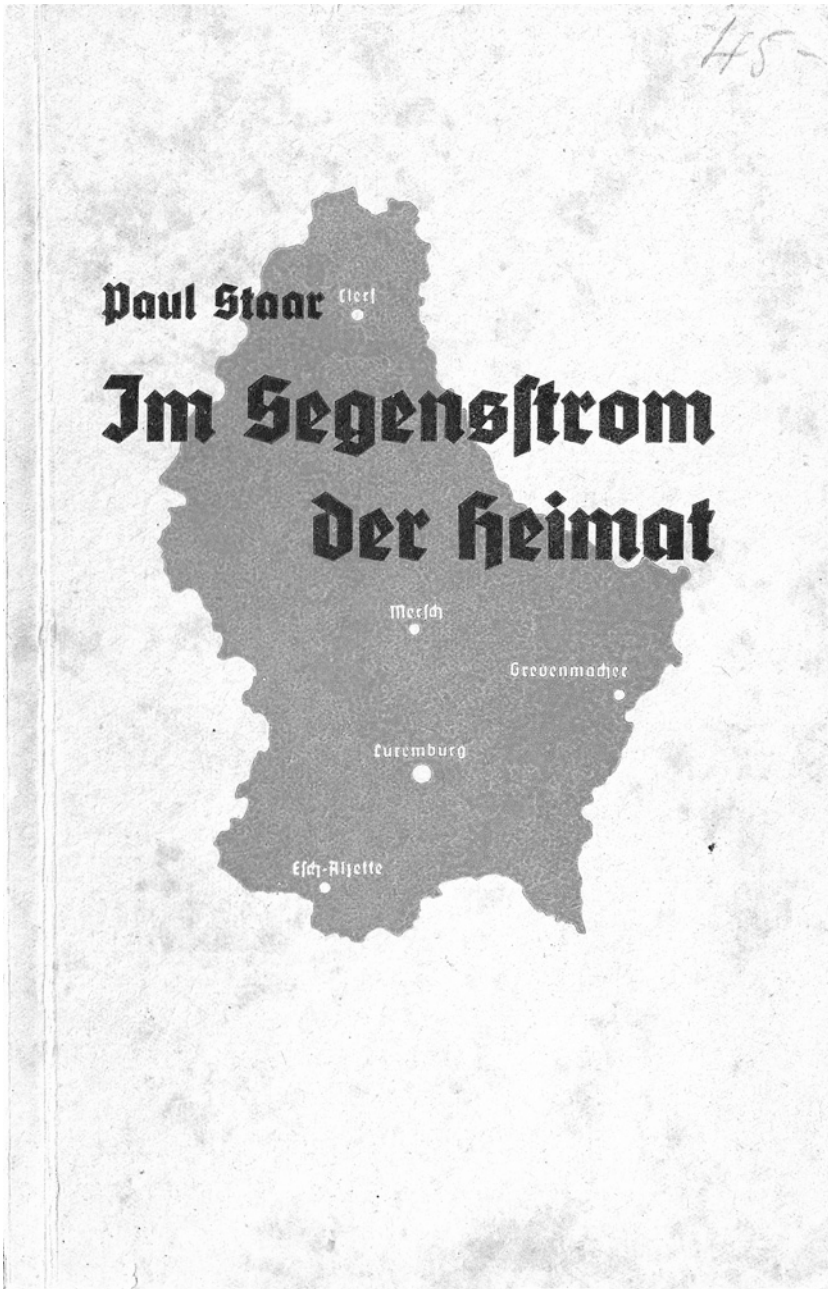


Fig. 4. Paul Staar, ed., *Im Segenstrom der Heimat. Ein Buch Heimatbilder in Worten zur Belebung des Unterrichts* (Saarlautern: Hausen, 1938), cover.

However, in the whole book, there are only a few texts that address Luxembourg as a whole, mostly linked to the experience of the Great War. In a piece entitled ‘Homeland and War’ Alfons Foos writes: “[t]he war has taught many a Luxembourger to appreciate his little homeland for the first time. The war has showed many of them the beauty of landscapes they had until then been looking for beyond the borders”.<sup>95</sup> At first sight, the narration of ‘war’ appears to politicise the notion of ‘homeland’ and turn it into a ‘fatherland’. If, however, one takes into account that the author became the head of the *Gedelit* after the German invasion of 1940 and supported the National Socialist propaganda efforts in Luxembourg,<sup>96</sup> attention shifts to the adjective ‘little’: the ‘little homeland’ is cast in terms of landscape and natural beauty; it faces ‘inwards’, not ‘outwards’. This holds true for *Im Segenstrom* in general. The book combines short historical pieces (‘Of Past Times’), descriptions of professions (‘Dying Trades’), folk legends and thirty-five portrayals of towns and villages, including four of the (ex-) fortress of Luxembourg and one of an industrial town, Differdange. Some authors use the same effusive language for industrial areas as for natural beauty (‘The Land of Red Soils’), while others highlighted the workers’ misery and poverty with martial imagery (‘The Working Army’, ‘Land of Ore and War’). The countryside, by contrast, is consistently romanticised and provides the “roots” that “the spirit of these people feeds on”.<sup>97</sup> Likewise, Goethe and Napoleon I are merely mentioned as “visitors” and no longer comprised among the “men of the homeland”, as they had been in Hary’s compilation.<sup>98</sup>

Staar was made director of the Institute for Teaching Training (*Normalschule*) under the Nazi occupation and was forced to retire after the war. His post-war writings are marked by pacifism, pro-Europeanism and an abhorrence of nationalism. He blames the teaching of purely national history and the ‘infection’ of schools by nationalism in the wake of World War I for the inculcation of hatred.<sup>99</sup> Staar’s exaltation

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<sup>95</sup> Alfons Foos, ‘Heimat und Krieg’, in *Im Segenstrom*, 18; “So manche Luxemburger hat erst der Krieg das kleine Heimatland schätzen gelehrt. Der Krieg zeigte vielen zum erstenmal landschaftliche Schönheiten, die sie bisher jenseits der Grenzen gesucht haben”.

<sup>96</sup> C. Conter and G. Goetzinger, ed., *Autorenlexikon*, s.v. Foos.

<sup>97</sup> As Staar put it in his ‘Vorwort’, in *Im Segenstrom*, 3: “Der Geist dieser Menschen nährt sich eben unablässig aus den besten Wurzelkräften der Heimat”.

<sup>98</sup> P. Staar (ed.), *Im Segenstrom*, 103–104 (‘Hoher Besuch’).

<sup>99</sup> P. Staar, *Auf dem Weg zum Gesamtvaterland*, 8, 34.

of the 'homeland' had subsided (or may have been filtered out by his son and editor fifty years later), but his willingness to blame the war and its 'sufferings' (no mention was made of war crimes) on nationalism does not necessarily contradict any of his former statements. His allegiance was never to the (national) 'fatherland', but rather to the (locally bound) 'homeland'. In fact, his very lack of nationalist sentiments made Staar acceptable to the Nazi regime.

The question remains whether the ethno-cultural reification of the 'homeland' in the inter-war period was a patriotic reaction against the notion of a pan-Germanic *Volkstum* or whether it was a parallel development, based on similar ideological grounds to the National Socialist connection of blood and soil. The same question has been asked of the ethno-cultural turn the debates over legislation regarding nationality took in the 1930s: were the efforts to replace the *ius soli* by the *ius sanguini* a patriotic reaction against German threats to annex the country, or were they motivated by the rejection of increasing numbers of immigrants (often fleeing from the Nazis)?<sup>100</sup> In the latter case, it was not "an irony of the course of history" that the law was voted in March 1940, only two months before the Nazi invasion.<sup>101</sup> Rather, the law reflected a political desire and a societal trend.<sup>102</sup> would explain why the legislation was not withdrawn after the war. A similar—tentative—conclusion may be drawn for the ethno-cultural definition of the 'homeland': it emerged not as a patriotic reaction against the German construction of *Volkstum*, but parallel to it. Some authors realised that—given German plans for annexation—this would sooner or later clash with the notion of an independent Luxembourgian nation-state and emphasised the 'national character of 'homeland'. Others, such as

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<sup>100</sup> The first line of reasoning features quite prominently in Denis Scuto, 'Qu'est-ce qu'un Luxembourgeois? Histoire de la nationalité luxembourgeoise du Code Napoléon à nos jours', *Hémécht* 58/1 (2006): 86, 90. Scuto later revised his position and affirmed that the 1940 Naturalisation Law should not be interpreted as part of a major ethno-cultural turn. See Denis Scuto, 'La construction de la nationalité luxembourgeoise. Une histoire sous influence française, belge et allemande (1839–1940)' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Université libre de Bruxelles, 2009).

<sup>101</sup> D. Scuto, 'Qu'est-ce qu'un Luxembourgeois?', 90: "une ironie du sort de l'histoire".

<sup>102</sup> Serge Hoffmann, 'Deutsche politische Flüchtlinge in Luxemburg während der 30er Jahre', in *Itinéraires croisés. Luxembourgeois à l'étranger, étrangers au Luxembourg*, ed. Antoinette Reuter and Denis Scuto (Esch-sur-Alzette.: Ed. Le Phare, 1995), 202–205; Lucien Blau, 'L'immigré et le réfugié dans le discours de l'extrême-droite luxembourgeoise', in *ibidem*, 206–209.

Staar and Foos, went much further and accepted to define ‘homeland’ within a German ‘fatherland’.

### 3.3. *The Nationalisation of the ‘Homeland’*

After the Second World War, the unity of soil and blood (and, by extension, the connection of space and culture) was tainted by its association with National Socialism. The only (politically and morally correct) way to link territory and nationality was to use decidedly patriotic language, conceived of as implicitly anti-Nazi. ‘Homeland’ needed thus to be equated with the Luxembourg ‘fatherland’.

This is particularly evident in two sets of worksheets used for the teaching of *Heimatkunde* introduced in the 1960s. Aimed at children aged nine to ten, *Heimatkunde* was taught alongside *Anschauungsunterricht* (1st and 2nd grades) and history and geography (5th and 6th grades) until the 1990s. Since the Ministry of Education did not issue any textbooks, two teachers’ trades unions decided to publish worksheets for *Heimatkunde* for themselves:

- A: *Luxemburg, dein Heimatland* (1966, reed. 1975), published by the *Instituteurs Réunis* (founded as *Katholischer Lehrerverein*, today *Syndicat National des Enseignants*).
- B: *Wat d’Hemecht as, dat froën s’oft* (1967, reed. 1975), issued by the rival *Fédération Générale des Instituteurs Luxembourgeois* (FGIL) in favour of secular education.

Primary school teachers were free to use either (or neither) in their classes. In contrast to earlier schoolbooks, these worksheets were to be used directly by the children, as colouring books and learning tools. (Figs. 5 and 6)

Both A and B seek to convey a sentiment of belonging to the homeland/fatherland, but B<sup>103</sup> adds an extra layer of patriotic disposition: Its title is in Luxembourgish, taken from a song written by ‘national poet’ Michel Lentz. The title (literally ‘What is the homeland, they often ask’) is by no means an open question; the answer is provided by the song itself, reproduced on the cover of both volumes of the 1975 edition

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<sup>103</sup> The unnamed author is Alphonse Kettenmeyer, an adept of Freinet’s pedagogics, who had unsuccessfully tried to merge the two teaching associations after the Second World War. We would like to thank Ed Kirsch, current president of the FGIL, for this information.

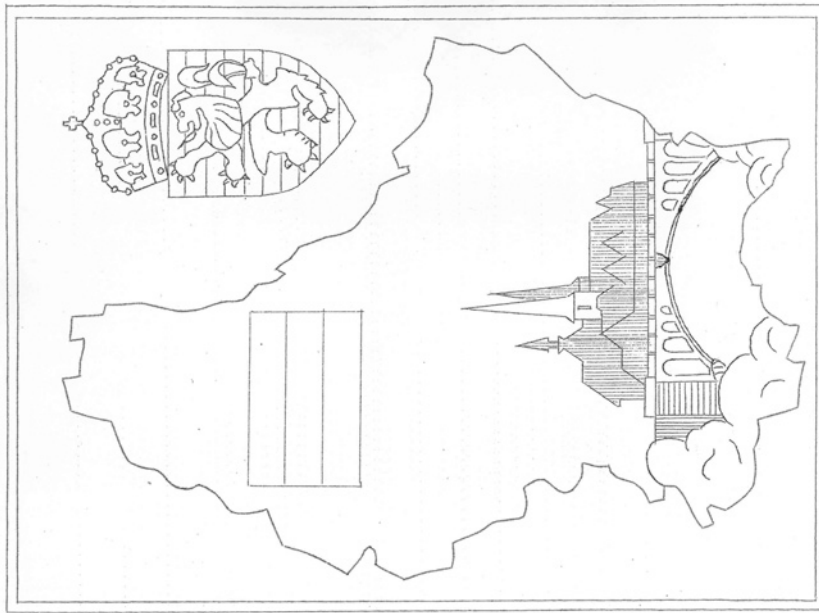


Fig. 5. *Luxemburg, dein Heimatland* (1966, reed. 1975), cover.



Fig. 6. *Wat d'Hemecht as, dat froen s'oft* (1967, reed. 1975), cover.



(*Heimatkunde* 3 and 4). The lyrics are placed within the stylised contours of the country, surrounded by idyllic rural landscapes that reflect the song. This is a deliberate choice, since there is a different version of the same song containing a verse on industrialisation (railways and ore).<sup>104</sup> The chosen version is not complete either,<sup>105</sup> but leaves out a verse on the Luxembourg language. B thus provides a de-politicised ‘homeland’, defined by nature and motherhood and—rather surprisingly for a secular publication—blessed by God. This is underlined by an exercise asking pupils to get to know ‘their’ church.<sup>106</sup> The only reference to the ‘fatherland’ is another exercise, consisting in tracing down the war memorials of one’s hometown or village.<sup>107</sup> By comparison, the first page of A also features the contours of the country, comprising a panorama of the capital (the Pont Adolphe and the cathedral) and a flag; in the upper right corner are the crowned heraldic arms.

Both learning tools feature a second stylised image of the country and of the rivers mentioned in the national anthem (Figs. 7 and 8). A displays no patriotic insignia; its map occupies only half a page, but contains all the major rivers, not just the three mentioned in the anthem. Moreover, the rivers are not named (leaving that to the pupils) and are indistinguishable from the thinly drawn borders of the country. Underneath the large title *Luxemburg, dein Heimatland*, the text continues in German: “Homeland is first the village or the town in which we live; but the local district and the whole country are also our homeland. Our national anthem *Ons Heemecht* tells us of the beauties of our home country.”<sup>108</sup> This is followed by the opening words of the anthem in Luxembourgish

Where the Alzette runs through the meadows  
The Sûre breaks through the rocks

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<sup>104</sup> *Mir sangen. Lidderbuch fir d’Lëtzebuurger Schoulen* (Luxembourg: Ministère de l’Education Nationale, 1981), 107.

<sup>105</sup> Nik. Biwer, ed., *Luxemburger Gaudeamus. Taschenliederbuch für sangesfreudige Luxemburger* (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 1982), 46–47.

<sup>106</sup> *Wat d’Heemecht as, dat froën s’oft* (*Heimatkunde* 3), 1975, 6 (“Unsere Kirche: 1. Zeichne eure Kirche oder klebe ein Bild davon auf (...).”).

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 (“1. Hut dir e ‘Monument aux Morts’? 2. Pech e Bild dervun op! 3. Schreif op, wat op deem Monument steet”).

<sup>108</sup> *Luxemburg, dein Heimatland*, 2: “Heimat ist zuerst das Dorf oder die Stadt, in der wir leben; aber auch die Gemeinde und das ganze Land sind unsere Heimat. Unser Nationallied ‘Ons Heemecht’ erzählt von den Schönheiten unseres Heimatlandes”.



Fig. 7. *Luxemburg, dein Heimatland* (1966, reed. 1975), 2.

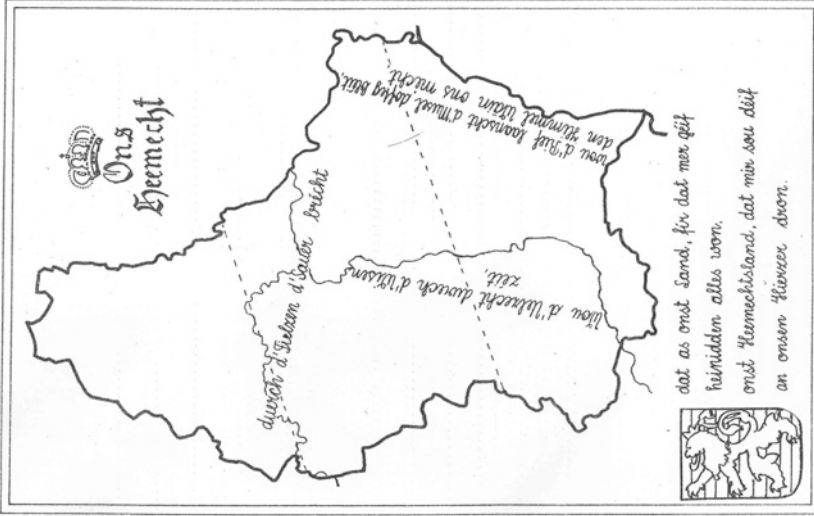


Fig. 8. *Wat d'Heemecht as, dat froën s'off* (1967, reed. 1975), 2.

Where fragrant vines blossom on the banks of the Moselle  
 The heavens make us wine.  
 There lies the land...<sup>109</sup>

B places the same opening words of the anthem on the map, alongside the river in question and (unlike A) provides the remaining words of the first verse:

There lies the land for which we would  
 Dare everything down here  
 Our own, our native land which ranks  
 Deeply in our hearts.<sup>110</sup>

This ‘interpellation’ (in the Althusserian sense)<sup>111</sup>, characterised by the introduction of the personal pronoun ‘we’, is placed beneath the map, next to the heraldic arms. Moreover, the map is subdivided by dotted lines into three parts to be coloured in red, white and blue and in the top right corner features the gothic title *Ons Heemecht* surmounted by a crown. A and B thus construct the ‘homeland’ (*Heemecht*) in two different ways. A multiplies the meanings of ‘homeland’ (within the national boundaries) and defines the country by the rivers that spring outside the country, run through it and have banks on both sides of the border. By contrast, B contains the ‘homeland’ within the national borders, both visually and textually. The ‘outside’ is filled with national and monarchical insignia and the chosen extract of *Ons Hémecht* emphasises the emotional binding of the individual to his or her native land. In both cases, a stylised map is used to convey the sense of a national unit(y).

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid.: “Wou d’Uelzecht durech d’Wisen zéit, duurch d’Fielzen d’Sauer brécht, wou d’Rief laanscht d’Musel dofteg bléit, den Himmel Wäin ons mécht, dat ass ons Land...”

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.: “Dat ass onst Land, fir dat mer géif heinidden alles won, onst Heemechtsland, dat mir sou déif an onsen Hierzer dron”, transl. by Service Information et Presse, *A propos... symboles de l’Etat et de la Nation*, URL: [http://www.eu2005.lu/fr/savoir\\_lux/lux\\_publications/a\\_propos\\_symboles/a\\_propos\\_symboles.pdf](http://www.eu2005.lu/fr/savoir_lux/lux_publications/a_propos_symboles/a_propos_symboles.pdf) (accessed June 2008).

<sup>111</sup> Louis Althusser, ‘Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses. Notes towards an Investigation’ [1970], *Lenin and Philosophy and other essays*, ed. Althusser (translated by Ben Brewster). London and New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 121–176.

#### 4. *Territorialisation of the Fatherland*

The cartographical and chorographical representation of national territory in schoolbooks has changed a lot over time. This section shows how different concepts emerge and why they remain valid—or not—until today. The first such concept is that Luxembourg 'was treated like an eighteenth province' by King William I in the years 1815–1830; the second is the powerful notion that Luxembourg has undergone 'three dismemberments' in the course of its history. The continuity of the spatial existence of Luxembourg is based on a third concept, that of early-modern 'particularism', which seeks to blank out the disruptive years of the French occupation 1795–1815 and establish a persistent 'regional patriotism'. An analysis of the evolution of these three notions show how Luxembourg was gradually rendered 'distinct' from former political entities, notably the Southern Low Countries. A fourth concept, the 'barrier of the Ardennes', provides the geographical foundation of that construct and provides 'natural' borders that prefigure Luxembourg as an autonomous nation-state.

##### 4.1. *The Eighteenth Province*

The first textbook of the geography of the grand duchy, *Elementarbuch der Erdbeschreibung zum Gebrauche der Schullehrer des Gross-Herzogthums Luxemburg* (1828), gives a factsheet for each continent and for each European country. The author includes Luxembourg in the kingdom of the Netherlands: after a description of the 'northern provinces' and the 'southern provinces', a couple of pages are dedicated to 18) *Provinz, das Großherzogthum Luxemburg*.<sup>112</sup> The second edition, dated 1844, adjusts to the division of the 'southern' (Belgian) provinces and places Luxembourg among the German states. At least, this is where the table of contents places the grand duchy (between Mecklenburg and the "lands of the Saxon ducal line"), but in actual fact the relevant pages (pp. 87–94) are missing—presumably due to an error in editing. Instead, the Luxembourgian data, based on the 1842 census, can be found in a separate, much extended, appendix (pp. 189–250). Luxembourg has thus become 'independent' of the rest

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<sup>112</sup> *Elementarbuch der Erdbeschreibung zum Gebrauche der Schullehrer des Gross-Herzogthums Luxemburg* (Luxembourg: Schmit-Brück, 1828), 122–131.

of the book and has been placed on the same level as Palestine, which is also placed in an appendix. Luxembourg and Palestine are both treated separately and given a particular status. Jacques-Adrien Blaise's *Elementarunterricht in der Geographie: ein Handbuch mit statistischer und topographischer Beschreibung des Grossherzogtums Luxemburg* undergoes a similar evolution: the 1857 edition places Luxembourg among the European countries (at the head of the list), whereas the 1880 edition puts it in a separate appendix altogether.

This symbolic separation of Luxembourg from the United Kingdom of the Netherlands is encapsulated in the notion of the 'eighteenth province'. The term is linked to King William I's application of the Dutch Fundamental Law to the grand duchy he had been granted as a personal possession at the Congress of Vienna and his decision to treat it like the other seventeen provinces. The reason why the notion of the (virtual) 'eighteenth province' was and still is so popular may be two-fold. On the one hand, it implicitly excuses Luxembourg's adherence to the Belgian cause in 1830–39 and shifts blame from the pro-Belgian local élites to the king, who is said to have acted unlawfully. On the other hand, the 'eighteenth province' marks a transition between the cartography and historiography of the Netherlands and that of the Luxembourg nation-state. *Ancien Régime* maps and descriptions had counted the duchy of Luxembourg among the seventeen provinces of the Burgundian Circle, even after the secession of the northern provinces.<sup>113</sup> The conquests and territorial reorganisations of the French Revolution and the First Empire had broken the Circle, but the *concept* of the 'seventeen provinces' nevertheless survived the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire. The United Kingdom of the Netherlands, established in 1815 as a buffer state between France and Prussia, was again considered 'complete', that is, made up of 'seventeen provinces'. Conceived of as an 'eighteenth province', the new grand duchy of Luxembourg was both part of the old imaginary realm and was not. The idea that this liminal state was 'unlawful' and contrary to the spirit of the Congress of Vienna gained in weight and may be found today in practically every account dealing with that period of Luxembourg history.

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<sup>113</sup> See Jean-Luc Mousset, 'Une commande spéciale pour les anciens Pays-Bas', in *Hybrides. Porcelaines chinoises aux armoiries territoriales européennes* (Luxembourg: MNHA [2003]), 25–27.

#### 4.2. *The Three Dismemberments*

The creation of the grand duchy of Luxembourg in 1815 has often been assimilated to the 'second division' of the country, although it was based on a complete reorganisation of the territory, which only took over the name of the former duchy. It integrated Bouillon and parts of the former Département de l'Ourthe, whereas territories attached to the former duchy situated to the east of the rivers Moselle, Sûre and Our (with the exception of the town of Vianden) became part of the Kingdom of Prussia.<sup>114</sup> The narration of three consecutive divisions was shaped by Joseph Paquet, who considered the last one, the treaty of 1831 (which was accepted by William I in 1839) as the "yet another slicing of the country of Luxembourg, which had already been ripped apart by the treaty of the Pyrenees<sup>115</sup> and the treaties of 1815".<sup>116</sup>

This narration of territorial loss was extraordinarily successful. Although—in contrast to most later writers—Paquet was careful to mention earlier territorial exchanges such as those between Luxembourg and Lorraine (1602–1603) and between Empress Maria-Theresa and King Louis XV of France (1769),<sup>117</sup> he did not take into account the blurred boundaries and patchwork of territories that they generated. Enclaves owing loyalty to different potentates remained a feature of the political landscape until the eighteenth century and even within individual villages, seigneurs paid homage to different homage depending on which plots of land they happened to occupy.<sup>118</sup> Yet it seems

<sup>114</sup> See Guy Thewes, 'Les trois démembrements', in *Lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg* (see note 47), 35–40; Martin Uhrmacher, 'Von der Grafschaft zum Großherzogtum. Entstehung und Entwicklung des luxemburgischen Staatsgebiets vom 10. Jahrhundert bis heute', in *Atlas du Luxembourg*, ed. Patrick Bousch, Philippe Gerber, Christian Schulz and Dorothea Wiktorin (Cologne: Emons, forthcoming).

<sup>115</sup> The Treaty of the Pyrenees (1659) stipulated that Louis XIV of France was to receive the southern strongholds of Thionville, Montmédy and Damvillers and the provostships of Yvois, Chauvancy-le-Château and Marville.

<sup>116</sup> J. Pacquet, *Hauptthatsachen*, 1839, 101: "abermals Zerstückelung des durch den Vertrag der Pyrenäen und durch die Verträge von 1815 schon zerrissenen Luxemburger Landes"

<sup>117</sup> For a more detailed analysis, see Paul Margue, 'Wie unsere Südgrenze entstand', *Hémecht* 16/3 (1964): 321–325 (with detailed maps of the partitions of 1601–1603 and 1659); Paul Margue, 'Die Grenze an Mosel und Sauer', *Hémecht* 16/3 (1964): 197–200.

<sup>118</sup> Daniel Nordman, 'Des limites d'Etat aux frontières nationales', in *Les Lieux de mémoire*, ed. Pierre Nora (Paris, 1984), vol. 2, 35–61; Catherine Denys, 'Construction et image de la frontière entre les Pays-Bas et la France: une réflexion historique sur la relation entre la frontière et la ville frontière', in *Villes et frontières*, ed. Bernard Reitel e.a. (Paris: Ed. Economica, 2002), 179–187.

clear that Paquet—and those who followed in his wake—regarded such subtlety and complexity as an obstacle to the construction of a clear narrative which would allow the contemporary Luxembourg to be identified directly with a comparable territory in the past.

The much-simplified narrative of the ‘three dismemberments’ allowed for the creation of a continuity linking the modern nation-state with the territory of the past. This over-simplified vision of Luxembourg’s territorial history was seldom questioned, and the rare attempts to assert that ‘lost’ territories were a rightful part of Luxembourg seem to coincide with major upheavals in international politics, such as the vehement campaigns launched by the *Letzebuenger Nationalunio’n* in 1919 and 1945.<sup>119</sup> The sense of continuity between the modern Luxembourgian territory and that of the past on the basis of the ‘three dismemberments’ has often been mirrored in cartography.

The first schoolbook to translate Paquet’s narrative into a map was the *Text-Atlas für die Schulen des Luxemburger Landes* (1905). A four-coloured map marked the ‘lost’ territories (“Ceded to France 1659 / to Prussia 1815 / to Belgium 1839”) in addition to “the current grand duchy”. This representation was based on a map in *Kleine Vaterländische Geschichte* (1883) “as revised by Prof. N. van Werveke”, which, however merely depicts the pre-1659 stage (*Das Herzogtum Luxemburg im 14., 15. und 16. Jahrhundert*), van Werveke’s revisions must have been quite substantial. Nicolas van Werveke may thus be considered the author of the—later ubiquitous—map of the ‘three partitions’. The specificity of this map is that it represents the former duchy of Luxembourg as an island, the neighbouring territories being literally blanked out. This was not a particularly useful method to employ in a geography textbook, given that geographical features, industrial developments and communications routes did not stop neatly at the border.<sup>120</sup> Nonetheless, van Werveke’s map was enthusiastically reproduced in history textbooks. In 1930, Joseph Hansen published a more elaborate version of this map, but nevertheless continued to gloss over the separate existence of enclaves and parts of Luxembourg’s earlier incarnations which had subsequently

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<sup>119</sup> Lucien Blau, *Histoire de l’extrême-droite au Grand-duché de Luxembourg au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Esch/A: Le Phare, 1998), 252–254, 508–517; André Grosbusch, ‘La question des réparations dans l’opinion luxembourgeoise 1945–1949’, *Hémecht* (1984): 569–591.

<sup>120</sup> R. Reyland, *Geographie für die Primärschulen des Luxemburger Landes*, 5th ed., (1919), 106; *Luxemburger Geographie* (1926).

been lost, such as the county of Chiny and the former duchy of Bouillon.<sup>121</sup> Arthur Herchen's *Le Grand-Duché de Luxembourg historique et géographique* (1925) included a map by Hansen<sup>122</sup> and a simplified version was included in Joseph Meyer's *Einführung in die Luxemburger Geschichte* (1939). Immediately after the war, the latter was re-edited with coloured maps—very costly and unusual at the time. It comes as no surprise that the map of the 'three dismemberments' bears the national colours red, white and blue. The same map has also been reproduced in all nine editions of Arthur Herchen's *Manuel d'histoire nationale* (1918–1972) and in the 2006 *Luxemburger Lexikon*.<sup>123</sup> Even Emile van der Vekene's register of early-modern maps uses a highly simplified map of the three partitions twice, at the very beginning and at the very end of the book.<sup>124</sup> It has been replicated in countless student papers, in tourist brochures and websites, and may even be found on the introductory panel to the history of Luxembourg placed at the entrance of the Cathedral of Luxembourg. It has—in a sense—been 'canonised'.

#### 4.3. Particularism

The idea that early-modern 'particularism' prefigured national consciousness is supported by the image of a country that was shaped by consecutive partitions, but basically remained the same throughout time. Like the notion of 'three dismemberments', the concept of 'particularism' also needs to be historicised. It was developed in the inter-war years in order to entrench the autonomy of the (young) Luxembourg

<sup>121</sup> Joseph Hansen, *Carte historique du Luxembourg* (1930). A copy is held by the Musée d'Histoire de la Ville de Luxembourg. Reproduced in G. Thewes, *Les trois démembrements*, 36, and: G. Trausch, *Le Luxembourg. Emergence d'un Etat et d'une nation*, 193. For a critical appreciation, see: M. Uhrmacher, *Von der Graftschafft zum Großherzogtum*.

<sup>122</sup> Paul-Louis Ensich, Marcel Strainchamps and Emile Thoma, *Le livre scolaire Luxembourgeois: catalogue des manuels conservés à la BN* (Luxembourg: Bibliothèque Nationale de Luxembourg: 1995), 161.

<sup>123</sup> The article 'Luxembourg, Grand-Duché de' contains an historical map (of the three dismemberments), an administrative map, a geographical map; and a tourist map. Georges Hausemer, *Luxemburger Lexikon. Das Großherzogtum von A-Z* (Luxembourg: Binsfeld, 2006), 264–273.

<sup>124</sup> This highly abstract nature of this map contrasts greatly with the content of the book, which offers a minutely detailed inventory of historical maps, Emile van der Vekene, *Les cartes géographiques du Duché de Luxembourg éditées aux XVI<sup>e</sup>, XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles*. 2nd ed. (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 1980). 1st ed. from 1975.



state. In opposition to German expansionist theories, Joseph Meyers detected the idea of a distinctly Luxembourgian ethnicity (*Volkstum*) and the consciousness of being different (*Sonderbewusstsein*) in local opposition to policies aimed at the centralisation of authority in the early-modern period. He declared that these notions paved the way for ‘total independence’ in the nineteenth century.<sup>125</sup> This line of reasoning was not shared by his colleague Nicolas Margue, who considered early modern particularism part of feudal territorial politics that were washed away by the French Revolution.<sup>126</sup> As seen in chapter 2, both historians worked on several re-editions of Arthur Herchen’s *Manuel d’histoire nationale* after the author’s death in 1931. These re-editions happened in a spirit of collaboration.

As Daniel Spizzo has argued, the next generation of history books, published in the 1980s, have struck a note of compromise between Meyers and Nicolas Margue.<sup>127</sup> Although differentiating between particularism and national sentiment, Gilbert Trausch, for example, has contended that national sentiment developed out of earlier particularism in a process that was mediated by nation-builders—an approach closer to Eric Hobsbawm’s than to Anthony Smith’s, at first sight.<sup>128</sup> For Trausch, as for Margue, the French Revolution and the subsequent period of French rule acted as a “steamroller” which effectively brought a close to the particularism of the *Ancien Régime*.<sup>129</sup> Yet despite this abrupt ending of Luxembourgian particularism, Trausch has pointed out that the early-modern interest in local matters served as a ‘scholarly’ basis for nineteenth-century constructions of national sentiment,

<sup>125</sup> J. Meyers, ‘Die Entwicklung des luxemburgischen Sonderbewußtseins’, 169–170. Cf. Sonja Kmec, ‘Ecriture de l’histoire et construction nationale’, *Hémécht* 58/4 (2006): 489–491.

<sup>126</sup> D. Spizzo, *La nation luxembourgeoise*, 66–70.

<sup>127</sup> D. Spizzo, *La nation luxembourgeoise*, 70–71.

<sup>128</sup> Gilbert Trausch, *Du particularisme à la Nation. Vom Sonderbewußtsein zur Nation. Essais sur l’histoire du Luxembourg de la fin de l’Ancien Régime à la Seconde Guerre mondiale* (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 1989), 6–7. Smith represents the ‘primordialist’ view that the origins of nations may be traced back to pre-modern ethnic communities, while Hobsbawm espouses the argument that the nation is a modern social construct. Anthony D. Smith, ‘The Origins of Nations’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 12/3 (1989): 340–367; Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1780: programme, myth, reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

<sup>129</sup> Gilbert Trausch, ‘Comment les Luxembourgeois sont devenus une nation’, *forum* 58 (1982): 18. Spizzo considers N. Margue “too” radical.

and that—as an artefact—particularism was preserved by national historiography deployed for the purpose of nation-building.<sup>130</sup>

What is striking about Trausch's analysis, however, is that early-modern élite particularism is somewhat taken for granted and is not examined as a discursive construction in the same manner as 'monarchical fidelity' or 'foreign dominations'. For Trausch, the particularism of the *Ancien Régime*—which, he suggests was waning even before the French Revolution<sup>131</sup>—was based on geography. As he puts it in his influential *Le Luxembourg Émergence d'un État et d'une nation*, it is

geography that gives Luxembourg particularism its greatest strength (*sa meilleure consistance*)...Once the grand duchy of Luxembourg is an autonomous state and separated from its neighbours (1839), this *Ancien Régime* particularism, comparable to regional patriotism, plays a major role. It has survived the levelling effect of the French Revolution and the amalgam William I had been dreaming of. It provides the foundation on which Luxembourgers are going to construct a national sentiment.<sup>132</sup>

Trausch revises thus his earlier assertion that the French Revolution acted as a "steamroller". Moreover, his ascription of a determining role to geography omits that particularism under the *Ancien Régime* referred to an entirely different territory than the grand duchy, created in 1815 and vastly reduced in surface in 1839. Finally, the identification of particularism with regional patriotism implies that particularism was not limited to the preoccupations of élites fending for their own interests, but that it included popular emotional attachment. This, however, is not corroborated by early-modern sources.<sup>133</sup>

The 1989 exhibition *150 Joer onafhängeg* (150 Years of Independence) tentatively challenged the notion of *Ancien Régime* particularism, but nevertheless sustained the concept. The section entitled

<sup>130</sup> G. Trausch, *Du particularisme à la Nation*, 6–7.

<sup>131</sup> This has also been stressed in Paul Margue, 'Histoire et art', in *Luxembourg, cadre naturel, histoire, art, littérature, langue, économie, traditions populaires*, ed. Christine Bonneton (Le Puy, 1984), 30; idem, 'Grundlagen des Sonderbewußtseins', in *De l'État à la Nation, 1839–1989. 150 Joer onafhängeg. Katalog zur Ausstellung*, ed. Jean-Claude Muller (Luxembourg: Ministère de l'État, 1989), 51–2.

<sup>132</sup> G. Trausch, *Le Luxembourg. Émergence d'un État et d'une nation*, 146.

<sup>133</sup> Discussions of early-modern group identifications centre on the practices and representations of regional élites, see Bernhard Giesen (ed.), *Nationale und kulturelle Identität. Studien zur Entwicklung des kollektiven Bewusstseins in der Neuzeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991); Rainer Babel and Jean-Marie Moeglin, *Identité régionale et conscience nationale en France et en Allemagne du Moyen Age à l'époque moderne* (Sigmaringen: J. Thorbecke, 1997).

‘Le cadre fédéral des Pays-Bas, une lente absorption? Eingliederung in die Niederlande?’ (The federal framework of the Low Countries, towards a slow incorporation?) curated by Paul Margue, sought to show that, despite official attempts to integrate Luxembourg into the Netherlands, the most southern province clung to its peculiar institutions and customs.<sup>134</sup> (Figs. 9–11)

The first panel of this series (C42) explains that the unity evoked by the early-modern pictures never existed, since the northern provinces broke away after the Eighty Years War (1568–1648) and the southern provinces were highly diverse in terms of law, language, traditions, economics and customs policies. This is illustrated by a selection of three contemporary maps from Philippe Godding’s work on private law (C43). Luxembourg is depicted as even more ‘particular’ than the other provinces, since it was separated from the rest of the Southern Netherlands by the independent principality of Liège—as a contemporary school map illustrates (C44). The accompanying text is ambiguous: on one hand, the seventeen provinces are said to prefigure an *Ancien Régime* “Benelux”, on the other hand it is recalled that Joseph II granted Luxembourg “an exceptional status / that was different from that any of the other provinces”.<sup>135</sup>

This exceptionality is mirrored by a “geographical separation” of the province of Luxembourg, as Paul Margue expressed it in 1984: “The province of Luxembourg, *geographically separated* from the rest of the Low Countries... had similar institutions, received instructions from Brussels, but was rarely represented at the States General and insisted on its autonomy”.<sup>136</sup>

#### 4.4. *The Barrier of the Ardennes*

The construction of geographical isolation may be dated back to the 1830s, when the pro-Orangist élites sought to distance Luxembourg from rebellious Belgium. A letter to the editor of the *Journal de la Ville et du Grand-Duché* published on 13 October 1830, admitted that—historically speaking—the territory had been part of *Belgia* under the Romans and part of the Austrian Low Countries, but that physically

<sup>134</sup> Archives nationales du Luxembourg, Exposition 1989, Planches C41–C44.

<sup>135</sup> Archives nationales du Luxembourg, Exposition 1989, Planche C44: “une place hors du régime commun / eine von den übrigen Provinzen getrennte Einheit”.

<sup>136</sup> P. Margue, ‘Histoire et art’, 30, emphasis added.

and geographically, it had always been quite distinct: "one could not, physically speaking, apply such a name [Low-Countries] to Luxembourg, which is the highest of all the countries that surround it."<sup>137</sup> Two years later, Schrobilgen also used toponymy and physical characteristics to demonstrate that Luxembourg never really belonged to the Low Countries, aptly named so after their "great incline towards the sea".<sup>138</sup> Although he did not mention the 'barrier of the Ardennes' Schrobilgen appealed to a perceived geological uniformity (slate in the west, chalk in the east) and the existence of economic interdependence "since times immemorial" to rebut proposals to partition the grand duchy. He expressed his conviction that

this nationality, in that it is founded on the unity and entirety of the territory and on the needs and interests of the population, needs to continue to subsist under the conditions that providence itself seems to have subordinated it to.<sup>139</sup>

When the borders were fixed in 1839 neither the 'unity' of the grand duchy nor the 'interests of the population'—opposed to a partition—were taken into account. Once a division of the territory had been decided on, historical arguments were used to set Luxembourg apart from Belgium. As we have seen the topos of 'monarchic loyalty' was transferred to the rump grand duchy, bolstered up later by the notions of 'foreign dominations'<sup>140</sup> and 'particularism'. At the same time, the new borders were 'naturalised' by emphasising the Ardennes massif. This argument was developed in the 1930s by Joseph Meyers, who cites the Ardennes as the reason why neither Burgundian nor Habsburg rulers managed to change Luxembourgian 'particularity' (*Sonderda-sein*) and why Luxembourg was looking towards both Germany and France.<sup>141</sup> This openness towards the south and east was emphasised by François de Witt-Guizot, who described the grand duchy as "without natural borders, in immediate contact with the Germanic and Latin

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<sup>137</sup> *Journal de la Ville et du Grand-Duché* 82, 13 October 1830, 4: "on ne pouvait pas, physiquement parlant, appliquer une telle dénomination [Pays-Bas] au Luxembourg, qui est plus élevé que tous les pays qui l'environnent".

<sup>138</sup> M. L. Schrobilgen, *De la situation politique*, 10, "sa grande inclinaison vers la mer".

<sup>139</sup> M. L. Schrobilgen, *De la situation politique*, 25.

<sup>140</sup> See Chapters 1, 2 and 4.2.

<sup>141</sup> J. Meyers, 'Die Entwicklung des luxemburgischen Sonderbewusstseins', 175–176; idem, 'Die Folgen der Burgundischen Herrschaft für Luxemburg', *Les Cahiers luxembourgeois* 10 (1933): 419.





worlds".<sup>142</sup> By contrast, contact to the Low Countries, the exchange of merchandise, people, news and orders with the General Governship in Brussels, was considered difficult.

The 1989 exhibition (panel C45; Fig. 12) juxtaposes a photograph of a forest and an eighteenth-century drawing of a street through the Ardennes. The text explains that communication and travel were very difficult until the 1770s. In his textbook *Le Luxembourg sous l'Ancien Régime*, Gilbert Trausch explains that the lack of infrastructure was "aggravated by the absence of a geographical unity: on one side, the undulating plains of Lorraine (Bon Pays, Pays de Gaume); on the other side, the massif of the Ardennes." This is illustrated by a map depicting the "limits of the Ardennes".<sup>143</sup> For Trausch, the foothills of the Ardennes—together with the political barrier of the principality of Liège—represent a key reason for the persistence of early modern particularism.<sup>144</sup> In *Le Luxembourg. Emergence d'un Etat et d'une nation*, the Ardennes become an almost insurmountable barrier, illustrated by a map entitled 'Un pays à part' (A country of its own) with the enclosed text:

'Surrounded by foreign countries on all sides, Luxembourg differs from the other provinces of the Netherlands by its sterile soil and its cultivations, its borders with neighbouring countries, far from encouraging free commerce, hamper it...' (extract of a request by the Estates, 25 March 1716).<sup>145</sup>

No explanation is provided as to the objective of this petition, and no supporting reference is given. It merely serves to underline the message of the map itself, that "until the construction of railways in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Ardennes constituted a bar-

<sup>142</sup> François de Witt-Guizot, 'Le long de nos frontières. Le Grand-Duché de Luxembourg', *Revue des deux mondes*, 1 Jan. 1930, 74.

<sup>143</sup> Gilbert Trausch, *Le Luxembourg sous l'Ancien Régime*. Manuel d'histoire luxembourgeoise. vol. 3, (Luxembourg: Ministère de l'Education nationale, 1977), 111 and 122.

<sup>144</sup> G. Trausch, 'Aux origines du sentiment national', 76–7; idem, La signification historique, 10; idem, 'Von Maria Theresia zu Joseph II', in *Du particularisme à la Nation*, 36.

<sup>145</sup> G. Trausch, *Le Luxembourg. Emergence d'un Etat et d'une nation*, 145: "Entouré de toutes parts de pays étrangers, le Luxembourg diffère des autres provinces des Pays-Bas par son Terrain stérile et par ses crus, ses frontières avec les pays voisins, bien loin de favoriser les mouvements d'un libre commerce, les entravent..." (extrait d'une requête des États, 25 mars 1716)."

rier that separated Luxembourg from the rest of the Low Countries and accentuates its particularism".<sup>146</sup>

Another map, designed by Charles Barthel, is remarkable in many respects (Fig. 13). Although it is intended to represent a low mountain chain, the massif is indicated only by the inscription "*Barrière des Ardennes*", which runs *through* the upper part of the territory of the old duchy, represented in sandy tones. In a similar vein, a green line representing the linguistic border runs *through* the territory represented. These two lines—the mountains to the north and the linguistic border to the west—are combined with the rivers Our, Sûre and Moselle to the east to bring to the fore the current grand duchy, coloured in brown. The borders of 1839 appear thus to follow both natural borders (mountains and rivers) and cultural ones (the partition of 1839 being based on linguistic criteria, with some adjustments for strategic reasons). The map of 'Un pays à part'—set out to explain early-modern particularism—legitimizes current state borders by 'naturalising' them and providing them with historical antecedents.

The self-contained representation of the grand duchy is contradicted by another map by Charles Barthel, also shown at the 1989 exhibition (D81). (Fig. 14) This map depicts the network of roads that existed in 1839. It shows that external borders were no obstacle to commerce or social relations, compared to the lack of infrastructure within. Big dark arrows represent "intense relations" with neighbouring regions and thin red arrows show the "weak relations" between localities within the country. Quoting nineteenth-century sources, the text explains that there were very few bridges that crossed the Sûre and that people in the west and north were isolated and "half-wild". This second map was reproduced neither in the 1989 catalogue nor in Trausch's *Le Luxembourg. Emergence d'un Etat et d'une nation*. This is perhaps a consequence of its distance from the traditional terms of Luxembourgian historiography. It even contradicts the national master narrative and its insistence on Luxembourgian isolation, 'foreign domination' and enduring 'particularism'. It contrasts thus strikingly with the first map, which fully supports the national master narrative. It links up, however, with other research on early-modern mobility.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 145: "Jusqu'à la construction des chemins de fer dans la seconde moitié du 19e siècle les Ardennes constituent une barrière qui sépare le Luxembourg du reste des Pays-Bas et accentue son particularisme".



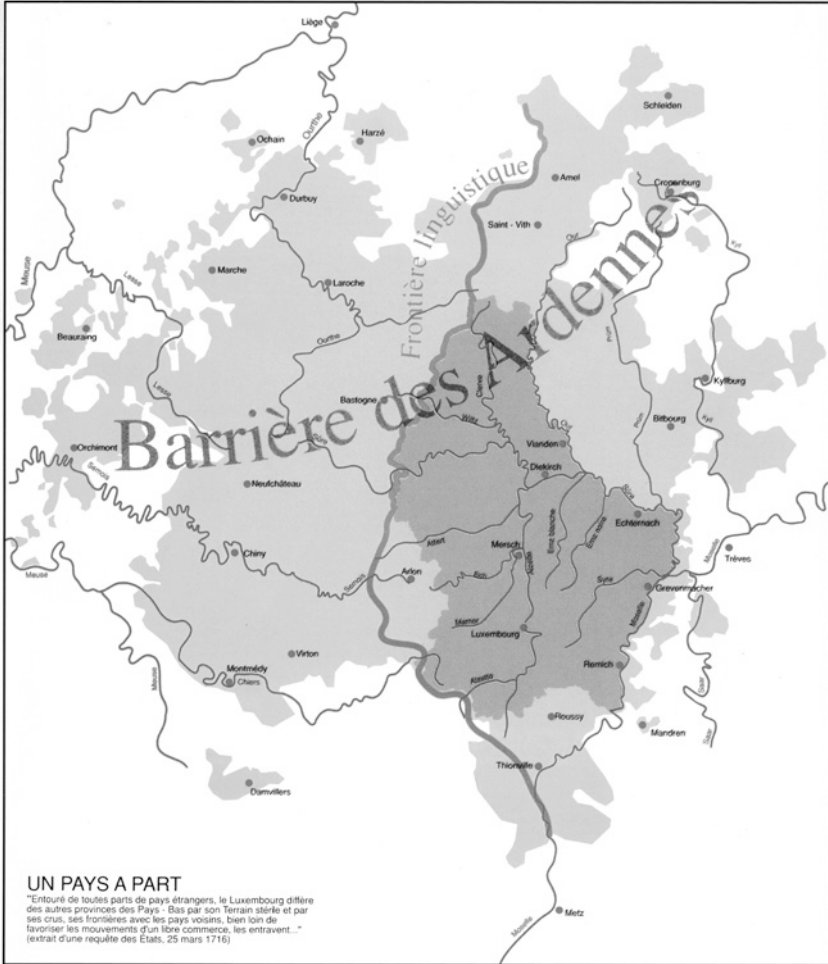


Fig. 13. Gilbert Trausch, *Le Luxembourg. Emergence d'un Etat et d'une nation* (Antwerp: Fonds Mercator; Esch-sur-Alzette: Editions Schortgen, 1989), 145.



Several historians came to challenge the notion that the Ardennes functioned as a natural barrier. Jean-Marie Yante considers it a “tenacious error of perspective” and, in analysing road tolls, concludes that the Ardennes were criss-crossed by routes linking the rivers Maas and Moselle in the sixteenth century.<sup>147</sup> Guy Thewes’ work on early-modern infrastructure goes as far as to say that in the eighteenth century, the roads through the Ardennes were paradoxically in a better state than those in the south-eastern part of the country: roads built on slate—a geological characteristic of the Ardennes—were less likely to deteriorate than those constructed on sandy or loamy soils, and which were constantly in need of repair due to inundation and storm damage. Moreover, in regions with a higher population density than the Ardennes, village rivalries and opposition to new roads often led to acts of sabotage.<sup>148</sup> Michel Pauly has shown that—despite relatively harsh climatic conditions and a sparse density in population—the foothills were crossed by merchants and pilgrims, who could resort to travel inns (*hospitia*) even in most remote areas in the Middle Ages.<sup>149</sup>

The works of Yante, Thewes and Pauly marks a radical shift towards recognising the importance of transnational flows and the end of the nation-state as frame of reference for historical research.<sup>150</sup> New frames of reference, as discussed in the following chapter, are emerging, such as that of the Great Region. In a paper given at the 1995 colloquium

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<sup>147</sup> Jean-Marie Yante, ‘Routes et courants commerciaux dans la Luxembourg (XIV<sup>e</sup>–XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles)’, *Bulletin trimestriel de l’Institut archéologique du Luxembourg* 62/3–4 (1986): 47 and 53. See also Yante, ‘Réseau routier et circulation dans le pays de Luxembourg-Chiny’, in *Auf den Römerstrassen ins Mittelalter*. Trierische Historische Forschungen 30, ed. Friedhelm Burgard and Alfred Haverkamp (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1997), 513–515.

<sup>148</sup> Guy Thewes, *Route et Administration provinciale au siècle des Lumières: L’exemple des États du Duché de Luxembourg (1748–1795)*. Collection Histoire in-8° 91 (Bruxelles: Crédit Communal, 1994), 85–6 and 127–8.

<sup>149</sup> Michel Pauly, ‘Le bas Moyen Age. Chances et handicaps d’une ville et de ses habitants’, in *La Ville de Luxembourg. Du château des comtes à la métropole européenne*, ed. Gilbert Trausch (Anvers: Mercator, 1994), 61–80. Pauly, *Peregrinorum, pauperum ac aliorum transeuntium receptaculum. Hospitales zwischen Maas und Rhein im Mittelalter*. Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte Beiheft 109 (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 2007): 57, 60.

<sup>150</sup> Roland Marti believes that a paradigm shift is marked by the fact that the pursuit of cultural ‘purity’ predominant in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has given way to a more positive understanding of cultural ‘hybridity’. Roland Marti, ‘Einleitung’, in *Grenzkultur-Mischkultur? Veröffentlichung der Kommission für saarländische Landesgeschichte und Volksforschung* 35, ed. Roland Marti (Saarbrücken, 2000), 12.

*Héritages culturels dans la Grande Région*, Christine Piraux and Michel Dorban analysed crossborder trade relations in the eighteenth century and concluded that the duchy of Luxembourg was indeed different from the other Dutch provinces on the grounds that taxation was collected at one third the rate enforced elsewhere and that it enjoyed an almost unique linguistic situation, which gave the territory both French and German speaking areas.<sup>151</sup> The latter at least, was not that exceptional: of all the southern Netherlands only the province of Namur was monolingual.<sup>152</sup> Piraux and Dorban argued that crossborder trading with the Habsburg Netherlands was very limited, compared to the intense economic exchanges of both a legal and an illegal nature that took place between Luxembourg and its southern and eastern neighbours. The reason the authors advance is plain and somewhat self-evident: the duchy had practically no common border with the Low Countries.<sup>153</sup> This begs however the question of trading relations with the principality of Liège. Where there any reasons why the borders to the north were sealed off, when those to France, the duchies of Lorraine, Bar and Jülich and the Electorate of Trier were constantly crossed? The issue of long-distance commerce and Luxembourg's integration in or isolation from international trading routes and fairs, well studied for the Middle Ages,<sup>154</sup> would also merit further investigation with regards to the early-modern period. Did the Ardennes really function as a 'barrier', as Piraux and Dorban maintain?<sup>155</sup> What about other types of mobility, such as pilgrimage, considering that the duchy of Luxembourg belonged to several dioceses, including the dioceses

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<sup>151</sup> Christine Piraux and Michel Dorban, 'Les douanes luxembourgeoises au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle', in *Héritages culturels dans la Grande Région. Saar-Lor-Lux-Rhénanie-Palatinat*. Cahiers ISIS 4, ed. Jean-Paul Lehnens, Christian Glöckner, Jean Laurain and Monika Sommer-Hasenstein (Luxembourg: Publications du Centre Universitaire, 1996), 98–99.

<sup>152</sup> On the difference between premodern 'vertical' linguistic self-assertion and the nationalist 'horizontal' (geocultural) dynamic of self-othering, see: Joep Leerssen, 'Medieval Heteronomy, Modern Nationalism: Language Assertion between Liège and Maastricht, 14th–20th Century', in *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor nieuwste Geschiedenis / Revue belge d'histoire contemporaine* 34/4 (National Identities and National Movements in European History) (2004): 581–593.

<sup>153</sup> C. Piraux and M. Dorban, 'Les douanes luxembourgeoises', 125–126.

<sup>154</sup> See for example: Michel Pauly, 'Le bas Moyen Age. Chances et handicaps d'une ville et de ses habitants', in *La Ville de Luxembourg. Du château des comtes à la métropole européenne*, ed. Gilbert Trausch (Antwerp: Mercator, 1994), 72–75.

<sup>155</sup> C. Piraux and M. Dorban, 'Les douanes luxembourgeoises'.

of Liège and Namur? What about migration pattern of artisans or recruitment of soldiers? How were they represented in schoolbooks? These issues outstrip the scope of this chapter, but would merit more attention.

This chapter has attempted to retrace the representations of community that follow a 'centripetal' logic, by distinguishing four distinct strands. The analysis of the first strand—'monarchical fidelity'—has shown how the concept was developed in the early-modern times to express a link between the élites of the province and the monarch. This political allegiance was re-interpreted at the end of the nineteenth century as a character feature of the Luxembourgian people and was cited as evidence for the age-old existence of the national community. The second strand, based on the notion of 'foreign dominations', would have undermined the first one, were it not for the corollary idea of passive resistance to that domination. While distancing the 'population' from its 'foreign lords', it maintained the continual existence of a national community and a shared 'culture' (defined by values such as loyalty and obedience, as well as courage and persistence) that was passed on from one generation to the next. In the early twentieth century, this 'imagined community' was 'rooted' in a particular territory. Representations of community/culture were spatialised. Or, to put it the other way round, representations of space were ethnicised and culturalised. Schools reformers and anti-modernist thinkers sought to (re)create the unity of space—reified as the 'homeland'—and society/culture, which they saw threatened by industrialisation and urbanisation. A closer analysis of the processes of cultural transfer may yield more information about the interactions and cross-influences of these writers and National Socialists proponents of the ideology of *Volks-tum*. This study can only point out, that after 1945, the 'homeland' was still reified, but now cast in distinctly national terms and/or (more recently) in opposition to globalisation processes. The 'territorialisation' of the national community, which constitutes the fourth strand of the 'centripetal' strategy, dismissed ethno-culturalism, but sought to reconcile the first two strands, which had established cultural values and norms, with the nation-state and its political borders. The notions of the 'eighteenth province' (part of the former Burgundian Circle, yet not really) and the 'three dismemberments' provided a connection between the historic duchy and the newly founded grand duchy, cre-

ated in 1815. Although the continuity of Old Regime 'particularism' into the era of nations was considered a myth by Trausch and the makers of the 1989 exhibition, a teleological outlook was not eschewed completely. The duchy/province of Luxembourg was declared to have always been distinct from the rest of the Habsburg-ruled Low Countries, both naturally (due to the 'barrier of the Ardennes') and culturally (due to the Germanic-Romance language border, which was to serve a basis for the partition of 1839). This teleological approach is not limited to the 'centripetal' logic or the national frame of reference. As we shall see in the following chapter, historical antecedents may also be sought—and found—for open or hybrid cultural spaces.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE 'CENTRIFUGAL' DISCURSIVE STRATEGY: DE/RENATIONALISING THE TERRITORY

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, specific, increasingly bounded territories were discursively, performatively and emotionally constructed as 'fatherland' of certain people, whilst others were defined as 'ethnic minorities' or 'of immigrant origins'.<sup>1</sup> As shown in the previous chapter, the nationalisation of Luxembourgian territory was not hindered by the fact that the country remained an integral part of larger political or economic entities after the demise of the Holy Roman Empire and the disintegration of the French First Empire. After the Napoleonic Wars, the newly constituted grand duchy of Luxembourg was represented as part of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands on maps and in schoolbooks until 1830, and ruled by the Dutch crown until 1890. At the same time, it was part of the German Confederation (1815–1866) and Customs Union (1842–1918). After World War I, it joined the Belgo-Luxembourgian Economic Union and after the Second World War it became a founding member of Benelux and of the European Coal and Steel Community, which laid the economic foundations for the European Economic Community and the European Union. Transnational cooperation schemes have received multiple boosts in the last thirty years with the creation of Saar-Lor-Lux and the Great Region,<sup>2</sup> as well as the four subsequent European INTERREG programmes.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Gérard Noiriel, ed., *L'identification: genèse d'un travail d'Etat* (Paris: Belin, 2007); Jane Caplan, *Documenting Individual Identity: the Development of State Practices in the Modern World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> Martin Niedermeyer and Peter Moll, 'SaarLorLux—vom Montandreieck zur "Großregion"', in *50 Jahre Saarland im Wandel*, ed. H. Peter Dörrenbächer, Olaf Kühne and Juan Manuel Wagner (Saarbrücken: Institut für Landeskunde im Saarland, 2007), 297–321.

<sup>3</sup> INTERREG, the first European programme for the promotion of regional and local cooperation across internal and external borders, was launched in 1990. It has been a key vehicle for the implementation of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) which was adopted in 1999. INTERREG IV (2007 to 2013) includes the operational programme 'Grande Région', URL: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/cooperation/crossborder/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/crossborder/index_en.htm); <http://www.feder.public.lu> (last accessed 16 December 2009).



While centripetal discursive strategies emphasise the grand duchy's perceived distinctiveness and 'nationalise' its territory notwithstanding its membership of larger political and economic entities, centrifugal strategies stress the ties which link Luxembourg to its neighbours. The impulse towards a 'centrifugal' understanding of the territory is not difficult to discern, especially in recent years. Increasing border transaction flows and crossborder commuter numbers have led to a reinterpretation of state borders, previously represented as delimitations of a specific cultural space or area of communication. In the context of European regionalisation processes, borderlands are proclaimed "test beds for the construction of Europe".<sup>4</sup> The positive image of the borderland as a bridge between cultures has been applied to Luxembourg before and is now extended to include the whole of the Great Region. The discursive construction of the Great Region fits thus previous moulds of Luxembourg as European model and an in-between culture. Benoît Majerus has shown how the 'Europeanness' of Luxembourg has been highlighted by referring to the active role played by its politicians in the European construction process (from Joseph Bech to Jean-Claude Juncker), to the Luxembourgian 'roots' of 'founding father' Robert Schuman and to the country's central geographical position ('at the heart' of Europe).<sup>5</sup> Its role as mediator between France and Germany is further emphasised with reference to its position between Romance and Germanic linguistic and cultural spheres.<sup>6</sup> The first section of this chapter will present the institutional make-up of the Great Region, deemed necessary to understand the representations of that protean territory and of Luxembourg's role within in. In order to examine the shift of emphasis from the continuity of national character (as examined in chapter four) to the historical importance of borderland

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<sup>4</sup> Kommission der Europäischen Gemeinschaften, 'Europe 2000+. Cooperation for Territorial Development', *EUREG 2* (1995), 39, cited by Christian Schulz, *Interkommunale Zusammenarbeit im Saar-Lor-Lux-Raum: staatsgrenzenüberschreitende lokale Integrationsprozesse*. Saarbrücker geographische Arbeiten 45 (Saarbrücken: Fachrichtung Geographie der Univ. des Saarlandes, 1998), 15.

<sup>5</sup> See Benoît Majerus, 'Le petit Européen parfait. L'Europe, le Luxembourg et la construction nationale', in *L'Europe de Versailles à Maastricht*, ed. Nicolas Beaupré and Caroline Moine (Paris: Seli Arslan, 2007), 225–235.

<sup>6</sup> See Claude D. Conter, 'Mischkultur', in *Lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg*, ed. Sonja Kmec, Benoît Majerus, Michel Margue and Pit Péporté (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 2007), 23–28; Wolfgang H. Lorig, 'Politische Kultur', in *Das politische System Luxemburgs*, ed. Wolfgang H. Lorig and Mario Hirsch (Wiesbaden: VS, 2008), 31–44, here 32–34.

features, we will focus in this chapter on two types of representation of the past: cartography and historiography. The second section deals thus with early-modern maps and their usage in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to convey a sense of historical continuity to Luxembourg as a name and/or as a territorial entity. It will examine how the absence or instability of borders in early modern maps came to be interpreted as historical precedents for open borders and intercultural influences. The following section will examine how the 'in-betweenness' of Luxembourg has been assessed in literary works, both in negative and in positive terms. Finally, we will examine how the image of Luxembourg as 'borderland culture' has been extrapolated to stand for the entire Great Region and how the latter has been constructed as 'community of destiny', based on (alleged) historical continuity, shared values and common future outlook.

### 1. *The Great Region: Institutionalisation of Crossborder Cooperation*

The Great Region is an area of crossborder cooperation. It does not have fixed borders; contours vary according to the level of cooperation. The Great Region is thus a "space of variable geometry", as Christian Schulz has put it.<sup>7</sup> According to the figures given by the Luxembourgian Parliament during its *Débat d'orientation sur la Grande Région* on 19 March 2008, the Great Region contains 11.4 million inhabitants and covers 65,400km<sup>2</sup>. It includes Saarland, Lorraine, Luxembourg, the Rhineland-Palatinate and Wallonia. As several speakers insisted during the debate, the Great Region is thus twenty-five times bigger than Luxembourg.<sup>8</sup> Of all European border regions (Euroregions), the Great Region is considered to be the largest in terms of area and population.<sup>9</sup> This broadest possible definition of what constitutes

<sup>7</sup> C. Schulz, 'City-networking', 224–8.

<sup>8</sup> *Mémorial de la Chambre des Députés*, Séance 31, 19 March 2008, 378–391.

<sup>9</sup> Christian Schulz, 'City-networking and bottom-up development by transborder cooperation: the influence of local authorities in the Saar-Lor-Lux Region', in *Nationalising and Denationalising European Border Regions, 1800–2000. Views from Geography and History* The GeoJournal Library 53, ed. Hans Knippenberg and Jan Markusse (Dordrecht et al.: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999), 223–240, here 227. For a map of the Euroregions, see European Commission. Regional Policy. Interreg IIIA: Crossborder cooperation. URL: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/interreg3/abc/voleta\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/interreg3/abc/voleta_en.htm) (last accessed 16 December 2009).

the Great Region was also been used by the organisers of *Luxembourg and Great Region—European Capital of Culture 2007* and seems to enjoy wide currency. Attempts to break it down to a more manageable size following historical and economical lines, as proposed by the institutes of Metz and Saarbrücken in 1997,<sup>10</sup> or to define a ‘functional core area’ (*funktionales Kerngebiet*) based on the strength of labour market interconnections, as Niedermeyer and Moll have attempted to do, have had no practical implications so far.<sup>11</sup>

In 1986 an Interregional Parliamentary Council, composed of delegates of the national or federal parliaments, was set up. It has no legislative powers and is “parliamentary but in name”.<sup>12</sup> The Economic and Social Committee of the Great Region, established in 1997, and the umbrella organisation of local councils *EuRegio SaarLorLux+* are more active, despite being limited by their purely consultative roles.<sup>13</sup> In contrast to decisions taken at EU level, those proposed by the Great Region have thus no legal force unless endorsed by the governments of the countries to which its constituent regions belong.<sup>14</sup> As the experience of Lorraine has demonstrated, this has had a tendency to lead to some tensions between the national and regional interests of some members. Since Luxembourg is the only constituent part of the Great Region which is a nation-state, however, there has been no conflict between the grand duchy’s interests as a nation and its interests as a member of Saar-Lor-Lux. Since 1970, Luxembourg has sat on the Intergovernmental Commission, and has sat on the Regional Commission—responsible for implementing the decisions of the Intergovernmental Commission—since 1980.

<sup>10</sup> Christian Schulz, ‘Die kommunale grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit—Basis und Motor der europäischen Integration?’, *Berichte zur deutschen Landeskunde* 72/4 (1998): 267–290, here: 270; C. Schulz, *Interkommunale Zusammenarbeit*, 53 (map).

<sup>11</sup> M. Niedermeyer and P. Moll, ‘SaarLorLux’, 319.

<sup>12</sup> F. Clement, *La construction sociale*, 5.

<sup>13</sup> URL: <http://euregio.lu> (last accessed 16 December 2009). For more details on these institutions, see Peter Schmitt-Egner, ed., *Handbuch der europäischen Regionalorganisationen, Akteure und Netzwerke* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2000); Bernd Groß, Christian Wille, Claude Gengler and Patrick Thull, *SaarLorLux von A-Z. Handbuch für die grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit in der Großregion* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2006).

<sup>14</sup> Franz Clement, *La construction sociale du territoire de la Grande Région: une confusion entre les concepts de coopération et d’intégration*, Gouvernance & Emploi 2/2008 (Differdange: CEPS-INSTEAD, 2008).

Attempts to further crossborder cooperation are orchestrated both at a grassroots level—such as through the establishment of local co-operatives for tourism<sup>15</sup>—and at a regional level—through the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC).<sup>16</sup> Perhaps the greatest achievement of the institutions of Great Region to date, however, is the instigation of the fourth INTERREG programme (2007–2013), in which all members have agreed to participate. Based at the *Maison de la Grande Région* in Luxembourg, this programme co-funds projects designed to extend the cultural cooperation, such as *Kulturraum Großregion / Espace culturel Grande Région*,<sup>17</sup> and the so-called 'University of the Great Region', which serves to bring together the universities of the area in order to promote student and staff exchanges.<sup>18</sup>

In Luxembourg, the institutional composition of the Great Region has influenced its popular image in a number of ways. For a long time, the lack of concrete achievements led to its being perceived as an 'empty shell'. As its media presence has become more strongly felt, however, this rather negative public image appears to be changing.<sup>19</sup> The Great Region is used, on the contrary, as a boost for Luxembourgian self-representation: the unusual status of Luxembourg as 'state within a region' and the (related) fact that many headquarters have been installed in its capital are cited to portray Luxembourg as the 'driving force' or 'locomotive' of crossborder cooperation. (Fig. 15) This is further emphasised by reference to Luxembourg's economic

<sup>15</sup> The Karlsruhe Agreement, signed by Luxembourg, France, Germany and Switzerland on 23 January 1996, set out the legal framework for the creation of Local Transfrontier Cooperation Groupings (LTCG). F. Clement, *La construction sociale*, 10–12.

<sup>16</sup> Patrick Dumont and Philippe Poirier, 'Recherche exploratoire des modes institutionnels de coopération transfrontalière', presentation at the colloquium *La Grande Région dans son contexte européen*, 20–21 February 2008; F. Clement, *La construction sociale*, 12–13. See also 'Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC)', *Official Journal L 210* (31 July 2006). URL: [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/index_en.htm) (last accessed 28 September 2008).

<sup>17</sup> This association, presided over by Guy Dockendorf, was already financed by e-BIRD. URL: <http://www.plurio.net>.

<sup>18</sup> URL: <http://www.uni-gr.eu> (last accessed 16 December 2009).

<sup>19</sup> The daily newspaper *Luxemburger Wort* has introduced a section dedicated to the 'Groussregioun' and cultural events in neighbouring regions are mentioned in most Luxembourgian papers. An increasing number of radio stations and magazines cover the Great Region, though mostly with a language bias (either French or German speaking regions, both including Luxembourg).

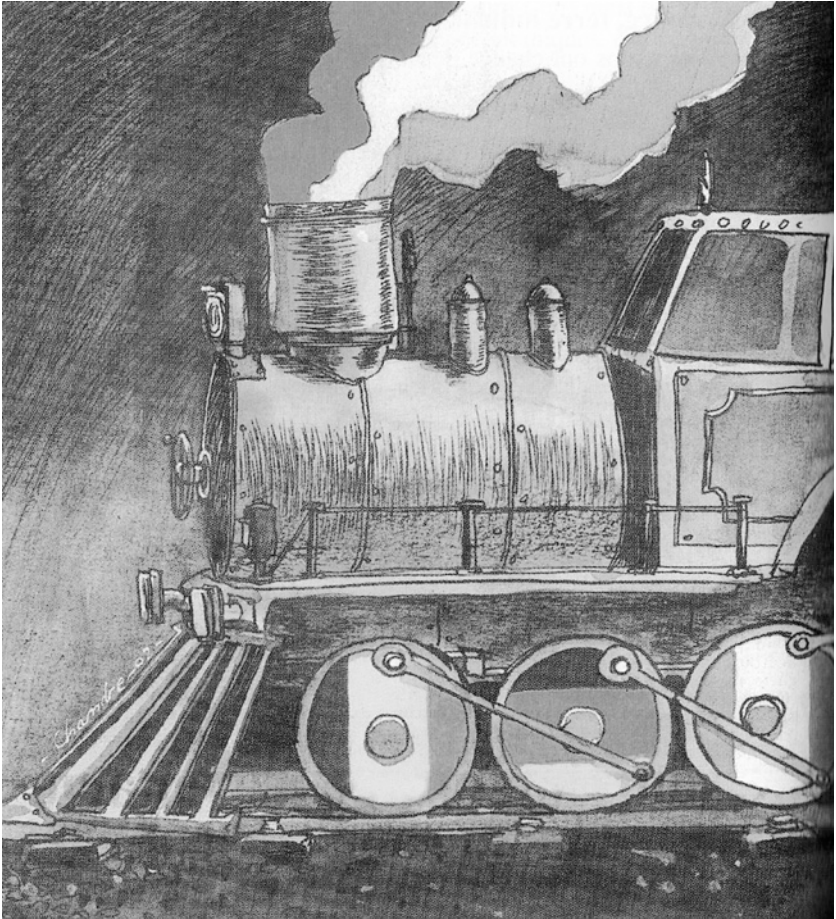


Fig. 15. Claude Gengler, *Vivement Dimanche. L'autre regard sur l'actualité luxembourgeoise et grand-régionale* (Esch-sur-Alzette: Le Phare, 2002), 74.

strength and its labour market, which attracts high numbers of cross-border commuters,<sup>20</sup> but this self-representation is explicitly not limited to the economy. On 19 March 2008, the Minister of the Interior and Regional Development concluded the *Débat d'orientation sur la Grande Région* with the statement that:

as the only sovereign state...Luxembourg surely plays a crucial role. It has to be the driving force, but not only the economic driving force of the Great Region, so that one day we will have a social dimension next to the economic one, a space that gains in significance within Europe, where citizens feel happy.<sup>21</sup>

All members of the Luxembourgian parliament agreed there was a strong interdependence of Luxembourg and the Great Region. Four motions proposed by the parliamentary commission presided over by Marcel Oberweis were passed. These motions sought to increase cooperation between universities in the Great Region, public knowledge and use of the *Maison de la Grande Région*, cultural cooperation, and a "multi-centred trans-border metropolis". Oberweis explained to the Parliament that

Now it is up to us to let the European spirit work in the Great Region...The Luxembourgers and their neighbours should understand that our and their Great Region also represents a piece of homeland in greater Europe.<sup>22</sup>

This reference to the Great Region as 'homeland' may be linked to the process of reification, discussed in the previous chapter. Regionalisation, it is sometimes argued,<sup>23</sup> tends to create new territorial bonds that are no longer defined by the national frame, but are expressed

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<sup>20</sup> Paul Zahlen, 'Arbeitsmarktpolitik', in *Das politische System Luxemburgs* (see note 6), 253–285.

<sup>21</sup> *Mémorial de la Chambre des Députés*, Séance 31, 19 March 2008, 390, col. 4: "Als eenzege souveräne Staat, dat ass och schonn ugeklongen, spillt Lëtzbueg sécherlech eng promordial Roll. Si muss de Motor, awer net nëmmen de wirtschaftleche Motor vun der Groussregioun sinn, fir dass mer eng Kéier nieft der wirtschaftlecher och eng sozial Dimensioun kréien, ee Raum, deen an Europa eng Bedeitung kritt, an deem sech d'Bierger wuel fillen". See also *ibid.*, 379, col. 1; 386, col. 3; and the image of a Luxembourgian 'magnet' surrounded by economically 'negative poles', 387, col. 3.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 381, col. 1: "Un ons ass et elo, den europäeschen Geescht an der Groussregioun wierken ze loossen...D'Lëtzebuenger an hir Nopere solle verstoen, dass ons an hir Groussregioun och ee Stéck Heemecht duerstellt an deem groussen Europa".

<sup>23</sup> Wilhelm Amann, "Regionalität" in den Kulturwissenschaften', in *Periphere Zentren oder zentrale Peripherien? Kulturen und Regionen Europas zwischen Globalisierung und Regionalität*, ed. Wilhelm Amann, Georg Mein and Rolf Parr (Heidelberg:

on a subnational level. Here, it seems that the same may be true at a supranational level, although it is limited to a normative exhortation, which does not allow to draw any conclusions about actual identification of the Great Region as ‘homeland’. The need for a “common sense of belonging” in the Great Region was mentioned in the first motion and was repeated several times during the *Débat d’orientation*.<sup>24</sup> The shared history of and common everyday problems faced by the Great Region’s citizens were to be understood better through recourse to scholarship. At the same time, the parliamentary debate also based its arguments on scholarly publications.<sup>25</sup> This coming together of scholarly and political discourse is an example of what Jürgen Link has termed ‘interdiscourse’.<sup>26</sup> It is based on the simplification of complex processes and the reduction of differentiation (*Entdifferenzierung*) with the objective of making it easier to communicate and disseminate. Interdiscourse is always the result of a selection, which may be hegemonic or subversive. The interdiscourse develops common basic notions, examples and narrative patterns that are used over and over again, by multiple authors. Knowledge is thus generated by sheer repetition. Its multisubjectivity, however, also allows dissenting voice to be heard. This may be illustrated by the interdiscourse about the Great Region’s (and, by extension, Europe’s) ‘common sentiment of belonging’ or ‘identity’, based on a shared cultural heritage.

With reference to the European slogan “unity through diversity”, the Great Region was declared to have “a great array of cultural elements, because [it] is a crossroads in history. Here people experience

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Synchron, 2008), 13–30. See also Benno Werlen, ‘Identität und Raum. Regionalismus und Nationalismus’, *Soziographie* 6/2 (1993): 39–73.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 381, cols. 1, 3; 382, cols. 2–4; 388, col. 4; 389, cols. 1–2; 390, col. 3. It was considered to be of only secondary importance on only one occasion, for which see *ibid.*, 383, col. 2.

<sup>25</sup> In particular on the study by Marine Cavet, Fernand Fehlen and Claude Gengler, *Vivre dans la Grande Région. Etude des pratiques transfrontalières dans les espaces frontaliers / intérieurs / de la Grande Région*. Collection Forum Europa 2 (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 2006). Their results are reported by Marcel Oberweis, *Mémorial de la Chambre des Députés*, Séance 31, 19 March 2008, 379, col. 1.

<sup>26</sup> Jürgen Link, ‘Dispositiv und Interdiskurs. Mit Überlegungen zum “Dreieck” Foucault-Bourdieu-Luhmann’, in *Foucault in den Kulturwissenschaften. Eine Bestandsaufnahme*, ed. Clemens Kammler and Rolf Parr (Heidelberg: Synchron, 2007), 219–238; *idem*, ‘Literaturanalyse als Interdiskursanalyse’, in *Diskurstheorien und Literaturwissenschaft*, ed. Jürgen Fohrmann and Harro Müller (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1988), 284–307.

what it means to live in the European homeland."<sup>27</sup> The territory was thus construed both as a regional 'junction' and as a self-contained entity, "geographically surrounded by low mountain chains".<sup>28</sup> These borders are viewed as something to be overcome. In general, it was felt that borders should not longer for obstacles. This discourse contrasts strikingly with national(ist) concepts of borders; a shift that is reflected by the changing presentations of past geographies.

## 2. *Early Modern Maps and Contemporary Readings*

Today, most maps include state borders. Early-modern maps represented territorial boundaries to endorse political claims in contested areas<sup>29</sup> or omitted them altogether. The connection between territory and culture that became one of the key features of modern nationalism was never affirmed. In Sebastian Münster's sixteenth-century *Cosmographie* Luxembourg appeared on four different maps:

1. The name "LUTSENBORG" is inserted between the place names "S. Hubert" in the north and "Lützelbo." in the south on a map of "Francia" (France) which stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Rhine, with the title *Das gantz Frankreich, so vorzeiten Narbonensis, Lugdunensis, Belgica und Celtica genennt worden.*
2. The place-names "Dietenhofen", "Lützelburg", "Bitzburg" and "S.Veit" can be found between the Meuse and Moselle and the area names "LOTRINGIA" and "BRABANT" on a map of "New Teutschenlande" (Germany) bearing the title *Teutschlandt, mit seinem gantzen Begriff und eyngeschloßnen Landschafften.*
3. The name "LUTZENBVRG" and several place names along the Moselle, Sûre, Our and Alzette are listed on a map representing the catchment area of the Rhine with the title *Die ander Tafel des Rheinstroms, begreifend die Pfaltz, Westereich, Eyfel.*

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 379, col. 1: "eng grouss Palette vun Kulturelementer, well [si] ee Kräizungspunkt war an der Geschicht. Hei erliewen d'Mënsche wat et heescht, an der euopäischer Heemecht ze liewen."

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 389, col. 4: "[G]eographesch vu Mëttelgebiergsketten ëmschloss."

<sup>29</sup> Peter Fritzen and Peter H. Meurer, 'Der *Lutzenburgii typus* des Antwerpener Verlages Gerard de Jode', *Hémecht* 60 (2008): 173–190, here 174.



4. The “Ducatus Luzemburgensis” opposite the place name “Trier” on the Moselle on a fourth map, entitled *Von der Eyfel*.

While the first three maps were placed at the beginning of the atlas and the fourth one inserted in the “fifth book” dedicated to Germany,<sup>30</sup> the chorographical description of Luxembourg was included—together with the rest of the Low Countries—in the “third book” of *Cosmographie* dealing with France. This text was illustrated with the heraldic lion and a depiction of the fortress of “Dietenhofen” (Thionville).<sup>31</sup> The insertion of the Low Countries in the section on France may be explained by the fact that the volume was first published in 1544 at a time when Emperor Charles V and King Francis I of France were fighting for control over the region. The conflict lasted until the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) and the tone of the 1614 edition—consulted here—was decidedly anti-Spanish. Münster, who was based at the University of Basel, depicted the Rhine as French border, but it is difficult to say whether he sought to make a political statement or merely appealed to classical Antiquity. Moreover, the maps overlap significantly and are more concerned with rivers and place-names than political entities.

Although Münster’s atlas was held by the Library of the Jesuit College, which became the National Library, his maps have never been part of the canonical cartographical representations of the country, as they have been described in various inventories. The first such list, published in the newspaper *Luxemburger Land* by railway engineer Constantin De Muysen, was regrouped in 1886 under the title *Recueil de cartes et de plans du pays et de la ville et forteresse de Luxembourg publiés depuis 1579 et 1867*. This inventory included a third-century Roman road map, sketches and early-modern maps of Luxembourg, France and the Low Countries that appear to have been assembled in a rather random fashion. It did not mention Münster’s maps. The Historical Section of the Grand-Ducal Institute became aware that maps were an historical source and published further inventories by De Muysen in 1896 and 1898.<sup>32</sup> The Institute did not have a geographical

<sup>30</sup> Sebastian Münster, *Cosmographie: das ist Beschreibung aller Länder, Herrschaften und fürnemesten Stetten des gantzen Erdbodens: sampt ihren Gelegenheiten, Eygen-schafften, Religion, Gebräuchen, Geschichten mit allerley Gedechtnuswürdigen Sachen biß ins M.DC.XIV jahr gemehret* (Basel: S. H. Petri, 1614), 612.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 354–355.

<sup>32</sup> See Constantin De Muysen, ‘Cartographie luxembourgeoise. Recueil de plans, cartes, vues, gravures, tableaux, lithographies, phototypies ainsi que les photographies

section and such matters were handled by the *Section historique*, the *Section de linguistique, de folklore et de toponymie*,<sup>33</sup> and by the *Section des sciences naturelles, physiques et mathématiques*.<sup>34</sup> In 1898, Jules Vannérus, who began his career as an archivist in Belgium that same year, completed De Muyser's lists with a selection of maps from his private collection, but did not mention Münster's maps either.<sup>35</sup> Later scholars regarded the cartographer Jacques de Surhon as having been the first to have produced a map of the duchy of Luxembourg, having worked on this project at Charles V's behest from 1551 onwards. The map was used for military purposes and kept secret until its publication in 1579 in Abraham Ortelius's *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*. De Surhon may also have been responsible for a map published in Gerard de Jode's *Speculum geographicum totius Germaniae Imperium repraesentans* (1578).<sup>36</sup>

In the nineteenth century, knowledge of these maps was limited to the small circle of learned people, but in the late twentieth century they were increasingly popularised as objects of curiosity, prestige, and artistic and commercial value. In 1984, for example, the Banque Générale du Luxembourg purchased the *Itinerarium Belgicum* (1587) and displayed it to the public. The atlas was offered to the National Library, and the map of the duchy of Luxembourg it contained was reproduced in a brochure written by Emile van der Vekene, head of the *Réserve Précieuse*.<sup>37</sup> Van der Vekene played an important role in

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principales de la Ville et du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg...', *PSH* 45 (1896): 185–220; *PSH* 46 (1898): 295–326.

<sup>33</sup> Ernest Platz, 'Géographie panlinguistique', *Annuaire. Institut grand-ducal. Section de linguistique, de folklore et de toponymie* (1928): 63–77; Henri Klees and Prosper Kayser, *Geographie der Luxemburger Familiennamen (nach der Volkszählung von 1930)*. Beiträge zur luxemburgischen Sprach- und Volkskunde 18 (Luxembourg: Institut Grand-Ducal. Section de linguistique, de folklore et de toponymie, 1989).

<sup>34</sup> Alphonse Eyschen, 'Les Nouvelles cartes topographiques du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg au 25 000e et 10 000e', *Archives. Institut Grand-Ducal de Luxembourg, Section des Sciences naturelles, physiques et mathématiques* 22 (1956): 63–88.

<sup>35</sup> Jules Vannérus, 'Cartes et plans du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg appartenant à Jules Vannérus. En rapport avec le Recueil publié par M. de Muyser', *PSH* 46 (1898): 352–360. See Jean-Marie Yante, 'Vannérus, Jules', in *Nouvelle Biographie Nationale* (Bruxelles: Académie royale des sciences des lettres et des beaux-arts de Belgique, 1990), 2: 365–367.

<sup>36</sup> Alternatively, it may be the work of Jan van Schilde, see P. Fritzen and P. H. Meurer, 'Der Lutzenburgii typus'.

<sup>37</sup> Emile van der Vekene, *Atlas anciens et cartes du duché de Luxembourg* (s.l.: BGL, s.d.), 8–9; Emil van der Vekene, *Bibliographie der Jahre 1961–1992*, ed. Guido Pressler (Hürtgenwald: G. Pressler, 1993), 83. For a scholarly analysis, see Emile van

making the maps more accessible to the general public and in the constitution of a certain canon of maps of Luxembourg. In 1979, he prefaced a reproduction of de Jode's map and chorographic description of the duchy. Although van der Vekene's inventory clearly showed that maps of the duchy of Luxembourg were not made for their own sake, but included in thick volumes or series of maps dealing with the *orbis terrarum*, the European continent or—at the very least—the Low Countries,<sup>38</sup> it also had a somewhat teleological focus on the nation-state, explicitly excluding maps where “Luxembourg is only represented fortuitously”.<sup>39</sup>

Inventories, reprints or exhibitions of these early-modern maps confer—implicitly or explicitly—a sense of historical continuity to Luxembourg as a name and/or as a territorial entity. Notwithstanding the enlargement and partial abandonment of the national frame of reference, this sense of continuity has rarely been questioned. In 1989, Marcel Watelet published a selection of maps held by the Belgian archives, examining the ‘Luxembourgian space’ in the historical context of the Southern Low Countries. The book was prefaced by Prime Minister Jacques Santer and by Charles-Ferdinand Nothomb, President of the Belgian Parliament, who declared that the volume

revives this world that we have lost with the emergence of the nation-states in the nineteenth century and with the European integration process that will occur in the twentieth century... May this book be an itinerary and a guide through the Luxembourgian landscape in the *longue durée*. Remember the people who lived a long-lasting adventure there and made their way together towards Europe!<sup>40</sup>

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der Vekene, ‘Michael von Eitzing und Franz Hogenbergs “Itinerarium Belgium” (Köln 1587)’, in *Ars impressoria. Entstehung und Entwicklung des Buchdrucks* (Munich and New York: K. G. Saur, 1986), 266–284.

<sup>38</sup> We would like to thank Nadine Besch for her work on van der Vekene's inventory.

<sup>39</sup> Emile van der Vekene, *Les cartes géographiques du Duché de Luxembourg éditées aux XVI<sup>e</sup>, XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 1980), xiii: “[où] le Luxembourg ne prend place qu'accessoirement”.

<sup>40</sup> Charles-Ferdinand Nothomb, ‘Preface’, in *Luxembourg en cartes et plans. Cartographie historique de l'espace luxembourgeois XV<sup>e</sup>–XIX<sup>e</sup> siècles*, ed. Marcel Watelet (Tielt: Ed. Lanoo, 1989), 7–8: “Le recueil ravive ce monde que nous avons perdu dans les États nations qui affirment leur existence au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle et dans l'intégration européenne qui sera l'événement du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle... Puisse ce livre être un itinéraire et un guide dans la longue durée à travers les paysages du Luxembourg. Retrouver les hommes qui y ont vécu dans une longue aventure et un long cheminement commun vers l'Europe!”

This quotation reflects a somewhat nostalgic view of a past that has been “lost”. It implies a rather teleological view of the people of the old duchy of Luxembourg—separated by national borders, now (re)united in Europe.

Europe was also the frame of reference of the cartographical exhibition *Magna Regio*; a title that does not refer to any historical designation, but is the latinised (historicised and romanticised) version of the modern name of the Great Region. Although it was not part of the official programme of the European Capital of Culture 2007 (Luxembourg and the Great Region), the title directly alluded to this event. The exhibition of maps from a private collection was sponsored by the *Fortis Banque Luxembourg*, a multinational bank that had taken over the *Banque Générale du Luxembourg* a couple of years before. Stressing the country’s past inscription in a larger (regional and European) context fitted its own outlook at the time.<sup>41</sup> The double focus on the Great Region and Europe may also be explained by the biographical interests of Thomas Niewodniczanski, the owner of the collection and editor of the exhibition catalogue, being born in Poland and living in Bitburg “formerly part of the duchy of Luxembourg”.<sup>42</sup> One of the highlights of *Magna Regio* was the oldest map of central Europe drawn by Nicolaus Cusanus (1401–1464). The item, a copy dated c. 1530, may be compared to the above-mentioned maps by Sebastian Münster: the name “LVTZELBURGVM” was not linked to a clearly described territory, but simply placed between the rivers Meuse and Moselle.

In his contribution to the exhibition catalogue, curator and literary scholar Gast Mannes highlighted the role played by maps as representations of power and cautioned against using them to construct an image of the Great Region as an enclosed area which glosses over internal differences and regional particularities.

Nobody doubts...that, from an historical perspective, these different units [constituted in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries] have entertained close links since time immemorial,<sup>43</sup> even if those links do

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<sup>41</sup> Following the financial crisis in October 2008, *Fortis* was dismantled, its Luxembourg branch nationalised, and sold on to *BNP Paribas*, and rechristened itself *BGL-BNP Paribas*.

<sup>42</sup> Thomas Niewodniczanski, ‘Préface’, in *Magna Regio. Luxembourg et Grande Région, cartes, atlas, vues (XV<sup>ème</sup> au XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle)*, ed. Gast Mannes and Kazimierz Kozica (Luxembourg: Fortis, 2007), 10–11.

<sup>43</sup> The expression “time immemorial” is not given in inverted commas by the author, but the laconical footnote referring to “www.grossregion.net” reveals that the terminology is that of the official website.

not always exactly correspond to the territories that are nowadays partners in the Great Region project.<sup>44</sup>

Mannes's veiled criticism of the construction of a (counter-factual) historical continuity showed nonetheless the pervasiveness of the official 'great regional' discourse: "nobody doubts". Mannes stressed the discontinuities of cartographical representations and their shifting perspectives. Though he included the canonical maps of the duchy of Luxembourg, published by de Jode in 1578 and Ortelius in 1579,<sup>45</sup> he described them as part of atlas productions. He examined them alongside two early-modern editions of Ptolemy's *Geographia*<sup>46</sup> and three versions of a map known as the *leo belgicus*. This zoomorphic map represents the heraldic lion (common to Brabant, Flanders, Hainaut, Holland, Namur and Luxembourg) as a cartographical entity. The fact that Luxembourg is always placed in the left paw of the lion, regardless of his posture, may be significant. Perhaps it was expressing Luxembourg's politically peripheral situation in the early modern times, when the general governor and his/her councillors were based at Brussels.<sup>47</sup> By contrast, van der Vekene chose to exclude this type of map in his inventory, since it did not focus on Luxembourg. The only exception to this omission is a map that circulated as a playing card and was published in 1678 in a book entitled *Europäisch-Geographische Spiel-Charte*. The reason it is listed at all is because it features a miniature map of the duchy of Luxembourg next to main the map entitled *Le Lion Belgique des Pais Bas contenant les XVII Provinces*.<sup>48</sup> The inclusion of the *leo belgicus* in the 2007 selection of large-scale representations, which Mannes considered to be of artistic and historical interest to a national and international public,<sup>49</sup> shows that interest had

<sup>44</sup> Gast Mannes, 'Magna Regio ou les arpenteurs de la Grande Région / Magna Region oder die Vermessung der Großregion', in *Magna Regio*, 12–36, here 16.

<sup>45</sup> 'Atlas / Atlanten', in *Magna Regio*, 44, 47.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 40–41; 'Cartes / Karten', in *Magna Regio*, 68–69, 72. See also the descriptions by Kazimierz Kozica, 'Légendes / Legenden', in *Magna Regio*, 100–147. The first time the name "Lvtzäbvrg" appears on a Ptolemean map is in the representation of Gallia in the 1522 Strasbourg edition, G. Mannes, 'Magna Regio', 18.

<sup>47</sup> Planche 18 (1583, by Michael von Aitzing, published by Franz Hogenberg), planche 22 (c. 1621 by Claes Janszoon Visscher), planche 27 (1672 by Wilhelm Serlin). G. Mannes, 'Magna Regio', 28.

<sup>48</sup> E. van der Vekene, *Les cartes géographiques*, nr. 2.42. Van der Vekene explains that the book also contains a three page description of the duchy of 'Lützenburg', presumably in German, although the text on the maps is in French.

<sup>49</sup> G. Mannes, 'Magna Regio', 20.

shifted from Luxembourg 'itself' to Luxembourg 'in a international context'. In part, this may be explained by the international readership *Magna Regio* was believed to be addressing, but it also reflects a more 'centrifugal' approach to spatial representations. Luxembourg is still at the centre of attention, but the gaze is no longer inwards. Instead, one is looking at the wider picture, at Luxembourg as part of former political entities such as the Low Countries, as part of Europe and as part of the world.

Attitudes to early-modern maps have thus shifted profoundly. This does not mean that the linkage between past and present has been severed, as the importance Mannes attached to the 1786 map by Jean-Claude Dezauche (first published in 1690 by Alexis-Hubert Jaillot) entitled *DUCHE DE LUXEMBOURG DIVISE EN QUARTIER WALON ET ALLEMAND* shows. "The fact that the entire region is clearly characterised by its bilingualism," Mannes wrote, "and thus its belonging to two cultures, as highlighted by the title, illustrates the position Luxembourg has occupied within the Great Region until today".<sup>50</sup> Contrary to his general emphasis on discontinuities, Mannes here underlined the continuities between past and present: Jaillots' representation is "cartographically the most convincing", since it shows the 1659 "amputation of the Spanish Netherlands"<sup>51</sup> and—most importantly—the "two great linguistic spaces". The duchy becomes thus "the final limit and point of contact of the Latin and Germanic worlds".<sup>52</sup>

### 3. *In-between and Nomadic*

The representation of Luxembourg as country *in-between* France and Germany is a central feature of the centrifugal discourse. There are innumerable examples of this trope in the official literature on Luxembourg as European Capital of Culture 1995 and 2007, but these examples would need further investigation as to the actors and speech

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 27. Since the map is drawn from a French perspective, it would be more accurate to speak of 'territorial gains'—a linguistic slip that reveals the persistent influence of the narrative of the 'three dismemberments', examined in the previous chapter.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 30: "End—und Berührungspunkt der lateinischen und germanischen Welten". Jaillot's map also adorns the cover of Joseph Groben's *L'Ancien Duché du Luxembourg / Das ehemalige Herzogtum Luxemburg* (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 1999).

acts involved. Gast Mannes' own domain of research is precisely the cultural transfer operated by Luxembourg writers and literary patrons in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>53</sup> The extrapolation of specific research to other domains and its spreading out over time may be considered typical of the interdiscourse, that is, the interaction between scholarly and official discourse, examined here.

The image of Luxembourg a bridge between Romance and Germanic cultural spheres has been replaced by the notion a hybrid or liminal space, yet there is still a risk of reifying the ingredients of the 'mixture', instead of viewing them, too, as hybrids in constant flux. More recently, a new topos, or rather *a-topos*, has emerged: that of the nomadism as a "possible founding myth of national literature", as Corina Mersch-Ciocârlie has put it.<sup>54</sup> The literary abolition of location has also been explored in Nico Helminger's *grenzgang* (2003). Like Mersch-Ciocârlie, Helminger considers himself to be a "nomad", moving between different literary models and juggling languages and cultural codes.<sup>55</sup> This is taken up by Robert Garcia, the general coordinator of the European Capital of Culture 2007, in his preface to the exhibition *Retour de Babel*, dealing with migrations to and from Luxembourg, but from an anthropological perspective. Entitled 'Nomade: j'assume!', this preface compares *Retour de Babel* to the 1989 exhibition, both "questioning the myths of the construction of a kind of feeling of identity of a tiny country surrounded by strong nation-states".<sup>56</sup> Garcia describes the 2007 exhibition as another attempt to narrate the construction of identity through the history and lived experiences of migration of "this European crossroads that has somehow remained a

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<sup>53</sup> Germaine Goetzinger, Gast Mannes and Frank Wilhelm, ed., *Hôtel de Colpach / Colpacher Gäste* (Mersch: CNL, 1997); Gast Mannes, *Luxemburgische Avantgarde. Zum europäischen Kulturtransfer im Spannungsfeld von Literatur, Politik und Kunst zwischen 1916 und 1922* (Esch-sur-Alzette: Phi and CNL, 2007).

<sup>54</sup> Quoted by Jeanne E. Glesener, 'La littérature de l'(im)migration au Luxembourg', *Identitäts(de)konstruktionen. Neue Studien zur Luxemburgistik*, ed. Claude D. Conter and Germaine Goetzinger. (Esch-sur-Alzette: Phi and CNL, 2008), 114.

<sup>55</sup> Irmgard Honnef-Becker and Peter Kühn, 'Interkulturalität und Hybridität in der Literatur', in *Über Grenzen. Literaturen in Luxemburg*, ed. Irmgard Honnef-Becker and Peter Kühn (Esch-sur-Alzette: Phi, 2004), 7–14, here 12.

<sup>56</sup> Robert Garcia, 'Nomade: j'assume!', in *Retour de Babel. Itinéraires, Mémoires et Citoyenneté*, ed. Antoinette Reuter and Jean Philippe Ruiz, 3 vols. (Luxembourg: Éd. Retour de Babel, 2007) Vol. 1: 9: "interroger les mythes autour de la construction d'une sorte de sentiment d'identité d'un minuscule pays entouré d'États nations forts".

*département des forêts* on the fringes of these nation-states".<sup>57</sup> Garcia declares that the society of a micro-state such as Luxembourg has "no alternative but to accept its migratory and nomadic character" and may even serve as "model for other larger and small regions of Europe and the world", though this intercultural process also needs to be accepted by the population in its everyday interactions.<sup>58</sup>

While group formation has traditionally been discussed in terms of static properties of space (habitation, boundaries, location), the impact of mobility has attracted increasing attention. According to Enghin F. Isin, the social cohesion of modern-day 'nomads' is not achieved through group solidarity.<sup>59</sup> When travelling, identity becomes unstable and fluid, creating a weakened sense of obligations and rights, and enhancing the feeling of insecurity.<sup>60</sup> To subsume the experiences of mobility, migration and deterritorialisation under the general heading of 'nomadism' glosses over profound social inequalities. According to Zygmunt Bauman the experience of being uprooted is very different according to whether one moves out of choice (being globally mobile) or out of necessity (being locally tied). He makes a clear distinction between "tourists" and "vagabonds".<sup>61</sup> In this sense, the above cited writings describe a 'tourist' rather than a 'nomad' experience: cultural hybridisation is portrayed as creative and emancipating rather than disempowering. While 'cosmopolitanism'<sup>62</sup> is nowadays mostly cast in

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.: "ce carrefour européen, resté quelque part 'département des forêts' au confins de ces États-nations". The *département des forêts* refers not only to the French administrative unit (1795–1814), but also to the image of backwoodsmen, an ironical inversion of which the European Capital of Culture 2007 sought to bring about. This was symbolised by the blue deer, the 2007 mascot.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.: "pas d'autre alternative que d'assumer son caractère migratoire et nomade... un modèle pour d'autres grandes et petites régions de l'Europe et du monde".

<sup>59</sup> This contrasts with Georg Simmel's conclusions about the strategies employed by nomadic groups to establish a sense of solidarity, which he juxtaposes with the agonistic strategies of sedentary groups. Georg Simmel, "The Sociology of Space (1908)", in *Simmel on Culture. Selected Writings*, ed. Mike Featherstone and David Frisby (London: Sage, 1997), 161, quoted by Enghin F. Isin, *Being Political. Genealogies of Citizenship* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minneapolis Press, 2002), 46.

<sup>60</sup> E. F. Isin, *Being Political*, 46–47.

<sup>61</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Globalization. The Human Consequences* (Cambridge: Polity, 2008), 77–100.

<sup>62</sup> Ulrich Beck prefers 'cosmo-politism' (relating to the global *cosmos* as well as the local *polis*) to 'hybridisation' or 'creolisation' (referring to an either/or logic and to a monstrous outcome). Ulrich Beck, 'Kosmopolitisierung ohne Kosmopolitik', in *Die Macht des Lokalen in einer Welt ohne Grenzen* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2006), 252–270, here 257.



positive terms, this was not always the case. Historically, ‘cosmopolitanism’ was not devoid of negative connotations (*vaterlandslose Gesellen*) and Luxembourg’s ‘hyphenated identity’ was also interpreted as problematic. Anise Koltz, Jean Portante and others have depicted an “identity trauma”<sup>63</sup> and literary production has been thought to suffer from this liminality, as many

lack the initiative to free themselves from the muddy concept of *Mischkultur* and the eternal dilemma of which language to choose, [and instead] stay in the cosy place where twilight provides the undecided with an almost cheerfully and thankfully accepted alibi for his impotence.<sup>64</sup>

As Jeanne E. Glesener has argued, it seems that this view has changed over the last decades,<sup>65</sup> although divergent views continue to be expressed and may gain again in importance in the future. Concerns with hybridisation and interculturality are not only to be found in literary works. The ‘European’ and ‘open’ character of Luxembourg(ers) was stressed in particular in the period prior to the referendum on the ratification of the European Constitution held on 10 July 2005.<sup>66</sup> It is central to the (inter)discursive construction of the Great Region, as we shall see below. The construction of Luxembourg as a tolerant, open and profoundly European society draws together previous narrations of Luxembourg as a former fortress (its demolition being described as an act of opening-up), as a borderland and as a traditionally multilingual environment.

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<sup>63</sup> See Corina Mersch, *Un miroir aux alouettes: petit dictionnaire de la pensée nomade* (Esch-sur-Alzette: Phi, 1999), 105–6.

<sup>64</sup> Cornel Meder, ‘Probleme der Geschichtsschreibung luxemburgischer Literatur’, in *Literatur an der Grenze. Der Raum Saarland-Lothringen-Luxemburg-Elsass als Problem der Literaturgeschichte*, ed. Uwe Grund and Günter Scholdt (Saarbrücken: Saarbrücker Druckerei und Verlag, 1992), 81–89, here 83: “[F]ehlt der Entschluß, sich von dem morastigen Mischkultur-Begriff und dem ewigen Dilemma, mit welcher Sprache man sich denn nun abzugeben habe, zu lösen [und] verbleibt lieber in einem wohligen Bezirk, wo das Zwielficht dem Unentschlossenen ein fast schon freudig und dankbar entgegengenommenes Alibi für seine Impotenz liefert”. See also J. E. Glesener, ‘La littérature de l’(im)migration au Luxembourg’, 113.

<sup>65</sup> J. E. Glesener, ‘La littérature de l’(im)migration’, 113.

<sup>66</sup> Analysed by Patrick Dumont, Fernand Fehlen, Raphaël Kies and Philippe Poirier, *Le référendum sur le Traité établissant une Constitution pour l’Europe. Rapport élaboré pour la Chambre des Députés* (Luxembourg: STADE/Université du Luxembourg, 2007).

#### 4. *Providing the Great Region with a 'Common Identity'*

There is a whole host of voices participating in the discursive construction of the Great Region: several supra-national bodies such as the European Academy Otzenhausen,<sup>67</sup> the non-profit making association Forum Europa,<sup>68</sup> the Interregional Institute (IRI) (since 2003, the Institute of the Grande Region [IGR]),<sup>69</sup> the *Institut Européen des Itinéraires Culturels*,<sup>70</sup> and the *Institut Culturel Européen Pierre Werner* (IPW).<sup>71</sup> All but the first have their headquarters in Luxembourg. Their websites, the conferences and round table discussions they organise, their mission statements and research objectives, as well as their publications provide rich source material for an analysis of the Great Region as spatial representation. As can be discerned from the names that appear in the committees of colloquiums and the contributors to publications, there is much overlap between the worlds of the human and social sciences and politics. One profits from the other and is influenced in what it says and how it says it by the other. Neither the scholarly nor the official discourses are monolithic: conflicting individual positions, institutional interests, ideologies or political convictions lead to multiple debates. Politicians argue over which policy to implement and to what end, whereas scholars disagree about methodologies and interpretations, as they are well aware that they provide this or that political camp with useful arguments. They thus often remain very cautious about their results and express their scepticism about the political interest in their research. At the same time, their funding is often linked to precisely this research. This act of balance has probably not changed much over the last twenty years.

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<sup>67</sup> Institut für regionalpolitische Zusammenarbeit in innereuropäischen Grenzräumen der Europäischen Akademie Otzenhausen. It hosts the FIME (Fédération internationale des Maisons d'Europe), which seeks to promote the consciousness of common European identity through adult continuing education and extra-curricular activities. URL: <http://www.eao-otzenhausen.de> (last accessed 16 December 2009).

<sup>68</sup> Its objectives are described in the introduction to M. Cavet, F. Fehlen and C. Gengler, *Vivre dans la Grande Région*, 8.

<sup>69</sup> URL: <http://www.institut-gr.lu/presentation.html> (last accessed 16 December 2009).

<sup>70</sup> URL: <http://www.culture-routes.lu> (last accessed 16 December 2009).

<sup>71</sup> Set up as a Franco-German platform of exchange between social actors, political decision makers and analysts, the IPW covers also larger, pan-European issues, URL: <http://www.ipw.lu> (last accessed 16 December 2009).

#### 4.1. *Looking for a Common Heritage*

The Charter of University Cooperation was signed in 1984,<sup>72</sup> and four years later, Alfred Wahl organised the first major colloquium on “modern and contemporary history in Saar-Lorraine-Luxembourg” in Metz. In contrast to subsequent conferences, there were few speakers and organisers from outside academia. The importance of comparative international analysis was underlined, but at the same time, scepticism prevailed as to the alleged “shared past”. Speaking about the *Ancien Régime*, Paul Margue stated that

one needs to remain lucid about regional divergences of historical experiences. Territorial and political belongings, the origins of intellectual and cultural movements, and their dissemination are far from matching and should not be sacrificed to late twentieth-century synchronisation or desires for harmonisation.<sup>73</sup>

As we have seen above, Paul Margue was responsible for the panel on Luxembourg ‘particularism’ in the 1989 exhibition and was acutely aware of teleological tendencies. He saw that the past could not only be reinterpreted to prefigure the development of the nation-state (in the case of ‘particularism’) but also to serve as antecedent and thus as legitimisation for supranational forms of political association.

In the 1990s, the political desire for interregional harmonisation grew stronger in the wake of the Maastricht Treaty and moves towards interregional cooperation. At the first summit of the Great Region in September 1995, a common declaration of principle was issued, stating that “among the inhabitants of the European core region a feeling of common belonging has developed, which has proven itself daily in

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<sup>72</sup> Charte de coopération universitaire Sarre-Lorraine-Luxembourg-Wallonie-Rhénanie Palatinat, presided over by Louis Schuffenecker, president of the INPL (Institut National Polytechnique de Lorraine). See *Cahiers de la Grande Région* 5/1 (2004): 23. URL: [http://www.institut-gr.lu/IGR\\_cahier5\\_1.pdf](http://www.institut-gr.lu/IGR_cahier5_1.pdf) (last accessed 16 December 2009).

<sup>73</sup> Paul Margue, ‘Recherches récentes sur le Luxembourg à l’époque moderne’, in *L’Histoire moderne et contemporaine en Sarre-Lorraine-Luxembourg. Actes du colloque*, ed. Alfred Wahl, Centre de Recherche Histoire et Civilisation de l’Université de Metz 18 (Metz: Université de Metz, 1990), 37–48, here 47: “il conviendra de rester lucide sur les divergences dont l’histoire elle-même a parsemé la région. Les appartenances territoriales et politiques, les provenances des courants intellectuels et culturels, leur rythme de pénétration aussi, sont loin d’être superposables et ne sauraient être sacrifiés à nos vues synthétiques ou à nos désirs d’harmonisation de la fin du vingtième siècle.”

many crossborder measures and projects".<sup>74</sup> This "feeling of common belonging", based on a common culture—linked to a specific territory—was to be promoted either by the heritage industry (tourism) or by writing about a common past.

The calls for the promotion of a "feeling of common belonging" made at the Great Region's first summit did not meet with much approval in the academic community, and the scepticism observed after the promulgation of the 1984 Charter of University Cooperation remained. The colloquium *Héritages culturels dans la Grande Région. Saar-Lor-Lux-Rhénanie-Palatinat*, held at Kirchberg in November 1995, for example, saw many participants reject the search for common roots and historical continuity suggested by the title on the grounds that Saar-Lor-Lux was a political construction of the 1970s and thus an anachronistic framework for scholarly analysis. Despite this, Jean Laurain nevertheless affirmed in his concluding remarks that the search for common roots and a collective past within the Great Region was valid, and appealed to Michel Parisse's work on Lotharingia and François Roth's study of Austrasia as justification.<sup>75</sup> 'Lotharingia' and 'Austrasia' appear on the short-list of names that entered the competition launched in May 2002 to find a suitable name for the Great Region.<sup>76</sup> History in general and Lotharingia in particular were cited as a 'necessary myth' for the future of the Great Region by the governor of the

<sup>74</sup> "unter den Bewohnern der europäischen Kernregion [hat sich] ein Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl entwickelt, das sich in vielen grenzüberschreitenden Maßnahmen und Projekten täglich bewahrt", quoted by Guy Linster, 'Kooperation in der Großregion: Betrachtungen eines Verfechters grenzüberschreitender Zusammenarbeit', in *Saar-Lor-Lux. Eine Euro-Region mit Zukunft?* ed. Jo Leinen, Geschichte, Politik und Gesellschaft. Schriftenreihe der Stiftung Demokratie Saarland 6 (St. Ingbert: Röhrig Universitätsverlag, 2001), 343–359, here 346.

<sup>75</sup> Jean Laurain, 'Conclusions', in *Héritages culturels dans la Grande Région: Saar-Lor-Lux-Rhénanie-Palatinat*, ed. Jean-Paul Lehnens (Luxembourg: Centre Universitaire, 1996), 298. It is not clear which work by François Roth is meant. Roth's contribution to the colloquium, 'La région transfrontalière Sarre-Lorraine-Luxembourg: approche historique et géopolitique' stresses, on the contrary, the importance of national borders and state structures. Among the publications of Michel Parisse, the most relevant one is 'La Lotharingie: Naissance d'un espace politique', in *Lotharingia. Eine europäische Kernlandschaft um das Jahr 1000. Referate eines Kolloquium vom 24.–26. Mai 1994 in Saarbrücken, veranstaltet von der Staatskanzlei des Saarlandes*, ed. Hans-Walter Hermann and Reinhard Schneider (Saarbrücken, 1995), 31–48.

<sup>76</sup> 'Un nom à la Grande Région', *Le Républicain Lorrain*, 4 June 2002; Claude Gengler, 'Welcher Name für unsere Großregion?', *Luxemburger Wort*, 2 April 2003. There was no winner and the area continues to be referred to as "Grande Région / Großregion". See also Christian Wille, 'Eine namenlose Region', *forum* 288 (2009): 30–31.

Belgian Province du Luxembourg, Bernard Caprasse, a keen defender of European and trans-border cooperation.<sup>77</sup> The same line of reasoning was followed by Christian Glöckner, the long-time secretary general of the IRI. In *Saar-Lor-Lux. Eine Euro-Region mit Zukunft?* (2001), he underlined the historical roots of economic cooperation within the area stretching from the Mediterranean to the North Sea. This perceived continuity was emphasised by two maps:

1. the “unfortunate” partition of the Carolingian empire by the Treaty of Verdun in 843, resulting in a western kingdom (later France), an eastern kingdom (later Germany) and a middle part (prefiguring the Great Region).
2. a representation of the so-called ‘blue banana’, an area supposedly with the highest economic growth in Europe.<sup>78</sup>

The trained economist cited historical antecedents to give weight to a current representation, notwithstanding the fact that Francia Media (the middle kingdom) only existed for about twelve years (843 to 855). Historians tended to be very ambivalent about this type of usage of the past. On one hand, they profited from the renewed interest in and recognition of the importance of their domain of research.<sup>79</sup> On the other hand, however, they became increasingly aware of and interested in precisely the political usages of the past in the *longue durée*.<sup>80</sup> While the importance of historical analysis that goes beyond the national frame

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<sup>77</sup> ‘La Grande Région, un mythe fondateur’, *La Voix du Luxembourg*, 25 November 2000.

<sup>78</sup> On the ‘blue banana’ as an ironical symbol of the Eurocratic obsession with norms, see Wilhelm Amann, “‘Regionalität’ in den Kulturwissenschaften”, in *Periphere Zentren oder zentrale Peripherien? Kulturen und Regionen Europas zwischen Globalisierung und Regionalität*, ed. Wilhelm Amann, Georg Mein and Rolf Parr (Heidelberg: Synchron, 2008), 13–30, here 19–21.

<sup>79</sup> Notably the biannual *Journées Lotharingiennes*, launched by Paul Margue in 1980 and currently organised by the University of Luxembourg. See also Hans-Walter Herrmann and Reinhard Schneider, *Lotharingia: eine europäische Kernlandschaft um das Jahr 1000. Referate eines Kolloquiums vom 24.–26.5.1994 in Saarbrücken, veranstaltet von der Staatskanzlei des Saarlandes*. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Saarländische Landesgeschichte und Volksforschung 26 (Saarbrücken: Saarbrücker Druckerei und Verlag, 1995).

<sup>80</sup> See, for example, the papers presented at the 14e Journées lotharingiennes: Michel Margue and Hérold Pettiau, ed., *La Lotharingie en question: identités, oppositions, intégration / Lotharingische Identitäten im Spannungsfeld zwischen integrativen und partikularen Kräften (10–13 Oct. 2006)* (Luxembourg: CLUDEM, forthcoming), particularly François Pernot, ‘L’Europe ‘lotharingienne’, sa place et sa représentation

of reference has been reasserted, straight-forward continuities between a time when political borders and allegiances were blurred and today, when the mobility of EU-citizens is granted and even encouraged, have been refuted.<sup>81</sup> This links up with Heiko Riedel's study, *Wahrnehmung von Grenzen und Grenzräumen*, published in 1994. He concluded that in the absence of historically grown structures, identification with a crossborder region such as Saar-Lor-Lux could not be decreed from above. According to his findings, the elimination of official borders did not automatically lead to the disappearing of prejudices and delimitations. On the contrary, they seem to have gained in weight.<sup>82</sup> Historically speaking, Hans-Walter Herrmann, insisted that the territories of the Great Region were united only in 1801 and even then remained part of distinct departments within the French Empire.<sup>83</sup>

To Guy Linster—president of the *IRI*—some elements of the past may nonetheless indicate a commonality: firstly, the Second World War, which serves as demonstration that transnational cooperation is necessary for peace; secondly, a specific 'borderland culture', based on 2000 years of existence as a borderland and closely linked to the above mentioned *topos* of 'in-between', which is used here not to designate Luxembourg but the entire Great Region. For Linster, the 'borderland culture' that characterises the Great Region is marked by a particular ability to integrate 'foreigners' and develop intercultural communication skills.<sup>84</sup> Though xenophilia is considered a characteristic feature of the Great Region—a virtue and a skill grounded in history—the cultural space is still being homogenised and reified. Linster's article was

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dans la construction des Etats européens et dans les projets de construction européenne du XV<sup>e</sup> au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle".

<sup>81</sup> Jean-Paul Lehnert, 'Zur historischen Legitimation einer Raumkonstruktion: Die europäische Großregion Saar-Lor-Lux', *Westfälische Forschungen* 46 (1996): 259–274; Michel Pauly, 'De l'Austrasie à Sarre-Lor-Lux: La "Grande Région", une entité historique?', *Annales de l'Est* Special Issue (2008): 307–326. Paper presented at the colloquium *La Lorraine, le Luxembourg et les pays wallons*, organised by the *Comité d'Histoire Régionale* of the *Région Lorraine* at the Hôtel de Région, Metz (22–23 Feb. 2007). A more radical expression of the same argument can be found in Michel Pauly, 'Eine geschichtslose Region', *forum* 288 (2009): 27–29.

<sup>82</sup> Heiko Riedel, *Wahrnehmung von Grenzen und Grenzräumen. Eine kulturpsychologisch-geographische Untersuchung im saarländisch-lothringischen Raum* (Saarbrücken: Fachrichtung Geographie der Univ. des Saarlandes, 1994).

<sup>83</sup> Hans-Walter Herrmann, 'Die Großregion aus historischer und politisch-wirtschaftlicher Sicht—ein historischer Abriss', in *Saar-Lor-Lux*. (see note 74), 27–48, here 33.

<sup>84</sup> G. Linster, *Kooperation in der Großregion*, 343.

published in Jo Leinen's 2001 book *Saar-Lor-Lux. Eine Euro-Region mit Zukunft?*, a collection of essays that exemplifies the interplay of the political and the scholarly in the discursive construction of the Great Region. On the one hand, most authors with a political background avered that a common great-regional 'identity' constitutes a precondition for the Euroregion to stay economically competitive in a global market. The Economic and Social Committee is thus presented as a "mouthpiece for an effective public communication of common belonging."<sup>85</sup> Great-regionalism is viewed as an answer to the fears unleashed by globalisation. On the other hand, the book also presents a meta-analysis of this discourse on regionalism by Peter Schmitt-Egner.<sup>86</sup> These rather opposite points of view are placed next to each other without confronting them with each other. Another example for the (impossible) dialogue between scholarship and politics is the issue of 'subsidiarity', the principle that decisions should always be taken at the lowest possible level or closest to the area which they will effect. Subsidiarity appears in many contributions to Leinen's book. Some authors were concerned about grassroots democracy, while others believed that 'subsidiarity' was underpinned by the principle enshrined in the Maastricht Treaty that nation states should cede power to regions. As head of the only national government in the Great Region, Jean-Claude Juncker had no qualms about adhering to the principle of subsidiarity even at a macroscopic level: for Juncker, regional empowerment entailed the growth, and not the reductions of Luxembourg's political influence. He concluded that the Great Region is a model for a well-functioning Europe, in which decisions are made from below, rather than being imposed from the top. Adopting a rather more pessimistic view on the actual political participation of citizens, however, Jean-Paul Lehnert and Lars Bolle demonstrated that the more power a body has the less subsidiarity it permits, and the more distant decision-making becomes from the people those decisions affect. Lehnert and Bolle believed that while Saar-Lor-Lux may not have a common identity—since the region is not homogeneous—day-to-day pragmatism

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<sup>85</sup> Wolfgang Natus, 'Die interregionale Zusammenarbeit der Industrie—und Handelskammern im Saar-Lor-Lux-Raum', in *Saar-Lor-Lux* (see note 74), 139–146, here 145: "Sprachrohr im Hinblick auf eine öffentlichkeitswirksame Vermittlung dieses Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühls".

<sup>86</sup> Peter Schmitt-Egner, 'Grenzregionen im Prozeß der Globalisierung—Probleme, Chancen, Strategien', in *Saar-Lor-Lux* (see note 74), 155–182, here 160.

has generated highly developed crossborder networks. For Lehnert and Bolle, the question therefore becomes whether the pursuit of a common identity is really necessary in order to promote solidarity or whether it would be sufficient to improve communication and remove potential sources of conflicts, such as social inequalities.<sup>87</sup>

In his attempt to reconcile the political promotion of the Great Region (Juncker, Glöckner, Linster, Natus *et al.*) and historical scepticism (Herrmann, Schmitt-Egner, Lehnert, Bolle *et al.*), the editor, Jo Leinen, explained that territorial boundaries *artificially* separate economic contacts, natural landscapes and cultural relations. In his view, there is thus something like a *natural* cultural area that exists beyond society, politics and shifting man-made borders, a common culture—in other words—that would unite the people of the Great Region not because of their history, but *despite* their history.

#### 4.2. Working towards a Future 'Identity'

As the *Débat d'orientation* illustrates, the search for a common 'identity' for the Great Region had become a political ideal accepted by most politicians in Luxembourg by 2008. This ideal had already been outlined in *Future Vision 2020* presented at the 7th Saarbrücken Summit in 2003 and co-written by Guy Linster. Its objective was two-fold: to make the Great Region "the most European of all European regions" and to give it a distinct "identity".<sup>88</sup> The quest for this "identity" was crucial to the paper's understanding of the Great Region's fortunes. "In the end," it was argued, "the success of the Great Region project [will depend] on the willingness to create a community spirit."<sup>89</sup> Contrary to other declarations seeking historical antecedents, this paper stated that 'common identity' was not to be found in the past or in the present, but had to be seen as an objective for the future. This

<sup>87</sup> Jean-Paul Lehnert and Lars Bolle, 'Region in Westeuropa: Am Beispiel der grenzüberschreitenden Zusammenarbeit', in *Saar-Lor-Lux* (see note 74), 361–378, here 375–377.

<sup>88</sup> *Vision 2020*. URL [http://www.cpi-ipr.com/Uploads/Dossiers/2\\_1\\_vision2020fr.pdf](http://www.cpi-ipr.com/Uploads/Dossiers/2_1_vision2020fr.pdf), 6 (last accessed 16 December 2009). For an analysis of the *Zukunftsbild 2020* in terms of regional politics, see Peter Moll and Martin Niedermeyer, 'Das "Zukunftsbild 2020": Leitlinien und Perspektiven der Grenzüberschreitenden Kooperation in der Großregion SaarLorLux', in *Das politische System Luxemburgs* (see note 6), 344–363.

<sup>89</sup> *Vision 2020*, 56: "finalement la réussite du projet de la Grande Région [dépendra de] la volonté de parvenir à établir l'esprit communautaire".



‘new identity’ was nonetheless based on (the diversity of) cultural heritage, particularly multilingualism. The paper considered the European Capital of Culture 2007 as a model for the future working of the Great Region, a model which was to provide “a synthesis that will create unity in diversity on a new level of identity”.<sup>90</sup> The Great Region had thus to embrace the European slogan “unity in diversity” and, simultaneously, to develop a sense of common identity (implicitly distinct from that of other European regions).

What is interesting as far interactions between politics and scholarship are concerned, is that *Future Vision 2020* included plans to set up a research centre (*Agence interrégionale pour la culture et le multilinguisme*, supported by a *Centre de recherche interculturelle*, and as part of the *Institut de recherche sur les espaces frontaliers*). Its aim was to investigate

the unique intercultural character of the Great Region, [for] the systematic study of this phenomenon contributes not only to the understanding between cultures, but is also an important element in the development of a interior identity.<sup>91</sup>

According to this logic, to study an ‘identity’ is to create it, or at least to assist its creation. As we have seen, this view has been challenged by human and social scientists since the 1980s and is still topical. At the same time, researchers depend on funding and institutional support, which is directly linked to political concerns. To secure such funding to be able to analyse ‘identity’ constructions without participating in the act of creation of this ‘identity’ is a delicate balancing act.

This balancing act may be illustrated by the research project *Vivre dans la Grande Région—une étude scientifique portant sur les conditions de vie et les aspirations des habitants de la Grande Région*, funded by the Fonds National de la Recherche (FNR 02/05/19) and based on a large-scale opinion poll. In general, opinion polls attract funding not just because they are valuable research tools, but also because they are highly useful for political decision makers. The conclusions Fernand Fehlen, Claude Gengler and Marine Cavet drew is that the Great

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 12: “une synthèse créatrice d’unité dans la diversité, à un niveau d’identité nouveau”.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.: “le caractère interculturel unique de la Grande Région. Outre son apport à l’entente entre les cultures, l’étude systématique de ce phénomène est aussi un élément important pour le développement d’une identité intérieure.”

Region is an economic reality (in terms of crossborder employment, shopping and other socio-cultural activities), but that only people living in Luxembourg and the Saarland seem to have developed a sense of common belonging based on the perception of a shared past, present and future.<sup>92</sup> One of the authors of this study, Claude Gengler, went further: as head of *Forum Europa*, which also published the study, he organised two conferences, highlighting the need to improve crossborder cooperation and to promote a more coherent image of the Great Region. Thus, the analysis and the promotion of common belonging became difficult to separate.

The conferences and publications we have discussed here—an inter-discursive mixture of scholarly literature and political policies—initially appear to embrace a change of paradigm. They are no longer concerned about the Luxembourgian 'we(e)-group' (small endo-group), but are framed in terms of a centrifugal discourse which views Luxembourg in the context of the Great Region. While constructing the Great Region as a new 'homeland' or at least as a self-contained entity, they maintain Luxembourg firmly at the centre of attention: Luxembourg is held to be "the new navel of the region between the Rhine and the Meuse".<sup>93</sup> Even the FNR survey of crossborder practices focused on the border area surrounding Luxembourg and ignored other state borders within the Great Region. This may be explained by the national source of funding, while another type of bias happened in the project *LuxAtlas*. A representative of the Ministry of the Interior, one of the partners of the project, insisted that the frame of reference had to be the Great Region, notwithstanding the irrelevance of these contours for historical phenomena. The outcome of this project, a multidisciplinary online atlas entitled *GR-Atlas*, later won the First Prize at the Interregional Science Awards 2009 for "promoting crossborder cooperation and enhancing the profile of the Great Region both internally and externally".<sup>94</sup> The trend to examine Luxembourg in a supranational frame of reference is confirmed by another research project on metropolisation processes. The project *Metrolux* (2007–2009) focused on Luxembourg

<sup>92</sup> M. Cavet, F. Fehlen and C. Gengler, *Vivre dans la Grande Région*.

<sup>93</sup> *Mémorial de la Chambre des Députés*, Séance 31, 19 March 2008, 381, col. 2: "deen neien Nuebel vun der Regioun tëschent Rhäin a Meuse."

<sup>94</sup> URL: <http://gr-atlas.uni.lu> ((last accessed 16 December 2009); Michel Pauly, 'Ein Atlas für die Großregion', *forum* 288 (2009): 53–54.

city as a metropolis and as an emerging global city, while the subsequent project, *Metroborder* (2009–2011) examines the Great Region as a “crossborder polycentric metropolitan region” in comparison with the Upper Rhine Region.<sup>95</sup> The first was funded by the Luxembourg funding agency FNR, while the second is financed by the European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON). Whether the availability of funding shaped the direction of the project, or the direction of the project determined the funding sources that were approached is difficult to reconstruct. The evolution of research strategies and funding would need further elucidation, but the increasing importance of European research programmes for national funding agencies certainly encourages the building of international research consortiums, while each individual team remains attached to one particular country. This is key to the development of the centrifugal perspective: the national remains at the centre of attention but the frame is enlarged and the gaze is directed outwards.

There thus seems to have been a certain evolution in terms of scholarly outlook that is reflected in political discourse—or vice-versa. National characteristics (openness, Europeaness, in-betweeness) have been extended to apply to the whole Great Region: as Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker declared in an interview given after the 2009 Summit “we want to be the model region of Europe.”<sup>96</sup> “We” no longer stands for the national community, but refers to a larger group of people, the inhabitants of the Great Region. However, the “model” that is conjured up is that of a supranational entity. The new jargon of a ‘crossborder polycentric metropolitan region’, which has established itself in the wake of the 2009 Summit, may indicate a shift away from a *supranational* frame of reference, in which Luxembourg remains firmly at the centre, to a *transnational*, polycentric view. This would call into question the centrifugal strategy and lead to another, third type of spatial representation of Luxembourg, related to the notion of ‘hybridisation’.

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<sup>95</sup> URL: <http://metrolux.ceps.lu> (last accessed 16 December 2009).

<sup>96</sup> *Luxemburger Wort* (17 July 2009): 4.

## CONCLUSIONS

Spatial representations of Luxembourg are intrinsically linked to the master narrative analysed in the first chapters of this book. The master narrative attempts to make sense of ever-changing borders by linking them to Luxembourg's progress from birth, through hardship to resurrection. After a period of growth in the Middle Ages, the territory was marked by 'three dismemberments' that symbolise the decline and loss during the 'foreign dominations'. At the time of national independence (1839), Luxembourg is said to have been reduced to small size but to await a formidable rebirth. While the centripetal strategy links the community of descent and destiny to 'homeland' or 'fatherland', the centrifugal opens it up and declares the community to transcend national boundaries. As we have shown here the centripetal discursive strategy posits a national frame of reference, while the centrifugal strategy adopts a viewpoint focused on the Great Region or Europe, without Luxembourg being moved from centre-stage.

The tropes of 'monarchical fidelity' and 'foreign dominations' are part of the centripetal logic as they have been deployed to give the 'Luxembourgian' territory a sense of historical continuity by linking it to the various people who have inhabited it over time. These people are said to have shared certain characteristic features, which allowed them to 'survive the foreign dominations'. According to this master narrative, the Middle Ages represent a time of greatness, not only in the figurative sense of the word: Luxembourg was three to four times bigger, and was at its largest under Wenceslas I. Territorial extension is described as a slow process, the mark of a good medieval monarch who managed to attract new vassals. The descriptions of the reigns of Ermesinde and John of Bohemia—the two most important medieval figures after Sigefroid—in particular tend to emphasise the increasing number of nobles who paid homage. By contrast, the early-modern period represent an anticlimax: the partitions of 1659, 1815 and 1839 left Luxembourg with only a third (some say a quarter) of its lands. The idea of territorial decline is fully in line with the concept of the 'foreign dominations': the change from representing an active political entity in the Middle Ages, to becoming a passive pawn during the early-modern period. The early-modern period thus constitutes a kind

of antithesis to the medieval golden age and to present-day official discourse, which presents Luxembourg as a yet sovereign and autonomous—if sometimes beleaguered—state. Current fears of a loss not only of national sovereignty and European supremacy, but also individual fears of being at the mercy of global market strategies may lead to a reinforcement of the topos of ‘foreign dominations’, used metaphorically to express for instance economic dependence on international financial companies.<sup>1</sup>

The national master narrative is defined by the central role it accords Luxembourg: events taking place beyond the grand duchy’s borders are scarcely mentioned. In Herchen’s *Manuel d’histoire nationale*, for example, external developments are only mentioned in so far as they have a direct impact on events in Luxembourg. The representation of Luxembourg’s position within the larger political frameworks is equally revealing. In examining the House of Limburg-Luxembourg’s successful enlargement of their domains through the acquisition of several Central European crowns, the national master narrative presents the duchy of Luxembourg as the dynasty’s ‘heartland’, not as a peripheral possession. Nineteenth and early twentieth-century historiography saw the fourteenth century as a time when Luxembourg colonised Germany—an inversion of real power relations at the time of writing. In 1946, Joseph Meyers declared in an interview that: “Germany was culturally influenced—one could even say colonised—by the Luxembourg rulers from the West to the East. It is significant that Germany received its first and only constitution with Charles IV’s Golden Bull.”<sup>2</sup> According to the national master narrative, the Burgundian conquest in 1443 marks a watershed, relegating Luxembourg from the centre to the periphery of European affairs: far from being a commanding influence, it “sank to the level of a province”.<sup>3</sup> Luxembourg was to retain this provincial standing until 1815 or even until 1839, as the

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<sup>1</sup> See Marc Auxenfans, ‘D’Finanzplaz’, in *Lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg*, ed. Sonja Kmec, Benoît Majerus, Michel Margue and Pit Péporté (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 2007), 231.

<sup>2</sup> *Revue* 2/18 (1946): 355: “Deutschland wurde durch die Luxemburger Herrscher von Westen nach Osten kulturell beeinflusst, man kann sogar sagen kolonisiert. Es ist bezeichnend, dass Deutschland von KIV in der Goldenen Bulle seine erste und letzte Verfassung erhielt.”

<sup>3</sup> Nicolas van Werveke, *Kulturgeschichte Luxemburgs* (1983 edition), vol. 1, 60; Joseph Meyers, ‘Die Folgen der Burgundischen Herrschaft für Luxemburg’, *Les Cahiers luxembourgeois* 10 (1933): 415; idem, ‘Die Entwicklung des luxemburgischen Sonderbewusstseins unter den Burgundern und Habsburgern’, *Ons Hémecht* 43 (1937): 173.

'18th province' of the Netherlands. It only 'regained' its centrality when it gained its national independence. *Supranational* frames of reference do not call this centrality into question. The community of destiny is merely enlarged to encompass people living today in the Great Region or in Europe, by insisting on the common past of their ancestors (Lotharingia, industrialisation, the Second World War) or on allegedly shared experiences, such as the suffering brought about as a result of wars the people did not want. The master narrative runs, however, counter to a *transnational* view of history, which insists on early-modern cultural and economic exchanges or crossborder migration, thus calling the very existence of a clearly defined, closed and self-centred territory into question.



PART THREE

CONSTRUCTING THE LANGUAGE





## INTRODUCTION

A Luxembourger is someone who speaks the Luxembourgish language.<sup>1</sup>

The processes of inventing Luxembourg and inventing Luxembourgish are closely linked. This chapter will describe the creation of a language. From the beginning of the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, Luxembourgish has not only undergone linguistic transformations but also changes in status. It is the status of the language that will be at the centre of our analysis: from ‘our German’—as it was referred to in the nineteenth century—to the most recent of the western Germanic languages—as it is labelled by linguists today. This process is far from being exceptional. No language has existed in its current form since the beginning of time: all have been shaped by processes of codification, unification and standardisation by national movements, politicians and scholars such as linguists and historians.

It has not been possible to touch on the question of whether and from when the mastery of all three languages—Luxembourgish, French and German—has played a distinctive role in the grand duchy in this work. This question would deserve its own detailed study. The working hypothesis of this study is that the status of a language is closely linked to the political development of the nation (state) with which it is associated. It is not language that creates national unity, but the nation that creates a unifying language as an expression of its identity.<sup>2</sup> In the case of Luxembourg, there would be no Luxembourgish language without an autonomous Luxembourg.

A constructivist perspective needs to emphasise this extremely close link between language and nation, a link which is rarely given much prominence in the grand duchy. Political statements which refer to the language as one of the “(five) roots” of Luxembourg<sup>3</sup> and historical

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<sup>1</sup> Nikolaus Welter, *Das Luxemburgische und sein Schrifttum*, 6th ed. (Luxembourg: Soupert, 1921), 8: “Ein Luxemburger ist, wer die Luxemburger Sprache redet.”

<sup>2</sup> Florian Coulmas, *Sprache und Staat: Studien zu Sprachplanung und Sprachpolitik* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1985), 12.

<sup>3</sup> Jacques Santer, ‘Luxemburg—Wurzeln einer Nation’, *Télécran*, 22 June 1985.

judgements which view the language as a key element in Luxembourgian ‘particularism’ since the early modern period<sup>4</sup> are left unchallenged. It seems, however, that this approach needs to be reversed. Rather than shy away from such issues, it is necessary to determine which social actors have used the language, and in what manner, in constructing the nation-state. Likewise, it is necessary to look at how the state used the language to further its own legitimisation. Thus our aim is not to analyse the daily use of Luxembourgish, but rather to define its functions both as determined by and within the public sphere.<sup>5</sup>

Such issues have until recently attracted very little attention from scholars working in the humanities in Luxembourg, despite the fact that linguists, historians, sociologists and literary scientists have been researching Luxembourgish for nearly 150 years, and that the significance of Luxembourgish has been emphasised in most publications about the country, from coffee table books to academic works. In the past few years, however, some researchers have opted for a more analytical approach and have given more consideration to the historical context and social implications of the language.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, most linguists working on Luxembourgish still remain surprisingly detached from such considerations, as if they did not realise that their subject, like any other, can quickly be turned into a ‘science of legitimisation’.<sup>7</sup> The importance of language as a means of providing legitimisation in the process of nation-building in much of Europe has been emphasised for some time in international literature on the topic. The same

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<sup>4</sup> Gilbert Trausch, *Le Luxembourg sous l’Ancien Regime*, Manuel d’histoire luxembourgeoise 3 (Luxembourg: Bourg-Bourger, 1977), 89.

<sup>5</sup> Ed Maroldt, ‘Anpassung des Lëtzeburgischen an das Industriezeitalter’, in *Dialektologie heute. Festschrift für Hélène Palgen*, ed. Fernand Hoffmann (Luxembourg: Institut Grand-Ducal, Section de linguistique, de folklore et de toponymie, 1979), 188.

<sup>6</sup> Gerald Newton, *Luxembourg and Lëtzebuergesch: language and communication at the crossroads of Europe* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, 1996); Germaine Goetzinger, Gast Mannes, and Roger Muller, *Lëtzebuergesch: eine Sprache geht ihren Weg: von “onst Däitsch” zu “eis Sprooch”*: Ausstellung, Centre National de Littérature, Maison Servais, Mersch, Luxembourg, Oktober 2000—März 2001 (Mersch; Luxembourg: Centre National de Littérature, 2000); Fernand Fehlen, ‘Le “francique”’: dialecte, langue régionale, langue nationale?’, *Glottopol* 4 (2004): 23–46; and Claudine Moulin, ‘Grammatisierung und Standardisierung des Lëtzebuergesch. Eine grammatikographisch-sprachhistorische Annäherung’, in *Perspektiven einer linguistischen Luxemburgistik. Diachronie und Synchronie*, ed. Claudine Moulin and Damaris Nübling (Heidelberg: Winter, 2006), 305–339.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Schöttler, *Geschichtsschreibung als Legitimationswissenschaft: 1918–1945* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997).

applies to its function as a tool for exerting control in the social and political sphere: language is not only considered a means of communication, but also an expression of the feeling of belonging to a group. As an individual or collective constructive element, language enables the self to be defined in relation to the outside world. At the same time, the use of the right language at the right time becomes a distinctive element within a group, allowing the establishment of hierarchy within that group.<sup>8</sup>

How, then, should one account for the shifting position Luxembourgish has occupied in society for almost two centuries? In seeking to address this question, this section will explore two lines of reasoning. First, it will focus on written works in Luxembourgish. Although the language gradually gained in status and authority, writing in Luxembourgish remains a meaningful—and even marked—choice to this day. While authors no longer have to defend their choice of language in the same manner as Jean-François Gangler in the nineteenth century, writing in Luxembourgish still requires justification.<sup>9</sup> Second, this section will look at the various aspects of the politics of language. In dealing with heterogeneous, multi-faceted challenges and multiple actors, the choice of language is central to the legitimisation of hegemonical tendencies. Communication in one language (rather than another) is not always purely a matter of content but can also, at a symbolic level, express awareness of a community. The presence of other languages (French, German or Portuguese) in the grand duchy is of indisputable importance, but the focus of this study is on the use of the Luxembourgish language in the construction of national identity.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> This process has been well researched. Tomasz Kamusella, *The politics of language and nationalism in modern Central Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008) is one of the latest case studies published on this topic.

<sup>9</sup> There are many reasons as to why in some contexts people feel they have to justify using Luxembourgish. Amongst these we find the reduced size of the potential readership: the use of Luxembourgish prevents not only an international audience from understanding what is being said, but also a large number of local immigrants and crossborder workers. In addition, some people claim that the language lacks specialised jargon for some fields (e.g. academic, legal), providing thus potential grounds to justify any usage in those particular circumstances.

<sup>10</sup> For the sociolinguistic aspects, see Fernand Fehlen et al., *Le Sondage "baleine": une étude sociologique sur les trajectoires migratoires, les langues et la vie associative au Luxembourg* (Luxembourg: SESOPI—Centre intercommunautaire, 1998; Fernand Fehlen, *BaleineBis: Une enquête sur un marché linguistique multilingue en profonde mutation—Luxemburgs Sprachenmarkt im Wandel* (Luxembourg: SESOPI—Centre Intercommunautaire, 2009).

A language's development occurs not in a neutral space, but in relation to the history and development of a nation.<sup>11</sup> This last part of the book will thus discuss associations committed to the promotion of Luxembourgish on the one hand, and language policies pursued by governmental bodies—or, as the linguist Robert Cooper calls them, “formal elites”—on the other hand.<sup>12</sup> The presentation and analysis of this process is all the more interesting as it uncovers the images used by different actors to create Benedict Anderson's “imagined community”.<sup>13</sup>

The following two chapters are thus about the perception of language. They will refuse to make a point about whether Luxembourgish should be considered a language, a dialect or an idiom, whether this changed, or when this change should have happened. Many of the authors we analyse, however, consider a ‘dialect’ as hierarchically inferior to a ‘language’. Their usage of these terms therefore has a bearing on our analysis, despite our refusal to take a position on the issue as such.

The two chapters comprising this third section are arranged chronologically. The first covers the ‘long nineteenth century’, which is characterised by the insertion of Luxembourgish into the larger German language area and by the emergent view that Luxembourgish and German were not antagonistic but complementary. The second chapter, covering the period from the inter-war years until the present day, deals with the changing representations of Luxembourgish from a dialect to an established language.

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<sup>11</sup> Miroslav Hroch, *Social preconditions of national revival in Europe: a comparative analysis of the social composition of patriotic groups among the smaller European nations* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), xv.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Leon Cooper, *Language planning and social change* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 88.

<sup>13</sup> See the controversy following the publication of a study on languages spoken in Luxembourg, entitled BALEINE (Fernand Fehlen et al., *Le Sondage “baleine”: une étude sociologique sur les trajectoires migratoires, les Langues et la vie associative au Luxembourg* (Luxembourg: SESOPI—Centre intercommunautaire, 1998), which attacked Luxembourgish linguistics as overly conservative (cf. articles published in *forum* 177 (1997), and: Joseph Reisdorfer, ‘L’Odyssée de la Baleine’, *forum* 179 (1997): 31–36.

## CHAPTER SIX

### ‘OUR GERMAN’ (1820–1918)

Defining a starting point for a study of the Luxembourgish language is a delicate matter. The risk of arbitrarily creating a ‘date of birth’ for the language is high. Furthermore, the grand duchy’s inhabitants did not start speaking a language identifiable as Luxembourgish at any precise date in time. Most studies agree that linguistic borders in the area stabilised after the great migrations of the sixth century. Thereafter, most of the lands comprised in today’s grand duchy were located in the German language area.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1. *Writing in a German Dialect*

This chapter addresses the period after c.1820, since it was at around this time that people moved from spoken to written Luxembourgish.<sup>2</sup> Considering the general importance of the written word, this represents a radical transformation in the status of the Luxembourgish language. At the same time we notice that people started to reflect about Luxembourgish in a way that went beyond linguistics and along a process of auto-denomination (*Eigenbenennung*): people started to refer explicitly to ‘their’ language.

The first two moments in the nineteenth century that the local vernacular can be found in written form are largely forgotten. This was because the authors could not be stylised as proper Luxembourgers. In 1824, the *Luxemburger Wochenblatt* featured a short news item probably written by the paper’s editor, the Silesian Gaspar Weiss.<sup>3</sup> A year

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<sup>1</sup> For a brief and recent summary of the genealogy of the Luxembourgish language, see Guy Berg, “*Mir wëlle bleiwe, wat mir sin*”: *soziolinguistische und sprachtypologische Betrachtungen zur luxemburgischen Mehrsprachigkeit*, Reihe Germanistische Linguistik 140 (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1993), 10–18.

<sup>2</sup> At the beginning of the nineteenth century nobody wrote in the vernacular in Luxembourg. The majority of the population spoke a dialect that they regarded as part of German and which is now referred to as the Luxembourgish language.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Bruch, *Luxemburger Grammatik in volkstümlichen Abriss*, Beiträge zur Luxemburger Sprach—und Volkskunde 10 (Luxembourg: Section de Linguistique de l’Institut grand-ducal, 1973), 8.

later, in 1825, the *Luxemburger Wochenblatt* published a poem in Luxembourgish entitled ‘A Drunkard’s Last Wish’ (interestingly its original title was kept in French: *Les derniers Voeux d’un ivrogne*). Roger Muller has convincingly demonstrated that the text was not penned, as was long assumed, by Jean-François Gangler, but by Georg Weiß, a Prussian from Breslau who settled in Luxembourg in 1817.<sup>4</sup> *E Schrëck op de Lëtzebuenger Parnassus*, a collection of poems written by Antoine Meyer and published in 1829, is traditionally considered the first ‘true’ work in Luxembourgish.<sup>5</sup> It earned its author—a known Freemason—a place in the pantheon of Luxembourgish literature, despite the harsh criticisms which have been levelled at the work’s literary quality.<sup>6</sup> These early editorial essays bear witness to the tentative beginnings not of an ‘awareness of one’s own language’ (*Eigensprachlichkeitsbewusstsein*) but rather of ‘awareness of one’s own dialect’ (*Eigendialektbewusstsein*)—a language which was not competing with German and which had no implications for any potential national sentiment.<sup>7</sup> Incidentally, none of the mentioned three authors, considered to be the first Luxembourgish-language ‘writers’, had Luxembourgian nationality, neither at birth nor at their death. Luxembourgish language had no specific function in the state and society of the time. It did not yet act as an ‘identity marker’ providing internal cohesion and enabling identification by the outside world.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Roger Muller, ‘War der Initiator lëtzebuergescher Dichtung ein Nichtluxemburger?’, *Nos Cahiers* 25/2 (2004): 81–114.

<sup>5</sup> Anton Meyer, *E Schrëck op de Lëtzebuenger Parnassus*, ed. Roger Muller (Mersch: Éd. du Centre National de Littérature, 2004). Meyer became a Belgian citizen in 1839.

<sup>6</sup> Fernand Hoffmann, *Geschichte der Luxemburger Mundartdichtung. Erster Band: Von den Anfängen bis zu Michel Rodange* (Luxemburg: Bourg-Bourger, 1964), 65: “Wäre Meyer nicht der Vater unserer Mundartdichtung, so hätte er trotz allem kaum mehr als einen Hinweis in einer Geschichte des Luxemburger Dialektschrifttums verdient.”

<sup>7</sup> Johannes Kramer and Roland Marti, ‘Zweieinhalbsprachigkeit (Fallbeispiele Korsika, Curaçao, Seychellen, Gröden, Luxemburg)’, in *Sprachenpolitik in Grenzregionen* (Saarbrücken: Saarbrücker Druckerei und Verlag, 1996), 126.

<sup>8</sup> Consequently, we argue for a different chronology to that proposed by Peter Gilles and Claudine Moulin, ‘Luxembourgish’, in *Germanic Standardizations—Past to Present*, ed. Ana Deumert and Wim Vandenburg (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2003), 304–306. The contention that “[t]he history of Luxembourgish as a national language begins with the foundation of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg on 19 April 1839” is an anachronistic statement, given that Luxembourg did not yet exist as a nation at this point in history. The presence of a ‘national identity’ from the mid-nineteenth century onwards is also strongly contested by today’s historians.

This may seem hardly surprising considering that, despite existing as a judicially autonomous entity since 1815, the grand duchy was still largely regarded as the 'eighteenth province' of the Netherlands.<sup>9</sup> Although the Luxembourgish people may not have been overly satisfied with belonging to the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, they did not openly express any desire for greater independence. In the grand duchy, the promotion of Luxembourgish was not considered a key element in the affirmation of identity.

Two factors seem significant in this transition from the spoken to the written use of a dialect that was then still considered to be a form of German. First and foremost, a trend towards the study of dialects started to emerge in the German language area (but also in other parts of Europe). Scholars such as the Brothers Grimm and Karl Simrock were interested in the 'common folk' and their language. The Romantics saw it as a new source of popular legitimacy for political claims. Unsurprisingly, this trend was embraced in the fragmented German-speaking world, which was devoid of other unifying forms of political legitimacy, and which had nothing to compare to the centralising influence of the French state. At the same time, other German dialects in Switzerland, Bavaria and Transylvania also underwent a codification through the transition from spoken to written forms. As a matter of fact, Antoine Meyer can be linked to this initial wave of regionalism, having come across the tentative beginnings of its Flemish and Walloon manifestations in Liège.<sup>10</sup>

Secondly, it was only in the 1820s, after decades of political instability, that Luxembourg's communication space came to be recognised as a clear geographical space.<sup>11</sup> The role of the press in Luxembourg speaks eloquently to the emergence of this regional identity: there was an audience interested in regional news and thus potential for a printing industry with a regional focus. Indeed, between 1815 and 1848, several publications were launched, some longer-lived than others: the *Luxemburger Wochenblatt* (1821–1826), the *Journal de la Ville et du grand-duché de Luxembourg* (1824–1844), the *Echo du Luxembourg* (1836–) and the *Wochen-Blatt für Bürger und Landsleute* (1837) were aimed at a Luxembourgian audience and as such had an interest in

<sup>9</sup> See chapter 4 for a detailed discussion of this.

<sup>10</sup> F. Hoffmann, *Geschichte der Luxemburger Mundartdichtung. Erster Band*, 214.

<sup>11</sup> See Karl W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and social communication: an inquiry into the foundations of nationality* (New York: Wiley, 1953).



creating news specific to the region.<sup>12</sup> The significance of a shared communication space in creating a common identity is emphasised by both Karl W. Deutsch and Benedict Anderson, who see language as one factor which may contribute to such a common identity.<sup>13</sup>

## 2. *Writing about a German Dialect*

In addition to these first works *in* Luxembourgish, the first works *on* Luxembourgish also appeared during the nineteenth century. The *Lexicon der Luxemburger Umgangssprache* by Jean-François Gangler, published 1847, is a case in point.

Gangler, a police captain, attributed a double Celtic and Saxon genealogy to the Luxembourgish language. For Gangler, the Celts represented the indigenous inhabitants of the Luxembourgish territory, whereas the Saxons had left their mark on the language through migration. Gangler's detection of what he believed to be the Celtic roots of Luxembourgish can be seen as a reflection of the craze for all things Celtic, which was sweeping Europe at the time. In a world undergoing rapid modernisation and industrialisation, this Romantic trend par excellence expressed nostalgia for a lost past. Gangler's identification of a Saxon connection, by contrast, was intended to provide Luxembourgers with a connection to the 'Saxons' in Transylvania and the 'Saxons' who had colonised the British Isles.<sup>14</sup>

What is striking about Gangler's study is that it concerns a highly particular form of Luxembourgish. The 'Luxembourgish' that Gangler described in the 1840s was clearly the spoken form in Luxembourg City and its surroundings. At the same time, his Luxembourgish was strongly influenced by French, perhaps as a result of his French secondary education and the translation job he held at Luxembourg's Court of Justice before joining the police (Luxembourgish law being chiefly

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<sup>12</sup> Romain Hilgert, *Les journaux au Luxembourg, 1704–2004* (Luxembourg: Service information et presse, 2004), 41–47.

<sup>13</sup> K. W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and social communication*; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

<sup>14</sup> On the origins of the idea according to which Luxembourgish is tightly linked to the English-speaking world, see Gerald Newton, 'German, French, Lëtzebuergesch', in *Luxembourg and Lëtzebuergesch. Language and Communication at the Crossroads of Europe*, ed. Gerald Newton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 41–43.

administered in French).<sup>15</sup> But what is most striking is that Gangler’s efforts to analyse Luxembourgish were coloured by his methodology and his view of the language itself. Gangler pointed out the difficulties in transcribing Luxembourgish, but without indicating the rules he had followed himself. As a matter of fact, he did not seem inclined to contribute to the progressive formation of written Luxembourgish and considered the few recent attempts as nothing but “language samples” (*Sprachproben*). This language was “devoid of education” (*bildungslos*) and used by the “common people” (*Volk*),<sup>16</sup> as opposed to the administrative and political elite who used another language, specifically French.

In other words, despite first writings in Luxembourgish and the creation of a specific linguistic space, the political elite did not envisage using the language as a tool for nationalist claims. In fact, it did not raise any such claims, but by and large adhered to Orangism and upheld its loyalty to the dynasty of Orange-Nassau. Historiography also remained true to this paradigm, and there was thus no emergence of a competing storyline based on a ‘national’ conception of the Luxembourgish language.<sup>17</sup> This sets Luxembourg in contrast to the German master narrative of the time, which rests largely on a ‘linguistic community’.

### 3. *First Steps in Nationalising Language*

#### 3.1. *Creation of a Luxembourgish Trinity*

Historical accounts of Luxembourgish literature tend to present the second half of the nineteenth century as having been focused around the Lentz-Dicks-Rodange triumvirate. In Pierre Grégoire’s words,

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<sup>15</sup> Joseph Hess found that “in 1847, when the country was still in the early years of its customs agreement with the German states, the Luxembourgish dialect was so largely based on French that the influence of *Hochdeutsch* on our language at the time was hardly significant”. Hess’ assessment needs to be placed in the context of 1947—barely two years after the end of World War II, when anti-German sentiments were ubiquitous and French links were underlined with glee. Joseph Hess, *Centenaire du premier lexique du parler luxembourgeois—extrait de l’annuaire 1947* (Luxembourg: Institut grand-ducal, section de linguistique, de folklore et de toponymie, 1947), 2. For the most recent biography of Gangler see *Eis Sprooch* 12 (1980): 41–42.

<sup>16</sup> Jean-François Gangler, ‘Vorwort’, in *Lexicon der Luxemburger Umgangssprache (wie sie in und um Luxemburg gesprochen)* (Luxembourg: V. Hoffmann, 1847), iv.

<sup>17</sup> Christiane Huberty, ‘La vie politique du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle dans l’historiographie: bilan et perspectives’, *Hémecht* 58/4 (2006): 549–561.

Luxembourgish literature revolved around this “proud trio...Lentz, the impassioned intellectual writer, Dicks, the lyricist and dramatist, and Rodange, the epic poet.”<sup>18</sup>

Dicks (Edmond de la Fontaine), whose mother tongue was probably not Luxembourgish but French<sup>19</sup> belonged to the upper middle-class. His father, Theodore de la Fontaine, was governor and later the first State Minister of Luxembourg. Dicks would come to represent the ideal type of the nineteenth-century European bourgeois, typified by his scientific and literary interest in dialects. During his studies at Heidelberg in 1846/47, he was exposed to the ideas of the Brothers Grimm and the Germanist Simrock. The first Germanist congress took place in Frankfurt in 1846, demonstrating the vibrancy of intellectual interest in the German language at that time. German was then far less codified, and Luxembourgish seemed a natural affiliate. Upon his return from Germany, Dicks started collecting common sayings in Luxembourgish in order to access, via comparison with other peoples, the “innermost being” (*innerstes Wesen*) of the inhabitants of Luxembourg.<sup>20</sup> After subsequently becoming a member of the Historical Section of the Grand-Ducal Institute, he published several ethnographic books and became involved in the debate around spelling. He rejected the models of Meyer and Gangler and sought to take advantage of the fact that the language was still in its infancy to suggest a systematic prescriptive frame based “on the phonetic rules of the language”.<sup>21</sup> These proposals were actually relatively successful, as they were taken up by Michel Lentz and other authors, making Dicks the inventor of the “first classical Luxembourgish orthography”.<sup>22</sup> In parallel to this

<sup>18</sup> Pierre Gregoire, *Zur Literaturgeschichte Luxemburgs* (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 1959), 51: “stolzes Trio jener Zeiten ist bis heute noch nicht übertroffen worden: der pathetische Verstandesdichter Lentz, der Lyriker und Dramatiker Dicks und der Epiker Rodange.”

<sup>19</sup> Alain Atten, one of his biographers, concedes: “so ‘welscht’ die Mutter wohl lieber,” Alain Atten, ‘Dicks/Edmond de la Fontaine (1823–1891)—Volksdichter-Volkskundler’, in *Mumm Séis*, ed. Edmond de la Fontaine (Luxembourg: Centre d’études de la littérature luxembourgeoise, 1994), 10.

<sup>20</sup> Edmond de la Fontaine, *Die Luxemburger Sprichwörter und Sprüchwoertlichen Redensarten* (Luxembourg: V. Bück, 1857–58). Quoted by F. Hoffmann, *Geschichte der Luxemburger Mundartdichtung. Erster Band*, 148.

<sup>21</sup> Edmond de la Fontaine, *Versuch über die Orthographie der luxemburger deutschen Mundart* (Luxembourg: V. Bück, 1855), 2: “auf den phonetischen Sprachgesetzen.”

<sup>22</sup> Lucien Koenig, *Auf dem Wege zu einer Grammatik der Luxemburger Mundart. 1. Teil. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Lux. Dialektliteratur* (Luxembourg: Nationalverlag, 1928), 13: “erste klassische Luxemburgische Orthographie.”

academic output, Dicks also produced other works, which made him the first author writing in Luxembourgish to enjoy popular success. His plays in particular helped to make the Luxembourgish language more fashionable. Initially written for the Gymnastics Society—the *Gym* in Luxembourg City—they were staged in a context of growing national identification. As in Germany, gymnastics societies in Luxembourg were social meeting places for the urban bourgeoisie, and were also places that set social networks into a national context.<sup>23</sup> This particular society was founded in 1849 and was one of the first to have a 'national' dimension in Luxembourg, its democratic leanings at times drawing an angry response from the authorities.<sup>24</sup> A few years later, the Echternach gymnastics society, founded in 1863, was to be the favourite playhouse of another Luxembourgish language author, André Duchscher.

Like Dicks, Michel Lentz was a member of the *Gym*, but he came from a lower middle-class background. His father was a baker and Lentz was to earn his living as a civil servant. As the author of both the *Feierwon* and *Ons Hémécht*, Luxembourg's official and unofficial national hymns, he came to be known as the country's 'national poet' (*Nationaldichter*) during his own lifetime.<sup>25</sup> At Lentz's funeral, at which his body was wrapped in the flag of Luxembourg, the eulogy which was delivered in Luxembourgish by State Minister Paul Eyschen became a milestone in the history of the language. It was the first time that a Luxembourgian statesman used his mother tongue in an official ceremony. The speech is considered an important stage in the emancipation of the language, proving that Luxembourgish was 'capable' of expressing feelings and discussing the arts appropriately. This speech was referred to at several crucial moments in the language's development, be it by Caspar Mathias Spoo in 1896 or various members of Parliament in 1984.

Despite the fact that they were embroiled in a notable quarrel, posterity has been inclined not to place Dicks and Lentz in opposition to

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<sup>23</sup> Svenja Goltermann, *Körper der Nation: Habitusformierung und die Politik des Turnens 1860–1890*, Kritische Studien zur Geschichtswissenschaft 126 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998).

<sup>24</sup> Marc Thiel, 'Faits associatifs et sociabilité autour de 1848. Une discussion sur une structure sociale essentielle du 19<sup>e</sup> siècle', *forum* 158 (1998): 25–29.

<sup>25</sup> F. Hoffmann, *Geschichte der Luxemburger Mundartdichtung. Erster Band*; Roger Seimetz, 'Dicks, poète national', in *Lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg. Usages du passé et construction nationale*, ed. Sonja Kmec, Benoît Majerus, Michel Margue and Pit Péporté (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 2007), 85–90.

one another, but to present them as complementary members of the same group. Although the two could have hardly been more different, the fact that they were promoting the language at a time when the status of Luxembourgish was in question allows their disagreements to be overlooked. Indeed, in 1903, a monument was constructed in the centre of Luxembourg City bearing the following inscription: “To Dicks and Lentz, from the people of Luxembourg, erected in 1903” (*Dem Dicks an Lentz vum Lëtzebuurger Vollek opgericht 1903*).

The monument to Dicks and Lentz is a good illustration of the context for the reception of their work and demonstrates not only the socio-economic groups involved in the use of Luxembourgish in the construction of national identity, but also the question of whom the newly-valued Luxembourgish should represent. (Fig. 16) The initiative for the monument came from the *Gym*. Far from being erected by the “people of Luxembourg”, this monument shows the central role played by the middle-classes in the process of state formation and nationalisation in the second half of the nineteenth century. By retaining a monopoly on the construction of monuments in Luxembourg, as elsewhere in Europe, the bourgeoisie imposed many of its values on symbolic representations of the nation. This does not, however, mean to say that the middle-class *Gym* was necessarily united, and the hidden controversy which surrounded the construction of the monument illustrates the intense debate which Luxembourgish literature generated at the beginning of the twentieth century. Initially, the monument was supposed to be dedicated to Dicks alone. Preoccupied by the desire to engender a sense of national identity during his term in office, however, Paul Eyschen asserted that it should also honour Michel Lentz. Unlike Lentz, whose work was rather conventional, Dicks had sometimes been too caustic for the ruling élites: his poem *Vulleparlament*, published in 1848, was said to have accelerated the fall of the government led by Gerard Eyschen, Paul’s father.<sup>26</sup> What the monument united in 1903 was not to come apart thereafter. As the *Dicks-Lentz-Club*—created in 1916 as a Luxembourgish Academy by the *Nationalunio’n*—and the popular brass band Dicksy-Lentz-Band—founded by Jang Linster in 1987—show, the two authors came to be seen as inseparable.

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<sup>26</sup> One can of course speculate whether Eyschen urged Lentz’s inclusion because he wished the two to be united *per se*, or because he wished—in a sense—to downgrade the man who had helped to bring down his father. We still lack a detailed study of the period that will allow us to take a definite stance on this matter.



Fig. 16. Dicks-Lentz Monument by Pierre Federspiel, Square Jan Palach, Luxembourg.

A third author was soon added to the unlikely pair of Lentz and Dicks: Michel Rodange.<sup>27</sup> Rodange, who stemmed from a family of farmers, worked as a schoolteacher. He made his entry into the history of the Luxembourgish language by adapting Goethe's *Reinecke Fuchs* to the Luxembourgian context. His *Rénert* was printed in Gothic letters, as were all texts in German: a clear sign that Luxembourgish was considered a German variation of some sort.<sup>28</sup> Despite going fairly unnoticed at the time of its publication in 1872—scarcely 300 copies were sold in its first three decades—*Rénert* was to become *the* Luxembourgish 'national epic' just a few decades later.<sup>29</sup>

Most anthologies present these three authors together, as symbols of the first golden age of the Luxembourgish language. In comparison with France and Germany, Luxembourg is thought to have acquired a 'classic' literature only belatedly. Of course, France considers the seventeenth century to be its classical age, with writers such as Racine and Corneille, while the German *Klassik* centres on Weimar in the age of Goethe and Schiller around the turn of the nineteenth century. The linguist Guy Berg denies the *Rénert* classical status, pointing out that the creation of this pantheon did not take place in Rodange's lifetime.<sup>30</sup> While this is correct, one needs to keep in mind that a 'classic age' is itself a construction of later ages—be that in France, Germany or Luxembourg.<sup>31</sup>

The last quarter of the nineteenth century was characterised by the rise of the 'national' character of the society of the grand duchy. The international crises of 1867 and 1871 brought about the expression

<sup>27</sup> E.g.: The award bestowed annually by *Actioun Lëtzebuergesch* (which will be mentioned later) since 1984, bears the name 'Dicks-Rodange-Lentz'.

<sup>28</sup> René Engelmann, *Auf heimatischen Pfaden*, 2nd ed. (Diekirch: P. Schroell, 1916), 72–74.

<sup>29</sup> This is based on the excellent introduction by Romain Hilgert 'Koumdumat-séngemblaistëftdennanetsméchel', in Michel Rodange, *Rénert—de Fuuss am Frack an a Maansgréisst*, 2nd ed., ed. Romain Hilgert (Luxembourg, 1995), 5–27.

<sup>30</sup> Guy Berg, 'Abschied vom Dialekt. Zur lëtzebuergsprachigen belletristischen Gegenwartsliteratur', in *Lëtzebuergesch. Entwicklungstendenzen und Forschungsperspektiven einer jungen Sprache* (Luxembourg and Mersch: CNL, 2005), 99.

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, *Ons Hémecht* 12/1 (1906), 5; L. Koenig, 'Auf dem Wege zu einer Grammatik', 42 talks of "Klassiker" when referring to the three authors. On the process of classicification and canonisation, see Michael Einfalt, "'Classicisme" und Nationalliteratur: Literaturgeschichtsschreibung und Kanonbildung', in *Konstruktive nationaler Identität: Deutschland, Frankreich und Großbritannien (19. und 20. Jahrhundert)*, ed. Michael Einfalt, Joseph Jurt, Daniel Mollenhauer and Erich Pelzer (Würzburg: Ergon, 2002), 59–74.

of a broader national sentiment from different layers of the population. The fact that the 1871 population census included a category for 'foreigners' for the first time is a case in point. An important paradigm shift occurred with the change of dynasties and the accession of Adolph of Nassau. The grand duchy was permanently severed from the Netherlands. This development had admittedly begun in the 1830s with the Belgian Revolution, but the separation of the two entities was confirmed in 1890. Luxembourg now had a responsibility to create a new sense of political legitimacy; the steady increase in the percentage of voters in the total population from 1890 onwards was one of its means. At the start of the nineteenth century, the legitimacy of state power did not require the existence of a 'nation':<sup>32</sup> as Denis Scuto demonstrated with regard to the policy of nationalisation, the "point of reference is the state... where national ideology does not yet have its place."<sup>33</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the situation had changed and language could and did play an important role in this process of building a Luxembourgish nation. This process was not merely limited to top-down decisions, but was also significantly affected by the actions of social groups and movements. Indeed, the two worked alongside one another in the formation of a national sentiment and the emergence of the 'nation' was in many senses the product of the social impact of political reforms as much as it was the result of a conscious policy of nation-building. Following a phase of intensive industrialisation, Luxembourg's society underwent wide-ranging modernisation. Mandatory primary education was introduced, a welfare system was progressively established and the state apparatus was gradually expanded. The combined effect of industrialisation and social modernisation was the emergence of a sizable group of civil servants and state employees, whose socio-economic condition was directly or indirectly linked to the existence of the state. These professionals were to become pillars of the organisations that would appear from the end of the nineteenth century onwards and that would play a role in developing a sense of self-identification with the Luxembourgish state at a grassroots level. Similarly, as Christiane Huberty has demonstrated,

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<sup>32</sup> Ruth Dörner, *Staat und Nation im Dorf. Erfahrungen im 19. Jahrhundert: Frankreich, Luxemburg, Deutschland* (Munich: M-Press, 2006), 16.

<sup>33</sup> Denis Scuto, Qu'est-ce qu'un Luxembourgeois? Histoire de la nationalité luxembourgeoise du Code Napoléon à nos jours', *Hémécht*, 58/1 (2006): 82: "point de référence est l'Etat (...) où l'idéologie de type national n'a pas encore sa place."



these same professionals further contributed to the development of a truly national sentiment their active participation in the growing number of national celebrations and ceremonies in that period.<sup>34</sup>

### 3.2. *Ons Hémecht: The Society for Luxembourgian History, Literature and Art*

The creation in 1896 of *Ons Hémecht*, the Society for Luxembourgian History, Literature and Art (*Verein für Luxemburger Geschichte, Literatur und Kunst*),<sup>35</sup> was an expression of the social activities which were organised by various associations at a national level in this period, but may also be set in a broader European context.<sup>36</sup> Although the Archaeological Society—precursor of the Historical Section of the Grand-Ducal Institute, founded in 1845—hosted conferences on Luxembourgish well before the foundation of *Ons Hémecht*, Luxembourgish remained an unconventional subject in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. While Pierre Klein declared in 1854 that language was “a memorial... in our midst, though many times unsettled and damaged, yet still solid and unbroken... a living testimonial to our origins, our nationality, our innermost being,”<sup>37</sup> no provision was made for the establishment of a department of Luxembourgish when the Grand-Ducal Institute was founded in 1868. As a result, it was left

<sup>34</sup> Christiane Huberty, ‘Guillaume II, Roi des Pays-Bas et Grand-Duc de Luxembourg (1840–1849). Construction et évolution d’un lieu de mémoire’, *Hémecht* 58/1 (2006): 111.

<sup>35</sup> See also chapter 1.

<sup>36</sup> The *Allgemeiner Deutsche Sprachverein* was founded in Germany in 1885. In 1892, the historian Gottfried Kurth founded the *Deutscher Verein zur Hebung und Pflege der Muttersprache* in the Belgian province of Luxembourg to give more attention to German, rather than the language spoken in that region. Albert Conter, ‘Evolution linguistique dans l’Arelerland depuis 1839 à nos jours’, in *Actes du cycle de conférences Lëtzebuergesch: quo vadis?* (Luxembourg: Victor Buck, 2005), 210.

<sup>37</sup> “Ein denkmal steht noch mitten unter uns, zwar mannigfach erschüttert und beschädigt, aber noch fest und ungebroschen (...) ein lebendiges zeugnis unserer herkunft, unserer nationalität, unseres innersten wesens. Dieses denkmal ist unsere sprache.” Quoted by Joseph Goedert, *De la Société archéologique à la Section historique de l’Institut Grand Ducal. Tendances, méthodes et résultats du travail historique de 1845 à 1985*. PSH 101 (Luxembourg: Section historique de l’Institut grand-ducal, 1987), 414–415. Goedert sums up the works on the Luxembourgish language presented to the *Société archéologique / Section historique* in *ibid.*, 414–417. Pierre Klein, who followed the Brothers Grimm, affirmed clearly: “dasz das Luxemburger volk, wie seine sprache, durchaus deutsch ist.” Pierre Klein, *Die Sprache der Luxemburger* (Luxembourg: V. Bück, 1855), 4.

to the Institute's Historical Section to attempt to integrate the study of Luxembourgish into a discourse which might provide a nascent national identity with some sort of historical roots.

There seems to be a parallel to the 'patriotic groups' that were active in other small European nations during the nineteenth century, as investigated by Miroslav Hroch.<sup>38</sup> His model recognises the foundation of private societies that promote history or literature as a first sign of national consciousness. It distinguishes three stages in this process: stage A represents a period of academic interest, stage B a period of patriotic agitation and stage C the beginning of a mass national movement. Of course, this model only partially applies to Luxembourg, since Hroch principally studied small nations that were in the process of shaking off a 'foreign domination'. Nevertheless, his chronology proves relevant here with regards to his first two stages. Moreover, his sociological study of patriotic groupings helps to place Luxembourg's evolution in a broader European context.

Based on the composition of *Ons Hémecht*, these figures for Luxembourg seem to confirm Hroch's belief that "no class or social group had a stable place in the structure of the patriotic communities sufficient to signify that such a group had a fixed and necessary share in the national movement." The data, however, does allow for the identification

Table 1. Social structures of patriotic groupings<sup>39</sup>

	Luxembourgish (n = 146)	Norwegians	Czechs	Estonians	Slovaks	Danes
1. Old ruling class, landowners	1%	c. 20%	1-7%	c. 1%	c. 5%	c. 1%
2. Tradesmen, industrialists	3%	20-30%	3-5%	c. 5%	?	5-13%
3. Craftsmen	2%	5-15%	5-10%	3-7%	?	5-10%
4. Self-employed	11%	c. 10%	4-10%	c. 1%	5-10%	1-4%
5. Civil servants	26%	c. 10%	14-18%	c. 5%	6-10%	5-20%
6. Clergy	27%	c. 10%	20-30%	0%	30-60%	2-10%
7. Teachers	20%	c. 5%	5-10%	30-50%	15-26%	c. 5%
8. Students	3%	c. 20%	c. 15%	c. 5%	10-20%	c. 5%
9. Farmers	0%	c. 10%	2-5%	10-30%	?	40-65%
10. Workmen	0%	0%	c. 1%	c. 7%	?	?
11. Unspecified	6%		/	/	/	/

<sup>38</sup> M. Hroch, *Social preconditions of national revival in Europe*.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 130 for European figures. For Luxembourg, see the member list published in *Ons Hémecht* 1/3 (1895): 58-60.

of certain trends particular to Luxembourg. While the prominent role played by the clergy (over a quarter of the members) and teachers in Luxembourg is broadly similar to the role played by these groups in other European countries, the involvement of an uncommonly sizeable number of civil servants and the absence of any farmers from the membership of *Ons Hémecht* stands out as unusual. The high number of civil servants involved in *Ons Hémecht* may be explained by the fact that, unlike the other countries considered by Hroch, Luxembourg already was an independent state with an administrative apparatus and, as has already been explained, this group had a direct interest in the state's survival. The absence of farmers at a time when over two thirds of the population made a living in the agricultural sector, however, remains difficult to explain. Admittedly, *Ons Hémecht* was primarily a literary society, but other European patriotic organisations were also oriented towards culture. The low percentage rather seems to indicate the considerable poverty of the farmers, a population that was not much integrated in the nascent Luxembourgian cultural scene.

The social composition of *Ons Hémecht* reflected a paradox that was inherent to many patriotic societies: the 'people'—in this case mostly composed of farmers—whose language was considered particularly worthy of being promoted was not represented within these associations.<sup>40</sup> Founded in 1895, *Ons Hémecht* was essentially based in and around Luxembourg City, and 61% of its members came from this canton. The cantons of Diekirch and Mersch, each represented by 7% of members, lagged far behind. Only 5% of members came from the canton of Esch-sur-Alzette, although it accounted for 19% of the population of Luxembourg. If *Ons Hémecht* was primarily an urban phenomenon as a result of the predominance of Luxembourg City, it is important to emphasise that members from outside the city tended to come from small towns: urban centres such as Esch, Clervaux, Echternach, Dudelange or Differdange were under-represented. Only two other towns, Diekirch and Vianden, provided proportionately more members to *Ons Hémecht* than their demographic weight in the grand duchy would lead one to expect. Even though the organisation claimed to be politically neutral, it was in fact close to Catholic circles and often met in the *Katholisches Volkshaus*.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> F. Coulmas, *Sprache und Staat*, 68–69.

<sup>41</sup> *Ons Hémecht* 16/2 (1910), 72.

Table 2. Evolution of the number of *Ons Hémecht* members<sup>42</sup>

Year	1895	1896	1903	1909	1923	1925	1928
Number of Members	146	252	290	225	243	376	369

*Ons Hémecht* came very close to the ideal type of a linguistic society. On the one hand, it focused on the developing structure of the language by publishing grammatical and lexicographical works. On the other hand, this philological interest gave it the authority required to become involved in moral and social debates. The language was considered to be more than a mere grammatical or lexical system, and more than a technical tool for communication. For *Ons Hémecht*, Luxembourgish carried values and beliefs of a cultural (aesthetic), social (moral) or political nature. Influencing the development of the language was seen as a means of influencing society itself.<sup>43</sup>

#### 4. First Efforts at Standardisation

##### 4.1. *The Wörterbuch of 1906*

At the same time as private associations, the state began to engage in an effort to codify and normalise the language. A first linguistic committee was founded by General Director<sup>44</sup> Mathias Mongenast on 19 February 1897, both “to collect and archive our national vocabulary” (*behufs Sammlung und Aufzeichnung unseres nationalen Sprachschatzes*), and to determine groundrules for spelling. Most of the members of the committee were also members of *Ons Hémecht*.<sup>45</sup> Nine years later, they

<sup>42</sup> The figures are taken from the journal *Ons Hémecht*.

<sup>43</sup> Andreas Gardt, ‘Die Sprachgesellschaften des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts’, in *Sprachgeschichte. Ein Handbuch zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und ihrer Erforschung*, 2nd ed., ed. Werner Besch et al. (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1998), 332–348.

<sup>44</sup> At the time, this was the official title of a member of government.

<sup>45</sup> Nikolaus Gredt\* (director of the Athenaeum), Jean-Pierre Henrion\* (*conseiller de gouvernement*), Charles Müllendorf\* (canon), Heinrich Schliep\* (retired civil servant from Dutch Indonesia), Caspar Mathias Spoo (MP), Joseph Weber\* (dentist) et Nicolas Van Werveke\* (secondary school teacher). Later: Paul Clemen\* (school inspector), André Duchscher\* (industrial) and Willy Goergen\* (secondary school teacher) joined the commission. The names followed by an asterisk (\*) were also members of

presented a *Wörterbuch* that, unlike Gangler's, offered translations in German alone.<sup>46</sup> The dictionary's preface indicated the dominant social position of those interested in the language at the beginning of the twentieth century. The members of the committee were preoccupied with several issues.

In the first place, they sought to establish standard rules for spelling, an endeavour which presented significant difficulties. The final version of the *Wörterbuch* partly retained the use of diacritics, but mostly referred to rules applicable in German, which was hardly surprising considering that two German professors, F. M. Folmann and Gustav Kisch, were involved in the elaboration of the orthography.<sup>47</sup> Orthography was based on the following principle:

As a branch of the family of Germanic languages, the Luxembourgish idiom is to be based as much as possible on the orthography of the current written High German. Reading our vernacular in print and writing will thus be made significantly easier as we already are familiar with both High German styles of lettering.<sup>48</sup>

Together with the historian Nicolas van Werveke, C. M. Spoo was eventually to leave the committee following this decision against Dicks's spelling system. One may wonder whether the division within the committee was not determined by political differences. It is hardly surprising that a committee whose majority came from a rather conservative Catholic organisation—which followed a form of Catholi-

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the *Verein für Luxemburger Geschichte, Literatur und Kunst*. Some of these people were also part of the patriotic circle of Moulin, which was based in the capital and headed by Joseph Weber. Weber had by then published on Luxembourgish spelling and a Luxembourgish dictionary on botany: 'Lezeburjesch-latein-fransesch-deitschen Dixoner fun de Planzen', *Recueil des Mémoires et des Travaux publiés par la Société botanique du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg* 12 (1890): 43–144. See also his detailed obituary in *Ons Hémecht*, 15/1 (1909).

<sup>46</sup> *Wörterbuch der luxemburgischen Mundart* (Luxembourg, 1906). The (extreme) germanocentric character of the project was criticised by some observers, for which see Mathias Tresch, 'Eléments français dans le patois luxembourgeois', *Journal de l'Association des Professeurs de l'Enseignement supérieur et moyen* 16 (1920): 17–23.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, vii, xiv–xv; C. Moulin, 'Grammatisierung und Standardisierung des Lëtzebuergeschen', 323.

<sup>48</sup> L. Koenig, 'Auf dem Wege zu einer Grammatik', 34: "Die luxemburger Mundart ist als ein Zweig der germanischen Sprachenfamilie soviel wie möglich in der Rechtschreibung der jetzt bestehenden Schreibart des Hochdeutschen anzulehnen. Das Lesen unserer Mundart in Druck und Schreibrift wird dadurch bedeutend erleichtert, da wir gewöhnt sind, beide hochdeutsche Schriftarten zu lesen."

cism heavily influenced by Germany—did not choose the spellings suggested by Dicks, who was of the opposite political persuasion.

In the second place, the realisation of the dictionary was even at this early stage marred by a sense of regret that the language was not as pure as in the past, a subject brought up every time Luxembourgish was discussed. Unlike in other countries, such as England or France, linguistic purism was not so much defined by reference to some historic *élite* in medieval or early-modern times—which was in any case lacking in Luxembourg—but was instead a form of what may be called 'ethnographic purism',<sup>49</sup> which was rooted in the image of an ancient peasant identity that was in danger of disappearing in the face of what was perceived to be an inexorable process of industrialisation.<sup>50</sup>

At the same time, the dictionary strove to define Luxembourgish even more precisely by establishing a geographical typology in its introduction. Landscapes and particularly rivers had been 'nationalised' from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. As Myriam Sunnen has shown, landscape and rivers came to play extremely important allegorical roles in the identity-building process.<sup>51</sup> The *Wörterbuch* distinguished four distinct idioms identified with different areas: (1) the Alzette idiom; (2) the Moselle idiom; (3) the Sauer idiom; and (4) the Öslinger idiom.<sup>52</sup> The identification of these idioms was based largely on the 1843 work of Mathias Hardt, who had proposed an almost identical classification based on the view that rivers circumscribed the areas in which particular idiomatic expressions of the language were spoken.<sup>53</sup> Although this system of classification is strongly challenged

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<sup>49</sup> See Robert McColl Millar, *Language, Nation and Power. An Introduction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005), 105.

<sup>50</sup> The struggle for purism remained a constant feature of the argumenst in favour of Luxembourgish. In 2004, Fernand Lorang justified his publication on the basis of "eist Lëtzebuergesch haut net an engem Mier vu friemlänneschen Neologismen ënnergeet": Fernand Lorang, *Deemols. Lëtzebuergesche Duerftraditionen, Völléksbräich a Sprochgewunnechten aus aller Zäit. Deel II* (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 2004), 116.

<sup>51</sup> Myriam Sunnen, 'L' "invention" du paysage luxembourgeois. Paysage et identité nationale'; paper given at the workshop 'Constructions identitaires: art, architecture et patrimoine' on 10 March 2006 at the University of Luxembourg. See also her contributions in *Lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg. Usages du passé et construction nationale*, ed. Sonja Kmec, Benoît Majerus, Michel Margue and Pit Péporté (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 2007).

<sup>52</sup> *Wörterbuch der luxemburgischen Mundart*, v: "1. Die Alzette-Mundart... 2. Die Mosel-Mundart... 3. Die Sauer-Mundart... 4. Die Öslinger-Mundart."

<sup>53</sup> Mathias Hardt, 'Vocalismus der Sauer-mundart', in *Programm herausgegeben beim Schlusze des Schuljahres 1842–43. Königlich-Grossherzogliches Progymnasium*

today,<sup>54</sup> the association between geographical and linguistic categories was still strongly enough felt in the 1930s for Norbert Jacques to declare that “the landscape is the mother of language”,<sup>55</sup> and the same idea could still be found as late as the 1960s in the work of Robert Bruch.<sup>56</sup>

Finally, the dictionary also presented the language as evidence for the existence of an ‘ideal’ Luxembourg stretching beyond the narrow borders of the grand duchy. Indeed, the authors expressed their desire for a dictionary that would cover “all idioms of the ancient duchy of Luxembourg before its dismemberment in 1659, as well as those spoken by the so-called Transylvanian Saxons at the most remote eastern limits of the German language area.”<sup>57</sup> Since François Xavier de Feller’s assertion in the eighteenth century that linguistic similarities suggested a racial link between the inhabitants of Luxembourg and Transylvania, Transylvania had become an imaginary landscape with a strong resonance in intellectual circles. In the two decades preceding World War I, the idea of a kinship between the two countries can be seen to have gained ground. The *Junggrammatiker* (Neo-grammarians) embarked on numerous studies aiming to provide a scientific basis for this theory. In Luxembourg enthusiasm for these ideas was not even dampened by the fact that, in Germany, a similar interest for *Auslanddeutsche* (expatriate Germans) was undeniably motivated by political concerns that were potentially dangerous for the grand duchy. In 1905, a group of scholars from Transylvania even came to visit their *Urheimat* (ancestral homeland). From their perspective, the journey proved to be a ‘failure’, as most linguists apart from Gustave Kisch realised that the notion of common origins could no longer be

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zu Echternach (Trier: Fr. Lintz, 1843), 1; Tony Kellen, *Deutschtum & Franzosentum in Luxemburg seit den ältesten Zeiten bis auf unsere Tage. Zugleich eine Denkschrift zur Thronbesteigung des Herzogs von Nassau als Grossherzog von Luxemburg* (Luxembourg: P. Breithof, 1889), 6 employs the same typology.

<sup>54</sup> Peter Gilles, *Dialektausgleich im Lëtzebuergeschen. Zur phonetisch-phonologischen Fokussierung einer Nationalsprache* (Tübingen, 1999), 51–59.

<sup>55</sup> *Jonghémécht* 6/4 (1932): 118.

<sup>56</sup> Robert Bruch, ‘Volkstümlicher Rundgang durch die Luxemburger Sprachlandschaft’, in Robert Bruch, *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, ed. Fernand Hoffmann and Carlo Hury (Luxembourg: Bibliothèque Nationale Luxembourg, 1969), 96. First published in *Lëtzeburger Bauere-Kalenner 1954* (Luxembourg, 1954), 68–72.

<sup>57</sup> *Wörterbuch der luxemburgischen Mundart*, ix: “sämtliche Mundarten des früheren Herzogtums Luxemburg vor seiner Zerstückelung im Jahre 1659, sowie die von den sogenannten siebenbürgischen Sachsen an den entlegensten östlichen Marksteinen des deutschen Sprachgebiets gesprochenen Dialekte.”

maintained.<sup>58</sup> However, the myth managed to survive, and even as late as 2007, Luxembourg maintained links with Sibiu during its year as European Capital of Culture.<sup>59</sup>

#### 4.2. *How to Write Luxembourgish*

Shortly after the publication of the *Wörterbuch*, new spelling rules were developed which remain very influential to this day. The *Wörterbuch* triggered passionate debates, notably in the newsletters of *Ons Hémecht*, and, following the inclusion of Luxembourgish in the school curriculum in 1912, Nicolas Welter was commissioned by the government to write a concise textbook.<sup>60</sup> At the end of the textbook, he included the spelling rules which he had developed alongside René Engelmann. As one of the prominent pro-German intellectuals of the inter-war period,<sup>61</sup> Welter developed his spelling rules in opposition to those proposed by Dicks, which were considered to be too close to French and which therefore did not correspond to the “High German model” (*hochdeutsches Wortbild*).<sup>62</sup> He enlisted the help of René Engelmann, a linguist sent by the government of Luxembourg to Basel and Berlin to study *Germanistik*. Engelmann’s thesis of 1910, entitled *Vokalismus der Viander Mundart* (Vocalism of the Vianden idiom), constituted one of the first academic studies of Luxembourgish.<sup>63</sup> Although Engelmann was not altogether eager to remove traces of French, Welter appears to have succeeded in imposing his views.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Fernand Hoffmann, ‘Luxemburg und Siebenbürgen’, *Warte*, 8 June 1967.

<sup>59</sup> See below.

<sup>60</sup> Nicolas Welter, *Das Luxemburgische und sein Schrifttum* (Luxembourg: G. Soupert, 1912).

<sup>61</sup> Cf. the argument surrounding the assessment of Nikolaus Welter: Romain Hilgert, ‘Heimatchichtung als Nationalliteratur’, *Lëtzebuurger Land—supplément livre*, 13 December 2002, 9; Robert Thill, ‘Reine Blut- und Bodenliteratur?’, *Lëtzebuurger Land*, 21 February 2003, 14–15.

<sup>62</sup> N. Welter, *Das Luxemburgische und sein Schrifttum* (1929 edition), 381. Note that Welter uses “High German” to refer to ‘Standard German’.

<sup>63</sup> Vianden is a town in the north-east of the grand duchy and locals speak with a very distinct accent.

<sup>64</sup> N. Welter, *Das Luxemburgische und sein Schrifttum* (1929 edition), 382–384. Engelmann was a student of the German linguist and ethnologist John Meier (1864–1953), who systematically collected *Volkslieder*. He wrote a detailed analysis of Luxembourgish spelling, published posthumously: René Engelmann, ‘Vorschläge zur Regelung der luxemburgischen Rechtschreibung’, in *Auf heimatlichen Pfaden* (Diekirch: P. Schroell, 1916), 65–98.



This method of spelling, commonly referred to as Welter/Engelmann, was far from dominant in the inter-war period, but it became the spelling of choice for the dictionary committee in the 1950s and remains the basis of spelling today.

The years preceding World War I were characterised by a certain amount of agitation in favour of Luxembourgish, which we shall attempt to illustrate through one example: the renaissance of the *Rénert*. Michel Rodange's *Rénert*, published in 1872, had been a commercial flop, for which even the adjective 'spectacular' would be an understatement. The book had gone completely unnoticed. Condemned to obscurity for a long time, it underwent a kind of rehabilitation as a result of its having been integrated into various histories of Luxembourgish literature at the turn of the twentieth century (Glaesener in 1885 and Welter in 1906) and of it having been mentioned in Parliament. Simultaneously, C. M. Spoo made use of the network of 'Associations for Popular Education (*Volksbildungsvereine*)' to popularise *Rénert*'s text. This enabled him to combine his two political causes: supporting the Luxembourgish language and criticising the local élites. This revival of *Rénert* produced its first results in 1909, when the publisher Ch. Praum, who would later publish Batty Weber's works, decided to release a second edition of Rodange's book in his series *Bibliothek Luxemburgischer Theaterstücke* and a phenomenal 2000 copies were printed.<sup>65</sup> Excerpts from the *Rénert* were quoted in the Nicolas Welter's 1914 schoolbook, which included Rodange in the pantheon of Luxembourgish writers. "If we were to ask today which of our popular poets is due a place next to Dicks and Lentz on the cenotaph," Welter wrote, "the unanimous answer would have to be Michel Rodange."<sup>66</sup> Over the next forty years, Rodange was established as national writer and the *Rénert*, with its combination of various dialects spoken all over Luxembourg, came to be thought of as representing a linguistic map of the country.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>65</sup> R. Hilgert, 'Koumdumatséngembläistëftdenanetsméchel', 5–27.

<sup>66</sup> "Wenn wir heute herumfragten, welchem unserer Volksdichter auf dem Ehrenmal neben Dicks und Lentz mit vollem Rechte auch eine Stelle gebührt hätte, so lautete die Antwort wohl einstimmig: Michel Rodange." Quoted by *ibid.*, 24.

<sup>67</sup> After the First World War, Michel Rodange, as well as Dicks and Michel Lentz were remembered. The 1920s and 30s especially were a time when the three authors were enshrined as Luxembourg's 'classic' writers. The hundredth anniversary Michel Lentz's birth in 1920 was an opportunity for a range of ceremonies to be organised, particularly in schools. The centenary anniversary of Dicks's birth in 1923 was more



Fig. 17. Michel Rodange Monument by Jean Curot, Place Guillaume II, Luxembourg.

The inter-war period witnessed the confirmation of this literary oeuvre as the Luxembourgish book *par excellence*: the work was reissued on five separate occasions (1921, 1927, 1932, 1939 and 1940), and a monument representing the *Rénert*, purged of any social criticism, was constructed at the Place Guillaume II.<sup>68</sup> (Fig. 17) Uniting the Luxembourgish language and left-wing political messages may have been a recurrent feature of the nineteenth century, but after the First World War this was no longer to be the case.

### 5. *Luxembourgish in the Political Discussion*

So far, we have not yet mentioned the political sphere. Three parliamentary debates—in 1848, 1896 and 1912—allow us to shed some light on the legal status and the function of Luxembourgish for the (political) élites of the country.

#### 5.1. *The Constitution of 1848*

In view of the evolution of Luxembourgish examined above, it is hardly surprising that the thirtieth article of the 1848 Constitution, which addressed the issue of languages, did not actually mention Luxembourgish, merely stating that “the use of French and German is

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carefully orchestrated and the state assumed a coordinating role in the person of Joseph Bech, the General Director (i.e. Minister) of Domestic Affairs and Public Instruction. Under Bech’s supervision, 24 July 1924 became an official day of commemoration for Dicks which was celebrated in every Luxembourgian school. See ‘Rundschreiben an die Gemeindeverwaltungen und an das Lehrpersonal der Primär—und Oberprimärschulen’, *Ons Hémecht*, 29/5–7 (1923): 273–274. Many towns and villages also organised local celebrations. Journals like *Ons Hémecht* published special issues. Finally, a great many celebrations took place in 1927 for the centenary of Michel Rodange’s birth. Joseph Tockert published a new edition of *Rénert* and the people of his home village, Waldbillig, put up a plaque on the house where he was born in commemoration of the poet. See Joseph Tockert, ‘Zum Rodange-Jubiläum: eine Jubiläumsausgabe von Rodange: eine Anregung’, in *Jahrbuch. Luxemburgische Sprachgesellschaft. Gesellschaft für Sprach- und Dialektforschung* (Luxembourg, 1926), 54–56.

<sup>68</sup> Place Guillaume II, locally known as the *Knuedler*, is one of the two main squares in the capital and can be regarded as its political centre. The city hall looks onto the square, while the grand-ducal palace and the cathedral can both be seen from it: Germaine Goetzinger, ‘De Renert’, in *Lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg* (see note 25), 273–278.

optional".<sup>69</sup> While this was the first constitution to be written by a Luxembourgian assembly, the political élite—whether liberal or conservative—did not acknowledge Luxembourgish as a distinct language. The main Catholic newspaper, *Luxembourger Wort*, carried an article in 1848 which contained the assertion that: "[t]he people of Luxembourg are a German people speaking the German language... From now on, our ruling classes can and must speak German only, so as to be understood by the all people."<sup>70</sup> This advocacy of German—not yet considered a rival to Luxembourgish—was part of a call for the democratisation of Luxembourgian politics. The latter was still dominated by French, a language only understood by an educated minority. Indeed, the government disapproved of political discussions being conducted in German as they were feared to "influence the masses".<sup>71</sup>

The increasing democratisation of political life also lay at the root of the first intervention in Luxembourgish in Parliament. The subject of discussion was the participation of Luxembourgian deputies in the Parliament of the German Confederation, which convened in Frankfurt in 1848. During the debate, the young left-wing politician Karl Theodor André addressed his colleagues in Luxembourgish in order that he might be understood by a broader audience. The address did not spark any objections and Norbert Metz, an archetypal member of the liberal Luxembourgish bourgeoisie, replied in Luxembourgish. The *Luxemburger Wort* concluded that "the Luxembourgish language brought victory to the German cause".<sup>72</sup> While the linguist Fernand Hoffmann saw in this intervention signs of "a vague, still undefined national identity" (*einer vagen, nicht näher definierten nationalen*

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<sup>69</sup> "L'emploi des langues allemande et français est facultatif." On the official linguistic practice in Luxembourg before 1848, see the summary by: Johannes Kramer, *Zweisprachigkeit in den Benelux-Ländern* (Hamburg: Helmut Buske, 1984), 174–181.

<sup>70</sup> "Das Luxemburger Volk ist ein deutsches Volk, es redet die deutsche Sprache... Unsere Stände können und dürfen von jetzt an nur deutsch reden, damit alles Volk sie verstehe". Quoted by: Nikolaus Welter, *Mundartliche und hochdeutsche Dichtung in Luxemburg. Ein Beitrag zur Geistes—und Kulturgeschichte des Grossherzogtums*, (Luxemburg: Saint-Paul, 1929), 120.

<sup>71</sup> Report dated 13 June 1854 following the publication of an article in German in the *Journal de Diekirch*, quoted by Ruth Dörner, *Staat und Nation im Dorf*, 265.

<sup>72</sup> "Die luxemburgische Sprache hatte der deutschen Sache den Sieg verschafft." Quoted by Nikolaus Welter, 'Mundartliche und hochdeutsche Dichtung in Luxemburg', 120. Although these interventions are mentioned frequently, it is important not to over-estimate their role. In fact, they were to have no consequences and can perhaps be explained by the atmosphere of political unrest reigning in Luxembourg during that period.

*Identität*), it should perhaps be seen as a sign of a desire to make the debate itself more accessible to sections of the population which had previously been excluded.<sup>73</sup>

The similarities between German and Luxembourgish did not necessarily support the argument in favour of Luxembourg involving itself more fully in the German Confederation or later the Reich. Proximity of language did not entail a close political relationship. Nicolas Gredt underlined that

This multiplicity and dissimilarity may explain why the character of the German people to split politically into tribes. If we can consider ourselves lucky that one rich, complete overall language encompasses all these tribes' culture in the face of the disparity of the different German forces, it is no less beneficial to the intellectual and moral development of the German people that the centralisation of German culture and education is made impossible by this multiplicity of German voices. It would be a great calamity for a nation to fit all its tribes into the same, boring mould.<sup>74</sup>

Speaking 'German' did thus not necessarily imply belonging to the same nation state: indeed, quite the opposite. Nonetheless, the Luxembourgish homeland is clearly thought of as part of a larger, German block. An article titled 'Our Tribal Kinship (Nationality)' (*Unsere Stammverwandschaft (Nationalität)*), published in *Das Vaterland. Wochenblatt für Luxemburgische National-Literatur* (a paper frequently presented as expressing early nationalist sentiment) included the sentiment that "[o]ur language, our mindset, our manners and traditions—in brief,

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<sup>73</sup> Fernand Hoffmann, 'Dialekt: ein Politikum. Ein indirektes Plaidoyer für ein neues Selbstverständnis der Dialektologie', in *Dialektologie heute. Festschrift für Hélène Palgen* (Luxembourg: Institut grand-ducal. Section de linguistique, de folklore et de toponymie, 1979), 28. In fact, it would be anachronistic to see André as a forerunner of Luxembourgish identity of any kind, as in 1848 he agitated for Luxembourg's integration into a German republic. Cf. Gottfried Fittbogen, 'Der luxemburgische Dichter und Politiker Karl Théodor André', *Jonghémecht* 12/7–8 (1938): 258–264; 13/1–2 (1939): 7–15; 13/3–4 (1939): 66–71.

<sup>74</sup> Nicolas Gredt, 'Die Luxemburger Mundart. Ihre Bedeutung und ihr Einfluss auf Volkscharakter und Volksbildung', in *Programm, herausgegeben am Schlusse des Schuljahrs 1870–1871. Königlich-Grossherzogliches Athenäum zu Luxemburg* (Luxembourg: P. Bruck, 1870), 10: "In dieser Mannigfaltigkeit und Verschiedenheit mag der Charakterzug des deutschen Volkes, sich politisch in Stämme zu zersplittern, seine Erklärung finden. Dürfen wir uns, der Zerfahrniss deutscher Kräfte gegenüber, glücklich preisen, dass eine reiche, vollendete Gesamtsprache aller Stämme Geist umfasst, so ist es für die geistigsittliche Entwicklung des deutschen Volkes nicht weniger vortheilhaft, dass durch die Mannigfaltigkeit der deutschen Völkerstimmen eine Centralisierung deutscher Bildung unmöglich ist. Es ist ein grosses Unglück für eine Nation, alle Stämme in die gleiche, langweilige Jacke zu stecken."

our whole being, doing and weaving—mark us as Germans of the purest blood.”<sup>75</sup> This vision was not yet influenced by the nationalism which was about to spread and which would replace the peaceful coexistence of Luxembourgish and German (albeit on different levels) with a radical separation of the two languages. Indeed, there was no doubt in *Das Vaterland* that Luxembourgish people belonged to the German ‘homeland’ (q.v. the title), but this did not imply inclusion in a German state—which was about to be emerge at that point in history. Many Luxembourgian historians of the nineteenth century also saw the country’s history in a German context.<sup>76</sup>

### 5.2. Luxembourgish in Parliament—Spoo’s Speech (1896)

The year *Ons Hémecht* was founded, the Democrat<sup>77</sup> MP Caspar Mathias Spoo started a debate on the use of Luxembourgish in Parliament. He did so by giving a speech in his mother tongue. The speech he made on 9 December 1896 came to be seen as one of the three great landmarks in the history of the Luxembourgish language, along with the ‘referendum’ of 10 October 1941 and the law on national languages of 24 February 1984. This speech had been preceded by an intervention made by Spoo from his bench the same day, which was also in Luxembourgish. It did not raise any objection from other MPs, some of whom in fact replied in the same language.<sup>78</sup> Spoo’s speech, however, had a greater impact than his first intervention. It is often considered as the outcome of a long struggle for the autonomy of Luxembourgish. In fact, Spoo rebelled against what he considered an excessive use of French in Parliament, which a great majority of the population did not understand. Like many writers before him, Spoo continued to think

<sup>75</sup> ‘Unsere Stammverwandschaft (Nationalität)’, *Das Vaterland*, I (1), 6 June 1869, 2: “Unsere Sprache, unser Gemüthsleben, unsere Sitten und Bräuche, kurz unser ganzes Wesen, Wirken und Weben stempeln uns als Deutsche vom reinsten Blute.” In a neighbouring region of Flanders, intellectuals also declared themselves to belong to the “Duitse nationaliteit” in the 1830s, for which see Lode Wils, *Waarom Vlaanderen Nederlands spreekt* (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 2001), 41.

<sup>76</sup> Jacques Maas, ‘Ziele und Inhalte des Geschichtsunterrichts in Luxemburg (1815–1941)’, in *Schule und Identitätsbildung in der Region Saar-Lor-Lux*, ed. Rolf Wittenbrock, Gérard Michaux, and Paul Dostert (Saarbrücken: Ottweiler, 1994), 25–44.

<sup>77</sup> The Democratic Party had a very left-wing programme, seen by many as ‘Socialist’. It is for that reason that Spoo is occasionally referred to as a Socialist MP.

<sup>78</sup> *Compte-rendu des séances de la Chambre des Députés (ChD)—Session ordinaire 1896–1897* (Luxembourg: V. Bück, 1897) 13–18.

of Luxembourgish in a German-speaking context: “[o]ur language is German”.<sup>79</sup> Spoo’s speech in favour of his mother tongue was in fact based on a political, rather than a cultural line of argument. As long as the political field was dominated by French, Spoo argued, it could not pretend to be genuinely representative of the Luxembourgish people. To understand the latter remark, one must note that Spoo’s constituency was in the industrial south and his electoral base saw itself as ‘common people’.

In rejecting his proposal, none of Spoo’s opponents challenged his argument *per se*: rather, their rejection was based on appeals to patriotism, decency and the Constitution. Indeed, several scholars later pointed out that the failure of Spoo’s cause had the same origin as his principal motivations to give his speech: it was a matter of priority for Spoo’s opponents that large sections of the population should be prevented from expressing themselves in the political arena.<sup>80</sup> Interestingly Spoo’s portrayal of the language shows some remarkable parallels to that of the founders of *Ons Hémecht*—who after all belonged dominantly to the opposite end of the political spectrum—they all anthropomorphised Luxembourgish and praised it as a language whose richness and cleanness ‘rubbed off’ on those who spoke it.

The rejection of Spoo’s proposal did not trigger any particular protest in the Luxembourg itself. In the United States, however, the small Luxembourgish community defined itself essentially by its language in a multilingual environment. The *Luxemburger National-Zeitung* in Chicago printed the decision with a black frame, as a symbol of mourning. Contrary to their ‘countrymen’ who had emigrated to the

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<sup>79</sup> “Unsere Sprache ist die Deutsche.” *ChD. Session ordinaire 1896–1897* (Luxembourg, 1897), 91. According to the report: “L’orateur, qui a prononcé son discours en idiome Luxembourgeois, mais que les sténographes n’ont pas pu reproduire, a bien en voulu remettre une traduction en allemand.” (91) However, the stenographers were entirely capable of reproducing the ‘Luxembourgish idiom’ as shown by the retranscription of Spoo’s Luxembourgish speech on 9 December 1896 and the answers in Luxembourgish by his opponents. One can thus assume that the quotation above was based on a deliberate decision by the Speaker of the House. The retranscription uses Dicks’s spelling. As a result of its symbolic importance, the speech of 9 December 1896 was quickly disseminated in Luxembourgish after 1898. The last example of this dissemination is provided by the *Association de l’éducation populaire* in Differdange, which aimed at reintegrating Spoo into the collective memory of the political left. Caspar Mathias Spoo, *Ried an der Chambersëtzong vum 9. Dezember [1896] an deer neier Schreifweis* (Differdange, 1973).

<sup>80</sup> Fernand Hoffmann, ‘Dialekt: ein Politikum’, 28; and: Cornel Meder, ‘As de Spoo vergiess?’, *Eis Sprooch* 26 (1987): 15–21.

other side of the Atlantic, Luxembourgers in the grand duchy did not yet perceive their language as a symbol of identity.

While the Parliament's refusal to allow Spoo to speak in his mother tongue largely excluded the idiom from the House, it is interesting to note that Luxembourgish was nevertheless not completely absent from debates. Indeed, it seems that members of Parliament resorted to Luxembourgish when they sought to discredit a political opponent, although it is not entirely clear whether the Speaker wished to censure the language or the sentiment when calling for order.<sup>81</sup> For instance, when Emile Mark denounced his fellow MP Nicolas Ludovicy with the accusation "D'ass e Spetzbof!" (He's a scoundrel!), the Speaker "called him to order for this expression" and invited him to limit himself to "parliamentary expressions".<sup>82</sup>

### 5.3. *The 1912 School Law*

The passing of the 1912 School Law polarised the political sphere and led to a split, which remained palpable well into the institutional crisis that swept the country in 1918 and 1919. The relative emancipation of schoolteachers from the clergy that the law provoked a last intense upsurge of the culture wars in the grand duchy. Over the past decades, however, this law has been regarded as a significant step in the development of Luxembourgish. The government had not planned to introduce Luxembourgish into the school curriculum, but did not raise any objections when the Central Committee of Parliament demanded the inclusion of the language in the list of new subjects to be taught. Contrary to what has often been claimed, the law remained very vague as to the actual content of the subject.

C. M. Spoo stood behind the initiative to rephrase article 23 of the law. At first sight, the reasons given by the left-wing MP may seem surprising. He advanced arguments for the introduction of the language into school curricula which were neither cultural nor related to the potential democratisation of the political scene, as he had in 1896. Instead, Spoo now seemed most concerned by the issues of homogenisation and of the standardisation of spelling and pronunciation. Firstly,

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<sup>81</sup> There is no systematic study of the use of languages in Parliament. This hypothesis is based on samples and should not be considered as a definite result.

<sup>82</sup> *ChD. Session ordinaire 1911–1912* (Luxembourg, 1912), 2055.



he pleaded for a return to Dicks' phonetic spelling and argued against the new trend towards a more etymological, German-based approach, represented by the 1906 *Wörterbuch* and the proposal by Welter and Engelmann.<sup>83</sup> Spoo's defence of phonetic spelling may have been based on the assumption that it would be easier to learn, especially for people with little school education. Secondly, Spoo argued that "the true Luxembourgish language is that which is spoken in the capital". This contention may be explained by Spoo's centralising and modernising vision of the nation-state. As a Socialist, he wished the state to intervene and create *one* language which would be valid for all.

State Minister Paul Eyschen himself opposed these efforts at unification. Speaking from a more Romantic viewpoint, he defended regional differences thus:

What is so interesting about our country is its diversity... [I]n the canton of Esch people speak an idiom resembling the Swabians'... Elsewhere, we have a village called Frisingen with Frisians; further away, closer to France, there is Saxenheim, also known as Sassenheim... And the language of Vianden, Feianen, still means *der Feind* (the enemy) in Holland today.<sup>84</sup>

Several other members of Parliament agreed with this. Two elements of this discussion seem particularly interesting. Pierre Prüm rejected the Luxembourgish spoken in the capital on the grounds that "it is the worst and the least proper Luxembourgish because it has been submitted to infiltrations from Austrian and Prussian barracks for three centuries". It was one of the first times that Luxembourgish was clearly thought of in contrast to German, and that it had been presented as an idiom that had to be protected from German, previously seen as an elder brother. Luc Housse also believed Luxembourgish to be a distinctive symbol: it was, he believed, "an element of [the nation-state's] independence".

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<sup>83</sup> In a letter to Lucien Koenig (27 August 1913) he asks for "ëng Schreivârt fir ons, èng national létzebuergesch Schreift op romanescher Base a mat Ausschloss—eso' vëid eve' migelech—fun alle germaneschen Onprakteschkêten." Lucien Koenig, 'Auf dem Wege zu einer Grammatik', 20.

<sup>84</sup> "Ce qui est si intéressant dans notre pays, c'est la diversité... dans le canton d'Esch, on parle un idiome, qui ressemble à celui des Souabes... À un autre endroit, nous avons un village qui s'appelle Frisingen, ce sont les Frisons; plus loin, du côté de la France, nous avons Saxenheim ou Sassenheim... Et puis le langage de Vianden, Feianen, cela veut dire encore aujourd'hui en Hollande, der Feind."

Nobody, however, considered revoking the 1896 decision: in spite of being promoted in schools, Luxembourgish was still judged unworthy of Parliament.<sup>85</sup> In the end, decisions on how to implement the new law were being left to the government. In the school syllabus, national history and Luxembourgish were to be found under the same heading, the first subject's goal being "to awaken the love of both fatherland and the ruling dynasty", and that of the second being "to inspire the love for the homeland's language and to convey an understanding of our national particularism".<sup>86</sup> Judging from a circular from the 1920s, Luxembourgish remained only a marginal concern for teachers.<sup>87</sup>

It is clear that at the beginning of the twentieth century very few people thought of substituting Luxembourgish for German.<sup>88</sup> The two were not considered to be antagonistic in the slightest: rather, they were seen to play complementary roles within the larger German language area. Even though Luxembourgish had become the object of greater and more systematic scholarly investigation and its uniqueness was being increasingly emphasised, it was not yet thought of as being a component in the construction of national identity.

## 6. Mischkultur

The discussions which surrounded the 1912 School Law also point to an imminent shift in paradigm, illustrated by a new leitmotiv in the Luxembourgish master narrative: the balance of the German and the French languages (often associated with German and French culture). The two languages had both been legally recognised in Luxembourg since the promulgation of the 1848 Constitution, but it was only in the early twentieth century that the image of the country as an in-between

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<sup>85</sup> On the discussion of article 23 from which all the quotes are taken, see *Chambre des Députés—Session ordinaire de 1911 à 1912*, vol. 2 (Luxembourg, 1912), 2343–2354.

<sup>86</sup> 'Lehrplan für die Primärschulen des Grossherzogtums Luxemburg', *Schulbote* 2 (1914), 199: "die Liebe zum Vaterland und zum Herrscherhaus zu wecken... Liebe zur Heimatsprache einzuflößen und Verständnis für unsere nationale Eigenart zu vermitteln."

<sup>87</sup> 3 October 1929 ministerial guideline by Joseph Beck concerning Luxembourgish classes, in *Luxemburger Schulbote* 3 (1929): 67–68. For the *Lehrerzeitung* 25/5–6, 129–131 this was due to the vague character of the 1912 law, which did not define exactly how many hours were to be devoted to the teaching of Luxembourgish.

<sup>88</sup> J. Kramer, *Zweisprachigkeit in den Benelux-Ländern*, 119.

entity, as a combination of the best elements of two great cultures, as a natural mediator between France and Germany began to work its way through.

The construction of the myth of ethnically pure origins was complicated by the location and size of Luxembourg. Given that the grand duchy was increasingly involved in industrialisation and modernisation at the beginning of the twentieth century, economic connections which tied Luxembourg to other nations could, moreover, not be ignored.<sup>89</sup> On the eve of the First World War, Luxembourgian intellectuals were aware of these international entanglements, but nevertheless tried to highlight the uniqueness of Luxembourg and its inhabitants. The left-wing writer Batty Weber, for example, sought to define Luxembourg through its culture.<sup>90</sup> Even though he considered the racial origins of Luxembourgish people to be essentially German, he believed that their defining characteristic lay in their ‘mixed culture’ (*Mischkultur*). He defined *Mischkultur* not only in terms of a knowledge of both German and French, but also in terms of the perceptions of the grand duchy’s neighbours. Weber argued that Luxembourgers had the ability to understand both of their neighbours, without strictly belonging to either nation. Moreover, Weber contended, Luxembourg was perceived as somehow ‘different’: while Germans saw Luxembourgers as being French, the French saw them as being German.

The particular nature of *Mischkultur* led Weber to reject an important element in early twentieth-century concepts of nationhood. Although European debates about nationality tended to revolve around the notion of a culturally and ethnically homogeneous community, Weber sought to reject what he perceived to be a threat to the national existence of Luxembourg. The reasons for this were clear: in that Luxembourg was a *Mischkultur*, it could not be regarded as homogenous. In his *Essai d’une psychologie du peuple luxembourgeois* (1911),<sup>91</sup> Nicolas Ries defined Luxembourg as a “historical race”, a race whose definition was rather ambiguous. On the one hand, Ries considered Luxembourg to be a community based on a common history and language. On

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<sup>89</sup> Claude Conter, ‘1918 und Der moderne Identitätsentwurf in Luxemburg als Beispiel der luxemburgistischen Forschung’ (2005), 5 (unpublished paper).

<sup>90</sup> Batty Weber, ‘Ueber Mischkultur in Luxemburg’, *Beilage der Münchner Neuesten Nachrichten*, 20 January 1909, 121–124; and B. Weber, *Abreisskalender*, 22 February 1920.

<sup>91</sup> Nicolas Ries, *Essai d’une psychologie du peuple luxembourgeois* (Diekirch: P. Schroell, 1911).

the other hand, he presented the Luxembourgish people as a mixture of Gaulish, Roman and German racial characteristics, where race was perceived to be a 'blood' origin.

If the notion of *Mischkultur* did not allow to defend the autonomy of Luxembourg on the grounds that it comprised a culturally and ethnically homogenous community, the fact that Weber and Ries perceived it to be neither entirely French nor entirely German nevertheless allowed them to portray Luxembourg as markedly different from both of its neighbours. Following the Francophilia which was common amongst their intellectual associates on the left of the political spectrum, Weber and Ries were able to use the idea of *Mischkultur* to present Luxembourg as a mixture of French and German characteristics while simultaneously distancing the grand duchy from Germany itself. Despite the fact that Luxembourg was still a member of the *Zollverein*, Luxembourgish continued to be defined as a German dialect and a German-speaking élite maintained a presence. The notion of *Mischkultur* thus enabled the notion of a distinct Luxembourgish identity to emerge.

This new metaphor was integrated into the imagery of the Luxembourgish language, an imagery which may seem natural nowadays but which had no place in political discourse until the beginning of the twentieth century. When Luxembourgish was introduced in primary schools in 1912, the MP Joseph Brincour claimed that "while our nationality has a German weft to it, history has weaved a great many essentially French threads into it."<sup>92</sup> From that time on, the liberal left-wing movement integrated this vision of cultural hybridity into its political discourse, which in turn enabled some intellectuals to resist nationalistic discourses between the wars. That discourse became commonplace after 1945, when mainstream ideology called for legitimising the European integration process—the idea of the Luxembourgish language being a mixture of two 'great' languages constituted one of its central lines of argument.<sup>93</sup>

With the exception of studies of social dimensions of the period, the First World War still constitutes something of a gap in Luxembourgian

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<sup>92</sup> *ChD. Session ordinaire 1911–12* (Luxembourg, 1912), 1817: "Si notre nationalité a une trame allemande, l'histoire y a tissé bien des fils essentiellement français."

<sup>93</sup> Benoît Majerus, 'Le petit Européen parfait. L'Europe, le Luxembourg et la construction nationale', in *L'Europe de Versailles à Maastricht*, ed. Nicolas Beaupré and Caroline Moine (Paris: Seli Arslan, 2007), 225–235.

historiography.<sup>94</sup> In the absence of studies of the period it is difficult to define its cultural and political context. The policy of accommodation pursued by the local élites seems at any rate to have allowed the government of the grand duchy a certain freedom. Even though the Wilhelmine Empire had contemplated the annexation of the grand duchy, the German military administration did not promote the future integration of Luxembourg into Germany. The French language even kept its traditional prominence within state institutions.<sup>95</sup> While a policy of integration was actively pursued in other occupied territories, Luxembourgian groups such as *D'Letzeburger Nationalunio'n* continued to support Luxembourgish without appearing to have suffered any censorship. Nevertheless, the question of the construction of identity during and after the war remains. It seems that that first occupation led Luxembourg to distance itself from its Eastern neighbour. Two changes certainly influenced the grand duchy's relationship with Germany. On the one hand, the economy of Luxembourg went through an important reorientation after its break from the German Customs Union in 1918. Admittedly, Germany rapidly went back to being its main economic partner, but France and Belgium had nevertheless acquired positions in the Luxembourgish industry that meant that the German had lost its unchallenged predominance. On the other hand, Luxembourg's political élites had distance themselves from the Weimar Republic so as to ensure that they were in the winning camp. Belgium and France, both French-speaking neighbours, were to be celebrated for their supposed share in defending Luxembourg's independence during the commemorations of the First World War.

The distance which came to separate Luxembourg from Germany was also expressed at a linguistic level, and is evident in a Parliamentary intervention made by Pierre Prüm, an Independent National Party MP, who was to become Prime Minister in 1925. In 1918, almost twenty years after Spoo's intervention, Prüm called for the use of Luxembourgish in Parliament in the following terms: "Gentlemen, if we speak Prussian in this House, then I believe we can also speak our native Luxembourgish language."<sup>96</sup> In contrast to Spoo, Prüm clearly placed

<sup>94</sup> Gilbert Trausch, 'Contributions à l'histoire sociale de la question du Luxembourg, 1914–1922', *Hémecht* 26/1 (1974), 5–118.

<sup>95</sup> Gilbert Trausch, 'La stratégie du faible. Le Luxembourg pendant la Première Guerre mondiale (1914–1919)', in *Le rôle et la place des petits pays en Europe au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. Gilbert Trausch (Baden-Baden: Nomos / Brussels: Bruylant, 2005), 60.

<sup>96</sup> "Meine Herren, wenn man hier in der Kammer preussisch redet, so glaube ich, können wir auch unsere Luxemburger Heimatssprache reden." *ChD. Session ordinaire*

Luxembourgish in opposition to German, the latter being referred to with the derogatory “Prussian”. Admittedly Prüm’s intervention on 12 November 1918 was not successful: the revolutionary troubles which swept the grand duchy that winter very quickly took over the political agenda. Prüm’s motion, however, signalled a change in the way the relationship between Luxembourgish and German was perceived, a change that was to accelerate during the inter-war period.

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1918–19, 12 November 1918 (Luxembourg, 1919), 70. Prüm was supported by the following deputies, all of them from the left of the political spectrum: Jacques Thilmany, Joseph Kieffer, Pierre Krier and Jean Schaack. In February 1938, newly elected member Ferdinand Kuhn from the Socialist Labour Party also asked to express himself in Luxembourgish: “Thereby we give our fatherland stronger borderposts than if we were to surround it with a bombproof wall.” (*Dann setzen wir unserem Vaterlande stärkere Grenzmarken als wenn wir eine bombensichere Mauer um dasselbe errichteten*). A month later, deputy Jacoby also asked if he could express himself in Luxembourgish “to emphasise our independence” (*Zur Betonung unserer Selbstständigkeit*), *Jonghémécht*, 12/4 (1938), 150.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### MAKING LUXEMBOURGISH A LANGUAGE

#### 1. *Luxembourgish as an Identity Marker (1919 until the late 1940s)*

The inter-war period was a key phase in the nation-building process. The introduction of universal suffrage in 1919 gave the state a democratic legitimacy that went beyond dynastic symbolism. It created an equalising bond between a greater number of inhabitants, while at the same time limiting access to this bond (i.e. citizenship) by turning nationality into a ‘precious’ commodity.<sup>1</sup> Nationalism was thus an ideology which sought to legitimate state authority and to bring élites and non-élites closer together.<sup>2</sup>

The Luxembourgish language, spoken by “beggars, labourers, clerks, ministers, maids, laundresses, ladies,”<sup>3</sup> allowed for the establishment of an imaginary collective of individuals that were equal within the nation state. Luxembourg thus ‘caught up’ with other European nations at a time at which nationalistic jingoism was sweeping Europe. It was in this context that the Luxembourgish language saw an important rise in esteem—in marked contrast to the thirty years preceding the Great War. Other key elements in the discourse on identity underwent a similar evolution: if Luxembourgish somewhat emancipated

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<sup>1</sup> 336 requests for naturalisation were granted between 1849 and 1877, and 336 between 1878 and 1914, but there were no more naturalisations between 1914 and 1950, on which see Denis Scuto, ‘Qu’est-ce qu’un Luxembourgeois? Histoire de la nationalité luxembourgeoise du Code Napoléon à nos jours’, *Hémecht* 58/1 (2006): 77.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Spizzo, *La nation luxembourgeoise: genèse et structure d’une identité* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1995), 46.

<sup>3</sup> Nikolaus Welter, *Das Luxemburgische und sein Schrifttum*, 6th ed., (Luxemburg: Soupert, 1921), 45: “Bettler, Arbeiter, Beamter, Minister, Dienstmädchen, Waschfrau, Dame.” He continues: “they all speak ‘Luxembourgish’, and therefore stand together as equal members of one great family” (*sie alle sprechen ‘Luxemburgisch’ und treten damit nebeneinander als gleichberechtigte Angehörige einer großen Familie*). Although the fact that Luxembourgish is spoken by the entire national community is regularly emphasised, the fact that different ways of speaking this language have a significant impact on social hierarchy is mostly ignored.



itself from German,<sup>4</sup> historiography definitively detached itself from its Orangist influence and developed an increasingly nationalist discourse by increasingly subscribing to a *völkisch* vision.<sup>5</sup>

### 1.1. *Associations in Favour of Luxembourgish*

*Ons Hémecht* remained an important patriotic society between the wars, even if its membership was rather restricted. In geographical terms, its members continued to represent Luxembourgish society in only an imperfect fashion: more than half of its members were from the canton of Luxembourg (23% of the population), while only 12% were from the canton of Esch (28% of the population). The society's social composition attested to the clergy's dominance within *Ons Hémecht*, which could explain the limited growth of the organisation: with priests accounting for 40% of its membership, it had become an essentially clerical organisation—a fact which may have prevented some people from joining.

From the 1930s, however, *Ons Hémecht's* sphere of interest changed dramatically: history gradually started to dominate its journal, and Luxembourgish was no longer mentioned in relation to literature, linguistics or grammar—a trend which is still the case.<sup>6</sup> *Ons Hémecht* chose to leave the questions surrounding Luxembourgish to others and it was for different organisations to explore this field. One such movement emerged from within *Ons Hémecht* itself and was composed essentially of young men who were to achieve a somewhat independent status through the journal *Jonghémecht*. Like their elders, they had an interest in “Luxembourgian customs and traditions” (*luxemburgisches Heimattum*), which they perceived as being under threat and which they believed had to be preserved if it were not to be lost

<sup>4</sup> Although the expression *Letzeburgerdeitsch* was admittedly still in use (e.g. in an article by Lucien Koenig (Sigg yu Letzebuerg), ‘De’ jongletzeburger oder nationalitesch Dichterscho’l an ‘t Nationalinstitut’, *Jonghémecht* 2/1 (1927): 6), it was used ever more rarely in Luxembourg itself. Indeed, its use was criticised in the 1930s: “the language which (...) is still labelled ‘Letzebuenger Deitsch’ even though it has been ‘Luxembourgish’ only’ for a long time”, for which see *Jonghémecht*, 8/3–5 (1934): 114.

<sup>5</sup> Christiane Huberty, ‘Guillaume II, Roi des Pays-Bas et Grand-Duc de Luxembourg (1840–1849). Construction et évolution d’un lieu de mémoire’, *Hémecht* 58/1 (2006): 113.

<sup>6</sup> Although the society did not survive the Second World War, its journal continued to be published as *T Hémecht* (until 1963) and as *Hémecht* today.

altogether.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps unsurprisingly, language had great relevance for this desire to conserve Luxembourgian ways. *Jonghémécht*, however, chose to deal not with language as a grammatical system, but focused instead on literary forms of expression, such as Luxembourgish theatre. As a result, it was left to the *Société Luxembourgeoise d'Etudes linguistiques et dialectologiques* (Luxembourgian Society of Linguistic and Dialectological Studies), founded in 1924, to watch over the normative character of the language. Although language played an important role in the outlook of the *Société*, it—like *Jonghémécht*—placed linguistic issues within the broader context of cultural conservation. The members of the *Société* sought to raise the profile of a distinct Luxembourgian culture, and it is worth observing in passing that its co-founder, Joseph Tockert was also the driving force behind the *Amis des Musées* (Friends of the Museums), founded in 1926. Yet the fact that the *Société* approached Luxembourgish in this manner led it to have a significant impact on perceptions of the relationship between language and national identity, and its members, particularly Tockert, influenced the study of Luxembourgish until the 1950s. The *Société* used linguistics to legitimise group identity through scholarship.

Founded as a private organisation, the *Société* acquired a more official status in 1935, when it became the fourth 'section' of the Grand-Ducal Institute and became known as the *Section de linguistique, folklore et toponymie* (Section for the study of linguistics, folklore and toponymy). One of its main projects was the creation of a dictionary. However, the linguistic project was not limited to the study of the language and it remained within the scope of Germanic studies, as Tockert explained in 1936:

The Transylvanian linguist Scheiner put it very well: 'linguistic history relentlessly leads to ethnography, or rather, linguistic history is ethnography: not just the history of settlements and clans, but also the history of peoples' national consciousness and sentiments, which admittedly may be related to settlements and clan history' ... We will therefore work in association with the *Deutsche Dialektzentrale* from Marburg, the *Verband deutscher Vereine für Volkskunde*, the *deutsches Volksliederarchiv*, and the *Rheinisches Wörterbuch*.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> 'Zum Geleit', *Jonghémécht* 1/1 (1926): 1–2.

<sup>8</sup> *Vierteljahrsblätter für Luxemburgische Sprachforschung, Volkskunde und Ortsnamenkunde* 7 (1936): 133: "Le linguiste transylvanien Scheiner l'a si bien dit: 'Sprachgeschichte mündet unbarmherzig immer wieder in Volksgeschichte, vielmehr Sprachgeschichte ist Volksgeschichte: nicht nur Siedlungs- und Stammesgeschichte,

While remaining independent from the state, the *Section de linguistique, folklore et toponymie* came to play an increasingly important role in the official codification of the Luxembourgish language in the second half of the twentieth century. At the same time, since 'folklore' was part of its title, it also engaged in the work of assembling anthologies of folk songs and traditional tales to prove that local culture was alive and well, and to uncover its supposed unity. It was a truly national 'foundation work': it sought to place the nation at the heart of the cultural web which connected a mass of scattered elements.<sup>9</sup>

Scholarly interests and literary pursuits were both important to a further movement founded by Lucien Koenig (Siggy vu Lëtzebuerg). In 1910, strongly inspired by Maurice Barrès, a group of Luxembourgian students, including Koenig, founded *D'Letzeburger Nationalunio'n*. The preoccupations of this nationalistic and xenophobic movement revolved around history and the exclusion of foreigners, as indicated by the first two paragraphs of its statutes: "1. To create a base on which Luxembourgers of all political and religious affiliations can agree to unite themselves in the worship of the homeland and its traditions. 2. To oppose the spread of foreign elements in Luxembourg."<sup>10</sup> The official language of the organisation was Luxembourgish and the title of its journal, *Jongletzeburg*, also showed the generational character of the movement. In contrast to the supporters of the Luxembourgish language in the second half of the nineteenth century, the *Nationalunio'n* sought to affiliate itself to France: 'the other' had become Prussian/German. Prussians were presented as being the evil antithesis of the essence of the Luxembourgian character in Koenig's works, particularly in *Gro'wenîrz*, a volume of poetry.

In spite of its open activism, the movement was mainly inspired by Lucien Koenig's personality, and he was responsible for provoking and animating the debate around Luxembourgish between the wars.

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sondern Geschichte des Volksbewusstseins und Volksgefühles, die ja freilich mit Siedlungs- und Stammesgeschichte zusammenhängen mag? ... Nous travaillerons donc de concert avec la Deutsche Dialektzentrale de Marburg, le Verband deutscher Vereine für Volkskunde, le deutsches Volksliederarchiv, le Rheinisches Wörterbuch."

<sup>9</sup> Alain Dieckhof, *La nation dans tous ses Etats. Les identités nationales en mouvement* (Paris: Flammarion, 2000), 46.

<sup>10</sup> "1. Eng Basis schafen, op der Letzeburger vun alle Parteien a Konfessio'nen zu enger Aktio'n sech enege können, de am Kult vum Hemechsland a senger Traditio'n bestët. 2. Dem Virdrängen vum friemen Element am Letzeburger Land sech entge'nt ze stellen." Quoted by N. Welter, *Das Luxemburgische und sein Schrifttum* (1929 edition), 321.

Without any real support from the state, he tried to provide Luxembourgish with the attributes of a 'real' language. His efforts included the development of his own system of spelling,<sup>11</sup> the creation of a Luxembourgian academy and the composition of the first novel in Luxembourgish.<sup>12</sup> His outlook remained closely tied to a conservative vision of Luxembourg defined around three elements—language, soil and peasantry—which supported each other and which he saw as being threatened by anything foreign.<sup>13</sup> But in 1928, even Koenig was forced to admit that “our language [is], after all, nothing but a German dialect (Franconia-Saxony)”.<sup>14</sup>

Several other small associations with similar goals were created, like Adolf Berens's *Heemechts sprooch*<sup>15</sup> or the *Lëtzebuenger Nationalbühn* in 1937, a theatre company which only staged plays in Luxembourgish. Other initiatives were not essentially defined by language, but frequently used it in their nationalistic discourse (such as the journal *Landwuôl*, the *Die Heimat* pages of the journal *Obermoselzeitung*, and the school journal *De Wécker rabbelt*). Even though none of these groups ever really became a mass movement and were continually beset by organisational problems, their very existence suggests that there was little doubt that between the wars Luxembourgish society had entered the era of nationalism, and that language had thus assumed a greater significance. Political attitudes towards the function

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<sup>11</sup> Lucien Koenig, *Stürm. Lider a Gedichter fum Siggy fu Letzebürg* (Luxembourg: Worré-Mertens, 1917). Chasing his opinion in 1928, Koenig came to support the general use of the spelling proposed by Engelmann and Welter. Lucien Koenig, *Auf dem Wege zu einer Grammatik der Luxemburger Mundart. 1. Teil. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Lux. Dialektliteratur* (Luxembourg: Worré-Mertens, 1928), 104.

<sup>12</sup> Lucien Koenig, *Ketten* (Luxembourg: M. Huss, 1928–1929). This novel is an embellished version of his own life. The xenophobic and militantly Catholic nature of the novel explains why it is not more highly valued today. Indeed, it has not been republished by the Centre National de Littérature in the series *Lëtzebuenger Bibliothéik*, which currently consists of twelve books. Romain Hilgert, 'Eng nationalistesch Romanz. Siggy vu Lëtzebuerg: Ketten', URL: [http://www.land.lu/html/dossiers/dossier\\_roman/romanketten.html](http://www.land.lu/html/dossiers/dossier_roman/romanketten.html) (last accessed 28 December 2008).

<sup>13</sup> L. Koenig, *Ketten*, 102: “Das Luxemburgertum verliert beständig an Boden; seitdem die Landflucht eingesetzt hat, geht es auch rasch abwärts mit dem ‘freien Luxemburger Bauer auf freier Luxemburger Scholle’; fremde Elemente drängen sich in die entstandenen Lücken hinein.”

<sup>14</sup> L. Koenig, *Auf dem Wege zu einer Grammatik der Luxemburger Mundart*, 7: “unsere Sprache [ist] schliesslich nur ein germanischer Dialekt ist (Franken-Sachsen).”

<sup>15</sup> Adolf Berens (1880–1956) was a primary school teacher and a member of the board of the Section for the Study of Linguistics etc. at the Grand-Ducal Institute.

of the Luxembourgish language had certainly changed dramatically. The speeches by Karl Theodor André and Norbert Metz in 1848 and by C. M. Spoo in 1896 had been characterised by the desire to make Luxembourgian democracy more inclusive through the wider use of the language. Yet from 1919 onwards, Luxembourgish increasingly became a means of exclusion as right wing groups staked their claim to Spoo's heritage and the left abandoned the cause which they had so enthusiastically supported in previous years.<sup>16</sup>

### 1.2. *Luxembourgish as an Object of Analysis*

During the inter-war period, the language was not just used for political and nationalistic purposes; scholars also showed a growing interest in Luxembourgish. Indeed, a new generation of linguists had come to the fore. Young people like Robert Bruch embarked on linguistic studies, mainly at German universities. The state tried to systematise research by issuing grants for young researchers. Hélène Palgen was sent to the *Deutsche Dialektzentrale* in Marburg to study Germanic phonetics and philology under the direction of Professor Bach and Professor Müller, editor of the *Rheinisches Wörterbuch*.<sup>17</sup> Ernest Ludovicy went to Paris to study Romance philology and to Liège for Walloon philology, where he was taught by Jean Haust, author of the *Dictionnaire Liégeois*.<sup>18</sup>

For the celebration of the centenary of Luxembourg's independence (1839–1939), the government set up a committee tasked with developing a dictionary that would fulfil the scholarly criteria of the time. In contrast to the committee responsible for the 1906 *Wörterbuch*, the new committee was essentially composed of trained linguists and secondary school teachers.<sup>19</sup> The *Luxemburger Zeitung*—of which Batty Weber was the director—was critical of the government's choice. It

<sup>16</sup> Cornel Meder, 'As de Spoo vergiess?', *Eis Sprooch* 21 (1987): 20.

<sup>17</sup> Fernand Hoffmann, 'Hélène Palgen', in *Dialektologie heute. Festschrift für Hélène Palgen* (Luxembourg: Institut grand-ducal. Section de linguistique de folklore et de toponymie, 1979), 9–10.

<sup>18</sup> *Vierteljahrsblätter für Luxemburgische Sprachforschung, Volkskunde und Ortsnamenkunde* 7 (1936): 128.

<sup>19</sup> President Joseph Tockert, secretary Hélène Palgen and members Joseph Hess, Lucien Koenig, Ernest Ludovicy and Joseph Meyers. They were joined in 1938 by Paul Jost. Their methodology was strongly influenced by German dialect dictionaries, for which see 'Generalversammlung der Sprachwissenschaftlichen Abteilung des Grossherzoglichen Institutes', *Jonghèmecht* 12/2 (1937–38), 61.

considered the committee to be too elitist and not representative of Luxembourgish linguists, as it was composed mostly of ‘young people’ and ‘phoneticists’. The *Luxemburger Zeitung* was also worried about the normative power of the committee and was opposed to excessive codification.<sup>20</sup>

One of the scholarly debates of the inter-war period concerned the definition and the emergence of *koinè*, a standard form of Luxembourgish that was deemed superior to the various dialects spoken in the grand duchy. René Engelmann had been the first to show an interest in this question: in order to develop a spelling that was not based on phonetics, it was necessary to find a standardised language: “a common language spoken throughout the land by officials in particular, avoiding the idioms of dialect” which would be, “by and large, identical to the idiom of the capital”.<sup>21</sup>

Although the linguist Peter Gilles has recently shown that such a hypothesis cannot be maintained, the idea that High Luxembourgish had emerged from the Alzette valley prevailed between the wars.<sup>22</sup> The decision to select this region as the ‘cradle’ of the language does, however, not come as a surprise. Although the area did not have the symbolic or financial capital necessary to impose its particular linguistic variant, it was nevertheless situated at the geographical centre of the country and was home to the grand-ducal family. Furthermore, it had often been presented as the “authentic Luxembourgian landscape”, as Batty Weber put it.<sup>23</sup> The will to define a *koinè* bears witness to the centrality accorded to language in the identity-building process.

<sup>20</sup> *Luxemburger Zeitung*, 10 January 1940; quoted by *Eis Sprooch* (1990): 36.

<sup>21</sup> *Auf heimatlichen Pfaden* (Diekirch: P. Schroell, 1916), 60, 68: “durch das ganze Land besonders von Beamten gesprochenen und die dialektischen Idiotismen vermeidenden Gemeinsprache... im grossen und ganzen, mit der Mundart der Hauptstadt identisch”, René Engelmann, ‘Vorschläge zur Regelung der luxemburgischen Rechtschreibung’, in *Auf heimatlichen Pfaden* (Diekirch: P. Schroell, 1916), 60 and 68.

<sup>22</sup> Peter Gilles, *Dialektausgleich im Lëtzebuergeschen. Zur phonetisch-phonologischen Fokussierung einer Nationalsprache* (Tübingen, 1999), 14. The fact that the region was rural and sparsely populated makes it unlikely that its language would have achieved dominance across a wider area. Indeed, in 1906, a review of Willy Goergen’s *Blummen a Blieder* considered the author’s language—spoken in the Alzette valley—to be “a bit foreign” (*e bössje friem*) compared to the Luxembourgish spoken in the capital. *Ons Hémecht* 12/1 (1906): 3–5.

<sup>23</sup> “echt luxemburgische Landschaft”. Quoted by Myrian Sunnen, ‘L’“invention” du paysage luxembourgeois. Paysage et identité nationale’; paper given at the workshop ‘Constructions identitaires: art, architecture et patrimoine’ on 10 March 2006 at the University of Luxembourg.

In order for the language to have a unifying function, it was necessary to define a ‘proper’ Luxembourgish known as such by all and understood by all. A norm transcending the local and national differences became ‘necessary’ at a time when Luxembourgish entered a new phase of codification, be it through the dictionary projects or through new spelling projects. Even if the norm proposed by Welter and Engelmann had been widely disseminated, other authors invented their own models. Hary Godefroid, for example, proposed his Luxembourgish spelling (*leceburger schreifweis*) in *Jonghêmecht*, a spelling characterised by the systematic use of lower-case letters. Around the same time, Lucien Koenig demonstrated his support for the phonetic system in *Stûrm*, his volume of poetry,<sup>24</sup> before going back to the Welter/Engelmann system. The state itself encouraged the latter in primary schools without officially prescribing a particular spelling.<sup>25</sup>

### 1.3. State Interventions

Confronted with modernity for the first time, some turned to the peasant world for salvation. In 1924, Joseph Bech, the General Director of Public Instruction (Minister of Education), invited primary school teachers to

accomplish one of the tasks made necessary by the hour: that of inspiring country children with a love of their native soil and of the glebe that nourishes them, to make their own contribution to slowing down the exodus to the urban centres.<sup>26</sup>

The Luxembourgish language, seemingly deeply anchored in the territory, was a way of facing modernity. At the same time, efforts were made to make the language look older than it really was in order to provide it with a certain legitimacy. This argument was used most forcefully when comparing Luxembourgish with High German, considered to be a somewhat lesser language because it was only born in

<sup>24</sup> Note for example, L. Koenig, *Stûrm*, 61: “dat d’Fonétik elèng ons aûs dem ortogrâfeschen Dûrgernên eraûsreisse kan.”

<sup>25</sup> Ministerial instruction from 3 October 1929 on Luxembourgish classes by Joseph Bech, published in *Luxemburger Schulbote* 3 (1929): 67–68.

<sup>26</sup> Joseph Beck, Letter of 29 July 1924: “à accomplir une des tâches que lui dicent les nécessités de l’heure: celle d’inspirer à l’enfant des campagnes l’amour du sol natal et de la glèbe nourricière, de contribuer pour sa part à endiguer l’exode vers les centres urbains.” See *Luxemburger Schulbote* 2 (1924): 66.

the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and was therefore younger than Luxembourgish, the millennial language *par excellence*. This line of argument was developed in the inter-war period, but may still be found nowadays.

The growing importance of the language for the state authorities was due to several government initiatives, such as the rather symbolic creation of a literary prize in 1924 which was “awarded to a new literary piece of work in the Luxembourgish language, or to a study on the Luxembourgish language or folklore.”<sup>27</sup> In its early years, the award was not bestowed due to a lack of manuscripts of sufficient quality, which led the government to alter its regulations and to award it only every five years. It was granted for the first time in 1928 to Adolf Berens for *D’Kerfegsblo’*m, a collection of short stories in Luxembourgish, to Joseph Tockert for a new edition of Rodange’s works and to Mathias Tresch, “a primary school teacher, secondary school teacher and grammar school teacher”, as Nicolas Welter ironically commented, regretting the absence of young authors.<sup>28</sup>

More importantly, the Luxembourgish language became a criterion in political decisions about immigration and naturalisation. In January 1938 the Ministry of Justice informed the public about new conditions for obtaining Luxembourgian nationality.<sup>29</sup> Besides a certificate of physical and mental health, the candidate had to prove his “fluent command of the Luxembourgish language” (*geläufige Beherrschung der luxemburgischen Sprache*), which was considered an “absolute prerequisite” (*unbedingte Voraussetzung*).<sup>30</sup> Although the ministry

<sup>27</sup> Ministerial order (*arrêté*) (8 July 1924) creating a Luxembourgish literary award signed by Joseph Bech, for which see *Jonghémécht* 1/1 (1926), 14.

<sup>28</sup> N. Welter, *Das Luxemburgische und sein Schrifttum*, 377: “ein Oberprimärlehrer, ein Oberrealschullehrer, ein Gymnasiallehrer.”

<sup>29</sup> The official note (*amtliche Mitteilung*) was published in all newspapers in 21 January 1938. The patriotic journal *Jonghémécht*, wrongly referred to it as a “ministerial decree”, see ‘Erlass des Justizministeriums vom 21. Januar 1938’, *Jonghémécht* 12/4 (1938): 151. We are grateful to Denis Scuto for sharing all these details with us.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* There is some confusion in the literature: according to *Actioun Lëtzebuergesch*, the note dates from 1937 (*Eis Sprooch* 21 [1987]: 78), but Joseph Hess gives the date as 1938 and most other sources give 1939. Joseph Hess, *Centenaire du premier lexique du parler luxembourgeois—extrait de l’annuaire 1947* (Luxembourg: Institut grand-ducal, section de linguistique, de folklore et de toponymie, 1947), 104; Germaine Goetzinger, ‘Eine Sprache geht ihren Weg: Von “onst Däitsch” zu “eis Sprooch”’, in Germaine Goetzinger and Roger Muller, *Lëtzebuergesch* (Mersch: CNL, 2000), 18; Heinz Kloss, *Die Entwicklung neuer Germanischer Kultursprachen von 1800 bis 1950* (München: Pohl, 1952), 105; Claudine Moulin, ‘Grammatisierung und



omitted to indicate how such knowledge would be verified, this was the first time that language and nationality were publicly associated in legal terms.<sup>31</sup> Surprisingly, the measure was more heavily criticised in Luxembourg than abroad. Indeed, as *Jonghêmecht* noted in its press review, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* acknowledged that “just like Swiss German and Alsatian German, Luxembourgish German has come to embody the conscious expression of a political affiliation, which emphatically shields itself from foreign influences.”<sup>32</sup> Its reception in the grand duchy was, however, rather mixed. Batty Weber rejoiced over the fact that “interestingly enough” the ministry used “the Luxembourgish language, and not Luxembourgish German”.<sup>33</sup> Other journalists expressed their fear that this promotion of Luxembourgish might also lead MPs to use it in Parliament. The *Luxemburger Zeitung* commented, for instance, that

we would consider it a further degradation of our Parliament from a passably decent level if the use of the common Luxembourgish tongue were to be tolerated in Parliament. The interruptions and outbursts sometimes buzzing around in ribald and clumsy dialect raise the worst fears in this regard.<sup>34</sup>

The ministry’s measure did not last long. In 1940 knowledge of Luxembourgish was rejected by Parliament as a condition for obtaining nationality. Today the initiative remains largely forgotten: when knowledge of the language did become a compulsory prerequisite for

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Standardisierung des Lëtzebuergeschen. Eine grammatikographisch-sprachhistorische Annäherung’, in *Perspektiven einer linguistischen Luxemburgistik. Diachronie und Synchronie*, ed. Claudine Moulin and Damaris Nübling (Heidelberg: Winter, 2006), 308; and Guy Berg, “*Mir wëlle bleiwe, wat mir sin*”: soziolinguistische und sprachtypologische Betrachtungen zur luxemburgischen Mehrsprachigkeit, Reihe Germanistische Linguistik 140 (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1993), 17, 23.

<sup>31</sup> The 1938 note only confirmed what seems to have been common practice since 1936, when application forms for naturalisation asked candidates about their knowledge of Luxembourgish. How exactly the candidates’ answers were evaluated remains uncertain.

<sup>32</sup> *Jonghêmecht* 12/4 (1938): 151–153: “Wie das Schwyzerdütsch und Elsässerdütsch, so bildete das Luxemburger Deutsch allmählich den bewussten Ausdruck einer politischen Zugehörigkeit, die sich nachdrücklich gegen fremde Einflüsse zur Wehr setzt.”

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*: “wohl gemerkt, luxemburgische Sprache, nicht luxemburger Deutsch.”

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*: “würden wir es als ein weiteres Abrutschen unsers Parlamentes von einem einigermaßen anständigen Niveau ansehen, wenn man den Gebrauch der luxemburgischen Umgangssprache im Parlament zuliesse. Die Unterbrechungen und Zurufe, die manchmal in deftigem und klobigem Platt herumschwirren, lassen in dieser Beziehung die schlimmsten Befürchtungen zu.”

the acquisition of full citizenship in 2001, it was presented as a completely new measure.

#### 1.4. *Luxembourgish in the Press*

Despite these state interventions, Luxembourgish did not hold an important place in the written press during the inter-war years. By contrast, the creation of the *Compagnie Luxembourgeoise de Radio-diffusion* (Luxembourgish Broadcasting Company—CLR) introduced the language into the public sphere. The CLR contract with the state stipulated that at least one hour of programmes a day should be broadcast in Luxembourgish. This hour was, however, soon reduced to half an hour and the programme was openly criticised for being too lowbrow.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, for the first time in the history of Luxembourgish, a common and public communication space was created, which—in contrast to books—had the potential to reach a great number of people.<sup>36</sup>

#### 1.5. *Luxembourgish on the Eve of the Second World War*

The 1939 celebration of the centenary of Luxembourg's independence was characterised by the mobilisation of all levels of society. Besides the great procession organised in Luxembourg City and watched by some 100,000 people, many regional and local celebrations took place. This national commemoration, which was backed by a three-party coalition government composed of the Conservative Party (*Partie de la Droite*), the Liberals and the Socialists, sought to provide historical legitimisation in the face of an international situation judged increasingly threatening.<sup>37</sup> The language was only mentioned in passing but a great many patriotic poems in Luxembourgish were published. The first minting of coin bearing a Luxembourgish inscription was of the utmost importance. Coining currency is a defining right of a state and

<sup>35</sup> *Jonghémécht* quoted all press criticisms of this radio programme.

<sup>36</sup> Before World War II, the Luxembourgish programme was broadcast on Saturdays between 2 and 3pm. Fernand Hoffman, 'Lëtzebuergesch, Spoken and Written, Developments and Desirabilities', in *Luxembourg and Lëtzebuergesch. Language and Communication at the Crossroads of Europe*, ed. Gerald Newton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 113–114.

<sup>37</sup> Claude Wey, 'Le Centenaire de l'Indépendance et sa commémoration en 1939', *Hémécht* 41/1 (1989): 29–53.

therefore plays a particularly important symbolic role. The banknotes issued by the exiled government were also partially printed in Luxembourgish, but this measure did not last for long. It was not until the 1980s that a currency in Luxembourgish was introduced in the form of the 100 franc banknote.

Just before World War II, the position of Luxembourgish underwent an important change. More and more people acknowledged the independent status of the language: “Luxembourg generally counts as a bilingual country. That is too little or too much: it is either monolingual or trilingual”.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, the topos of bilingualism did not disappear from debates about the linguistic situation altogether, but the concept of trilingualism became thinkable and found more and more supporters. The two concepts—bilingualism and trilingualism—were sometimes used side by side and it seems that the apparent contradiction which existed between the two was not felt to present a problem.<sup>39</sup> Increasingly coming to perceive the language as independent, the government saw Luxembourgish as a key element of national identity: as Prime Minister Joseph Bech asked rhetorically in an interview given in May 1930, “could our spirit of independence manifest itself if we did not have that powerful connection between us that is our language?”<sup>40</sup>

The stress put on local specificity in the 1930s was partly a reaction to a scholarly trend, the so-called *Westforschung*, which claimed that Luxembourg was German soil. This research benefited from a surge in popularity at German universities, especially after the Nazis’ accession to power. At a linguistic level, the outlook of the *Westforschung* was not very different from that of Luxembourgian authors of the nineteenth century. In 1934, Herbert Kranz, for example, wrote that Luxembourg’s “remoteness earned it a precious commodity: its ancient German idiom”.<sup>41</sup> However, the political intentions which

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<sup>38</sup> *Jonghémécht* 7 (1929): 147: “Luxemburg gilt allgemein als zweisprachiges Land. Das ist zu wenig und zuviel: Es ist entweder einsprachig oder dreisprachig.” Transcription of a speech by Batty Weber in the *Frankfurter Rundfunk*.

<sup>39</sup> Nicolas Ries, *Essai d’une psychologie du peuple luxembourgeois* (Diekirch: P. Schroell, 1911), 111 discusses ‘bilingualism’, but mentions the “trilingual regime” two pages later (113).

<sup>40</sup> “Notre esprit d’indépendance pourrait-il se manifester si nous n’avions pas entre nous ce lien puissant qu’est notre langue?”, Interview with Prime Minister Joseph Bech in *Vingtième Siècle*, 2 May 1930, quoted in *Jonghémécht* 4/8 (1930): 228.

<sup>41</sup> Herbert Kranz, *Luxemburg—Brücke zwischen Deutsch und Welsch?* (Berlin: Grenze und Ausland, 1934), 46: “Seine Abgeschiedenheit hat ihm ein kostbares Gut erhalten: seine altertümlich deutsche Mundart.”

underpinned such publications gave such affirmations a whole new meaning.<sup>42</sup>

### 1.6. *World War II and its Aftermath*

The Second World War revealed two tendencies. Firstly, parts of the population had expressed their opposition to the occupying forces by appealing to their national identity. Secondly, many events connected to the experience of the war became a part of the Luxembourgian ‘master narrative’.<sup>43</sup> Even if the debate about the underlying motivations of the resistance movements—Luxembourgian nationalism or anti-fascism—is not yet closed,<sup>44</sup> people undoubtedly used national symbols (the tricolour, the song *Feierwon*, and pictures of the grand duchess) to a great extent when they sought to express their opposition to the occupying regime publicly.

The occupying forces, by contrast, justified the progressive integration of Luxembourg into the Third Reich by appealing to the supposed racial and cultural proximity of the two countries. The Luxembourgish idiom was not considered to be an obstacle to those political goals: quite the opposite in fact. A poster from the beginning of the occupation bore the national motto “We want to remain what we are”, adding “Old German Moselle Franks” (*Mir welle bleiwe wat mer sin: Urdeitsch Muselfranken*). To a certain extent, Luxembourgish was accepted on the grounds that it could be used to show that Luxembourg belonged to the Germanic cultural sphere. At the same time, Luxembourgish was never considered to be a language in its own right, but rather a German dialect.<sup>45</sup> As soon as it acquired symbolic significance in

<sup>42</sup> See chapter 2.

<sup>43</sup> Benoît Majerus, ‘Besetzte Vergangenheiten. Erinnerungskulturen des Zweiten Weltkrieges in Luxemburg—eine historiographische Baustelle’, in *Luxembourg, ville en Europe. Contributions historiques accompagnant l’exposition permanente du Musée d’Histoire de la Ville de Luxembourg* (Luxembourg: MHVL, to be published).

<sup>44</sup> Benoît Majerus, ‘Le débat existe bel et bien’, in *forum* 227 (2003): 60–61.

<sup>45</sup> The German linguist Walter Mitzka had sent questionnaires to Luxembourg in 1939 in order to complete his *Deutscher Wortatlas*. These questionnaires were only filled out in 1941, i.e. during the German occupation of Luxembourg. It has been impossible to analyse under which conditions this collection was made; its results became one of the bases of Robert Bruch’s thesis. Robert Bruch, “‘Hol iwer!’ Sprachgrenzen und Mundartbrücken zwischen Eifel, Saargau, Lothringen und Luxemburg”, in Robert Bruch, *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, ed. Fernand Hoffmann and Carlo Hury (Luxembourg: Bibliothèque Nationale Luxembourg, 1969), 180. The article was originally published in *La Moselle. Son passé, son avenir* (Schwebsingen, 1958), 263–278.

the resistance against Germanisation policies, the language became a target for Nazi repression. As many shopkeepers had replaced their French shop signs—forbidden since August 1940—with signs in Luxembourgish, the occupiers declared in October 1941 that the inscriptions should be written entirely in German. In January 1942, a decree forbade civil servants from using Luxembourgish, and in May of the same year, books in Luxembourgish were banned.<sup>46</sup>

The event that left undoubtedly the biggest mark was the census organised by the German administration in October 1941. Alongside the destruction of the *Gëlle Fra* monument and the so-called ‘general strike’, the census was later seen as a key component in the image of a people united in resistance and was often (wrongly) referred to as a ‘referendum’.<sup>47</sup> The census was part of a survey conducted across the Reich. Along with questions about citizenship (*Staatsangehörigkeit*) and ethnic origins (*Volkszugehörigkeit*), the census also asked people to state their mother tongue (*Muttersprache*), with the specific intention that the answer to all three should be ‘German’. As far as language was concerned, it was made explicit that ‘Luxembourgish’ was not a valid answer, as it was considered to be nothing more than a dialect (*Mundart*).<sup>48</sup> When a sample of replies was taken, it transpired that a large majority of people (over 90%) had not followed these instructions, and the census was called off.<sup>49</sup> This event later had an incredible impact on collective memory and was greatly exploited by organisa-

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<sup>46</sup> Mathias Wallerang, *Luxemburg unter nationalsozialistischer Besatzung. Luxemburger berichten* (Mainz: Gesellschaft für Volkskunde in Rheinland-Pfalz, 1997), 66. For a detailed overview of the Nazi conception of Luxembourgish see Hans Schiffels, ‘Die luxemburgische Mundart, eine deutsche Mundart’, *Luxemburger Schulbote*, 1 July 1942, 2–55.

<sup>47</sup> Paul Dostert, *Luxemburg zwischen Selbstbehauptung und nationaler Selbstaufgabe* (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 1985), 154–155. Paul Dostert has suggested that the word ‘referendum’ might have had relevance for the anti-Nazi propaganda campaign at the time, but that the term is strictly speaking wrong. Despite this, the myth continues to enjoy some popularity and the term ‘referendum’ is still found in print, especially in studies on Luxembourgish, a recent example of which is Jul Christophory, *Précis d’histoire de la littérature en langue luxembourgeoise* (Luxembourg: Bauler, 2005), 18. Most historical introductions to linguistic studies completely ignore recent findings in historical research.

<sup>48</sup> “Dialekte (Mundarten) z.B. luxemburgisch, plattdeutsch gelten nicht als Muttersprache”, excerpt from the form reprinted in URL: [http://lb.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personenstandsaufnahme\\_vum\\_10.\\_Oktober\\_1941](http://lb.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personenstandsaufnahme_vum_10._Oktober_1941) (last accessed 22 January 2009).

<sup>49</sup> This percentage is based solely on Luxembourgian reports. It has not yet been possible to check this figure in German sources. See M. Wallerang, *Luxemburg unter nationalsozialistischer Besatzung*, 70.

tions dedicated to promoting the use of Luxembourgish.<sup>50</sup> However, it is too often forgotten that, at the time, the proximity of the language to German, Luxembourgish remained a double-edged sword, as illustrated by the following passage from a left-wing resistance journal:

Do the Luxembourgers constitute a people? Yes... The characteristics of a people are its language, its peculiarities, its traditions and customs, its particular culture—but above everything else, its will and consciousness of unity, as well as love for the homeland. Where language is concerned, certain limits are difficult to draw... Furthermore, we Luxembourgers are a bilingual country. Everyone knows the old saying: ‘*Tout bon luxembourgeois parle français*’.<sup>51</sup>

On the one hand, the author claimed that language was a defining characteristic of the Luxembourgian people. On the other hand, he continued to claim that the country was bilingual (German-French) rather than trilingual.

Perceived as a sign of patriotic distinction, Luxembourgish was increasingly used as a written language. Indeed clandestine newspapers and tracts distributed by resistance movements were partially written in Luxembourgish. In the absence of precise studies, it is difficult to present a detailed overview. In *Ons Zeidong*, the journal of the left-wing movement *Alweraje*, the majority of articles were still written in German, but long contributions were regularly published in Luxembourgish, while French was hardly used at all.<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, the *Letzebuurger Vollekslegioun* (LVL), on the right of the political spectrum, seemed to have used Luxembourgish almost to the exclusion of other languages. In fact, its programme explicitly proposed “the ubiquitous use of the Luxembourgish language” (*Gebrauch vun*

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<sup>50</sup> The role played by “October 1941” in the legitimisation of Luxembourgish merits further investigation. During the discussions surrounding the 1984 law, nearly all speakers referred to it and it is recurrently mentioned in *Eng Klack fir eis Sprooch*, the journal published by *Actioun Lëtzebuergesch*.

<sup>51</sup> “Sind die Luxemburger ein Volk? Ja... Die Merkmale und Kennzeichen eines Volkes sind seine Sprache, seine Eigentümlichkeiten, seine Sitten und Bräuche, seine besondere Kultur, *aber vor allem sein Wille und Bewusstsein der Zusammengehörigkeit*, sowie die Liebe zur heimatlichen Scholle. Was die Sprache anbelangt, so lassen sich gewisse Grenzen kaum ziehen... Zudem sind wir Luxemburger ein zweisprachiges Land. Ein jeder kennt den alten bekannten Spruch: ‘*Tout bon luxembourgeois parle français*.’” *Ons Zeidong* 13, (1942), quoted by: Marc Limpach and Marc Kayser, *Wir glauben an die Demokratie: Albert Wingert, Resistenzler: eine Monographie* (Luxembourg: Éd. d’Lëtzebuurger Land, 2004), 174. Emphasis added.

<sup>52</sup> M. Limpach and M. Kayser, *Wir glauben an die Demokratie*.

*der Letzebuenger Sprôch iwerall*).<sup>53</sup> The use of the ‘right’ language was judged preferable to a rapid understanding of the texts; readers must have experienced difficulties with deciphering the vernacular due to their very limited practice.

The speeches delivered on the BBC in Luxembourgish by Grand Duchess Charlotte from exile in London are the last element to be taken into account. Up until then, the monarchy had not put itself forward as a defender of the Luxembourgish language in any pronounced fashion. During the centenary celebrations, Prince John did make a speech in Luxembourgish,<sup>54</sup> but before Charlotte, no monarch had publicly spoken the language.<sup>55</sup> The grand duchess used Luxembourgish to strengthen her legitimacy, but at the same time it was Luxembourgish that benefited most from an increase in legitimacy, reinforced by the fact that a radio station as renowned as the BBC would give airtime to a language spoken by so few.

During the four years of occupation, Luxembourgish became a real point at stake in the struggle over national identity. Even though it was considered a German idiom in 1940, it served as a means of expressing national opposition to the invader between 1940 and 1945. At the end of the war, this increase in status did not go unnoticed. Although the changes did not last for long, and a sense of ‘normality’ soon returned, the Luxembourgish language benefited from a rather exceptional upsurge in popularity for a few brief months. Important daily papers such as the *Luxemburger Wort* published their first issues after the war mostly in Luxembourgish. Several newspapers resolutely chose a Luxembourgish name, and prominent examples included

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<sup>53</sup> Quoted by: Serge Hoffmann, *Le mouvement de résistance LVL au Luxembourg* (Luxembourg: Archives nationales, 2004), 38.

<sup>54</sup> *Eis Sprooch* 3–4 (1953): 16. The Grand-Ducal Court published its first text in Luxembourgish in 1940. In a photographic article on the princes, Grand Duchess Charlotte’s preface was written in Luxembourgish, a move which Batty Weber welcomed warmly in *Jonghémécht*, 14/1–2 (1940): 22.

<sup>55</sup> The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Joseph Bech had expressed fears that the grand duchess would not be able to give her speeches in a comprehensible Luxembourgish: André Linden, ‘Léif Lëtzebuenger, ... dir dohém a mir hei baussen... the radio speeches of Great-Duchess Charlotte in exile’, in... *ët wor alles net esou einfach. Questions sur le Luxembourg et la Deuxième Guerre mondiale* (Luxembourg, 2002), 217. In 1918, the fact that Grand Duchess Marie-Adelaide did not master “our language” (*unsere Sprache*) had been used to contest her legitimacy. See the speech by Socialist MP Jean Schaack in *ChD. La Constituante de 1918–1919* (Luxembourg, 1919), 71.

*D'Zeitung vum Letzebuenger Vollek* (from July 1946), *Revue Letzeburger Illustré'ert* (from 1945), *Lëtzebuenger Journal* (from April 1948) and *d'Letzeburger Land* (from January 1954).<sup>56</sup> Publications in Luxembourgish also enjoyed a short period of glory: *Die kleine Heimat-Bücherei*, for example, published children's stories in Luxembourgish, and Jhemp Rosch embarked on a project of translating of prayers and church songs.<sup>57</sup> Books written before 1940 and republished 1945 were cleansed of passages that were now judged excessively pro-German.<sup>58</sup> Other authors changed their conception of what being Luxembourgish implied. In 1929, for example, Joseph Hess had written: "what unites Luxembourgers as a people is not belonging to a common race, but rather sharing a destiny for centuries, a common language, and political unity".<sup>59</sup> By 1946, however, the local idiom was considered too close to German to be a valid criterion: "incidentally, what determines ethnicity is not language but tradition, history, mentality and, above everything else, the will of the people".<sup>60</sup>

The most important and long-lasting change, however, was the fact that Parliament partly switched to working in Luxembourgish. The transition was admittedly not complete: while German completely disappeared from political discourse, French continued to be used. In the Chamber's opening session on 5 September 1945, for example, French was spoken more often than other languages (119 lines of report were in French compared to 82 lines in Luxembourgish). Nevertheless, Luxembourgish was being used with greater frequency than in previous decades, and in the opening session of the Consultative Assembly on 20 March 1945, all the MPs used Luxembourgish and only Prime Minister Pierre Dupong made his speech in French.

<sup>56</sup> R. Hilgert, *Les journaux au Luxembourg, 1704–2004*, 208–217.

<sup>57</sup> Jean-Pierre Rosch, *Mir bieden. Ons gebreichlechst Gebieder op Lëtzeburgesch* (Esch-sur-Alzette: J. N. Kappweiler, 1945) and Jean-Pierre Rosch, *Eng kleng Sammlong vu bekannte Kirchelidder aus dem Diözesangesangbuch an d'Hémechtsspröch iwersät* (Esch-sur-Alzette: E. A. Wengeler, 1945).

<sup>58</sup> G. Goetzinger and R. Muller, *Lëtzebuergesch*, 17.

<sup>59</sup> Joseph Hess, *Luxemburger Volkskunde* (Grevenmacher: P. Faber, 1929), 62: "Was die Luxemburger zur Volkseinheit zusammenschliesst, ist nicht die Rasseneinheit, sondern eher das gemeinsame Schicksal durch Jahrhunderte hindurch, die gemeinsame Sprache, die politische Zusammengehörigkeit."

<sup>60</sup> Joseph Hess, *Die Sprache der Luxemburger* (Luxemburg: P. Bruck, 1946), 7: "Übrigens bestimmt nicht die Sprache die Volkszugehörigkeit, sondern die Tradition, die Geschichte, die Geisteshaltung und vor allem der Volkswille."



The use of Luxembourgish in the political arena in the years after the Liberation, however, continued to be marked by social and political divisions. Members of government as well as the Speaker of the House for the most part continued to express themselves in French. In general, the use of Luxembourgish partly depended on which political party an MP they belonged to.<sup>61</sup> Although Communist MPs were the only representatives to express themselves solely in Luxembourgish, members of the Conservative and the Socialist Labour Party also mostly used Luxembourgish. Liberal MPs alone preferred to use French, although the party was divided on this issue. ‘Old liberals’ like Eugène Schaus and Gaston Diderich tended to remain attached to the Francophilia which had been the norm before 1940, while the ‘new liberals’, who had been politicised through their engagement in the resistance, tended to use Luxembourgish.

At a local level, official publications were also published in Luxembourgish and it was used for the reports of the municipal councils of several towns.<sup>62</sup> Such was the extent of the spread of Luxembourgish in public life that in the wake of the Liberation, even the pro-German writer Norbert Jacques was forced to admit that “even though this language has been moulded from a German dialect, I believe that it is precisely its nature that formed one of the greatest obstacles to Luxembourg joining the German”.<sup>63</sup>

Following its inclusion in the curricula of primary education in 1912, Luxembourgish now became part of secondary school education and from 1946, the language was taught for one hour each week for the first two academic years.<sup>64</sup> In primary schools, the time devoted to German was reduced in favour of French. The assigned goal of

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<sup>61</sup> This contention is rather hypothetical in nature, and is based on substantial interventions (longer than just a few sentences) of thirty MPs during five sessions in 1945 (11 Sept., 14 Sept., 5 Dec., 6 Dec., 18 Dec. and 19 Dec.).

<sup>62</sup> ‘Notre enquête—La situation actuelle des langues au Luxembourg’, *Academia* (1952): 59–70.

<sup>63</sup> Norbert Jacques, *Mit Lust gelebt. Roman meines Lebens*, ed., Herrman Gätje, Germaine Goetzinger, Gast Mannes and Günter Scholdt (St. Ingbert: Röhrig, 2004), 329: “Obschon diese Sprache sich aus einem deutschen Dialekt gebildet hat, glaube ich, dass gerade ihre Wesensart zu den stärksten Hindernissen gehört, weshalb Luxemburg nicht mit dem Deutschen zusammenkam.”

<sup>64</sup> Luxembourgish was removed from the curriculum for the second year of secondary education in 1968. Fernand Hoffmann, *Das Luxemburgische im Unterricht* (Luxembourg: Ministère de l’Éducation Nationale, 1969), 11. In 1992, the Ministry of Education introduced an optional class called ‘Luxembourgish Civilisation’, in which the language was accorded central importance alongside Luxembourgish history.

education in Luxembourgish was no longer limited to learning to read, but explicitly included the acquisition of writing skills.<sup>65</sup> However, the limitations of this reorientation of the educational system soon became clear. The limitation of German was judged excessive by the Minister of Education, Pierre Frieden. He reminded people that “German remains the only language that every Luxembourgish citizen can read fluently and can write relatively correctly.”<sup>66</sup> In spite of the “aversion” that the “language of the invader” provoked, therefore, German had to be rehabilitated:

The use of Luxembourgish will have to be reserved for those occasions on which it benefits pupils’ learning. While certain explanations may be given in the dialect, particularly in the first year, it will not be tolerated that all teaching is done in that language in future.<sup>67</sup>

The war undoubtedly contributed to high tensions regarding expressions of collective identity and to a strong reaction against anything connected to Germany, a reaction which also had an effect on linguistic policies. While legal acts were published in French and German before 1940, a German translation was only used for texts relating to social affairs and road traffic after 1945.<sup>68</sup> This anti-German sentiment explains a ministerial decree of 5 June 1946, which sought to introduce a radically new Luxembourgish spelling. This new orthography was introduced by Nicolas Margue, a member of the governing Conservative Party and Minister of Education (*Ministre de l’Instruction Publique*) prior to the war.<sup>69</sup> One can speculate to what degree Nicolas Margue’s support for this spelling was not also nourished by his experiences during the Second World War. He was the only member

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<sup>65</sup> “De cours fum Lezebuurjeshe sol t kaner derzou brengen, hiir hèmechtssprooch ze liesen an ze shraiven”, *Arrêté ministériel* (30 décembre 1946) on changes in the primary school curriculum. See *Courrier des écoles du Grand-Duché du Luxembourg*, special issue (1947), 4.

<sup>66</sup> “L’allemand reste la seule langue que tout Luxembourgeois lise couramment et sache écrire avec une certaine correction,” Pierre Frieden’s circular of 22 December 1948 to teachers on the use of German in primary education, in *Courrier des écoles du Grand-Duché du Luxembourg* 1 (1949), 6.

<sup>67</sup> “L’emploi du luxembourgeois devra être réservé aux seuls cas où il en résultera un profit pédagogique pour les élèves. Si certaines explications surtout dans la première classe sont données en patois, il ne sera pas toléré à l’avenir que tout l’enseignement se fasse dans cette langue.” Letter from 22 December 1948 (see above).

<sup>68</sup> *Projet de loi sur le régime des langues (N°2535)—rapport de la commission spéciale du 1<sup>er</sup> juillet 1983*, 25.

<sup>69</sup> For Nicolas Margue’s role as a historian, see chapter 2.

of the government who had not managed to escape in time, in consequence he and his family had to endure repressive measures (including deportation) during the occupation. In 1939, he assembled a committee to reform Luxembourgish orthography presided over by Jean Feltes (1885–1959), but Feltes’s phonetic proposal was rejected.<sup>70</sup> Immediately after the war, the Minister of Education Pierre Frieden unsuccessfully tried to relaunch the committee. Thanks to Margue’s initiative, a new committee, including his own son, George, Nicolas Hein and Jean Feltes, agreed on a new orthography strongly inspired by Feltes. Working as an English teacher at a boy’s secondary school, Feltes had also taught phonetics at the *Cours Supérieur* (a preparation class for university studies) since 1937 and had advocated a greater recognition of phonetics in the study of Luxembourgish since the late 1920s.<sup>71</sup> He had known Nicolas Margue for some years, when both sat in the committee of the General Association of Civil Servants. Feltes’s new proposal sought to distance the language as much as possible from German. His spelling was radically new, and was based on a rationalist approach with a strong modernising intent. The *Lezebuurjer Ortografi* was based on the orthophonic image of words and was inspired by the French typographical approach, particularly with regard to the letters ‘é’ and ‘è’.<sup>72</sup> Feltes partly resorted to previous approaches to phonetic writing in Luxembourgish, such as those of Dicks in the mid-nineteenth century and *Ons Hémecht* in the early twentieth century. Feltes saw a phonetic transcription as the only way to escape German influence. However, the Second World War made it possible to sever links with German radically, a break which had hardly been imaginable before 1940. This spelling found its first printed application in school manuals for primary and secondary education.<sup>73</sup> Meanwhile, criticism burst forth, emanating notably from the teaching profession and from

<sup>70</sup> The committee was composed of Jean Feltes, Ernest Ludovicy, Joseph Meyers, Paul Jost, Hélène Palgen, Camille Kasel, Leo Berchem, Franz Binsfeld, Max Goergen, Josy Imdahl, Lucien Koenig and Jean-Pierre Welter.

<sup>71</sup> Jean Feltes, ‘Miscellanea Phonetica’, *Journal de l’Association des Professeurs de l’Enseignement supérieur et moyen* 23 (1928): 12–16.

<sup>72</sup> Interview with Paul Margue (30 May 2006). See also the parliamentary intervention by Lucien Koenig (19 March 1953): *ChD. Session ordinaire 1952–53* (Luxembourg, 1953), 1182–1184.

<sup>73</sup> *Lezebuurjer Gedichter a Proosashteker fir ons Shoulen*, 2 vols., (Luxembourg: Staatlech Kommissioun, 1946–1947). Nicolas Margue admitted in 1947 that the new spelling posed certain problems and declared that “the teaching and use of the official spelling... are optional in primary schools.” *Instruction ministérielle* from 6 February

Pierre Grégoire, the culture editor of *Luxemburger Wort*. The scale of debates was growing to such an extent that Feltes dubbed the conflict “the new war of the clubs” (*der neue Klöppelkrieg*), referring to the local insurrection against the French revolutionary regime in 1798.<sup>74</sup> Besides the Margue/Feltes proposal, another—less radical—spelling was offered by J.-P. Oswald in 1946. It remained more faithful to the typographical approach used until then, while introducing French and English elements by eliminating capital letters and by replacing the letters ‘z’ and ‘k’ with ‘c’ and ‘cc’.<sup>75</sup> Due to a lack of support, the proposal did not come to fruition, but it illustrates the anti-German feelings of that era. In the end, the phonetic approach garnered less support than its etymological rival and, by the 1950s, only a small number of articles published in the journal *Academia* were using the Margue/Feltes spelling.

While the period immediately following the war was one of increased support for and codification of Luxembourgish, the growth of Luxembourg’s autonomy also had a limit, as the constitutional reform of 1948 shows. In reforming the constitution, politicians agreed not to take any decision regarding the grand duchy’s linguistic status. The recent memory of the Second World War undoubtedly explains why German was not declared an official language, but few people had an adequate grasp of French. However, nobody, it appears, thought of proposing Luxembourgish as the national language. Despite its increased profile due to the occupation, Luxembourgish was consequently confined primarily to the private sphere, and did not become an official language of the nation-state. Pierre Frieden’s thought is revealing of the dominant opinion:

Language does not make a nation or a nationality. Traitors also speak the language of those they betray. It is through the heart, through the spirit, through the soul that one belongs to a people, to a nation... Let us then cultivate the spirit and the heart, let us feed the soul and let us

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1947 on the use of the official spelling in primary education by Nicolas Margue, in *Courrier des écoles du Grand-Duché du Luxembourg* 1 (1947), 3.

<sup>74</sup> Jean Feltes, ‘Doppelkonsonanten in der Schrift’, *Academia* 2 (1953): 132. On the ‘real’ war of the clubs and its imagery in Luxembourgish society, see Sonja Kmec, ‘Klöpplkrich’, in *Les lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg. Usages du passé et construction nationale*, ed. Sonja Kmec, Benoît Majerus, Michel Margue and Pit Péporté (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 2007), 141–146.

<sup>75</sup> J. P. Oswald, *Écriture et prononciation de la langue luxembourgeoise. Méthode frangall (fr.-ang.-all.)* (Esch-sur-Alzette: Journal d’Esch, 1946).

not be fascinated by the mirage of the language. Let us give it its place in the home, a greater place than in the past, but let us not burden it with too heavy a mission.<sup>76</sup>

## 2. *A Momentary Lull (1950s to the 1960s)*

At first glance, the advance of Luxembourgish seems to have slowed somewhat in the 1950s and 1960s. Compared to the enthusiasm of the immediate post-war period and the multiple initiatives that emerged in the 1970s, this period was characterised by a relative decline in interest in the language. Despite the fact that the subject was no longer debated, an important state-funded project was launched during these years: the Luxembourgish Dictionary.

### 2.1. *Studying Luxembourgish*

The Luxembourgish Dictionary project started in the 1930s and was completed in 1975 with the release of the twenty-third and final volume. It represented an essential stage in the standardisation of the language, partly due to its widespread recognition. Its authority rested on a twofold basis. Firstly, the editorial team brought together the most highly regarded specialists in the field. Secondly, the whole enterprise was funded by the state. Although the government's involvement was limited to the provision of financial means, its support effectively conferred an official status on the project.<sup>77</sup>

The Dictionary's committee was granted a great deal of autonomy, which expressed itself in the decision not to comply with the Margue/Feltes spelling, even though the latter was the commonly used in state-supported publications. H el ene Palgen, president of the Dictionary's committee, was questioned in 1971 by the Minister of Education, Jean Dupong, on this disregard for the 'official' spelling. She replied

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<sup>76</sup> "La langue ne fait pas la nation, ni la nationalit e. Les traiteurs aussi parlent la langue de ceux qu'ils trahissent. C'est par le c oeur, par l'esprit, par l' ame que l'on est d'un peuple, d'une nation... Cultivons donc l'esprit et le c oeur, p etrissons les  ames et ne nous laissons pas trop fasciner par le mirage de la langue. Accordons-lui sa place au foyer, plus large que par le pass e, mais ne l' ecrasons pas sous la charge d'une mission trop lourde." Quoted in *ChD., Session ordinaire 1983-84* (Luxembourg, 1984), 2028.

<sup>77</sup> In 1965, close to 900 subscriptions to the Dictionary were recorded. Joseph Hess, 'Luxemburgisches W orterbuch', *Zeitschrift f ur Mundartforschung* 32/2 (1965): 138.

that in spite of being rational this spelling went against people's habits and triggered strong resistance from members of the teaching profession and the public... On the whole, it was a case of reconciling phonetics and tradition. The René Engelmann spelling modified by Nicolas Welter had been in existence before and had proved its value, even though it still had some imperfections, some of which we have been able to eliminate without going against people's habits. Moreover, every Luxembourger learns French and German and, as far as was possible, we did not want to make things more difficult for people by substituting different renderings of words for those with which people are familiar. This is why we decided to go mostly with German or French spellings.<sup>78</sup>

Having been written by Feltes, an outsider in the world of Luxembourgish linguistics,<sup>79</sup> there had been little chance that his spelling would ever have taken hold. In fact, under the impetus of Joseph Tockert,<sup>80</sup> Robert Bruch, secretary of the Dictionary's committee, decided to use a slightly remodelled version of the Welter/Engelmann version by the late 1940s—delivering a final *coup de grâce* to the Margue/Feltes spelling. One can speculate to what degree Tockert's position was not fuelled by a certain ideological and political hostility towards Nicolas Margue. While the 1906 *Wörterbuch* had failed to impose its chosen spelling, the same was not true for the 1950 Dictionary. It soon established itself as the standard work in the field and its typographical representation became the accepted mode of spelling.

The 1950s might be called the 'Robert Bruch years'. Until his death in 1959, Bruch dominated Luxembourgish language studies. His contribution to the field was, however, paradoxical: on the one hand, Bruch supported the emancipation of Luxembourgish from German,

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<sup>78</sup> "que cette orthographe, malgré son caractère rationnel, heurtait les habitudes et suscitait une forte résistance de la part du personnel enseignant et du public... En gros, il s'agissait pour nous de concilier la phonétique et la tradition. Il existait déjà l'orthographe de René Engelmann, modifiée par Nicolas Welter; elle avait fait ses preuves, tout en gardant des imperfections dont certaines ont pu être éliminées par nous sans trop heurter les habitudes du public. En outre, tout Luxembourgeois apprend l'allemand et le français; dans la mesure du possible, nous ne voulions pas lui rendre la tâche plus difficile en juxtaposant à l'image connue des mots une autre toute différente; nous nous sommes donc orientés, dans une forte mesure, sur l'orthographe de l'allemand ou du français." Letter by Hélène Palgen to Jean Dupong, Minister of Education, dated 2 April 1971. ANL, Ministère de la Culture, Box 1033.

<sup>79</sup> It is indeed interesting to note that, apart from the short 'Letzeburgesch an Englesch', in *Festschrift dem Nik Welter fir sei 75. Geburstag iwerrécht* (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 1946), 11–14, and some articles in *Academia*, Jean Feltes published very little on the Luxembourgish language in the post-war period.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Paul Margue, 30 May 2006.

while, on the other hand, he considered his mother tongue to be an incomplete language. His interpretative framework, which incorporated elements developed during the inter-war period, remained of central importance to the study of Luxembourgish until the 1980s.

Even if he felt deeply attracted to the German academic world, Bruch's works are characterised by his desire to dispense with the view that Luxembourgish belonged exclusively to the German-speaking world.<sup>81</sup> In 1952, Bruch wrote his doctoral thesis at Marburg University under the supervision of Walter Mitzka.<sup>82</sup> Entitled *Grundlegung einer Geschichte des Luxemburgischen* ('Foundations of a history of Luxembourgish'), it was a frontal attack against the *Bonner Schule* which had developed around Theodor Frings, Hermann Aubin and Joseph Müller. In the spirit of the *Westforschung* of the 1930s, they had integrated the Rhenish dialects into the paradigm of Theodor Wilhelm Braune's waves (*Wellentheorie*), which ranged from North to South. By categorising dialects into this structure, Luxembourgish became part of a large group of Central German dialects, stretching all the way to the Polish border. In his thesis, Bruch sought to provide Luxembourgish with a more distinct position by proving that additional dynamics stretching from East to West could be detected. Part of this was his claim that the Luxembourgish linguistic area was marked more by western than by eastern influences. Linguistically, he suggested that Luxembourg was an intermediate territory between two great cultures. This view shaped the reception of his research in Luxembourg itself. Fernand Hoffmann, who contributed most to the popularisation of Robert Bruch's sometimes arduous writings, summed up the linguist's thoughts as follows:

the beauty of Bruch's achievement is that it was made possible by Luxembourg's age-old particularity: the awareness of being a 'Western crossroads', of being part of both the Latin and Germanic cultural spheres, and, at the same time, the truly Luxembourgian feeling of a certain autonomy.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> His colleague Hélène Palgen, who published an important work on the subject in 1948, used a similar line of argument. Hélène Palgen, *Studien zur Lautgeographie Luxemburgs* (Luxemburg: P. Linden, 1948), 38–39.

<sup>82</sup> Walter Mitzka (1888–1976) was a professor at Marburg University from 1933 onwards, in which capacity he started to collect data for the *Deutscher Wortatlas* in 1938.

<sup>83</sup> "Das Schöne an der Bruchschen Leistung ist, dass urluxemburgische Eigenarten sie möglich machten: das Bewusstsein irgendwie 'carrefour de l'occident' zu

The paradigm shift that Bruch effected additionally saw the East-West shift as having been anterior to the North-South shift, which supposedly led to the creation of a 'Westfrankish bay' (*Westfränkische Bucht*). The point of all this was to make Luxembourgish appear as a particularly ancient language. Certain authors therefore considered Luxembourgish more 'noble' than *Hochdeutsch*. For Bruch, this geolinguistic situation explained why Luxembourgish developed in an autonomous manner for at least one thousand years, being thus no longer an "ordinary German idiom" (*gewöhnliche deutsche Regionalmundart*). This independent evolution would explain why Luxembourgers were unwilling to accept the Nazis' Germanisation programme during the occupation.<sup>84</sup>

Even though Bruch's work stood at some distance from German interpretations, it remained firmly embedded in the heuristic paradigms of German academia. Bruch continued to embrace the geographic vision of the language's development developed by Hugo Schuchard (1868) and Johannes Schmidt (1872), a vision based on the 'wave theory' (*Wellentheorie*) as mentioned above. Even though his doctoral supervisor, Mitzka, had started using new sociolinguistic

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sein, teilzunehmen am romanischen und germanischen Kulturkreis, und zugleich das so echt luxemburgische Gefühl einer gewissen Eigenständigkeit." F. Hoffmann, *Geschichte der Luxemburger Mundartdichtung. Erster Band*, 11. Jean Feltes that Bruch provided an argument for those who "want to base their own interpretation of our present-day language on the distinct particularism of our language habits" (... *auf der scharfen Sonderart unsrer Sprachgewohnheiten eine eigene Behandlung unsrer heutigen Sprache aufbauen wollen*), see Jean Feltes' report on Robert Bruch's *Grundlegung einer Geschichte des Luxemburgischen* in *Academia* 1 (1954): 41–46. The publication of Bruch's theory in 1953 was, however, greeted with some criticism by the academic world and is today recognised as outdated: P. Gilles, *Dialektausgleich im Lëtzebuergeschen*, 8. Nonetheless, Bruch's name continues to be surrounded by a certain aura in Luxembourg, Joseph Reisdorfer thus proposed to bestow his name on a planned Institute for the Luxembourgish language: Joseph Reisdorfer, 'La Luxembourgistique: présentation d'une nouvelle discipline', *Revue trimestrielle d'études linguistiques, folkloriques et toponymiques* 29 (1999): 58. In 2003, Bruch's name was given to one of the buildings of the new cultural centre based at the former Neumünster Abbey in Luxembourg. The Robert Bruch building hosts the Pierre Werner Franco-German-Luxembourgish Cultural Institute, as well as the Council of Europe's European Institute of Cultural Itineraries.

<sup>84</sup> F. Hoffmann, *Geschichte der Luxemburger Mundartdichtung. Erster Band*, 50. The author's own experience of war and occupation (he had been forcibly enrolled in the German army) most probably had an influence on his stance. His work aimed at creating a cultural distance between Luxembourg and Germany, as pointed out above.



concepts, such as ‘linguistic market’ and ‘surplus value’<sup>85</sup> from 1940 onwards, the only thing that Bruch viewed as dynamic was space. Bruch thus reified the language as a ‘wave’ with its own inherent dynamic, while dissociating it from its social context. His project of mapping Luxembourg’s linguistic situation was interrupted by his death, and then taken over by one of his collaborators.<sup>86</sup>

Robert Bruch participated in the deconstruction of certain myths about Luxembourgish, such as its supposed proximity to English,<sup>87</sup> but he remained deeply influenced by the view that language is an indicator of geographic criteria and of the cultural characteristics of a population.<sup>88</sup> At the same time, Bruch remained convinced that Luxembourgish would only retain a limited autonomy.<sup>89</sup> He did not consider Luxembourgish to be an *Ausbausprache* and thought of it essentially as a spoken language.

Bruch’s interpretation of Luxembourgish dominated linguistic research until the 1970s. This can be partly explained by the fact that, from the 1960s, Bruch had found a disciple—Fernand Hoffmann—who contributed to the popularisation of his work. Although Hoffmann

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<sup>85</sup> Peter von Polenz, *Deutsche Sprachgeschichte vom Spätmittelalter bis zur Gegenwart. Band 1. Einführung, Grundbegriffe, 14. bis 16. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2000), 21–23.

<sup>86</sup> Robert Bruch, *Luxemburgischer Sprachatlas. Laut- und Formenatlas*, ed. Ludwig Erich Schmitt (Marburg: N. G. Elwert, 1963). Today, Bruch’s maps are being digitalised under the direction of Claudine Moulin, see URL: <http://www.luxsa.info> (last accessed 16 December 2009).

<sup>87</sup> “Die Angelsachsen haben nun einmal in der Sprachgeschichte weder des Öslings noch der Mosel die Hand im Spiel gehabt—so schön wir das auch gerade heute als Kitt unserer atlantischen Freundschaft gebrauchen könnten.” Robert Bruch, “Miselesch”. *Kleiner Atlas der Luxemburger Moselmundarten*, in *Gesammelte Aufsätze* (see note 45), 117–136. Originally published in *Le vignoble luxembourgeois. IV<sup>e</sup> fête du vin de Schwesingen* (Schwesingen, 1956), 185–204.

<sup>88</sup> Robert Bruch, ‘Volkstümlicher Rundgang durch die Luxemburger Sprachlandschaft’, *Gesammelte Aufsätze* (see note 45), 93–99. Originally published in *Letzeburger Bauere-Kalenner 1954* (Luxembourg, 1954), 68–72.

<sup>89</sup> “Zunächst gilt es die Grundsätze einer luxemburgischen Sprachdidaktik vom überheblichen Mythos einer selbstgenügsamen *Luxemburger Sprache* zu befreien... Sie [die luxemburgische Sprache] zu schreiben dürfte nur bedingt erwünscht und in den seltensten Fällen erfordert sein,” Robert Bruch, “‘Deutsche Spracherziehung’ oder Sprachunterricht für Luxemburger...?”, in *Gesammelte Aufsätze* (see note 45), 37, 56. Originally published in *Journal des Professeurs. Organe officiel de l’Association des Professeurs de l’Enseignement supérieur et secondaire* 41 (1954): 30–55. This sparked criticism from some nationalistic circles (cf. several articles in the journal *Lëtzi* published by Jempi Braun). At that time Jean Feltes had already called for Luxembourgish to be considered a ‘language’, for which see a notice by Feltes published in *Academia* 4 (1954): 284. This point of view was not shared by a majority of linguists until the 1990s.

eschewed a linguistic approach and devoted himself more to the literary history of Luxembourg, he openly followed in Bruch's footsteps and produced a simplified and comprehensible version of Bruch's work.<sup>90</sup> Like Bruch, Hoffmann took a rather sceptical stance towards a functional extension of Luxembourgish.<sup>91</sup> In his doctoral thesis, he worked under the assumption that Luxembourgish was indeed a dialect (*Mundart*).<sup>92</sup> Hoffmann's perspective on Luxembourgish and his determination to bring Bruch's thought to a wider audience were to have a great influence in intellectual circles, not least because of the authority which was bestowed on his views as a result of his involvement in the culture pages of *Luxemburger Wort*—the grand duchy's most-read newspaper.<sup>93</sup>

## 2.2. *The Initial Failure of Pro-Luxembourgish Associations*

The attempt to launch a private association in support of Luxembourgish after the Second World War was relative unsuccessful. From 1952, a small group centred on Isidore Comes published the journal *Eis Sprooch*.<sup>94</sup> Contrary to *Actioun Lëtzebuergesch*, which appeared in the 1970s, the founders of *Eis Sprooch* did not seem to aspire to real popular support and it reached its rather low peak of 200 members in 1958. This group was modelled after the linguistic societies of the nineteenth century and was, moreover, characterised by a pessimistic view of the future of Luxembourgish.

At the time, the founders of *Eis Sprooch* believed that its worst enemy was "High German, the written German which...looks down on dialect" despite the fact that Luxembourgish was "just as old as

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<sup>90</sup> F. Hoffmann, *Geschichte der Luxemburger Mundartdichtung. Erster Band*; Fernand Hoffmann, *Geschichte der Luxemburger Mundartdichtung. Zweiter Band: Von Aendréi Duchscher bis zur Gegenwart*, (Luxembourg: Bourg-Bourger, 1967). These two volumes are still standard reference works 40 years after their publication.

<sup>91</sup> This indeed caused harsh attacks to be levelled against him by World War II veterans: *Les Sacrifiés* 1 (1980), 8.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. his criticism of the work of the *Actioun Lëtzebuergesch* and of the 1984 law.

<sup>93</sup> Fernand Hoffmann was equally known and respected as a literary critic, leading some people to call him even the 'High authority on literature' (*Literaturpapst*). See Joseph Groben, 'In Memoriam Fernand Hoffmann', *Luxemburger Wort-Die Warte*, 14 December 2000. Hoffmann's literary criticisms is marked by a very normative approach, which can also be observed in his approach to linguistics.

<sup>94</sup> In 1952, the committee was composed of Isidore Comes (b. 1875), Michel Hever (b. 1875), Fred Gremling (b. 1901), Henri Trauffer (b. 1890) and Nic Pleschette (b. 1882).

High German, if not older.”<sup>95</sup> The only salvation could come from the “people” (*Vollek*) who alone still spoke “real” Luxembourgish. Unsurprisingly, *Eis Sprooch* opposed the creation of a *koinè*, a standardised Luxembourgish language, which to them entailed a depletion of the language’s richness. Instead, the organisation advocated a return to an ‘ancient’ language and was strongly influenced by the view that language, native soil and mother country were intrinsically linked. The ethno-linguistic vocabulary of the 1920s and 1930s was barely revised, which was hardly surprising given the advanced age of the five founding members. The journal also endorsed a greater use of Luxembourgish in the liturgy, by translating *Our Father*, *Hail Mary* and excerpts from the New Testament among others. Church liturgy had remained an important domain in which German still possessed a clear dominance (besides Latin, of course).

From the late 1950s, the commitment which *Eis Sprooch* felt that it owed to Luxembourgish was more clearly connected with social responses to the naturalisation policies then being pursued by the government. These policies were seen as a threat as it was felt that they would permit an influx of foreigners to endanger the linguistic and cultural survival of the people of Luxembourg:

If one goes out among the ordinary folk, one often hears how people talk about the fact that so many foreigners are being nationalised so easily. In the end, do we have to be silenced by strangers and does this have to reach the point at which Luxembourgian family names disappear along with our language and that soon we will not longer have anything to say in our own country?<sup>96</sup>

The association lost its principal initiator with the death of Isidore Comes in 1959 and *Eis Sprooch* was published at ever-longer intervals, until the journal died out in 1962.<sup>97</sup> The decline of *Eis Sprooch* was

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<sup>95</sup> “d’Houdäitsch, d’Schröfdäitsch, wat den Dialekt, grad wéi do-iwer, vun uewen erof, iwer d’Schöller beguckt, well am dausendjeerege Räich sollt et heeschen: ‘Ein Volk, eine Sitte, eine Sprache’. Eis as sou al wéi d’Héidäitsch, wann net méi al,” *Eis Sprooch* 1–2 (1956): 6.

<sup>96</sup> The following excerpt is a good example, and far from unique: “Wann een dobaussen önnere d’Vollek könnnt, dann héiert ee ganz dack, wéi d’Leit sech driwer ophalen, datt esou vill Auslänner esou liicht nationaliséiert gin. Musse mer äis dann um Enn vun de Friémen iwewerdubbere loossen, a muss et esouwäit kommen, dat d’Letzebuurger Familjenimm mat eiser Sprooch vergin an datt mer geschwönn am eegene Land näischt me ze son hun?,” *Eis Sprooch* 1–3 (1961), 22.

<sup>97</sup> Jempi Braun’s solitary effort at publishing his stencilled journal *Lëtzi/Lötzi* between 1955 and 1963 did not meet with any more success. On the one hand, Braun

thus symptomatic for the 1950s and 60s, during which Luxembourgish was less of a socio-political issue than in previous decades, or than it was to be again in the following decades. Questions of 'national identity' in general seem not to have been very topical during this particular phase. As seen in Part One of this book, this development equally applies to Luxembourgian historiography in this period, which showed few innovations and few new publications. It remains unclear which factors stand at the origin of this temporary lull. Did the important economic growth of the two decades silence the debates? Or was it the Cold War and the necessity to embed oneself firmly within the Western hemisphere?

### 3. *Confirming the Standing of Luxembourgish (from the 1970s to the Present Day)*

In the past forty years, Luxembourgish has gone from being a 'vernacular language'—a language with few, if any, standards—to a 'standard language' (or standardised vernacular language).<sup>98</sup> Between 1970 and 1985, a lot of effort was put into renewing the esteem for the language by associations, the state and in cultural circles. However, neither the language's functions, nor its meanings have been homogenised. The different possible social functions it could take up were poles apart: they range from the usage of Luxembourgish by Pierre Peters's far-right *National-Bewegung* (NB) to its institutionalisation by Parliament in 1984 and its appropriation by the *Nouveau Roman* of Guy Rewenig and Roger Manderscheid. The analysis of this period will focus on four types of social agency: non-governmental organisations in support of the language, the political world, the arts and the media, and the influence of scholarship on the codification of the language. Separating these actors is of course artificial; they overlap to a large extent.

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attempted to put more distance between Luxembourgish and German by writing articles which popularised ideas expressed by Luxembourgish scholars and foreign linguists. On the other hand, he wrote several short stories and poems. He also applied himself to the creation of a new written form close to Engelmann's.

<sup>98</sup> Charles A. Ferguson, 'National Sociolinguist Profile Formulas', in *Sociolinguistic Proceedings of the UCLA Sociolinguistics Conference 1964*, ed. William Bright (Paris, 1966), 311–312.

### 3.1. Actioun Lëtzebuergesch

A tentative resurgence of interest in the language took place in the 1970s as a result of the actions of various associations and protest groups. The phenomenon itself was not limited to Luxembourg—a renewal of interest in ‘minor’ languages and dialects was visible everywhere in Europe. In 1976, for example, the association *Arelerland a Sprooch* was created in the Belgian province of Luxembourg, and it achieved its first victory with the recognition of Luxembourgish as an endogenous language of the French community in 1990. Two organisations dedicated to the defence of Luxembourgish—*Hemechtsland a Sprooch* (1975) and *Wéi laang nach?* (1976)—were founded in France in the same decade. In 1978, the Basque language was recognised as a regional language in Spain. The organisation *Lia Rumantscha* similarly succeeded in furthering the codification of Romansh in Switzerland since the 1970s.

The most obvious sign of the quiet revival of interest in Luxembourgish in Luxembourg itself was the creation of *Actioun Lëtzebuergesch* (AL). A small circle of five people launched the idea of a lobbying movement for the promotion of Luxembourgish: Aloyse Rathes, a primary school teacher but above all a central figure in the National Committee of the Resistance (CNR), Charles Malané, Lucien Ludwig, holder of the assets of the former journal *Eis Sprooch*, Emil Schmit and Jemp Bertrand. In February 1971, around twenty people<sup>99</sup> gathered for the first time, and in November of the same year, the *Actioun Lëtzebuergesch* was officially founded. The preparatory meetings took place in the buildings of the CNR, which shows the importance of the resistance movements to this phenomenon. Since the end of the war, groups committed to the memory of the Second World War had kept insisting on the question of language, though they had remained relatively quiet in the previous two decades. Their journals published

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<sup>99</sup> Alain Atten (civil servant), Jemp Bertrand (civil servant), René Faber (BCEE employee), Emile Duhr (physician), Jos Gevelinger (priest), Camille Goedert (director of *Sogel*), Jemp Hamilius (teacher), Jules Jost (dean), René Kartheiser (civil servant), Lucien Ludwig (insurance manager), Charles Malané (BCEE employee), Robert Philippe (civil servant), Aloyse Rathes (primary school teacher), Arthur Reckinger (priest), Henri Rinnen (employee), Lex Roth (primary school teacher), Emile Schmit (private employee), Metty Schroeder (dentist), Félix Steinberg (*Arbed* employee), Lily Uden (secondary school teacher).

many articles on the topic, centred around the date of 10 October 1941, the significance of which has been explained above.

Table 3. Evolution of the number of members of the *Actioun Lëtzebuergesch*<sup>100</sup>

Year	1971	1976	1977	1979	1980	1983	1986	1987	1994
Members	400	700	1000	1200	1500	1990	2300	2200	2000

With the rise of the *Actioun Lëtzebuergesch*, this type of organisation managed for the first time to recruit a significant number of members. To start with, the progression was continuous and reached its peak in 1986, when *Actioun Lëtzebuergesch* counted 2300 members. This number decreased somewhat partly due to internal struggles.

Although it is important not to overstate the case, the influence of *Actioun Lëtzebuergesch* as a lobby group should not be underestimated. Even though the AL was—and still is—officially politically neutral, it has from its inception clearly indicated that it stands on the right of the political spectrum. Apart from Cornel Meder, an intellectual close to the Socialist Labour Party, most of its leaders have belonged to the Catholic-conservative majority. As the Christian Social People's Party (CSV) has been in power almost without interruption since 1945 (the years 1974–1979 being the exception to the general rule) and has controlled the Ministry of Culture—which had to deal with the *Actioun*—for the majority of this period,<sup>101</sup> the AL has been in a position to have its demands accepted. To this day, the *Actioun Lëtzebuergesch* remains a major social actor which enjoys particular support from the Luxembourgian state. Its publication *Klack fir eis Sprooch* benefited during its first year of publication from the financial support of the Ministry of Culture<sup>102</sup> and its website (<http://www.eissprooch.lu>) is supported by the Ministry of Education.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>100</sup> The figures are taken from *Eis Sprooch* and from *Eng Klack fir eis Sprooch*, published by the *Actioun Lëtzebuergesch*.

<sup>101</sup> Madeleine Frieden-Kinnen (1969–1972), Jacques Santer (1972–1974), Pierre Werner (1979–1984 and 1989–1995), Erna Hennicot-Schoepges (1995–2004), François Biltgen (2004–2009), Octavie Modert (co-jointly with Biltgen from 2006 and as minister since 2009). See Guy Thewes, *Les gouvernements du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg depuis 1848* (Luxembourg: SIP, 2003).

<sup>102</sup> According to *forum*, this support has been granted although the conditions set up by the Ministry have not been fulfilled: see *forum* 185 (1998): 68.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. URL: <http://www.eis-sprooch.lu/partner.asp> (last accessed on 17 May 2006).

This (unofficial) connection with the conservative party may, however, also have been an obstacle to the expansion of AL, since it probably deterred some people from joining. Moreover, when the Ministry of Culture was run by the Socialist Labour Party (in coalition with the CSV), it behaved in a more reserved manner towards the AL.<sup>104</sup>

Table 4. Social structures of patriotic groups: a comparison of *Ons Hémecht* and *Actioun Lëtzebuergesch*<sup>105</sup>

	<i>Ons Hémecht</i> in 1895 (n = 146)	<i>Ons Hémecht</i> in 1923 (n = 248)	<i>Actioun Lëtzebuergesch</i> in 1980 (n = 856)
1. Old ruling class, landowners	1%	1%	0%
2. Tradesmen, industrialists	3%	0%	2%
3. Craftsmen	2%	5%	10%
4. Self-employed	11%	16%	5%
5. Civil Servants	26%	17%	47%
6. Clergy	27%	40%	1%
7. Teachers	20%	14%	29%
8. Students	3%	0%	4%
9. Farmers	0%	0%	1%
10. Workmen	0%	0%	0%
11. Unspecified	6%	6%	1%

The sociological profile of the members of *Actioun Lëtzebuergesch* shows that interest in Luxembourgish continued to be most clearly evident amongst the middle classes: indeed, over three quarters of its

<sup>104</sup> Indeed, when the AL asked for subsidies in 1986, Mars Klein, the advisor to the Socialist Minister Robert Krieps, wrote: “The AL is and remains a right-wing group (in spite of the fact that our friend Cornel [Meder] tries to influence the committee). The periodical *Eis Sprooch* is mediocre, full of conservative ideas. At the level of linguistic research—[it is] nothing to show off [about]. The [members of the] AL will not be the ones to save Luxembourgish.” (*AL est et reste un club de la droite (n’en déplaie à l’ami Cornel [Meder] qui essaie d’influencer le comité). Ce périodique ‘Eis Sprooch’ est médiocre, plein d’idées conservatrices. Sur le plan de la recherche linguistique: terrain vague. Ce n’est pas AL qui sauve le luxembourgeois.*) Mars Klein to Robert Krieps, undated note (c. 1986) ANL, MCULT, box 981.

<sup>105</sup> The figures are taken from *Ons Hémecht* 1/3 (1895): 58–60; *Ons Hémecht* 29/3–4 (1923): 73–81 and *Eis Sprooch* 18/4 (1980): 36. The data from 1980 does not distinguish between “workers, vintners and farmers”, which have been gathered under the category of ‘workmen’, or between “artisans and merchants”, gathered under ‘craftsmen’.

members were civil servants or state employees. In spite of the social and political leanings of the organisation, the clergy no longer played the same role in society as it had in the nineteenth century, and it is noticeable that only 1% of AL's members in 1980 were churchmen.

It is equally noticeable that, as for earlier associations, Luxembourg City continued to provide a substantial number of members for AL, even if its preponderance was far smaller than it had been in the nineteenth century (in 1980, the city accounted for 28.7% of AL members, although it comprised 21.6% of the general population). If traditional working-class towns like Esch-sur-Alzette (5.6% of AL members compared to 6.9% of the population) and Dudelange (3.1% compared to 3.9%) remained less well represented, other middle-sized and more middle-class towns like Diekirch (3.5% compared to 1.5%) or Bettembourg (3% compared to 1.6%) were proportionately better represented in AL than their actual size might have suggested.

The organisation had plans to become engaged on several levels. The overall objective was to spread the use of written Luxembourgish in everyday life. For example, it encouraged the use of Luxembourgish for family advertisements (which play a not insignificant social role) in the local press. Traditionally, the language of choice to announce family and social events was French, but within about twenty years, Luxembourgish had assumed this function.<sup>106</sup> A similar effort was made with town and street signs. The AL also supported the organisation *Arelerland a Sprooch* and regular exchanges took place between the two. Although this support did not involve calls for the annexation of the Belgian regions that had belonged *de jure* to the grand duchy of Luxembourg until 1830/39, their mutual affinity was nevertheless justified by reference to a common past.

Less successful was an attempt to impose the use of Luxembourgish in the Catholic Church. Although the *Actioun Lëtzebuergesch* counted some priests amongst its founding members, and in spite of the aspiration of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) to integrate local vernaculars in the liturgy, Church authorities were for a long time reluctant to provide texts in Luxembourgish. Since the times of the Vicar Apostolic Jean-Théodore Laurent (1841–1848), German had gradually established itself as the language of the diocese. Priests used

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<sup>106</sup> Between 1975 and 1979, the number of *Familjeannoncen* (family notices) in Luxembourgish increased from 990 to 3115; for which see *Eis Sprooch* 1 (1985): 35.



it not only in liturgy but also in their writings. Moreover, when the seminary opened in 1845, two of the five professors were German.<sup>107</sup> There had been some moves to offer Luxembourgish translations of prayers since the second half of the nineteenth century, and *Eis Sprooch* also dedicated the occasional page of its journal to translations of prayers. These early attempts, however, remained inconsequential. While the reasons for the Church's opposition are not very clear,<sup>108</sup> they prompted the AL to set up an official committee to promote the use of Luxembourgish in the liturgy (*Lëtzebuergesch an der Kiirch*) in 1980. The committee was supported by several war veterans' groups: the *Enrôlés de Force*, the *Conseil National de la Résistance*, the LPPD, the *Unioun* and the association of injured veterans.<sup>109</sup>

Over time, the committee succeeded in translating the majority of texts used in liturgy, and has supported the publication of religious books. The Church of Luxembourg has gradually abandoned its opposition and has begun to publish texts in Luxembourgish of its own accord. However, this effort is still far from being complete. It was not until 2006, for example, that the annual vows made to Our Lady of Luxembourg were made in Luxembourgish for the first time<sup>110</sup> and the Gospels have still not been translated in their entirety. Because of the late introduction of Luxembourgish in the Church, religious texts have not played the same role in the emancipation of the language as in other countries.

Purity of the language is one of main concerns of the AL.<sup>111</sup> It launched an initiative in support of 'proper' Luxembourgish in its column 'Eng Klack fir d'Sprooch', published in various daily newspapers,

<sup>107</sup> J. Hess, *Die Sprache der Luxemburger*, 99.

<sup>108</sup> It seems that Bishop Jean Hengen was rather in favour of the progressive introduction of Luxembourgish, but did not succeed in imposing his views since the majority of the priesthood was hostile to such a move. Interview with Lex Roth, 6 July 2006.

<sup>109</sup> The first members of the committee were René Wirtz (president), abbé Paul Klein (vice-president), Charles Malané and Henri Koenig (secretaries), Claude Bache, Jean Hames, Abbé Jean Leyder, Roger Linster, Abbé Camille Minette, Robert Philippe, Aloyse Raths, Emil Schmit, Emile Steichen, Fél Steinberg and René Schroeder.

<sup>110</sup> *Luxemburger Wort*, 20 May 2006, 32. The Catholic Church of Luxembourg is certainly not "a main way into the up-and-coming language" (*ein Haupteingangstor für die aufsteigende Sprache*), as Gaston Scheidweiler claims: Gaston Scheidweiler, 'Glanz und Elend des Luxemburgischen', in *Muttersprache. Zeitschrift zur Pflege und Erforschung der deutschen Sprache* 98/3 (1988): 243.

<sup>111</sup> For more on these preoccupations with linguistic purity, see Kristine Horner, 'Reimagining the nation: discourses of language purism in Luxembourg', in *Linguistic*

and in *Eis Sprooch*. A special issue, ‘Gréng a rout Leschten’, sought to codify the language, notably by describing it in terms of a contrast with the German ‘other’ and by highlighting the threat which German was still perceived to pose to Luxembourgish: “the school system, the written press and, above all, 25 German TV channels crush our language like a steamroller”.<sup>112</sup> The vivid imagery that can be seen in this description of the German ‘threat’ is, indeed, particularly common amongst defenders of Luxembourgish, and there is a tradition of anthropomorphising Luxembourgish and using evocative language—‘survival’, ‘struggle’, ‘hunting’, ‘killing’—to arouse strong emotional responses despite its unfamiliarity to scholarly interpretations of linguistic evolution. The organisation has recently also been spearheading calls for Luxembourgish to be given the status of a national language in the grand duchy’s Constitution.<sup>113</sup>

*Actioun Lëtzebuergesch* was more profoundly convinced of the close link between language and society than even *Ons Hémecht* at the end of the nineteenth century. As a result, it has not only intervened in purely linguistic issues, but has fostered wider aspirations, such as having a larger political impact on language usage. It is also for that reason that the AL sought to gather as many members as possible, unlike *Ons Hémecht*, which had remained a rather elitist movement. This difference was undoubtedly due to the fact that political life was no longer limited to the elite but involved the masses.

### 3.2. *Language as a Political Tool*

In the 1970s, the state started to involve itself in the issue of language once again. In 1973, a new schoolbook in Luxembourgish was introduced in primary schools, and Luxembourgish appeared again on the curriculum, which was effectively an official accolade for the *Actioun Lëtzebuergesch*.<sup>114</sup> On 10 October 1975, a government decree

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*Purism in the Germanic Languages*. *Studia Linguistica Germanica* 75, ed. Nils Langer and Winifred V. Davies (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2005), 166–185.

<sup>112</sup> “d’Schoul, déi geschriwe Press a vrun allem 25 däitschsproocheg TV-Programme rullen haut iwer eis Sprooch ewéi Dampwalzen,” *Gréng a rout Leschten*, Special Issue of *Eis Sprooch* (1999).

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> ‘10 Joër Actioun Lëtzebuergesch’, *Eis Sprooch* 13 (1981): 4. On the legislative appraisal of the place of Luxembourgish in Luxembourgian schools, see Laura Anda Badea, ‘Die fränkische Sprache in Luxemburg und Lothringen. Sprachplanung und

abolished the 1946 decision in favour of the Margue/Feltes spelling and reintroduced the ‘historical and phonetic spelling’, as used by the Luxembourgish dictionary and the schoolbook *Lëtzebuergesch an der Schoul*.<sup>115</sup> The trigger for the decree was an exhibition on the history of Luxembourgish Dictionary organised by the National Library to mark the publication of its final volume.<sup>116</sup>

The 1975 decree was written by Alain Atten, a civil servant working at the National Archives and a founding member of *Actioun Lëtzebuergesch*.<sup>117</sup> From the 1970s, students at the Institute of Education in Walferdange were able to take classes in Luxembourgish. In 1979, however, debates over a general reformation of secondary school education revealed a sharp political divide. The bill was introduced by a coalition government composed of socialists and liberals and did not envisage making Luxembourgish one of the compulsory languages to be taught. It was only due to lobbying by the AL and opposition parties—the CSV, SPD and the *Enrôlés de Force*<sup>118</sup>—that the legislation proposed to “make provision for the study of the Luxembourgish language within the framework of the compulsory study of German or within the framework of compulsory options.”<sup>119</sup> The amendment proposed by MP Fernand Boden to make Luxembourgish compulsory was rejected by a majority of one (30 to 29 votes).<sup>120</sup>

These are just two small examples of a more serious trend that shows that the state was adopting a more and more interventionist approach to Luxembourgish. This approach will be examined in more detail in the following sections in relation to three themes: the law of

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ihre Auswirkung auf den öffentlichen Schulunterricht’ (Unpublished master’s thesis, Universität des Saarlandes, 2007). On the use of Luxembourgish, Badea claims that nowadays “das außerplanmäßige Vorkommen des Luxemburgischen in Grundschulen tabuisiert wird.”

<sup>115</sup> *Régime des langues et orthographe luxembourgeoise* (Luxembourg: Ministère d’État, 1989), 4.

<sup>116</sup> *Den Neie Lëtzebuenger Dixonär 1950–1975* (Luxembourg: Section de linguistique, de folklore et de toponymie de l’Institut grand-ducal, 1975).

<sup>117</sup> ANL, MCULT, box 1033, letter from 23 July 1975 by Raymond Weber, secondary school teacher working for the Ministry of Culture, to Alain Atten.

<sup>118</sup> An organisation of war veterans who had been forcefully enrolled in the German army during the occupation.

<sup>119</sup> *ChD. Session ordinaire 1978–79*, 21 March 1979 (Luxembourg, 1979), 4130.

<sup>120</sup> Boden’s motion was supported by his own party, the CSV, by the SPD and by the Communist Party (opposition), while Socialist and Liberal MPs (majority) voted against it.

1984, language and the politics of heritage, and language as a tool of immigration policy.

### 3.2.1. A 'National Language' by Law (1984)

While the prestige of Luxembourgish greatly increased from the 1970s onwards, it was largely due to an outside influence that Luxembourgish was made a 'national language' by law. In 1980, a far-right German newspaper, the *Deutsche Nationalzeitung*, published an article on the *Enrôlés de force*, and declared that

The German dialect has been declared a Luxembourgish language. The population, however, speaks and reads German. Luxembourgian children are being taught in German, but are swotting up on French from as early as the second grade in order to understand, as subjects, the official language of the authorities.<sup>121</sup>

Following the media unrest which had fed by other articles published in German newspapers, several Members of Parliament seized upon the issue and submitted motions in Parliament demanding that Luxembourgish be declared the national language. With the exception of the Communist Party, all parties supported one or another of these motions.<sup>122</sup>

Up until then, the position of Luxembourgish had not been defined by a specific law. For twenty years, the language had crept into the body of law as a result of the gradual increase in the recognition it was granted. The law of 10 June 1980, governing access to the teaching profession, declared that "nobody is to be admitted to pedagogical training, unless he shows evidence of a sufficient proficiency in the country's three customary languages (French, German and Luxembourgish)."<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> "Der deutsche Dialekt wurde als luxemburgische Sprache deklariert. Die Bevölkerung aber redet deutsch und liest deutsch. Die luxemburgischen Kinder werden in Deutsch unterrichtet, müssen aber schon ab dem zweiten Schuljahr Französisch büffeln, damit sie als Untertanen die Amtssprache der Obrigkeit verstehen", Quoted in *ChD. Session ordinaire 1979-1980* (Luxembourg, 1980), 2217.

<sup>122</sup> The first motion was signed by Joseph Weirich (*Enrôlés de force*), Jean Gremling (PSI), Edouard Juncker (CSV), Carlo Meintz (DP) et Lulling (SPD), the second motion was signed by Robert Krieps (LSAP), Bernard Berg (LSAP), Jean-Pierre Glesener (CSV), René Hengel (LSAP) and Victor Braun (DP) and the third by Viviane Reding (CSV), Jean Gremling (PSI), Jean Hamilius (DP), Lydie Schmit (LSAP) and Joseph Weirich (*Enrôlés de force*).

<sup>123</sup> "Nul ne peut être admis au stage pédagogique s'il ne fait preuve... d'une connaissance suffisante des trois langues usuelles du pays (le français, l'allemand et le luxembourgeois)." *Memorial A* (Luxembourg, 1980) 847.

This was not the first time that Parliament showed an interest in the official status of the local language. During a debate in 1977 on the implementation of a European directive on the free circulation of physicians and vets, Luxembourgish was already at the centre of the discussion. The directive stipulated that “the member states should make sure...that the beneficiaries have acquired the linguistic skills needed to exercise their profession in the host country, in their own interest and in the interests of their patients.”<sup>124</sup> Some Members of Parliament found this formulation too vague. They introduced a specific clause that prescribed knowledge of the Luxembourgish language and explicitly made provisions for civil or penal sanctions in the event that the clause was not respected. This triggered a response from the European Commission, which asked the government not to include the clause on several occasions. It also prompted a parliamentary question in the European Parliament which treated Luxembourgish as being of the same status as Alsatian, and thereby provoked much protest in Luxembourg. The Luxembourgian government then introduced a *pro forma* modification: Luxembourgish was no longer a requirement for the authorisation of medical practice, but a mastery of the language remained “an essential condition”. Ignorance of the language continued to constitute “professional misconduct susceptible to civil and penal disciplinary sanctions.”<sup>125</sup> The assessment of language skills was left to the medical and veterinary colleges, which enabled those two bodies to exercise collective control over the influx of foreign medical doctors.

At the beginning of the 1980s, another question was being raised—whether the Luxembourgish government should support idioms spoken in neighbouring regions and closely related to Luxembourgish. The initiative came from a CSV Member of Parliament, Erna Hennicot-Schoepges, the future Minister of Culture. During the debates on a cultural agreement with Germany in January 1982, she asked for “a little propaganda for Luxembourgish in our border areas” (*an eise Grenzgebidd e bëssche Propaganda fir d’Lëtzebuergesch*). Hennicot-

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<sup>124</sup> “que les Etats membres font en sorte que...les bénéficiaires acquièrent dans leur intérêt et dans celui de leurs patients, les connaissances linguistiques nécessaires à l’exercice de leur activité professionnelle dans le pays d’accueil.” URL: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31980L0154:FR:NOT> (last accessed 16 December 2009).

<sup>125</sup> “une faute professionnelle susceptible d’être sanctionnée disciplinairement, civilement et pénalement.” Dispatch from the Minister of State to the Speaker on 26 May 1982.

Schoepges was thinking of the Arlon, Thionville and Eifel regions. It is interesting to note that the AL was, by contrast, only interested in the territories to the west of Luxembourg, in Belgium, while the idiom spoken by Germans living on the eastern border was considered to be a German dialect. Here, the state border was seen as a linguistic border. Accepting these German dialects as part of the wider world of Luxembourgish would have stressed the linguistic proximity between Luxembourgish and German. In the west, by contrast, the linguistic field was allowed to cross national borders, because the extreme minority status of the dialects in Belgium did not represent any dangers. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Colette Flesch, replied to MP Hennicot-Schoepges in a prudent manner. She was opposed to any “propaganda” but declared herself ready to “start some initiative of this type [in favour of Luxembourgish] and to render the services such initiatives might call for.”<sup>126</sup> Subsequently, however, the Luxembourgian government appears to have been rather reluctant to commit itself. One of the reasons for this seems to have been the fear of supporting nationalist or even far-right movements.<sup>127</sup>

These parliamentary debates give a good idea of the official positions of the main political groups on the language issue, and of the main images used to underpin the ‘story’ of the Luxembourgish language. Even though all the parties initially supported the establishment of Luxembourgish as a ‘national language’, the fact that two years were needed for the special committee to present a report shows the difficulties inherent to a legal definition of the status of the language. The debates in the committee, as well as the two readings of the bill in Parliament were surrounded by public controversy.<sup>128</sup> The latter revolved around the question of the extent to which the use of Luxembourgish could be imposed on the state’s administrative departments. A majority of committee members recommended a maximalist approach: civil servants should be obliged to reply to a letter written in Luxembourgish in the same language. However, in the Council of State (*Conseil d’Etat*)—a kind of Upper House, where Luxembourgish

<sup>126</sup> “engager toute initiative de ce genre [en faveur du luxembourgeois] et pour prêter les services auxquels de telles initiatives pourraient faire appel.” *ChD. Session ordinaire 1981–82* (Luxembourg, 1982), 1891, 1897.

<sup>127</sup> Interview with Guy Dockendorf, advisor to the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education, 18 January 2006.

<sup>128</sup> The presence of Prime Minister Pierre Werner in the meetings of this committee shows the importance given to this question.

remains not used for plenary sessions to this day<sup>129</sup>—the government and a few MPs (especially those of the Democratic Party, historically linked to the Francophile liberal bourgeoisie) were in favour of a minimalist approach: French and German should be the only written languages of administration. In the end, a compromise which stipulated that Luxembourgish should be used “as much as possible” constituted a victory for the minimalists, given the vagueness of the formulation. This decision also revealed the gap between the statement that “the most important attribute of our identity... is our Luxembourgish language”<sup>130</sup> (Robert Krieps—LSAP) and the difficulties of transforming this essentially spoken language into an administrative, written language.

The arguments put forward during the discussions surrounding the 1984 law are highly revealing. Firstly, the quest for legitimacy was not so much pursued by using linguistic arguments than by referring to historical imagery. The so-called ‘referendum’ of 10 October 1941 was mentioned in almost every speech. When Prime Minister Pierre Werner first expressed his position on the motions introduced by the Members of Parliament, he considered it obvious that this date was central for the reasons

1. That Luxembourgish is our national language, 2. That it is demanded that the Luxembourgish language be fixed by law. We do know by now that Luxembourgish is our national language. Those who have lived through the war and 10 October 1941 in particular here in Luxembourg know that.<sup>131</sup>

Most of the subsequent speakers also referred to the same date. Other traditional ideas reactivated during the discussions were the alleged proximity of Luxembourgers to Transylvanians by the Communist MP Aloyse Bisdorff, the notion that Luxembourgish was more ancient

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<sup>129</sup> The Council of State was opposed to the first article, which declared Luxembourgish to be the national language. The committee’s report was written in French and not in Luxembourgish, despite the fact that the discussions had been conducted in the latter.

<sup>130</sup> “dee wichtigsten Attribut vun eiser Identitéit... as eis Lëtzebuenger Sprooch” *ChD. Session ordinaire 1983–84* (Luxembourg, 1984), 2013.

<sup>131</sup> “1. Dass d’Lëtzebuenger Sprooch ons national Sprooch as, 2. Dass verlangt gët, dass dat duerch Gesetz soll verankert gin. Mir wësse schon haut, dass Lëtzebuergesch ons national Sprooch as. Déi déi de Krich a besonnesch den 10. Oktober 1941 erlieft hun hei zu Lëtzebuerg, déi wëssen.” *ChD. Session ordinaire 1979–1980* (Luxembourg, 1980), 2215.

than High German by MP Pol Wagener (CSV), and the triad of Dicks, Lentz and Rodange.

Secondly, if all the speakers agreed to assert the importance of Luxembourgish as a constituent element of national identity, they also emphasised the importance of trilingualism in defining a Luxembourgish citizen. In this vein, Viviane Reding, the *rapporteur* of the law, stated that “one may thus record without exaggeration that Luxembourgian national identity is not solely based on the Luxembourgish language, but that trilingualism—so typical of Luxembourgers—forms the basis of our national guise.”<sup>132</sup> The parliamentary debate and the resulting law therefore illustrate Daniel Spizzo’s thesis (following Benedict Anderson and Gilbert Trausch) that it is “the apparent ambiguity between particularism and universalism” which characterises debates over national identity.<sup>133</sup> If the mastery of several languages is often highlighted as a Luxembourgian exception, it is often forgotten that this is not only not true for other European countries, but that it is also the norm in Africa and Asia: as McColl has put it, “societal multilingualism is the norm—monolingualism is unusual”.<sup>134</sup>

Thirdly, the status of Luxembourgish was discussed with regard to stereotypes of ‘the Prussian’ which were overlaid with derogatory overtones (e.g. by Henri Koch, or Georges Margue).<sup>135</sup> Robert Krieps phrased it most explicitly: “How does it help us if we later claim to speak and write Luxembourgish, but in the end it is Prussian?”<sup>136</sup> Besides, Luxembourgish was not considered to be strong enough to reverse that trend of germanisation. Indeed, several MPs stressed the importance of the French language in maintaining a balance between

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<sup>132</sup> “Et kann een also ouni ze iwwerdreiwen festhalen, dass d’Lëtzebuenger national Identitéit nët nëmmen vum Lëtzebuergeschen aleng geschafe gët, ma dass déi fir d’Lëtzebuenger typesch Dräisproochegkeet d’Grondlag vun eisem nationale Gesiicht as”. *ChD. Session ordinaire 1982–83* (Luxembourg, 1983), 5181.

<sup>133</sup> Daniel Spizzo, ‘Entre particularisme et universalisme: le langage national au Luxembourg de 1830 à 1939’, in *Régions, nations, mondialisation. Aspects politiques, économiques, culturels*, ed. Jean-Paul Lehnens, Guy Schuller, Janine Goedert (Luxembourg: Centre universitaire, 1996), 34.

<sup>134</sup> Robert McColl Millar, *Language, Nation and Power. An Introduction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005), 19.

<sup>135</sup> *Luxemburger Wörterbuch. Band III* (Luxembourg: Linden, 1965–1970), 381.

<sup>136</sup> “Wat hëlleft dat eis, wa mir herno soen mir géingen Lëtzebuergesch schwätzen a schreiwen an en fin de compte as et preisesch.” *ChD. Session ordinaire 1983–84* (Luxembourg, 1984), 2018.



the three languages, a balance which was ultimately judged to be the best way of protecting Luxembourgish.

In the end, support for Luxembourgish followed two lines of reasoning, one ideological (represented by those who defended a maximalist vision or who were part of the CSV) and the other generational (comprising those who had lived through the war). Following the media agitation over the articles published in Germany, some associations that linked the defence of Luxembourgish with xenophobic ideas appeared, but the parliamentary debate was characterised by its great reserve on the subject. Nonetheless, two MPs, Josy Eyschen (DP) and Erna Hennicot-Schoepges (CSV) mentioned domination by foreign influences (*Iwwerfriemung*) in their speeches in support of the law.<sup>137</sup>

Passed on 24 February 1984, the language law prescribed the following:

Article 1—National language

The national language of the Luxembourgers is Luxembourgish

Article 2—Language of legislation

Legislative acts and their regulations are written in French. When accompanied by a translation, only the French text is valid. . . .

Article 3—Administrative and judicial languages

In administrative matters, contentious or not, and in judicial matters, French, German or Luxembourgish may be used. . . .

Article 4—Administrative requests

When an inquiry is written in Luxembourgish, French or German, the administration has to reply in the language chosen by the applicant if feasible.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>137</sup> *ChD. Session ordinaire 1983–84*, 6 July 1983 and 7 July 1983 (Luxembourg, 1984), 5221 and 5260.

<sup>138</sup> “Art. 1<sup>er</sup>—Langue nationale.  
La langue nationale des Luxembourgeois est le luxembourgeois  
Art. 2.—Langue de la législation  
Les actes législatifs et leurs règlements sont rédigés en français. Lorsque les actes législatifs et réglementaires sont accompagnés d’une traduction, seul le texte français fait foi. . . .  
Art. 3.—Langues administratives et judiciaires  
En matière administrative, contentieuse ou non contentieuse, et en matière judiciaire, il peut être fait usage des langues française, allemande ou luxembourgeoise. . . .  
Art. 4. Requêtes administratives  
Lorsqu’une enquête est rédigée en luxembourgeois, en français ou en allemand, l’administration doit se servir, dans la mesure du possible, pour sa réponse de la langue choisie par le requérant.”  
*Régime des langues et orthographe luxembourgeoise*, 3.

The law was passed by 48 votes to three (belonging to MPs of the CSV, in favour of a maximalist vision), with five abstentions (four of which were Liberals who believed the law was going too far, since it was introducing Luxembourgish as an administrative language). Apart from a few isolated voices, there was no opposition in principle.<sup>139</sup> After the law was passed, the use of Luxembourgish in Parliament increased to 50% in the 1970s, and on to 90% in the 1990s: French was the only other major language used, as German had hardly been used at all since 1945.<sup>140</sup>

The 1984 vote was also destined to send a message abroad, although it did not modify the status of Luxembourgish within the European Union. At the early stages of the formation of Europe in the 1950s, nobody thought of placing Luxembourgish alongside the five other languages. This did not change until 2008, when the European Union counted 23 official languages. From the 1970s until 2009, however, some took issue with this situation. In 1972, Joseph Lucius (CSV) gave the first speech in Luxembourgish while sitting as a Member of the European Parliament, followed ten years later by another member of the CSV, Nicolas Estgen.<sup>141</sup> These two speeches had a mostly symbolic value, since in the absence of interpreters they remained incomprehensible to almost their entire audience. Due to the *Lingua* programme, Luxembourgish benefited from a certain recognition within the European Community in 1989,<sup>142</sup> though the move was thought insufficient by some. At the beginning of the 1990s, the Federation of the Luxembourgian Resistance Movements (*Unio'n*) launched an initiative

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<sup>139</sup> Fernand Hoffmann is undoubtedly the best-known opponent of the 1984 law. According to Hoffmann, Luxembourg would have risked linguistic war if Luxembourgish were to be more clearly codified. For Hoffmann's main criticisms, see Fernand Hoffmann, '1839–1989: Fast 150 Jahre amtlicher Zwei- und privater Einsprachigkeit in Luxemburg. Mit einem nationalsozialistischen Zwischenspiel', in *Germanisch und Romanisch in Belgien und Luxemburg*, ed. Wolfgang Dahmen, Günter Holtus, Johannes Kramer, Michael Metzeltin, Christian Schmitt, Otto Winkelmann (Tübingen: G. Narr, 1992), 149–164.

<sup>140</sup> Fernande Krier, 'Idiomverwendung in der luxemburgischen Abgeordneten-kammer', *Zeitschrift für Dialektologie und Linguistik* 66/1 (1999): 282.

<sup>141</sup> *Eis Sprooch* (1982) 47.

<sup>142</sup> Manfred Peters, 'Lëtzebuergesch: von der Mundart zur Nationalsprache. Soziolinguistische und pragmatische Aspekte einer komplexen Entwicklung,' in *Lëtzebuergesch. Entwicklungstendenzen und Forschungsperspektiven einer jungen Sprache. Beiträge zur luxemburgischen Sprach- und Volkskunde* 33 (Luxembourg: Institut Grand-Ducal, Section de linguistique, d'éthnologie et d'onomastique / Mersch: CNL, 2005), 39.

seeking recognition of Luxembourgish as an official European language, an initiative that was taken up in Parliament by the Liberal politician Josy Simon. The government, however, refused to comply, arguing that it would be impossible to convince other countries to carry the expenses such a measure would entail. Furthermore, it emphasised that “in the grand duchy the Luxembourgish language is not used for official deeds.”<sup>143</sup> In 2004 and 2005, the debate was rekindled following the recognition of Maltese (which is spoken as a first language by 400,000 people) and Irish/Gaelic (70,000 speakers), and following a decision taken on 13 June 2005 by EU Foreign Secretaries regarding the recognition of regional languages. Today, the Luxembourgian government actively supports the European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages.<sup>144</sup> The Luxembourg section of this NGO has a particularly well-developed infrastructure which organises language courses and evening lectures thanks to the House of Languages (*Sproochenhaus*).

If the recognition of Luxembourgish by the EU has been slow to come, the language increasingly became a tool in the political management of immigration. Indeed, the law on Luxembourgish nationality and naturalisation of 11 December 1986 explicitly addressed the question of assimilation, a concept that was completely absent from the debate in the nineteenth century, and which had appeared only in the 1930s.<sup>145</sup> In 1986, the government did not follow the maximalist advice of the Council of State, which proposed that nationalisation be denied “if [an applicant] is not able to prove, with the help of certificates, for example, that he has a basic command of Luxembourgish depending on his circumstances.” Luxembourgish gradually became an important element in the process of nationalisation. The law passed in July 2001 left even fewer doubts: nationalisation is to be refused if the applicant “does not have at least a basic knowledge of the Luxembourgish language, supported by certificates and official documents.” Luxembourgish had now clearly become a national attribute, which distinguished Luxembourgers from non-Luxembourgers.<sup>146</sup> In other words, “if the

<sup>143</sup> *ChD. Session ordinaire 1991–92* (Luxembourg, 1992), 158.

<sup>144</sup> This lobby group only mentions two governments on their website: the Irish government and the Luxembourgian government, URL: <http://www.eblul.org> (last accessed 4 July 2006).

<sup>145</sup> This paragraph is entirely based on D. Scuto, ‘Qu’est-ce qu’un Luxembourgeois?’, 92–94.

<sup>146</sup> Since 1991, the *Centre des langues Luxembourg* is responsible for the verification of a person’s knowledge of Luxembourgish; a Grand-Ducal regulation (dated 6 July

natives gave up speaking ‘*Letzeburgesch*’ ... they would lose [sic] their last privileges.”<sup>147</sup> In the discussions during the legislative process, the linguistic situation, the politics of immigration and asylum rights were often bundled together under the same banner.<sup>148</sup> Language became an instrument for power and state domination; it became an instrument for political legitimisation.

### 3.2.2. *Language and Heritage Politics*

From the 1990s onwards, and particularly at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the *Service des Sites et Monuments Nationaux* (SSMN) has developed a high-profile role as a defender of the language. This institution, which is in charge of national architectural heritage, became one of the main voices in support of national identity, notably under Director Georges Calteux.<sup>149</sup> At the turn of the century, the SSMN argued that the language was part of a heritage that needed to be protected. This conservative vision of linguistic development can be traced back to the nineteenth-century connection between monument and language. The SSMN went on to develop a touring exhibition called *Lëtzebuurger Haus*, presenting the history of Luxembourg and its present-day situation.<sup>150</sup>

The new interest in the language has also been marked by the reactivation of two images that are very prominent in modern collective memory: ‘Luxembourgers’ in Transylvania and in the United States of America. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the state launched ambitious projects to highlight the ‘family connection’ with these two regions, a connection that is justified by a shared language, among other things. The SSMN financed a ‘cultural itinerary’ and the

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1994) defines “certificates and diplomas certifying the competence in communication in the Luxembourgish language.” See L. A. Badea, ‘Die fränkische Sprache in Luxemburg und Lothringen’, 85.

<sup>147</sup> George Erasmus and Alison Koch-Kent, *How to remain what you are* (Luxembourg: Lux/Edit, 1989), 119.

<sup>148</sup> Cf. for instance a series of articles in the journal of the *Enrôlés de force*, written by Jos Benoît, secretary of the Dudelange section: *Les Sacrifiés* 4 and 5 (2001).

<sup>149</sup> On the connection between the protection of heritage and the building of identity in Luxembourg, see Simone Weny, ‘Patrimoine architectural et identité. Les députés luxembourgeois et les monuments historiques (une analyse des valeurs attribuées aux monuments du milieu du XIX<sup>e</sup> au début du XX<sup>e</sup> s.)’, a paper given at the workshop ‘Constructions identitaires: art, architecture et patrimoine’ at the University of Luxembourg on 10 March 2006.

<sup>150</sup> *Rapport d’activité 2001 du Ministère de la Culture*, 29.

construction of a ‘Casa Luxemburg’ in Sibiu. As European Capital of Culture in 2007, Luxembourg distinguished itself from previous holders of this title not only by letting trans-border regions participate in its cultural programme, but also by forging a close relationship with the Romanian town of Sibiu in the Saxon region of Transylvania. Despite the fact that the imaginary connection linking Luxembourg and Sibiu had been debunked as pure mythology during the 1950s, the supposed historical link between the two regions was nevertheless included in the initial presentation of the 2007 project.<sup>151</sup> Even the highly respected and scholarly *Centre National de Littérature* (CNL) has underlined this alleged relationship. Its 2000/2001 exhibition ‘Luxembourgish—a tongue which, of all, surround us most’ (*Lëtzebuergesch—eng Ried, déi vun allen am meeschten ëm ons kléngt*) included a section entitled ‘Where Luxembourgish is still spoken today’ (*Wou haut nach Lëtzebuergesch geschwat gët*). This part of the exhibition started by presenting Transylvania as such a region. Furthermore, the CNL has installed interactive maps and audio devices in one of its buildings, which feature that region of Eastern Europe without any indications of the problems that such a connection implies.<sup>152</sup>

At the same time, the SSMN launched the (re)construction of a ‘Luxembourgian house’ in the United States, the Roots and Leaves Museum. Just as in the case of Transylvania, the Luxembourgian authorities resorted to a recurring topos in Luxembourg’s collective memory, the notion of a small country which in reality is much bigger. In the United States as in Romania, the SSMN presents Luxembourgish as part of a common heritage in order to justify its projects. The protection of the language, a “heritage in danger of extinction”,<sup>153</sup> plays a very important role in justifying the efforts made by the Luxembourgian state in Wisconsin. The linguistic, ethnological and onomastic department of the Grand-Ducal Institute launched a project in Wisconsin in 2000,

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<sup>151</sup> Report on the Luxembourgian and Romanian nominations for the European Capital of Culture 2007. Issued by The Selection Panel for the European Capital of Culture (ECOC); URL: [www.europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/other\\_actions/cap\\_europ/pdf\\_word/report\\_select\\_panel2007.pdf](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/other_actions/cap_europ/pdf_word/report_select_panel2007.pdf) (last accessed 12 April 2006). Indeed, these continuities remain strongly anchored in the Luxembourgish consciousness, as illustrated by reports published in the press during the grand duke’s visit to Romania in March 2004. See Fernand Fehlen, ‘Urheimat Grossregion: Siebenbürgen und Luxemburg’, *d’Letzebuurger Land*, 11 June 2004, 15–16.

<sup>152</sup> This ‘parlodrome’ is also used by the government to introduce itself abroad: *Rapport d’activité 2001 du Ministère de la Culture*, 82.

<sup>153</sup> *Rapport d’activité 2000 du Ministère de la Culture*, 129.

with the objective of gathering linguistic and ethnological data for a research project, ‘Audio Archives of the Luxembourgish Language’ (*Archives sonores de la langue luxembourgeoise—ASoLux*). Unlike in Transylvania, this research was based on existing (though very distant) family ties between the inhabitants of both countries, following the emigration of several thousands of Luxembourgers to the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century.

### 3.2.3. *Language and Immigration Policies*

The debate on immigration took a new turn during the social and economic crisis at the end of the 1970s. At the same time, the ongoing European integration process rendered the question of non-nationals and the EU citizens’ right to vote ever more topical. Numerous ‘letters to the editor’—which in Luxembourg represent quite a particular form of communication<sup>154</sup>—started to voice complaints about supposed domination by foreign influences. In these letters, language was often considered to be a means of preserving national characteristics, of distinguishing ‘what is Luxembourgian’ from ‘what is not Luxembourgian’. Around that time, political parties also began to forge a connection between the idea that there might be ‘too many foreigners’ and policies in support of the Luxembourgish language. Thus the Social-Democratic Party (SDP) wrote in 1974 under the heading “Are the Luxembourgish people threatened by extinction?” that it

is concerned about the ‘overpopulation by foreigners’, about Luxembourgian society’s ‘capacity’ for integration, and pronounces itself in favour of the protection of Luxembourg’s linguistic heritage and national values.<sup>155</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the *Actioun Lëtzebuergesch* was forced to take a position in this debate, in which language played a central role. When Emil Schmit, one of its founding members published a xenophobic article

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<sup>154</sup> Letters to the editor represent an important medium in Luxembourg. Given the small size of the country, a considerable proportion of the population participates in writing these, often voicing concerns not addressed by any of the newspaper’s articles. These letters therefore create a forum, which sometimes perpetuates debates between several writers over a couple of weeks.

<sup>155</sup> “Le parti social-démocrate...s’inquiète de la ‘surpopulation étrangère’, du ‘potentiel’ d’intégration de la société luxembourgeoise, se prononce pour la sauvegarde du patrimoine linguistique luxembourgeois et des valeurs nationales.” Quoted by Michel Delvaux, *Structures socio-politiques du Luxembourg* (Luxembourg: Institut universitaire international, 1977), 65.

in February 1982, tensions appeared within the organisation.<sup>156</sup> In the debate about non-nationals' voting rights, the AL took up an intermediary position and held back from outright opposition. According to the AL, learning a language was evidence of one's will to integrate and was thus central to integration policies.<sup>157</sup> Some of its members, however, found this position too accommodating and, as a consequence, felt it to be unacceptable. In October 1984, the secessionists founded the *Actioun Letzebuergesch Identitéit*, later transformed into the *Federatioun Eist Land-Eis Sprooch* (FELES).<sup>158</sup>

Two of the five founding members of the original *Actioun Lëtzebuergesch* were among the founders of FELES. Emil Schmit and Charles Malané openly laid claim to Lucien Koenig's heritage and their journal bore the same name as Koenig's. However, FELES never carried the same social and political weight as the AL, even though it initially benefited from the support of several elected members of the CSV like Jean Spautz.<sup>159</sup> Even more so than the AL, FELES defined the language as being essential for the continuity of Luxembourgers and their country, especially in a Europe and in a world that are heavily marked by globalisation. Following some internal tensions, FELES imploded at the end of the 1980s, and gave rise to extreme-right parties like the *Greng Nationalbewegung/National Bewegung* and the *Eislecker Fraiheitsbewegung*.

*Actioun Solidaritéit* was another organisation which associated the defence of the language with the exclusion of foreigners. It was founded in 1988 by—among others—Hilda Rau-Scholtes, the widow of an MP and a member of the CSV, and George Als, Director of the National Office of Statistics (STATEC). Its ideology combined a commitment to the defence of Luxembourgish with anti-Communism, and

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<sup>156</sup> This was not the first time that Emil Schmit had displayed a certain disdain for foreigners. In the discussion about Luxembourgish in the Church in 1981, for example, he expressed his surprise about that absence “wou et jo méiglech as, och an Negerdialekten z'iwwersetzen, déi manner Ausdrocksméiglechketen hu wéi mir?” Emil Schmit, ‘10 Joër Actioun Lëtzebuergesch,’ *Eis Sprooch* (1981): 36.

<sup>157</sup> ‘Resolution’, *Eis Sprooch* 14 (1982): 46.

<sup>158</sup> On this split, and for more details on FELES, see Lucien Blau, *Histoire de l'extrême-droite au Grand-Duché de Luxembourg au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Esch-sur-Alzette: Le Phare, 1998), 519–554. The discussion of FELES in this chapter has been largely based on Blau's study.

<sup>159</sup> On the VIPs (beside Jean Spautz also *Caritas* director Paul Klein) in FELES, see ‘Feles-Zulauf’, *Revue* 4 (1988): 22.

references to the historiographical myth of the 'foreign dominations' with opposition to non-nationals' voting rights.<sup>160</sup>

Action in support of the language was thus for the second time this that century the breeding ground for an exclusive definition of national identity. Luxembourgish became a tool for excluding certain people from Luxembourgian society. While *Actioun Lëtzebuergesch* was beginning to see language as a potential means of furthering social integration and came to view language classes as a means of including non-nationals, other movements saw the status of Luxembourgish as justification for a policy of exclusion.

For many political leaders, Luxembourgish has become central to definitions of national identity, as can be illustrated by integration policies. It is important to recall that this was not always the case and that for a long time language did not play this role. This is also mirrored elsewhere in Europe: neither German immigration in the nineteenth century, nor Italian immigration between the wars was controlled by using language as a criterion for selection. It was not until the end of the 1960s that Luxembourgish started to be thought of as an aid to integration. The *Actioun Lëtzebuergesch* had stressed the importance of language to integration politics ever since its creation. Although their language courses received financial state support from the start, public authorities were seemingly reluctant to insist too much on teaching Luxembourgish to immigrants for several decades. The first manuals for learning Luxembourgish relied on private initiatives: in 1965, Lucien Ludwig and Henri Muller wrote *Lëtzebuergesch wéi ech et schwätzen*. A few years later, in 1973, Jules Christophory, the Director of the National Library, published *Sot et op lëtzebuergesch* and *Mir schwätze lëtzebuergesch*, which were soon followed by the publication of the AL's *Kommt mir léieren Lëtzebuergesch* in 1975. It was not until 1979 that the Ministry of Education and the public Centre for Languages (*Centre des Langues*) started to publish teaching tools with the series *Mir schwätze mateneen* and *Lëtzebuergesch fir all Dag*.<sup>161</sup> This was linked to a rise in demand for languages, as mastery of Luxembourgish

<sup>160</sup> See the small file in ANL, MCULT, box 981. In June 1991, the organisation handed out 10,000 leaflets entitled 'Luxemburg: auf dem Weg zur Fremdherrschaft?' On 'foreign domination', see the first four chapters in this volume.

<sup>161</sup> J. Christophory, *Précis d'histoire de la littérature en langue luxembourgeoise*, 117. These Luxembourgish classes are now considered part of collective memory, as illustrated by Andy Bausch's 2004 film *La revanche* and his 2004 short film *Language School*.



came to be seen as something of an asset in the job market, even if French (and English) are more commonly used in many fields. With the economic boom Luxembourg has known over the past twenty years, the job market has expanded considerably. It therefore comes as no surprise that Luxembourgish classes are increasingly popular: in 1980/81 there were 450 adults following classes, while this number had risen to 2,435 by 2002/03.<sup>162</sup>

This last example shows how much the role of the language has changed, due to both demands coming from the growing and very heterogeneous foreign-born population and the state's efforts to promote the language. In his 1994 governmental declaration, Prime Minister Jacques Santer asserted that the "government will make sure that the cultural identity of the nation is guaranteed: it will attach increased importance to the Luxembourgish language and literature."<sup>163</sup> Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker was no less concerned to reflect this ongoing transformation in a second declaration given in August 2004. The passage devoted to the language was relatively brief, but it was nevertheless given a central role in integration policies.<sup>164</sup> While Luxembourgish has since become a recurrent point of reference for politicians,<sup>165</sup> the same is true for associations and NGOs that deal with integration policies and asylum seekers.<sup>166</sup> This growing importance of the language for integration policies needs to be placed in a larger context: similar policies have been implemented in other countries, such as the Netherlands or in Flanders, where mastery of Dutch has become a condition of access to social benefit and a requirement for the acquisition of citizenship. Overall, emphasis is no longer put on

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<sup>162</sup> Christiane Tonnar-Meyer, 'Le Lëtzebuergesch comme facteur d'intégration dans l'enseignement public', in *Actes du cycle de conférences Lëtzebuergesch : quo vadis?* (Mamer: Melusina, 2005), 85.

<sup>163</sup> "le gouvernement veillera à ce que l'identité culturelle nationale soit garantie: il attachera une importance accrue à la langue et à la littérature luxembourgeoise" Government declaration of 22 July 1994. See, document C-1994-U-002-0006 on the website of Luxembourg Parliament URL: <http://www.chd.lu> (last accessed 16 December 2009).

<sup>164</sup> A declaration by Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker on the government's programme (4 August 2004). URL: <http://www.gouvernement.lu/gouvernement/programme/declaration2004/index.html> (last accessed 21 January 2009).

<sup>165</sup> Cf. François Biltgen's press conference on the learning of the Luxembourgish language through the use of IT (1 December 2005). URL: [http://www.gouvernement.lu/salle\\_presse/actualite/2005/12/01biltgen/index.html](http://www.gouvernement.lu/salle_presse/actualite/2005/12/01biltgen/index.html) (last accessed 16 December 2009).

<sup>166</sup> Cf. the press communication issued by the Association for the Support of Immigrant Workers (*Association de Soutien aux Travailleurs immigrés*, ASTI) on 9 January 2006 (<http://www.asti.lu/?p=91>; last accessed 16 December 2009).

social and economic conditions, but rather on language as a cultural prerequisite. In Luxembourg, these policies have been introduced at a time when French is the most widely-known language in the country: “96% of inhabitants claim to use French more or less regularly, followed by German and Luxembourgish with almost equal figures, 81% for German and 80% for Luxembourgish.”<sup>167</sup>

The increase in esteem for Luxembourgish has been noticeable since the beginning of the 1990s. It has also required the development of descriptive and/or normative grammars, as well as specific teaching methods, two elements that have contributed to the development of standardised Luxembourgish.<sup>168</sup> A range of teaching aids have been published in the past fifteen years, culminating in 2005 with the publication of the first ‘*Bescherelle*’<sup>169</sup> and of a new grammar book. Both were published by the Ministry of Education.<sup>170</sup>

### 3.3. *Luxembourgish in the Media and the Arts*

During the inter-war period, Luxembourgish had gradually become a language spoken on the radio. As in other countries, television and radio in Luxembourg possess an important influence on the use of language and enhance the value of the vernacular. Unfortunately, the influence of these media has not yet been studied to any great extent, partly due to the absence of an appropriate methodology.<sup>171</sup>

A short daily radio programme in Luxembourgish was first broadcast by *Radio-Television Luxembourg* (RTL) in 1959. If in neighbouring countries television broke through in the 1950s, in Luxembourg a weekly programme called *Hei elei, kuck elei* was aired only in 1968. In the 1990s, local radio and television underwent a radical change. The liberalisation of the airwaves led to the creation of several radio stations which broadcast in Luxembourgish. Prominent among these stations is 100,7—a state financed station—the official mission of which

<sup>167</sup> ‘Un sondage sur les parlers au Luxembourg’, *forum* 177 (1997): 20–23.

<sup>168</sup> Peter Gilles and Claudine Moulin, ‘Luxembourgish’, in *Germanic Standardizations—Past to Present*, ed. Ana Deumert and Wim Vandenbussche (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2003), 306.

<sup>169</sup> Reference book for the conjugation of verbs.

<sup>170</sup> *D’Lëtzebuenger Verben* (Luxembourg: MENFP, 2005) and *Grammaire de la langue luxembourgeoise* (Luxembourg: MENFP, 2005). For Jérôme Lulling and François Schanen’s biting critique of this grammar, see URL: <http://webplaza.pt.lu/jlulling/schanen/schanenvoix.htm> (last accessed on 12 July 2006).

<sup>171</sup> Peter von Polenz, *Deutsche Sprachgeschichte* (Berlin, 1999), 2: 39.

explicitly included the promotion of Luxembourgish. Likewise, RTL began to broadcast a daily television programme in Luxembourgish in 1991, which swiftly attracted a very large audience: in 1992, 81% of television viewers regularly followed this programme.<sup>172</sup>

By contrast, Luxembourgish has remained rather marginal in the written press. In April 1994, German was used in 74% of articles published in Luxembourg's two main daily newspapers: 71.88% in *Luxemburger Wort* (LW) and 77.15% in *tageblatt* (*t*). 25% of articles were in French: 21.35% in LW and 29.25% in *t*, while only 5%–6.77% in LW and 2.27% in *t*—were published in Luxembourgish. Those articles in Luxembourgish were devoted entirely to local news.<sup>173</sup>

Despite the impression left so far, Luxembourgish has not been the exclusive domain of conservative pressure groups such as the AL, or of the public authorities. The language has also been appropriated by left-wing authors since the end of the 1970s. The dialect or the *Mundart* has gained in importance in Luxembourg in the same way as in other areas like Switzerland (e.g. the writings of Eugen Gomringer) or Austria (e.g. Friedrich Achleitner, Gerhard Rühm), although at a slightly later stage. In an article published in 1979, Fernand Hoffmann distinguished three tendencies in this revival of dialects in Europe: a desire to document the language, to provide a political critique of society and to generate controversy.<sup>174</sup> The publication of *Hannert dem Atlantik* by Guy Rewenig in 1985 and of *Schacko Klack* by Roger Manderscheid in 1988 marked the birth of Luxembourg's *Nouveau Roman*. Given the content and the form of those novels, the authors could not be accused of xenophobic narrow-mindedness. For the first time since C. M. Spoo and the *Volksbildungsvereine*, Luxembourgish was associated with something other than national and nationalist movements. If some recent authors, like Guy Rewenig, have taken a firm stand against language and identity being linked too closely,<sup>175</sup> there has been no

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<sup>172</sup> Guy Berg, 'Abschied vom Dialekt. Zur lëtzebuergsprachigen belletristischen Gegenwartsliteratur', in *Lëtzebuergesch* (see note 142), 55.

<sup>173</sup> 'D'Lëtzebuerges Sprooch an eisen Dageszeitungen', *tageblatt*, 21 May 1994, supplement 'Presse à l'école'.

<sup>174</sup> Fernand Hoffmann, 'Dialekt: ein Politikum. Ein indirektes Plaidoyer für ein neues Selbstverständnis der Dialektologie', in *Dialektologie heute. Festschrift für Hélène Palgen*, 30.

<sup>175</sup> Romain Sahr, 'Identität und Fremdheit in der Luxemburger Kinderliteratur', in *Über Grenzen. Literaturen in Luxemburg*, ed. Irmgard Honnef-Becker and Peter Kühn (Esch-sur-Alzette: Phi / Mersch: CNL, 2004), 132.

doubt that this literature constituted a “new stage in the development of Luxembourgish.”<sup>176</sup>

The novels have been read mostly by a highly educated readership: the use of Luxembourgish no longer necessarily expresses a desire to reach out for the masses, as it did at the end of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the striking success and high sales figures of these books may indicate a new trend for books written in Luxembourgish. Roger Manderscheid’s *Schacko Klack* sold 4,000 copies, as did *Aleng* by Cathy Clément in 1996—this is a very large number for the small Luxembourgish market, whose potential customers number is less than 400,000. Perhaps more striking is the fact that the market for children’s books in Luxembourgish largely exceeds that of adult literature. *Muschkilusch* by Guy Rewenig, for example, has sold over 11,000 copies. Likewise, the comic book series *Superjhemp*, of which 22 volumes were published between 1988 and 2008, has the largest circulation of any Luxembourgish publication—its first two issues each sold 15,000 copies and the series as a whole has sold 185,000 copies.<sup>177</sup> This comic book is probably about the only book many people in Luxembourg will have ever have read in their mother tongue. *Superjhemp* is also a powerful medium for expressing a particular vision of the grand duchy’s history.<sup>178</sup> In *Superjhemp*, Luxembourg’s linguistic situation is presented in the form of a jovial multi-culturalism in which Luxembourgers shape up rather well thanks to their knowledge of several languages.<sup>179</sup>

The renaissance of Luxembourgish literature reached such a scale by 1986 that it was possible to found the Luxembourgian Association of Writers (*Lëtzebuurger Schrëftstellerverband*). At the same time, the state as well as the *Fondation Servais*, a private association, further contributed to institutionalise Luxembourg literature by creating literary awards. In 1978, the Ministry of Culture launched the ‘National Literary Award’ (*Concours Littéraire National*), open to four languages (Luxembourgish, German, French and English), which is awarded to a work from within a specific literary genre each year—the chosen

<sup>176</sup> “neue Entwicklungsstufe des Luxemburgischen.” G. Goetzinger and R. Muller, *Lëtzebuergesch*, 14.

<sup>177</sup> These careful estimations have kindly been provided by one of the authors, Roger Leiner (July 2006).

<sup>178</sup> See also chapter 3.

<sup>179</sup> Patrick Dondelinger, ‘Vaubans Wirken in Luxemburg. Kommemorative Darstellungen und identitätsstiftende Funktionen vor Ort’, *Hémecht* 58/1 (2006): 132.

genre changes from year to year.<sup>180</sup> It replaced the ‘National Literary Prize’ (*Prix National de Littérature*), which had been created in 1924 and which had been awarded only intermittently until falling into abeyance in 1966. The ‘Batty Weber Prize’, created in 1987, is awarded to an author for his whole oeuvre every three years. Finally, the *Foundation Servais* has selected what it considers the best literary work: among the thirteen books awarded prizes since 1989, four have been in Luxembourgish, six in German and three in French.<sup>181</sup> Besides these and other literary awards, the publication of anthologies has also contributed to the creation of a canon of Luxembourg literature. However, apart from schoolbooks, texts written in Luxembourgish do not benefit from a proper anthology, in contrast to Luxembourg literature written in French or German.<sup>182</sup> From the end of the 1970s through the 1980s, more and more texts across many different genres were translated into Luxembourgish, such as psalms, the Communist Manifesto, *Asterix and Obelix* comics or Antigone’s *Sophocles*.<sup>183</sup>

Alongside this development of literature, Luxembourgian cinema also experienced something of a renaissance. Contrary to the widespread opinion that local film production was born at the beginning of the 1980s,<sup>184</sup> films in Luxembourgish have been made since the 1930s.

<sup>180</sup> In 2000, of a total of 46 contributions, 18 were in German, 12 in French, 10 in Luxembourgish and 6 in English; *Rapport d’activité 2000 du Ministère de la Culture*, 18.

<sup>181</sup> For a first chronological and sociological analysis of the prize awarded by the Servais Foundation, see Gast Mannes, ‘Postface—Un signe d’amitié, un moment de bonheur partagé’, in *Wat ass wäiss a kënnt vun zwou Säiten?* (Luxembourg: Fondation Servais, 2005), 37–44.

<sup>182</sup> Texts in Luxembourgish are included in the trilingual anthology published in 1989 (the date Luxembourg’s 150th anniversary of independence was celebrated, see chapter 3): *Lëtzebuerg—Luxembourg—Luxemburg 1989* (Luxembourg: Ministère de l’Etat, 1989). For Luxembourgian literature in German, see *Deutschsprachige Lyrik in Luxemburg* (Luxembourg: Institut grand-ducal. Section des arts et des lettres, 2002). For Luxembourgian literature in French, see *Anthologie de littérature luxembourgeoise de langue française* (Bucharest: Expert, 2004).

<sup>183</sup> Alice Schroell and Gaby Schroell, *De Mënsch schwätzt mam Härgott. 50 Psalmen op Lëtzebuergesch* (Luxembourg: Oeuvres diocésaines Caritas, 1979); Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *D’Manifest vun der Kommunistescher Partei*, trans. Romain Hilgert (Luxembourg: Coopérative Ouvrière de Presse et d’Editions, 1983); *Dem Astérix säi Jong*, trans. Lex Roth (Bertrange: Éd. Cactus, 1987); Sophocles, *Antigone*, trans. Camille Lamboray (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 1989).

<sup>184</sup> Note, for example, the assertion made by *Eis Sprooch* [(1981), 51] that *800 Joërbuerg Klierf* (1981) was the second film in Luxembourgish.

Table 5. Luxembourgian films / Films in Luxembourgish<sup>185</sup>

1920's	1930's	1940's	1950's	1960's	1970's	1980's	1990's	2000–2005
5/0	13/3	20/1	24/1	28/7	13/3	14/12	57/16	86/14

What was new in the 1980s was the production of several full-length films in Luxembourgish: *Wat huet e gesot*, *Congé fir e Mord*, *E Fall fir sech*, *Déi zwi vum Bierg*, *Gwyncilla*, *Legend of Dark Ages*, *Die Reise das Land*, *De Falschen Hond*, *Mumm Sweet Mumm*, *Schacko Klack*. The proportional amount of films in Luxembourgish produced in Luxembourg has not been equalled since. As in the literary field, producers and directors adopted a rather critical attitude towards society.<sup>186</sup> At the same time, the popular success of these films indicates a demand for cinema in Luxembourgish, even if the audience was too small to make the local film industry economically viable, which is heavily sponsored by public financial subventions. It is also interesting to note that documentaries have accounted for a significant proportion of the Luxembourgish films in the last twenty years, and that these documentaries have occasionally contributed to the construction of a national master narrative (*D'Lëtzebuenger am Tour de France—2002*, *Heim ins Reich—2004*, *Léif Lëtzebuenger—2008*).<sup>187</sup>

Finally, the language has also experienced a much broader use due to new communication technologies, especially text messaging and the Internet. Given the lack of precise studies of text messaging, it is difficult to determine the language's exact influence in this domain.<sup>188</sup> Text messaging has nevertheless contributed to the more widespread use of written Luxembourgish and the creation of new words. Similarly,

<sup>185</sup> This table is indebted to two inventories: 'Filmography' and 'Analytical Inventory of 100 films collected in the CNA filmography' published in *Lëtzebuenger Kino. Aspects of Luxembourg cinema* (Dudelange: CNA, 2005).

<sup>186</sup> Jean-Louis Scheffen, 'The 1970s and 1980s: the beginnings of Luxembourg cinema', in *Lëtzebuenger Kino. Aspects of Luxembourg cinema*, 109–115.

<sup>187</sup> See Sonja Kmec, Benoît Majerus and Gian Maria Torre, 'Un film qui va droit au coeur. Quelques considérations sur Léif Lëtzebuenger', *forum* 277 (2008): 48–53.

<sup>188</sup> Although some linguists seem satisfied with this new use of the language (see, for example, Jérôme Lulling and Pierre Mousel, 'Gefahr oder Chance für das Luxemburgische? Das Internet und weniger verbreitete Sprachen', *d'Lëtzebuenger Land*, 20 December 2002) others have been inclined to look down on it, in which regard see, for example, a paper with the title 'Les SMS et la dérive de la langue', presented at a conference organised by the Société des Médecins *Les Nouveaux Outils de Communication: Nouvelles Drogues?* in 2004.

the Internet has led to an explosion of written Luxembourgish, which greatly outweighs book production. There are a great many examples to illustrate this trend. Today, nearly every web service is offered in Luxembourgish on the *Spaweck*, which means literally cobweb and represents a recent linguistic creation to refer to 'the Internet'; the word has not entered day-to-day language though. Two examples are <http://www.luxusbuerg.lu> and <http://www.wikipedia.lu>. The first address refers to a chat website almost entirely in Luxembourgish, visited an average of 3,400 people each day. The second website is a project dedicated to building an online Luxembourgish encyclopaedia. Until now, no encyclopaedia of this variety has ever been published at a national level. At the start of 2009, <http://www.wikipedia.lu> had almost 26,000 articles in Luxembourgish and therefore ranked 49th among all the languages used in this multilingual encyclopaedia project. These figures show the determined involvement of numerous people and Wikipedia also encourages the use of official grammar and spelling. Thanks to the Internet, organs of public administration are also using written Luxembourgish a good deal more than before. In 2002, a study pointed out that traditional newsletters are written in French, but that emails are often written in Luxembourgish.<sup>189</sup>

### 3.4. *Luxembourgish as an Object of Scholarly Analysis*

Since the second half of the nineteenth century, Luxembourgish has undergone various attempts to classify, codify and ensure the uniformity of the language. As this section will show, the evolution of scholarly paradigms is closely linked to societal and political concerns.

#### 3.4.1. *The Dictionary Affair (1996)*

The fact that sensitivity to the language had reached a new level by the late twentieth century is illustrated by the 'Dictionary Affair', a set of events that unfolded in the mid-1990s. In 1994, the Linguistic Section of the Grand-Ducal Institute decided to reprint the *Luxemburger Wörterbuch* that had originally been published between 1950 and 1977. While the Jewish consistory had already criticised the para-

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<sup>189</sup> *Rapport d'activité 2001 du Ministère de la Culture*, 30.

graph devoted to the word *Judd* ('Jew') in the 1980s,<sup>190</sup> other people had pointed to the racist and misogynistic undertones of several entries.<sup>191</sup> In 1996, the historian Paul Cerf, well-known for his reputation as a taboo-breaker,<sup>192</sup> expressed his indignation at the anti-Semitic content of the dictionary and particularly about the term 'Judd' in the newspaper *tageblatt*.<sup>193</sup> The debate was political from the start—Cerf accused certain members of the Grand-Ducal Institute of “exacerbated nationalism”. The day after his article had been published, the government forced the Linguistic Section to take the dictionary off the market. It has proven impossible to determine exactly which political groups had pushed for this decision, but according to Guy Dockendorf, a government councillor in the Ministry of Culture, the pressure had been significant. The lines of opposition were not necessarily determined by the political divide: Marie-Josée Jacobs, a member of the CSV and Minister for Equal Opportunities, argued in favour of banning the dictionary, while Cornel Meder, a Socialist and former president of the Linguistic Section, was opposed.<sup>194</sup> Even if the official arguments were based on copyright issues—rejected by the members of the Linguistic Section—it was the supposed anti-Semitic nature of the book which led to the government's involvement.<sup>195</sup> This act of suppression illustrates the importance attached to the image of the language, and reflects Cerf's concern that the *Judd* entry “cast Luxembourg's culture in a bad light”. As the language had become almost synonymous with

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<sup>190</sup> At the time of writing, Robert Bruch had sent his article to Great Rabbi Lehrmann to ask him about what to do about this dictionary entry. The latter then replied: “it seems to me that you have not forgotten anything and that you are treating this delicate subject with all the desirable objectivity”. Transcription of the letter (dated 18 June 1956) in *forum* 175 (1997): 34.

<sup>191</sup> Guy Rewenig, ‘Léift op lëtzebuergesch. Iwwer Sprooch a Sexualitéit’, *Lëtzebuurger Almanach* (1989): 105–113.

<sup>192</sup> Paul Cerf wrote two pioneering books on Luxembourg during the Second World War, the first devoted to the fate of the Jewish population (*Longtemps j'aurai mémoire* [Luxembourg, 1974]), and the second devoted to the post-war purges (*De l'épuration au Grand-Duché de Luxembourg après la Seconde Guerre mondiale*, 2nd ed. [Luxembourg, 1980]).

<sup>193</sup> Paul Cerf wrote that “the linguistic department of the Grand-Ducal Institute supports a book that is anti-semitic, anticlerical, xenophobic and obscene”, *tageblatt*, 7 November 1996, 10. The *tageblatt* is close to the Socialist Party, which was part of the governing coalition at the time.

<sup>194</sup> Cornel Meder, ‘Das Dicksionär—Variationen über einen Wörterkrieg’, *forum* 175 (1997): 29–32.

<sup>195</sup> Interview with Guy Dockendorf (18 January 2006). Dockendorf talks about an ‘overreaction’.



the essence of Luxembourgian identity, any elements that did not fit with late twentieth-century political correctness had to be done away with. While this attitude is different in nature from that voiced by the *Actioun Lëtzebuergesch* and others, it nonetheless stems from similar principles: the connection between the condition of the language and the state of society.

### 3.4.2. *The Establishment of Luxemburg Studies*

Since the late 1980s, the study of Luxembourgish in particular and of languages in general has been increasingly embedded in an academic framework. This development was new, because so far many of the most fervent and prominent supporters of Luxembourgish had no links to the academic world. For the first time, this seems not to have been exclusively due to international trends and their growing focus on the study of dialects. The increased academic interest seems to have generated its own dynamic. Several PhD theses have been written on the use of Luxembourgish: after a first wave in the 1920s and 1930s they constitute the second generation of linguistic research with a solid scholarly base.<sup>196</sup> In the meantime, several authors have started to look at Luxembourgish from a more general angle on European languages; they see Luxembourgish not solely as a specificity of the grand duchy, but from outside the confines of its national context. Most linguists—whether from Luxembourg or from abroad—now agree that Luxembourgish is the most recent Germanic language.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Although it is impossible to provide an exhaustive treatment of this topic, both the subjects examined by the following PhD theses and the dates on which they were submitted seems very revealing. See François Schanen, *Recherches sur la syntaxe du luxembourgeois de Schengen. L'énoncé verbal* (Paris, 1980); Jean-Paul Hoffmann, *Standardsprache und Dialekt in der saarländisch-lothringisch-luxemburgischen Dreiländerecke* (Luxembourg: Institut Grand-Ducal. Section de linguistique, de folklore et de toponymie, 1985); Guy Berg, 'Mir wëlle bleiwe, wat mir sin'. *Soziolinguistische und sprachtypologische Betrachtungen zur luxemburgischen Mehrsprachigkeit* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1993); Peter Gilles, *Dialektausgleich im Lëtzebuergesch. Zur phonetisch-phonologischen Fokussierung einer Nationalsprache* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1999); Jérôme Lulling, 'La créativité lexicale dans la langue luxembourgeoise' (unpublished thesis, Montpellier, 2002); Kristine Horner, 'Negotiating the language-identity link: Media discourse and nation-building in Luxembourg' (Unpublished PhD thesis, State University of New York at Buffalo, 2004); Natalia Filatkina, *Phraseologie des Lëtzebuergesch* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2005).

<sup>197</sup> Damaris Nübling, 'Das Lëtzebuergesche als Herausforderung für die Linguistik', in *Lëtzebuergesch*. (see note 142), 147. Jean-Paul Hoffmann, who holds a doctorate in literature and who is the son of Fernand Hoffmann, is one of the best-known oppo-

This growing academic interest has also been accompanied by an institutionalisation of those bodies ‘in charge’ of the Luxembourgish language. The state created two specific organisations to implement national language policy: the *Centre National de Littérature* (CNL) in 1999 and the *Conseil Permanent de la Langue Luxembourgeoise* (CPLL) in 1998. The CNL used to be the fifth department of the National Archives, but became an independent cultural institute answerable directly to the state in 1999. The CNL embeds the history and memory of the language in its narrative of national identity and presents them as an integral part of the latter. René Kollwelter (LSAP) emphasised “that this initiative, i.e. our Luxembourgian cultural specificity, evolves nonetheless, as is well known, within a multicultural society, and that certainly we cover hereby the most important, but surely not the only aspect of our national culture”,<sup>198</sup> while other MPs such as Léon Bollendorf (CSV) supported a more essentialist vision of culture and declared it to be “a highly important step in the ‘right’ direction for our Luxembourgish identity vis-à-vis all kinds of developments that we are currently undergoing.”<sup>199</sup> Located at Mersch—the mythical cradle of the Luxembourgish *koiné*<sup>200</sup> and the geographical centre of the country—the CNL has rapidly asserted itself as a major player in the world of Luxembourgish: it has contributed to advances in historical studies of the language and its literature and has popularised the results of this research through several exhibitions. It republishes texts by well-known authors from the nineteenth and twentieth century (in all three languages) in the series *Nouvelle bibliothèque du Luxembourg*

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nents of this hypothesis, for which see Jean-Paul Hoffmann, ‘Das verborgene Denken des Herrn. Über die luxemburgische Sprachpolitik’, *Lëtzebuurger Land*, 2 July 2004, 13–14.

<sup>198</sup> “dass dës Initiativ, also eis Lëtzebuurger Spezifizitéit op kulturellem Plang sech awer bekanntlecherweis an enger multikultureller Gesellschaft beweegt, an dass mer hei sécherlech dee wichtigsten, mä sécherlech nët deen eenzegen Domän, ofdecke vun eiser nationaler Kultur”, *ChD. Session ordinaire 1999–2000* (Luxembourg, 2000), 4105. N.B. the quotation is taken from a verbal debate in parliament, which explains for its opaque and slightly defective syntax.

<sup>199</sup> “e ganz wichtege Schrëtt an d’Richtung, fir eis lëtzebuergesch Identitéit vis-à-vis vun allmëiglechen Entwécklungen, déi mer dëse Moment duerchmaachen.” *ChD. Session ordinaire 1999–2000* (Luxembourg, 2000), 4125.

<sup>200</sup> In *Millenium—Lieux de mémoire et d’avenir* (Luxembourg: SSMN, 2000), which was published by the *Service des Sites et Monuments Nationaux*, and which gives a ‘place of memory’ for each county, the Luxembourgish language is associated with Mersch.

and is thus taking an active part in creating a canon of Luxembourgish literature, a process in which it benefits from representing a dominant authority that has as yet received almost no criticism.

The CPPL has not yet achieved the same status as the *Académie Française*, but it has nevertheless been given an extremely important role in defining what is ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ in Luxembourgish. Official regulations provided it with four tasks: to establish a simplified spelling of Luxembourgish, to produce a practical dictionary of the language, a revised version of the *Luxemburger Wörterbuch* and a multilingual dictionary.<sup>201</sup> The creation and functioning of the committee in charge of writing the *Dictionnaire pratique de la langue luxembourgeoise* (DPLL), however, was marked by new controversies and by the departure of one of its two instigators, the linguist Joseph Reisdorfer, in June 2001. The committee also had to contend with the absence of suitable scholarly organisation that would have allowed the dictionary to be on a par with those to be found abroad, particularly with respect to the creation of a large data bank, called *luxtext*. In the meantime, other projects have seen the light of day, such as the *Dictionnaire étymologique des éléments français du luxembourgeois*, the first volume of which was published in 2003.

In recent years, the grand duchy’s government has been more or less actively supporting foreign institutes and academic chairs devoted to the study of Luxembourgian culture. Indeed some universities, especially in Germany, had previously fostered interest in the Luxembourgish language but had never regarded it as a priority research area.<sup>202</sup> Since the mid-1990s, however, several research institutes have been established at foreign universities—often with the assistance of the grand duchy itself—which specifically concentrate on the study of Luxembourgish. The first research centre of this kind to be established was the Centre for Luxembourg Studies in the Department of Germanic Studies at Sheffield University, which was founded in 1995. Although this centre was created without any specific collaboration with the Luxembourgian government, it has nevertheless benefitted from occa-

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<sup>201</sup> Ministerial regulation of 5 January 1998, creating the Permanent Council of the Luxembourgish Language: see *Mémorial*—A 9, 17 February 1998, 144.

<sup>202</sup> Luxembourgish had been touched on in the context of the “rheinischen Mundart” taught at the University of Bonn in the 1970s and 1980s; J. Kramer, *Zweisprachigkeit in den Benelux-Ländern*, 8.

sional financial support from the grand duchy, and the Luxembourgian Embassy awards a prize every other year to the best student in a Luxembourgish course. This initiative at the University of Sheffield was swiftly followed by additional collaborative ventures which further contributed to raising the profile of Luxembourgish abroad, and which serve to illustrate the importance which has come to be attached to initiatives which help to establish Luxembourgish—long considered a mere dialect—as a distinct language. In 2001, for example, an agreement for the establishment of a Centre for Luxembourgian Language and Culture was signed between the Grand-Ducal Institute and Moscow State University. One year later, the chair of Luxembourgian Language and Culture (*Langue et Culture luxembourgeoise*) at the University of Namur was founded as a result of an agreement with the Luxembourgian government.<sup>203</sup> The government committed itself to financing a new course in Luxembourgish for two years, after which the university agreed to take over the financial burden if it proved successful.<sup>204</sup> Similarly, in 2004, the Research Centre for Luxembourgian Languages and Literatures (*Forschungsstelle für Sprachen und Literaturen Luxemburgs*) was created in the Department of Old German Philology (*Ältere deutsche Philologie*) at the University of Trier. At the level of symbolism, this research centre is particularly telling in two respects. First, although the department included the neologism *Luxemburgistik* only on its website (<http://www.luxemburgistik.de>)—rather than in its title—its willingness to employ the term at all indicates the recognition that it was prepared to grant Luxembourgish as a distinct language.<sup>205</sup> Second, the centre's website consciously displays the first document to record the toponym *Lucilinburhuc* (c. 963) alongside the current geographical outline of the grand duchy of Luxembourg, and thus implicitly gives credence to the association between Luxembourg's medieval 'origins' and its contemporary borders that has been so crucial to the

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<sup>203</sup> On 8 January 2003, the RTL television news programme presented this chair as a measure to ensure the safeguarding of the Luxembourgish language.

<sup>204</sup> Interview with Guy Dockendorf, government advisor to the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education (18 January 2006).

<sup>205</sup> *Duden. Das grosse Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache in 10 Bänden*, 3rd ed. (Mannheim, 1999) and its online version (consulted on 30 May 2006) has not retained this word. To our knowledge, the first person to use this term was Joseph Reisdorfer, who called for the creation of this new subject in a programmatic article: Joseph Reisdorfer, 'La Luxembourgistique: présentation d'une nouvelle discipline', *Revue trimes-trielle d'études linguistiques, folkloriques et toponymiques* 29 (1999): 57–66.

Luxembourgian master narrative. Within nine years, the language had thus found important recognition at academic institutions abroad. By contrast, the first attempt to launch a Luxembourgian department at the Centre Universitaire de Luxembourg—one of the few academic institutions in Luxembourg at the time—in the 1990s was a flop.

A further indication of the greater efforts which have been made to promote Luxembourgish is the publication of bilingual dictionaries. Although a few isolated dictionaries had been published in the past, it is striking that a wave of new bilingual dictionaries was issued between the late 1970s and the late 1980s, coinciding with the renaissance of interest in Luxembourgish. Between 1974 and 1982, bilingual German, French, Portuguese and English dictionaries were published, the first of which was compiled by Henri Rinnen, president of the *Actioun Lëtzebuergesch*, and Will Reuland.<sup>206</sup> In the past fifteen years, a large number of new dictionaries (Italian, Dutch, Romanian and Hungarian) have appeared, and the market has developed to the point at which competing editions have begun to appear simultaneously.<sup>207</sup> At the same time, a private initiative created a Luxembourgish/French electronic dictionary. The website <http://luxdico.com> has been developed by two Luxembourgish linguists, Jérôme Lulling and François Schanen, and has been promoted by Astrid Lulling.<sup>208</sup>

In the 1980s, a company developed a word processing programme called *Epistole PC/Interscript Epistole* which was used by state bodies and local authorities, and which was equipped with a dictionary and a

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<sup>206</sup> Henri Rinnen and Will Reuland, *Kleines deutsch-luxemburgisches Wörterbuch*, 12th ed. (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 1998); Rinnen and Reuland, *Petit dictionnaire français-luxembourgeois*, 2nd ed. (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 1985). First published in 1980; Jules Christophory et al., *Portugiesesch-lëtzebuergesch Dictionnaire*, 2nd ed. (Luxembourg: MEN, 2002). First published in 1980; Christophory et al., *English-Luxembourgish Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Esch-sur-Alzette: Schortgen, 1995). First published in 1982.

<sup>207</sup> Marie-Thérèse Kroemmer, *Steng fir e lëtzebuergesch-franséischen Dictionnaire* (Luxembourg: AL, 1989); Jos Boggiani and Maria Luisa Caldognetto, *Lëtzebuergesch-italienischen Dictionnaire* (Luxembourg: CLAE, 1996); Cornelia Pantea-Keintzel, *Wierderbuch Lëtzebuergesch-Ungaresch* (Bertrange, 2001); Cornelia Pantea-Keintzel, *Wierderbuch Lëtzebuergesch-Rumänesch* (Bucharest: Centre d'études et documentations Rumänien-Lëtzebuerg, 2002); Liette Derrmann-Loutsch, *Deutsch-Luxemburgisches Wörterbuch* (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 2003); Jérôme Lulling and François Schanen, *Luxdico.com. Dictionnaire online Français-Luxembourgeois/Lëtzebuergesch-Franséisch*, 2nd ed. (Esch-sur-Alzette: Schortgen, 2005). First published in 2004.

<sup>208</sup> Astrid Lulling is the great-aunt of the linguist and a CSV MEP who had previously been a member of the SPD, a party known for its nationalist discourse in the 1970s.

spell-check facility.<sup>209</sup> This project required a degree of abstraction that would have been unthinkable a few decades before. Recently, the development of language software has accelerated; these new programmes require additional in-depth reflection on the structures and the ‘functioning’ of Luxembourgish. In 2000, the *Cortina* project (which stands for *Computerised Spellchecker applied to the Luxembourgish Language*) was established on the basis of a collaboration between the Gabriel Lippmann Public Research Centre, under the direction of Pierre Mousel, and the CPLL, under the direction of Georges Wirtgen. Both bodies are partly funded by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Research. This Luxembourgish spellchecker was first established in 2002, and a new version was subsequently released in 2006.<sup>210</sup> The same team also developed a spellchecker to be embedded in the *Office for Windows* software. In 2006, three Luxembourgian students developed another spellchecker (<http://www.spellchecker.lu>) on their own initiative.

Finally, the discussions around the Centre for Research on and Study of Luxembourg (*Centre de Recherches et d'Etudes sur le Luxembourg*, CREL) at the University of Luxembourg have shown how fundamental language has become in identity discourses. The need for a research centre on Luxembourg and its language had long been considered a central part of a university structure in the grand duchy. Although the first multidisciplinary project had failed at the beginning of the 1990s,<sup>211</sup> the Centre Universitaire de Luxembourg offered classes in Luxembourgian Studies from the academic year 2000/2001 onwards. A few years later, the idea of a Luxembourgian Studies Research Centre was raised once again, and the language became its focus. Indeed, the first version of the University of Luxembourg's four-year plan, written under the direction of Rector Rolf Tarrach in January 2006, maintains that: “The study of the language should be the central element

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<sup>209</sup> Romain Hilgert, ‘Wenn der Computer Béchamelszooss kennt’, *Lëtzebuurger Land*, 13 July 2001.

<sup>210</sup> In 2004, *Microsoft Lëtzebuerg* asked the Luxembourgian state to assist with the establishment and validation of a list of IT words, a mission that was delegated to the CPLL, which thus fulfilled its role as judge of the Luxembourgish language.

<sup>211</sup> In May 2001, the Minister Erna Hennicot-Schoepges announced the creation of an interdisciplinary institute for the study of and research on Luxembourg and the Luxembourgish language in October 2002, which, however, did not see the light of day.

of this priority [of Luxembourgian Studies].”<sup>212</sup> For a long time, history seemed to constitute the central field among the arts and sciences used for legitimisation and identification.<sup>213</sup> Even if Clio has retained a significant lobbying power—as indicated by the changes in the text between the first and final versions of the four-year plan<sup>214</sup>—the University of Luxembourg appears to view society first and foremost through the lens of the language.<sup>215</sup> The process of nominating new academic positions in the field of Luxembourgian Studies has provoked new controversies in the press and a discussion in parliament. In both cases traditional themes used in the debate around Luxembourgish since the early twentieth century have reappeared. When a German professor was nominated for a chair in the department, MP Robert Mehlen (ADR), underlined the fact that foreigners were not qualified for this position on the grounds that they do not show “a delicate feeling for our language and our history.”<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> The University of Luxembourg’s four-year plan (2006–2009)—provisional version of 24 January 2006 (authors’ archives).

<sup>213</sup> Some Luxembourgian historians continue to claim this function. According to Gilbert Trausch, “a nation is only completed when it possesses also a collective memory, that is a certain knowledge of its past. It is the task of historians to bring out this knowledge and that of the teachers to transmit it to the younger generations” (*Une nation n’est achevée que si elle possède également une mémoire collective, c’est-à-dire une certaine connaissance de son passé. C’est la tâche des historiens de dégager ces connaissances et celle des enseignants de les transmettre aux nouvelles générations.*) Gilbert Trausch, ‘La place de la Section historique de l’Institut grand-ducal dans la formation du Luxembourg’, *PSH* 121/1 (1995): xix.

<sup>214</sup> The final version reads as follows: “The study of the Luxembourgish language should be the [main]- or at least one of the central—activities of this research priority, but placed in a larger context... Thus, the integration of other disciplines, and of historians in particular, in this research priority is envisaged.” (*L’étude de la langue luxembourgeoise devrait être sinon la, au moins une activité centrale de cette priorité, mais dans un contexte plus large... Ainsi on envisage l’incorporation d’autres disciplines et en particulier des historiens dans cette priorité.*) The University of Luxembourg’s four-year plan (2006–2009)—final version of 21 March 2006.

<sup>215</sup> In 2006, when the *Luxemburgistik* section was founded, there were fears that an essentialist approach would be introduced by favouring linguists over cultural scientists with a constructivist approach.

<sup>216</sup> “ë rengt Gefill fir eis Sprooch an eis Geschicht” Parliamentary question asked by Robert Mehlen on the Luxembourgish language at the University of Luxembourg (5 December 2008). URL: [http://www.indymedia-letzebuerg.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=14195&Itemid=26](http://www.indymedia-letzebuerg.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14195&Itemid=26) (last accessed on 22 January 2009).

## CONCLUSIONS

In 1987, the cultural historian Peter Burke stated that “language is too important historically to leave it to the linguists.”<sup>1</sup> Although it can also be read as a snub to linguists, Burke’s remark serves to rebuke historians for having neglected language in two important respects. On the one hand, historians have often ignored the important—if problematic—function played by language in the interpretation of sources. On the other hand, most historians failed for a long time to analyse it as a tool used by historical actors. For too long, language was considered as something essentialist, whose social construction was not open to questioning. This was particularly true for Luxembourgish, which was presented as one of few important elements hailed as ‘essential’ in the history of Luxembourg. Only recently have linguists and sociologists in Luxembourg started to question this polished vision of the past. What we have attempted to do here is to analyse the standing of Luxembourgish from a historian’s point of view, based on a constructivist understanding of the nation which places emphasis on the determining role of language.

Firstly, Luxembourgish is today put forward as the single most important indicator of ‘commonality’ (*Gemeinsamkeit*)<sup>2</sup> and, as such, has become a distinctive symbol in Luxembourgian society. This was the case neither at the time of the legal creation of the grand duchy in 1815 nor in 1839, often considered the date of birth of the current state.<sup>3</sup> Contrary to widespread historical opinion, it seems anachronistic to see the 1839 partition as the defining moment in the creation of linguistic unity in the grand duchy. While such an interpretation may seem obvious today, it is in our opinion a retroactive projection based on the function Luxembourgish now occupies in society. In fact, the grand duchy was in no sense a linguistic island as a result of the 1839 partition. What had been a bilingual territory was now a German-

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Burke, ‘Introduction’, in *The Social History of Language*, ed. Peter Burke and Roy Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 17.

<sup>2</sup> Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (München: C.H. Beck, 1992), 139.

<sup>3</sup> See chapters 1 and 3.



speaking principality within the German Confederation. As such the 1839 partition could be interpreted as a moment of great danger for Luxembourg: the possibility of becoming a part of the emerging Germany had, from a linguistic point of view, become more of a reality than before. In the same way, Luxembourgish literature in the mid-nineteenth century has mostly been interpreted teleologically as part of a 'national culture', while nineteenth-century authors thought of themselves as writing in a local variant of German. During the mid-nineteenth century—indeed, until the First World War, and arguably even later—Luxembourgish was considered to be a part of the German-speaking world. This, however, did not prevent the growth of interest in Luxembourgish, which was then considered to be a dialect. The enthusiasm for regional idioms came from Germany, where it was part of a double identity, whose constituents were not mutually exclusive, but in fact mutually reinforcing: the homeland (*Heimat*) and the people (*Volk*). In other words, identification with the regional level (*Heimat*), e.g. in form of a dialect, did not exclude you from belonging equally to a larger entity (*Volk*). The first authors who wrote in Luxembourgish created a spelling system, collected Luxembourgish expressions and conceived of themselves in relation to contemporary trends in German intellectual life. For example, in his *Luxembourgian Folktales and Legends* (1857), Dicks explicitly referred to the Brothers Grimm as the inspiration for his work.

Secondly, the historical function of Luxembourgish needs to be placed in the context of political life, dominated for a long time by a Francophile and French-speaking bourgeoisie. The French language clearly played a role in social exclusion. Since it was incomprehensible to a large majority of the population, French prevented political democratisation in the nineteenth century, and was, indeed, exploited for precisely this purpose. As long as the majority of the population was unable to participate in the decision-making process—the right to vote being restricted to a wealthy minority during almost the whole of the nineteenth century, in contrast to France and Prussia—neither Luxembourgish nor German could prevail.

It was not until the end of the nineteenth century that efforts to codify and organise Luxembourgish led to its gradual—although far from smooth—recognition as a distinct language. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, the language had become central to representations of Luxembourgian identity. The period around 1890 seems to have constituted a turning point in the construction of a national

identity in the grand duchy.<sup>4</sup> The advent of Luxembourg's own dynasty, economic development and relative international stability are factors which may explain this acceleration of the process of constructing the nation. The foundation of *Ons Hémecht* in 1896 and the 1912 School Law are, among others, indicators of the higher profile accorded to the language. With the benefit of this higher profile, Luxembourgish gradually came to play an increasingly important role in the promotion of the nation-state. In the early twentieth century, however, history continued to be viewed as constituting the most valuable means of asserting the legitimacy of the grand duchy, and language still remained on the fringes of state-led efforts to define Luxembourgian identity. It is for that reason that Prime Minister Paul Eyschen's efforts to promote identification with the language failed.

The inter-war period represented a momentous stage in the nationalisation of Luxembourgish. The higher public status which Luxembourgish had acquired allowed it slowly to gain recognition as an autonomous language. Little by little, Luxembourgish was set apart from German not as a result of perceived differences in grammar or orthography, but primarily as a result of the function which it came to play in constructions of Luxembourgian identity. Although there were both inclusive and exclusive models of the language, all of those who were involved in the debates surrounding Luxembourgish between the two World Wars were united in their belief that it played a crucial role in defining a national identity. This gradually increasing autonomy allowed Luxembourgish to become a distinctive symbol within identity discourse. Alongside a multiplicity of private organisations, the state began to consider the language as a central element in the definition of Luxembourgian identity.

This trend towards the assertion of linguistic autonomy in the pursuit of a distinct national identity accelerated both during and after the Second World War. Although the umbilical cord linking Luxembourgish and German was never completely severed, Luxembourgish was increasingly seen as a language in its own right, and this in itself helped to set it apart from German. Despite catalysing the more widespread

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<sup>4</sup> A similar line of argument is presented from a different angle in Benoît Majerus, 'D'Natioun fir d'Dynastie. La fête "nationale" au Luxembourg aux 19e et 20e siècles', in *Kalbasslamettanationalpilgeralbum. Traditions en migration* (Luxembourg: CNA, 2006), 20–30.

use of Luxembourgish and the development of a distinct form of spelling, the euphoria of the immediate post-war period was, however, short-lived. For twenty years, the promotion of Luxembourgish appeared to have reached a standstill and the 1950s and 1960s seemed to constitute a surprising lull in the construction of identity. It was not until the 1970s and the 1980s that a new nationalistic sentiment arose in the grand duchy, a sentiment in which language came to play a more and more important role. Confronted with economic crisis and the construction of the European Economic Community, a certain tension in perceptions of Luxembourgian identity could be felt, a tension that found expression in a renewed interest in Luxembourgish. At the same time, Luxembourgish benefited from a European trend towards the promotion of 'dialects' in opposition to 'high' languages, which were thought both to impede and to harm cultural diversity. The 1984 law and the discussions which surrounded it indicated that the Second World War continued to exert a powerful influence on the formation of identity and its legitimisation even forty years later.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Luxembourgish remains largely a minority language in print. Its written form has nevertheless been boosted by new communication technologies. Meanwhile, Luxembourgish is now considered as a language in its own right within the grand duchy. It has become an object of literary and linguistic study. The language has also been turned into a clear marker of 'being a Luxembourger'. For a long time, the state had a rather passive attitude and did not use Luxembourgish as a political tool. However, there is no doubt that without centralised political power, Luxembourgish would never have reached its current status nor acquired its current functions. Although the state did not intervene in a structured or structuring manner, it nevertheless provided a framework in which the language was able to develop and become an important element of national identity. Without the state as a "central configuration of modernity",<sup>5</sup> there would be no Luxembourgish language. Little by little, Luxembourgish has been nationalised. The fact that the country's identity is essentially perceived through the language can clearly be seen on *legilux*, the official website of the Luxembourgian government: the page entitled 'Luxembourgian Identity' consists only

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<sup>5</sup> Alain Dieckhoff, *La nation dans tous ses états : les identités nationales en mouvement* (Paris: Flammarion, 2000), 41.

of references to the Luxembourgish language.<sup>6</sup> This focus on language makes Luxembourg, though somewhat belatedly, a *Kulturnation*. This has nonetheless been a rather problematic construction, considering the linguistic proximity of Luxembourgish to German.<sup>7</sup>

There is no doubt that the marked growth of Luxembourgish as the subject of scholarly enquiry in the last twenty years has played a significant role in the establishment and standardisation of the language.<sup>8</sup> Although the structures of Luxembourgish have not changed much over the last two hundred years ago, the language has acquired a set of connotations, and it is thanks to these representations that it exists and that it has achieved its current status and functions in society. In the words of the socio-linguist Jean Calvet: “languages exist because speakers believe in them, because they have ideas and images of them.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> URL: <http://www.legilux.public.lu/leg/textescoordonnes/thema/index.html> (last accessed on 20 April 2006).

<sup>7</sup> G. Goetzinger and R. Muller, *Lëtzebuergesch*, 7–9.

<sup>8</sup> In this sense, even this chapter could also be considered as yet another element in the process of consolidating the position of the language. However, we hope to have avoided an essentialist vision by emphasising the evolving aspect of the language and the dynamics that influence its position.

<sup>9</sup> “les langues existent parce que/puisque les locuteurs croient en elles, parce qu’ils ont sur elles des idées, des images.” Quoted by Fehlen, ‘Le “francique”: dialecte, langue régionale, langue nationale?’, 29.



## GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

“What does it take to make a nation? One needs a territory, a language and a common past, and, in the case of Luxembourg, a fourth element: the goodwill of neighbouring states.”<sup>1</sup> This definition of the Luxembourgian nation has not only been taught in schools, but has generally been given credence. While the first three components are often cited with reference to the nation as a cultural entity, the fourth is more unusual. It stresses the interrelation between Luxembourg and its wider European context, and particularly the dependence of a small state on other countries. This study has taken up these four elements, but it also emphasises the constructed nature of territory, language and past. The aim was to address both the cultural and political aspects of Luxembourgian nation-building. Cultural representations and values are used to define a national community, to bring it together, while excluding those who do not share the same references. These common references and the on-going process of their construction are at the centre of this book.

The process of ‘nationalisation’ brings together discourse, concepts and media in the creation of a new coherent system of thought that is both simple to grasp and has the emotional potential to rally its adherents. This self-defined community, commonly referred to as the ‘Luxembourgian nation’, is defined around a collection of diverse and fluctuating images of a common history, territory and language. While there have been many focussed and comparative studies of the processes of ‘nationalisation’ in a number of European countries, the case of Luxembourg has attracted relatively little scholarly attention. This is partly due to the lack of a university-based academic tradition, and the fact that research previously done by existing cultural institutions, such as museums, research centres or archives, was aimed at specific

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<sup>1</sup> *Connaissance du monde contemporain, Enseignement secondaire technique, classe de 10<sup>e</sup>* (Luxembourg, 1991), 60: “Que faut-il pour faire une nation? Il faut un territoire, une langue et un passé commun, et dans le cas luxembourgeois, un quatrième élément: la bonne volonté des Etats voisins.” This statement was originally made by Gilbert Trausch and is quoted in the introduction to Luxembourgish history by this textbook.

exhibitions or inventories. The mission of such institution is, moreover, the promotion of 'national memory' and their scholarship linked to the production, transmission and custody of 'cultural memory'.<sup>2</sup>

This book is the result of a research project on the complex relationship between history and memory; it focuses on the process of 'inventing' the nation, that is to say on the 'nationalisation' of representations of the past, space and language. This process is considered neither linear nor deterministic, but closely linked to those of 'de-nationalisation' and 're-nationalisation'.

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What is at stake is the 'nation' as a system of thought, as a cultural representation of a human collective, as an imaginary and imagined unity. 'Nationalisation' serves an integrative purpose, yet exclusion is its inevitable corollary. A second function is to provide political and cultural legitimacy to the operating authorities. The role of these social and political actors—whether they work within the framework of an existing state or towards one—is crucial to the understanding of national construction. Luxembourg is no exception to this rule.

The role of the Luxembourgian state is particularly evident with regards to the codification, standardisation, teaching and study of the language. Compared to similar processes in other, larger countries, the 'nationalisation' of the language was not about establishing and imposing a standardised dialect on all Luxembourgian inhabitants. Instead, the fundamental issue was how the spoken language should be positioned with respect to German and French, both within a multilingual society and in relation to neighbouring nations. Initially, the language was linked to the territory and the people, but not to the 'nation'. This connection between language and nation only developed at the time of time of the First World War and the introduction of universal suffrage in 1919. German was now associated with the language of the occupier (later the defeated enemy) and French was increasingly seen as elitist and undemocratic. As the ruling dynasty and political representatives—for their own, very different reasons—started to promote the use of Luxembourgish, the language became a symbol of national

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<sup>2</sup> This concept was introduced in Jan Assmann, 'Kollektives Gedächtnis und kulturelle Identität', in *Kultur und Gedächtnis*, ed. J. Assmann and T. Hölscher (Frankfurt-am-Main: Suhrkamp, 1988), 9–19. Cf. Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (München: Beck, 1992).

'identity'. Luxembourgish was established as 'national language' by law in 1984 and has been declared a crucial instrument of social 'integration'. This sparked a debate about multilingualism and national 'identity' which is far from closed today.

The same process of 'nationalisation' applies to the representation of the past by public or state-subsidised institutions. History was pressed into a schematic and coherent narrative that displayed continuity across time and made 'sense' to readers. The past was structured around symbolic dates and heroic figures—functioning as myths or *lieux de mémoire* that were celebrated and commemorated by the nation-state. The 'nationalisation' of history preceded that of the language; it was driven first by erudite scholars, later by poets and writers, and finally taken up by the monarch and politicians. There is a good reason for this head start. History had something language was lacking: an obvious point of reference in the shape of the medieval county of Luxembourg. Not only was there was no classic literature in the local dialect that one could refer to in the nineteenth century, but the language as such was not perceived as being fundamentally distinct from German. Consequentially, the study of the Luxembourgian past focused on the medieval period, especially with respect to popular accounts, public commemoration and the conservation of heritage. The ruling dynasty played a crucial role in the creation of this mythical past, since it sought for its own roots in the glorious deeds of the medieval counts, well before speaking Luxembourgish, the language of its people, was of importance. The national master narrative was created by monarchists and was developed with the intention of expressing clear monarchist sentiments. It rests on the link which was forged between two periods of perceived national independence and sovereignty: i.e. the medieval county and the present grand duchy, separated by four centuries of 'foreign dominations'.

The definition of the national space, both in the sense of a cartographic space and of a conceived space, is closely linked to the evolution of the master narrative. The first textbooks established the idea that the borders established in 1839 were the 'true' national borders. This delimitation conveys an image of 'smallness' and thus the notion of an endangered nation-state that needs to struggle for its survival. Projected back onto the past, this image also contains the idea that Luxembourg's past grandeur was lost as a result of three consecutive 'dismemberments', the last of which occurred in 1839. This is mirrored to some extent by the idea that Luxembourg's greatness was



regained in the form of 'colonies' established by Luxembourgian settlers in Transylvania or the United States, or in the form of today's Great Region (*Grande Région*). The smallness of today's territory is seen to be further compensated by the emphasis which is placed on the diversity of Luxembourg's regions and localities, and by the insistence on the country's position as a global player. As political borders shift and cross-border cooperation intensifies, the definition of national space appears even more volatile and open to interpretations than definitions of national language and history.

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It is important to stress that the meaning attached to the concept of the 'nation' has been subject to constant change. Whether in Luxembourg or elsewhere, it has developed in several stages, which have often overlapped and influenced one other. As a result, a set of different definitions of the 'nation' with different points of reference can be discerned. In the medieval and early-modern periods, this point of reference is generally rooted in the ruling dynast. Even though most contemporary historians would agree that loyalty to one's ruler is not an expression of 'nationhood' in the modern sense of the word, monarchical allegiance has often been considered a precursor of national sentiment in the past two centuries. By the end of the eighteenth century, the '*nation luxembourgeoise*'—a phrase which first appeared in a pamphlet published during the Brabant Revolution—had acquired a new meaning that was linked to the people rather than to the monarch. This has nothing in common with the ethnic conception of the term current in Luxembourg in the inter-war period, or with the legal definition of the nation as the body of citizens which has recently been extended to allow for European citizenship or dual nationality. Interestingly, all four of these different meanings are still used today. Although all four have featured in recent political debates, political actors have omitted to differentiate sufficiently to allow each definition to be employed and understood in its proper sense, or to show any awareness of the distinct origins and evolution of the various concepts of the nation.

While this book adopts a largely thematic approach, the different processes of 'nationalisation' of the past, space and language may be taken together in order to detect their similarities and see how they interlink. In consequence one notices that the general trend towards 'nationalisation' seems to have been particularly intense at three points in time: during the final decades of the 'long nineteenth century', in

the 1930s and 40s, and finally over the past thirty years, climaxing in the 1980s. These three stages cannot be fully understood without their international contexts. The first stage was part of the rise of nationalism all over Europe, while the Second World War—both as a looming threat and as a period of collective suffering—is the basis for the second. The third stage can be read as a reaction to the accelerated process of European integration, with the disappearance of internal political borders, increased and facilitated migration, and the elaboration of supra-national power structures.

All three phases are characterised by a heightened production of monuments. These are important for two reasons.<sup>3</sup> First, monuments represent a crucial medium of collective memory. The fact that their number increased at various points in time confirm the importance of identity discourse at different moments. Second, their appearance and message vary at each stage, evidence of the changing forms of public remembrance. At the end of the nineteenth century, monuments represented mostly dead dynasts,<sup>4</sup> while after the Second World War most were erected to honour “the sacrifices of the Luxembourgian people”. Over the past thirty years, these two points of reference, ‘dynasts’ and ‘people’, have faded from view; monuments are now dedicated to the nation-state and its openness to a unified—and unifying—Europe. They mostly take the form of architecture, such as the new Philharmonic Hall, or the prominently placed buildings of the European Union institutions on the Kirchberg plateau in the capital.

Monuments are but one medium of identity discourse. Each phase in the ‘nationalisation’ process favoured certain media over others, whether oral or written, figurative or performative, highbrow or lowbrow. The spreading of national representations through these media also defines the (fluctuating) national space. The end of the nineteenth century was an age largely dominated by the written press, theatre and social clubs. The 1930s and 40s saw the rise of the radio and large-scale public ceremonies. At the end of the twentieth century, the arrival of digital communication technology plays an important role as media of

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<sup>3</sup> Daniel Fabre, ed., *Domestiquer l'histoire. Ethnologie des monuments historiques* (Paris: Editions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2000).

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, the articles on Princess Amalia, King William II, and John of Bohemia in Sonja Kmec, Benoît Majerus, Michel Margue and Pit Péporté, eds., *Lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg. Usages du passé et construction nationale* (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 2007).

collective memory (*vecteurs mémoriels*) and has a profound impact on the use of Luxembourgish.

The first phase of heightened 'nationalisation' climaxes right before the Great War. The most important moments during this phase include the foundation of *Ons Hémecht* in 1896, the first depiction of the 'three dismemberments' in 1905, the introduction of Luxembourgish to the school curriculum in 1912 and the publication of Arthur Herchen's *Manuel d'histoire nationale* in 1918. These examples reflect an evolution with durable effects. For more than half a century, the national master narrative asserted that the medieval county was 'resurrected' in 1815 or 1839 in form of the grand duchy of Luxembourg after having suffered a period of 'foreign dominations'. This idea underpinned the principal foundation myths of the nation-state: its medieval heroes, the concepts of dynastic fidelity and particularism in the early-modern period, and the notion of three consecutive dismemberments. Language played an extremely minor role at first; the tendency to view Luxembourgish as 'Our German' denied it any nationalising potential. Slowly, however, this changed: the use of Luxembourgish spread in literature, politics and education. At the end of the first phase, language started to take on new meaning as it tentatively came to be contrasted with German at the beginning of the First World War. This first phase was also characterised by a change in the political landscape, marked by a transition from the dominating liberal tradition of the nineteenth century to more Catholic and conservative principles which were established by 1919 and which were to dominate most of the twentieth century. This new mainstream was built on the perceived unity of the Church, the monarchy and the strongest political party.

One major change in the second phase was the willingness to accord Luxembourgish an equal importance to that of 'national history' within identity discourse. In 1936, three prominent historians closely linked to governmental institutions—Joseph Meyers, Nicolas Margue and Camille Wampach—opposed the German *Westforschung's* annexationist interpretation of the past and replaced it with an independent vision of a national past. That same year, naturalisation forms first asked applicants about their knowledge of Luxembourgish. In the wake of these changes, both history and language were placed at the heart of the central event of this second phase: the celebrations of the centenary of Luxembourg's 'national independence' in 1939. An important notion that arose in this phase was that of early-modern 'particularism'. Although developed by historians—particularly Joseph

Meyers—the notion of particularism essentially rested on a ‘centripetal’ perception of space. Strong ‘natural’ and political borders were projected back into the past, so as to create a basis for a belief in an age-old Luxembourgian identity which could function as the origin of and justification for modern nationalism. While history remained at the centre of identity discourse, language increasingly came to be used as a means of expressing inclusion and exclusion. The German occupation reinforced the standing of both history and language, by attempting to instrumentalise them. The National Socialist regime had expected all inhabitants to state that their language was German in the 1941 census. Likewise, it had torn down the *Gëlle Fra*, a monument in honour of fallen allied soldiers in the Great War, and was planning to replace it with a monument to John of Bohemia designed to illustrate the close historic links between the county of Luxembourg and the Empire in the Middle Ages. In reaction to these Nazi policies, both elements—the botched census and the destroyed statue—were used after 1945 in the discourse of ‘national identity’.<sup>5</sup> The use of national representations of the past and the language peaked in the years immediately following the Second World War, and then subsided until the 1980s.

The past thirty years represent a third phase, characterised by two faces of the same coin. The accelerated process of European unification was hailed in official discourse, but was at the same time counterbalanced by a return to national representations. The 150th anniversary of ‘national independence’ in 1989 formed the highpoint of this third phase. The centrality of history and language to identity discourse formed a prominent part of the celebrations and were evident in the large exhibition of the country’s past and in the historical documentary films which began to be produced. At the same time, scholarly historiography distanced itself from its ‘nationalising’ mission. Most historians (though not all) started to deconstruct the great national myths, such as the ‘foreign dominations’, the foundation of Luxembourg by Sigefroid in 963, and collective resistance to the Nazi occupation. Some scholars also adopted a different attitude towards Luxembourg which was characterised by international or transnational approaches,

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<sup>5</sup> See Benoît Majerus, ‘Eis Sprooch’, in *Lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg. Usages du passé et construction nationale*, ed. Sonja Kmec, Benoît Majerus, Michel Margue and Pit Péporté (Luxembourg: Saint-Paul, 2007), 17–22; Majerus, ‘Gëlle Fra’. In *Lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg. Usages du passé et construction nationale* (as above), 291–296.

a pro-European outlook, or conscious opposition to the national master narrative. As the interpretation of the past opened up and was shaped by multiple voices, language began to take over as the new symbol of 'identity'. The 1984 law on languages, the increased publication of Luxembourgish literature, the recognition of Luxembourgish as a field of academic study, and the central role of the language in the 2008 law on Luxembourgian nationality are all good examples of this. The 2008 law on Luxembourgian nationality is particularly noteworthy in that it required new 'nationals' to demonstrate not only a mastery of Luxembourgish, but also some knowledge of Luxembourgian law and state institutions. A familiarity with Luxembourgian history, however, is not required.

While language is still undergoing a process of 'nationalisation', history is increasingly being 'de-nationalised', at least as far as academic and official history are concerned. This may be due to a changing of scales and the adoption of a European perspective, as expressed in the concept of the Great Region (*Grande Région*) or in the European Capital of Culture in 2007. It operates, on the one hand, by deploying new *lieux de mémoire*, such as Robert Schuman or the Kirchberg plateau.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, this de-nationalisation process also 'europeanises' traditional *lieux de mémoire*, such as John of Bohemia. It would, however, be misleading to interpret this development merely in terms of a 'de-nationalisation': this discursive strategy consists in the integration of Luxembourg into larger frameworks, but ultimately continues to seek to construct a national 'identity' with the 'added value' of portraying Luxembourg as open, tolerant and multicultural. Nor is this approach entirely new. In the first half of the twentieth century, the concept of the *Mischkultur* was based on the multicultural character of the Luxembourgian nation and it was, therefore, only a small step to translate this into contemporary pro-European discourse. Emancipation from a national frame of reference and a national discourse thus remains an extremely difficult task; it requires a new type of reasoning, one that does not point towards the nation-state in a linear or teleological fashion.

'Nation' and 'nationalism' have no existence outside the human mind. They are the result historical processes. Although this study has

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<sup>6</sup> Most local offices of the European Union in Luxembourg City are based in Kirchberg.

attempted to analyse some of these historical processes, it can make no claims to comprehensiveness. The socio-economical aspects of the process of 'nationalisation' in particular remain to be studied. A scholarly analysis of the nation's representations remains the only means of recognising their 'nationalised' character and thus also the only means of overcoming them. Two analytical approaches have been of particular importance to this study. In the first place, it has attempted to view the nation as a construct, and has thus moved away from 'essentialist' models. In the second place, this study has attempted to present the multiple diverse concepts of 'nation' which have changed through time and across space. While the first requires that one abandons the concept of the nation altogether, the second has the effect of replacing it at the centre of discussion. Herein lies the paradox.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See Saskia Sassen, *Das Paradox des Nationalen. Territorium, Autorität und Rechte im globalen Zeitalter* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Suhrkamp, 2008), 7. The title of the German translation of her *Territory—Authority—Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006) is inspired by a discussion with Ulrich Beck on precisely this problem.



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ANL	Archives Nationales du Luxembourg
BNL	Bibliothèque Nationale du Luxembourg
ChD	Compte-rendu des séances de la Chambre des Députés [de Luxembourg]
CLUDEM	Centre luxembourgeois de documentation et d'études médiévales
PSH	Publications de la Section historique de l'Institut (royal-)grand-ducal

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