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Babel and its Consequences: Legal Translation and Interpreting in the Late Stage of the Habsburg Empire (1848–1918)

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Abstract: The area of legal interpreting and translation took shape especially in the wake of the 1848 revolutions which – over the decades to come – implied the creation of some more or less institutionalized sub-areas including sworn interpreters, the "Terminology Commission" or the "Editorial Office of the *Imperial Law Gazette*" (*Reichsgesetzblatt*). The discussion of these newly established settings will provide the basis for understanding the concurrence of the elements responsible for what I call the "construction of a Habsburg culture".

Keywords: Habsburg Monarchy, legal translation and interpreting, plurilingualism, institutionalization

1. Introduction

The ritual of swearing in new recruits, at least once a year, is still a commonplace situation in many countries. The Habsburg Army was no exception: in solemn ceremonies, all over the Habsburg lands, thousands of new recruits gathered and swore that they would defend the Habsburg Monarchy against all enemies and that they would obey the orders of the Emperor. The pluricultural setting of such a scene evokes questions of language and communication, and also of confession. Actually, detailed documentation of such ceremonies testifies that in some cases they were carried out in up to ten languages and with the participation of military clergymen of seven different confessions.[2]

Plurilingualism as a most distinct feature of the Habsburg societies brings me to my claim that translation and interpreting as mediation practice, in the multifaceted forms in which they were performed in the late Habsburg Empire, very significantly contributed to the construction of cultures in the Habsburg space. This claim will be substantiated by a focus on legal interpreting and translation and by connecting it to the institutionalizing processes which emerged in the wake of the 1848 revolutions in this field. Accordingly, this paper will be given a triple frame which will also deliver multiple points of reference to contexts beyond the legal agenda.

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2 A. Wandruszka, *Katholisches Kaisertum und multikonfessionelles Reich*, in A. Wandruszka, P. Urbanitsch (eds.), *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918*. Vol. IV: *Die Konfessionen*, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna, 1985, pp. xi-xvi.

The first frame is that of translation history. Multilingualism in the Monarchy and the ways in which the imperial institutions dealt with it is undoubtedly an important issue in the subdiscipline of translation history.[3] As a matter of fact, historical research on translation and interpreting has gained momentum in the last few decades, and the field of translation history is about to conquer a proper and independent position within translation studies. Regarding the connection between translation studies and historiography in terms of disciplinary conceptions, Lieven D'hulst[4] reminds us that the future will tell us "whether interdisciplinary cooperation will improve between translation historians and historians of other disciplines". The question whether translation studies research should remain in its own domain and do translation history research with methods and theoretical concepts elaborated there, thus mainly serving our discipline of translation studies, or whether, as an alternative, translation studies scholars should rather try to base their research on that of historiography, thus enriching historiographical research with translating and interpreting issues, can of course not be resolved, but has been extensively discussed in the last few years.[5] I personally would rather make a plea in favour of the second option by arguing that, when doing so, we considerably expand our area of investigation and could enhance both the historiographical discourse on translation and the translation and interpreting studies discourse on history. It is my hope that my paper will contribute to this second alternative.

My second frame is constituted by the phenomenon of plurilingualism in the Habsburg Empire. The discussion of the inextricable link between translation and multilingualism in the last decade has prompted a series of publications which already testify of an emerging flourishing field.[6] So far, the issue has been coped within a series of domains, including those of international public and private institutions or national language policies. In the Habsburg Monarchy, too, plurilingualism can hardly be thought of without connecting it to its (former) counterpart of translation.

Finally, the third frame represents the theme of this volume, "Legal Translations – Past and Present Challenges in Europe", to which this paper will contribute with a discussion of the interpreting and translating activity in the Habsburg Empire's legal field. Consequently, against the background of some data

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3 For a valuable source for recent developments in translation history, see C. Rundle's excellent *The Routledge Handbook of Translation History*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2022.

4 L. D'hulst, *The history of Translation Studies as a discipline*, in C. Rundle (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Translation History*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2022, p. 13.

5 This issue was promoted by insightful discussions which culminated in the *disputatio* between Christopher Rundle and Vicente Rafael: C. Rundle, R. Vicente, *History and translation: The event of language*, in Y. Gambier, L. van Doorslaer (eds.), *Border Crossings. Translation Studies and other disciplines*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam, 2016, pp. 23-47.

6 See, among many others, F. Mus, K. Vandemeulebroucke (eds.), *La traduction dans les cultures plurilingues*, Artois Presses Université, Arras, 2011.

with reference to a "Babelian view on Habsburg", in what follows I will first provide details of some of the communication patterns underlying the multi-ethnic state. I will then sketch the trajectory of the domain of legal translation and interpreting since its institutional implementation in the late monarchy. The emphasis will be on sworn interpreters and their pivotal function in contributing to constructing the – as I call it – "many-languaged soul" of the Habsburg Empire, followed by the presentation of the so-called "Terminology Commission"; finally, the huge translation project of the "Editorial Office of the *Imperial Law Gazette*" (*Reichsgesetzblatt*) will be discussed. These newly established settings will then be drawn together by exploring their contribution to institutionalizing the translating and interpreting activity in the legal context. This discussion will provide the basis for understanding the conjunction of the elements responsible for what I call the "construction of a Habsburg culture".

2. Babel and its consequences in the Habsburg Empire

The image of the ceremony to swear in new recruits on a multilingual basis draws on the Habsburg monarchy's pluricultural structure and thus invites us to evoke the building of the Tower of Babel. As we know, the Tower of Babel metaphorically symbolizes the human trauma of not being able to communicate with other humans, because they speak different languages. George Steiner locates in the myth of Babel a creative approach when he says: "humanity has remained alive and inventive through the dispersion of languages."[7] Accordingly, in history and presence, the "language confusion" of Babel calls to mind intricate strategies of communication and requires us to characterize the culturally and socially highly complex structure of the societies involved. This undoubtedly also applies to the Habsburg context. The Habsburg monarchy, like any multiethnic empire, necessitated differentiated communication strategies in order to guarantee the functioning of administration and daily life.

A glance at the statistics of the Habsburg Monarchy's nationalities shows its "Babelian" cultural and linguistic diversity. The last census of the monarchy, accomplished in 1910, gives us the figure of more than 51 million inhabitants[8], including 24 % German speakers, 20 % Hungarians, 13 % Czechs, 10 % Poles and 8 % Ukrainians, followed by Romanians with 6 %, Croats 5 %, Slovaks and Serbs 4 %, Slovenes 3 %, Italians 2 % and Bosnians 1 %.[9]

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7 G. Steiner, *After Babel. Aspects of language and translation*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1975.

8 To compare this figure with the Deutsche Reich: in the same period, they counted 64 million inhabitants.

9 *Österreichische Statistik*, ed. K. K. Statistische Zentralkommission, *New series 1 (1), Die Ergebnisse der Volkszählung vom 31. Dezember 1910 in den im Reichsrate vertretenen Königreichen und Ländern*, Gerold, Vienna, 1912, p. 34.

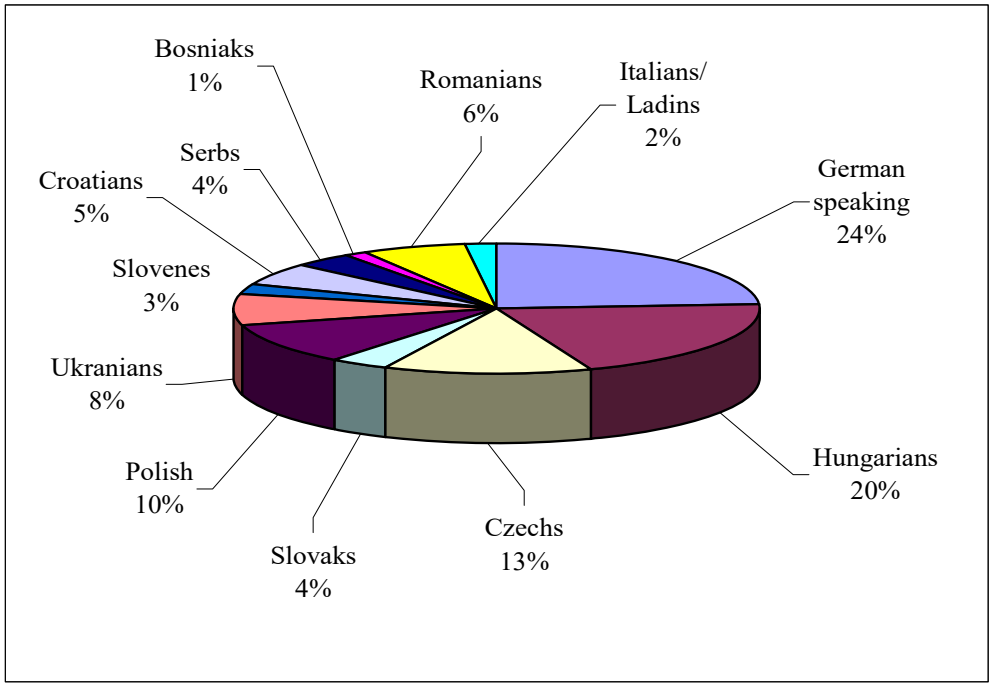

Fig. 1: The nationalities in the Habsburg Monarchy, census 1910[10]

Accordingly, it was the task of both the central government in Vienna and the local governments in the crown lands to cope with the multitude of problems arising from this multilingual situation. Especially after the uprisings of 1848, it was their central aim to guarantee the utmost communication between the various nationalities.[11] Thus, the cultural practice of interpreting and translation took on a

[10] H. Rumpler, *Österreichische Geschichte 1804–1914. Eine Chance für Mitteleuropa. Bürgerliche Emanzipation und Staatsverfall in der Habsburgermonarchie*, Ueberreuter, Vienna, 1997, p. 557.

[11] In this regard, Article 19 of the 1867 "December Constitution" is particularly revealing. Andreea Huţanu delivers valuable insights into the role of languages and translation with relation to Article 19: A. Huţanu [=Odoviciuc], *Vielsprachigkeit und das Übersetzen von Rechtstexten*, in Analele Ştiinţifice ale Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza" Iaşi, LXIII, Supliment/2017, p. 93. In more general terms, Peter Haslinger delivers an astute presentation of the language policy in the Habsburg lands between 1740 and 1914. He argues that in this period the language policy of the Habsburg rulers was determined by two factors: (1) by the emphasis on German as the unifying language within the State bureaucracy on the one hand and (2) by efforts towards the emancipation of other languages, combined with aspects of a divide et impera-policy, on the other. Haslinger's claim is that these two elements were not contradictory but rather co-existent, as they were part of a common political scheme both to secure imperial rule and to guarantee the stability of the various crown lands. He stresses, however, that the Habsburg language policy – especially in the last few decades of the Empire's existence – should not be interpreted as being benevolent or flexible towards the single national communities. The language policy rather aimed at integrating national – and other – political forces into the political system of Habsburg rule. P. Haslinger, *Sprachenpolitik,*

major role in shaping the various cultures involved in the continuous interactions which made up the various Habsburg societies. Interpreters and translators were therefore instrumental in establishing a consensus in a highly intricate system of political, confessional, legal, ceremonial and, increasingly, national interests and differences.

3. The legal field

The multilingual situation had a major impact on the development of the legal field in the Monarchy in more general terms and on its connection to translating and interpreting in particular.[12]

Legal translating and interpreting are very well documented. This might be due to the close connection between language and legislation: since legislation is realized in the form of language, the legal system is a sensitive indicator of linguistic tolerance and of a state's commitment to implementing its language policies. Especially in the final decades of the Habsburg Monarchy, language questions became increasingly important in judicial contexts, and, as in other domains, here, too, the nationalities conflict played an important part. Details on sworn interpreters, the "Terminology Commission" of 1849 and the activity of the "*Imperial Law Gazette's* Editorial Office" will illustrate the increasing awareness of the utmost necessity to institutionalize the legal domain.

3.1. Sworn interpreters

The first setting of legal interpreting I would like to discuss is constituted by the sworn interpreters. The use of sworn interpreters was stipulated as early as 1803 by the penal code. It said that if an accused did not talk the language of the investigating judge, an interpreter had to be present in the hearing. The interpreter had to swear an oath, saying that he would translate the questions asked by the judge and the answers formulated by the accused in an exact and faithful way and without alteration. Thus, the law not only provided the compulsory involvement

Sprachendynamik und imperiale Herrschaft in der Habsburgermonarchie 1740-1914, in Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung, 57/2008, p. 111.

[12] Andrew Fisher McKinney points to the important role individuals played in the legal translation history. He depicts the life story of Josef Winiwarter, a Habsburg lawyer who translated the *Austrian Civil Code* into English in 1866 and exposed the impact of this translation on English legal translation in more general terms. A. Fisher McKinney, *A nineteenth-century Habsburg translator: Josef Maximillian Winiwarter and his impact on English legal translation*, in A. Nuč, M. Wolf (eds.), *Das habsburgische Babylon, 1848-1918*, Praesens, Vienna, 2020, pp. 132-147. For translations of the *Austrian Civil Code* into Czech, Italian, Latin, Polish and Romanian, see H. Slapnicka, *Österreichs Recht außerhalb Österreichs. Der Untergang des österreichischen Rechtsraums*, Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, Vienna, 1973, p. 69. With a focus on similar reflexions in a more recent context, see I.-E. Zup, *Some considerations on the impact of the translation of EU legal texts on the Romanian legal language and legislation*, in Analele Ştiinţifice ale Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza" Iaşi LXIII, Supliment/2017, pp. 75-85.

of an interpreter and an *ad-hoc* swearing-in, but it also set a translation norm with reference to the relationship between the original and target text.[13] From 1803 onwards and throughout the existence of the monarchy, sworn interpreters made an important contribution to the functioning of the multiethnic state. Lists of sworn court interpreters in Vienna (all of them were men, there is no evidence of women working in this domain) were provided from 1864 onwards in *Lehmanns Allgemeiner Wohnungs-Anzeiger*, a directory of the city's addresses with what we call today "yellow pages" attached.

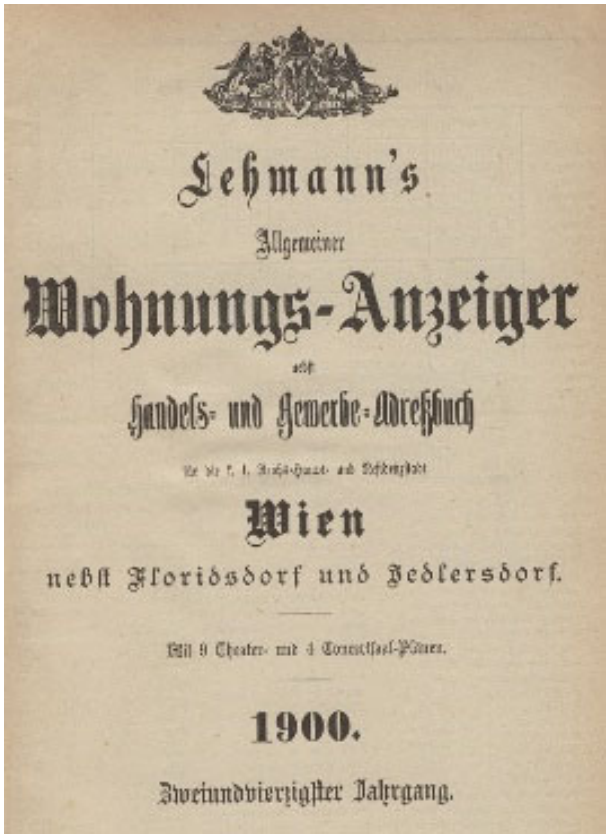
Lehmann's
Allgemeiner
Wohnungs-Anzeiger
mit
Handels- und Gewerbe-Adreßbuch
Wien
nebst Floridsdorf und Fedlersdorf.
1900.
Zweiundvierzigster Jahrgang.

Fig. 2: *Lehmanns Allgemeiner Wohnungs-Anzeiger*, 1900[14]

In the period between 1864 and 1918, 7,031 sworn interpreters are listed, who provided interpreting and translation services. The number includes multiple mentions of the same person in those cases where an interpreter continued working for several years. The interpreters and translators offered a total of 29 languages. Figure 3 shows the composition of the ten mostly used languages.

[13] For more details, see: N. Grbić, *Fürsorgerinnen – Scharlatane – Profis. Die Geschichte des Gebärdensprachdolmetschens in Österreich und die Konstruktion einer professionellen Welt*, Habilitationsschrift, University of Graz, 2017, pp. 210-211.

[14] ZEDHIA "Lehmanns Allgemeiner Wohnungs-Anzeiger, 1900", 2021, [Online] at https://zedhia.at/de/zedhia-blog/Neue-Bestande-auf-ZEDHIA-verfugbar, accessed on 5/10/2021.

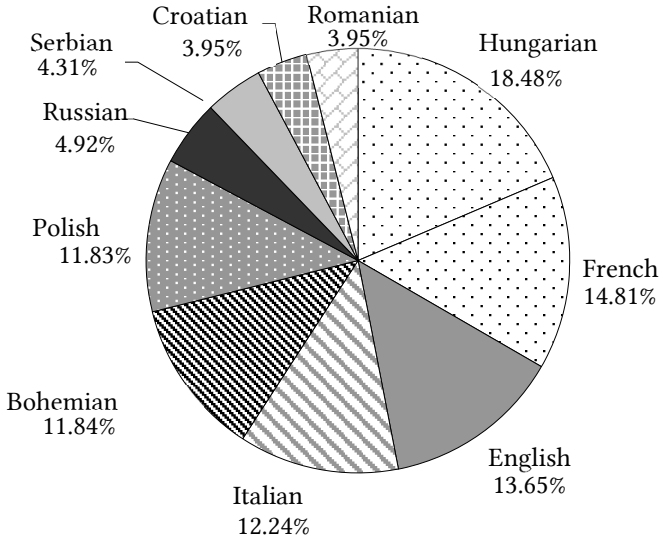

Fig. 3: The 10 mostly used languages of the sworn interpreters

As the chart shows, the languages of the Habsburg Monarchy predominated among those for which interpreting was offered, especially Hungarian (with 18.48 % or 1,033 sworn interpreters). French, English and Italian were all important languages for foreign trade, and thus for interpreting and certified translating activities. Table 1 shows the number of sworn interpreters only for the languages of the Habsburg Monarchy.

Table 1: Sworn interpreters in the languages of the Habsburg Monarchy, 1864-1918

Language	**1864–1870**	**1871–1880**	**1881–1890**	**1891–1900**	**1901–1910**	**1911–1918**
Bohemian	14	66	78	113	209	182
Croatian	0	2	54	67	62	36
Hebrew	5	31	27	20	11	15
Hungarian	23	111	209	262	265	163
Italian	23	96	107	141	168	149
Polish	15	77	129	154	155	131
Romanian	8	13	24	41	82	53
Ruthenian	0	16	29	51	52	35
Serbian	0	0	64	77	63	37
Serbo-Croat	8	44	6	26	46	47
Sign language	4	10	10	18	12	8
Slovenian	2	14	23	29	29	16
Spanish Hebrew	1	11	4	13	26	24
Total	**103**	**491**	**764**	**1,012**	**1,180**	**896**

A glance at only two languages practiced by the sworn interpreters shows the tight relationship of the activity and its historical context: Hungarian, for

instance, was extensively offered especially at the end of the nineteenth century. This might be attributed to the rearrangement of communication between the two halves of the Empire following the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, which obviously necessitated a large quantity of court interpreting and certified translation. Bohemian, as a second example, discloses a sharp increase in demand for sworn interpreters in the first decade of the twentieth century, which probably resulted from the Moravian Compromise of 1905.

The entries in *Lehmann* also deliver the professions carried out by the sworn interpreters in their "real life". Figure 4 shows that altogether they practiced 28 different professions.

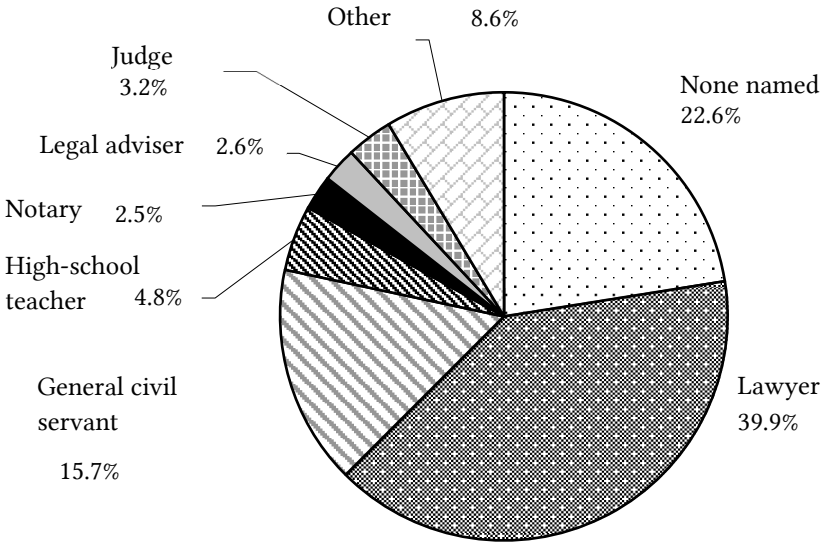

Fig. 4: Professions of sworn interpreters

Given the character of the work, it is not surprising that interpreters with a legal background are particularly well represented, accounting for 48.2 % or nearly 3,400 entries. The rather big group of "other professions" comprises, among others, archivist (22), businessman (43), engineer (30), librarian (38), and writer (35), thus intellectual activities in their majority.

Quite little is known about the qualifications of the sworn interpreters and translators. In addition to very general instructions presented in a decree from 1835, there exists an ordinance on "Examinations in the modern languages" issued on 27 December 1849 by the Minister of Education.[15] This ordinance introduced a university-based examination open to everyone, the so-called *Dekanatsprüfung*, which could be carried out by any state-appointed teacher of modern languages and held in the presence of the dean of the faculty of arts.[16]

[15] *RGBl. Reichsgesetzblatt* [Imperial Law Gazette], 15/1850.

[16] For more details especially with reference to the fees of sworn interpreters and translators and to their professional organizations, see M. Wolf, *The Habsburg*

The interpreters and translators were supposed not only to possess knowledge of the Monarchy's legal system and the content of the most important laws, but also be acquainted with the relevant terminology in the language or languages they were registered. Standardizing the legal terminology was initiated already in 1849 by the so-called "Terminology Commission".

3.2. The "Terminology Commission"

The 1848 revolutions brought about the call for the legal establishment of equal rights for all the Empire's nationalities. The consequent unification of law decreed by the 1849 constitution and applicable to the whole Empire can be seen as the basis for various processes which more often than not let translating and interpreting gain centre stage. One of the major projects for accomplishing the complex goal of implementing equal rights – and in which translation was strongly involved – was the standardization of legal terminology. Already on August 1st, 1849, a commission appointed by the Ministry of Justice headed by Alexander von Bach met for the first time. It was composed of 20 members, most of whom were outstanding specialist philologists along with respected experts in Slavic languages, including Vuk Karadžić, a writer, folklorist and the author of a grammar of the Serbian language; Franjo Miklošič, professor of Slavic philology; Jakiv Holovackyj, professor of the Ruthenian language, and Ivan Mažuranić, a Croatian poet and politician. Three members worked as translators in the local governments in Prague and Brno, others were lawyers or librarians.[17] Pavel Josef Šafařík (1795-1861), a respected professor of Slavic philology, was appointed as chair.[18] They sat together in a sort of conclave for four months with the aim of elaborating a terminology of legal terms with comments and translation examples for the Slavic languages spoken in the Monarchy. The terminology was to be created partly by drawing on earlier sources from legal history and partly through new coinages.[19] After the division into five sections, the individual sections were to work on their translations in the mornings, followed by afternoon consultations on the proposed translations. Every member was free to comment on the suggestions, but the definitive acceptance or rejection of an expression was in the hands of the section

Monarchy's many-languaged soul. Translating and interpreting, 1848-1918, translated by K. Sturge, J. Benjamins, Amsterdam, 2015, pp. 73-74, p. 79.

17 Wilhelm Brauneder delivers valuable insights into the composition of the "Terminology Commission" and also into the Empire's changing efforts to institutionalize legal translation: W. Brauneder, *Die Übersetzungen von Gesetzen in der Habsburgmonarchie*, in Donau-Institut Working Paper, 7/2013, pp. 2-15, [Online] at https://www.andrassyuni.eu/pubfile/de-46-7-di-wp-brauneder-ubersetzungen-von-gesetzen-final.pdf, accessed on 5/10/2021.

18 H. Slapnicka, *Die Sprache des österreichischen Reichsgesetzblattes*, in Zeitschrift für Ostforschung, 23/1974, pp. 444-445.

19 V. Petioky, *Zur nichtliterarischen Übersetzungstätigkeit in der Donaumonarchie*, in D. Huber, E. Worbs (eds.), *Ars transferendi. Sprache, Übersetzung, Interkulturalität. Festschrift für Nikolai Salnikow zum 65. Geburtstag*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 1998, p. 362.

concerned. The vocabulary gathered was recorded on index cards, soon numbering 8,000 cards per language, or "dialects", as they were then still called.

Originally, it was planned to build a joint terminology for all the five Slavic languages based on shared word stems and forms, but this project was quickly discarded as a "pipe dream", a "frommer Wunsch".[20] Yet, the outcome of the Commission's activity was quite astonishing, with one edition for the terminology in Bohemian already in 1850, another one for the Ruthenian language in 1851, and one collective edition for the Serbian, Croatian and Slovene terminology in 1853. The Commission's work was very positively received. Not only did it undeniably help to consolidate and enrich the young written languages, but it also led to numerous legislative texts being retranslated to reflect the new, more accurate terminologies. In the course of this busy translation activity, many specialised legal dictionaries were also revised in order to take account of the progress achieved in legal terminology, contributing importantly to a terminological unity that endured across much of the Habsburg area even after 1918.[21]

3.3. The "Editorial Office of the Imperial Law Gazette*"*

The legal terminology was desperately needed by the members of the so-called "Editorial Office of the *Imperial Law Gazette*". The Office was primarily based in the Ministry of the Interior, subsequently in the Ministry of Justice, and in 1863 in the Ministry of State; in 1868, the bureau moved once more to the Ministry of the Interior. The *Imperial Law Gazette* was to appear in ten editions for ten languages: German, Italian, Hungarian, Bohemian (simultaneously the Moravian and Slovakian written language), Polish, Ruthenian, Slovenian, in the Serbian-Illyrian language using Serbian Cyrillic script, in the Serbian-Illyrian (simultaneously Croatian) language using Latin script, and in the Romanian (Moldovan-Wallachian) language.[22] Already in 1849, all laws which were approved by the Reichstag had to be translated into all the Empire's languages and had to be published the same day. Thus, a large number of "language experts" were engaged as civil servants in the ministry and were working on this huge translation project, some of them for decades.

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[20] P. J. Šafařík, [*Introduction*], in *Juridisch-politische Terminologie für die slawischen Sprachen Oesterreichs. Deutsch-böhmische Separat-Ausgabe*, Kaiserlichkönigliche Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, Vienna, 1850, p. iv.

[21] This was certainly not the only terminology commission of this kind. There is evidence that for instance Eligio Smirić, a judge at the Dalmatian prefecture, on the basis of a comprehensive collection of laws in the Habsburg Monarchy, created a *Terminologia ufficiale italiana –serbo o croata – tedesca* [official terminology Italian – Serbian or Croatian – German], which before publication was submitted to a commission of jurists and philologists. The commission worked from September 1900 to February 1903 and had the task to correct and complement the terminology elaborated by Smirić: E. Smirić, *Terminologia ufficiale italiana – serbo o croata – tedesca*, Stamperia M. Marović, Zagreb, 1904; A. Martecchini, *Mia Autobiografia, di Antonio Martecchini, fu Pier Francesco*, Manuscript, in Ostavština obitelji Martecchini, RO-173, Državni Arhiv Dubrovnik, svežanj 28, Dubrovnik, 1906.

[22] *RGBl.* 153/1849, [*Introduction*] I, VI.

The translators' workload and time pressure were enormous. Consequently, there was always a shortage of skilled candidates qualified to carry out such complex work. As far as the translators' skills are concerned, no special qualification was needed. Especially in the first stage, all of them had legal training – but this by no means implied that their knowledge of languages was adequate for translation work. Later on, and after many problems had come up, linguistic knowledge was regarded as crucial. Actually, as early as 1851, an examination with sample translations was introduced to test the candidates' skills in legal language, but not to test their skills in translation. Yet, it can be assumed that some of them had good translatorial skills, because several of their names do appear in the lists of sworn interpreters, including for Romanian.

Table 2 shows the names of the Romanian translators of the Office. It seems revealing that three of them worked as teachers at the prestigious Theresian Academy before they were appointed translators for the Romanian language – obviously, this post was equipped with a good portion of symbolic capital which represented an appropriate starting point for a career at the "Editorial Office of the *Imperial Law Gazette*".[23]

Table 2: Romanian Translators in the "Office of the *Imperial Law Gazette*", 1863-1918

Name	***Former profession***	***Period of translator/editor***
Basil **Grigorovici**[24]	Jurist; teacher at the Theresian Academy	1863-1888 (1863-1870 remunerated ed.)
Aurel de **Onciul**	Senior official, Financial Procurator's office	1889-1893
Florea **Lupu**	Candidate notary	1895-1897
Grigori **Popovici**	Writer; Imperial Council deputy	1898-1899
Ernst **Tarangul**	Senior official, provincial government; teacher at the Theresian Academy	1901-1904
Grigori de **Pantazi**	Senior official, provincial government; teacher at the Theresian Academy	1905-1918

What is also worth mentioning is the paper consumption of the *Imperial Law Gazette*. The paper industry was one of the major profiteers of this huge project: one edition of such a collection of laws – which was issued often 2 or 3 times a year – counted 135,000 volumes, out of which 100,000 volumes were bilingual. This

[23] See particularly Iulia-Elena Zup for these questions: I.-E. Zup, *Traducerile legislației austriece în Bucovina habsburgică (1775–1918)*, Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", Iași, 2015.

[24] The reform of the "Editorial Office" of 1869 enabled four new editors to be appointed, for Italian, Polish, Romanian and Ruthenian. The teacher Basil Grigorovici, who had been working as a temporary or "remunerated" Romanian translator since 1863, was taken on permanently, and the three remaining posts were publicly advertised. Franz Wagner, director of the "Editorial Office", had first made his own evaluation of Grigorovici's performance, concluding that "based on the repeated enquiries I have made, especially among Romanian parliamentarians", his work "may be considered first-rate": AVA Verwaltungsarchiv, Innenministerium [Administration Archives, Ministry of the Interior], Vienna, II. A.5, ct. 14, no. 16796/869.

meant that only in the year 1850, 7-million-quart sheets were produced, which implied an increase of the paper production of about 50 %. The ten-language authenticity of the *Reichsgesetzblatt* texts only lasted for three years. From January 1st, 1853, the German text became the sole valid one, and the translations into other languages were now only to appear in the provincial gazettes, alongside the German texts. However, this new publication structure did not affect the "Editorial Office's" work, since all translations into the languages of the crownlands were still carried out in Vienna. The justification given for maintaining the central "Editorial Office" in the capital was primarily that the close collaboration between the translators was favourably influencing the development and standardization of the written forms of the various Slavic languages.[25]

4. Attempts at institutionalizing translating and interpreting activities

The considerations on the legal field in the late Habsburg Monarchy have shown that institutionalization of language-related topics became a major issue in the wake of the 1848 revolutions. Generally, institutionalization is understood as a process intended to regulate societal behaviour within organizations or entire

[25] AVA, (vgl. Anm. 24), 40/1, ct. 2788, no. 10546/911. So far, only few researchers have discussed the translations of the *Imperial Law Gazette*, including Michael Moser who deals with linguistic aspects of the Commission and compares selected Croatian, Ruthenian, Serbian, Slovenian and Czech lemmas with the translations of the *Imperial Law Gazette*: M. Moser, *Prüfsteine des Austroslawismus. Das ‚Allgemeine Reichs-Gesetz- und Regierungsblatt für das Kaiserthum Oesterreich' und die ‚Juridisch-politische Terminologie für die slawischen Sprachen Oesterreichs'*, in I. Pospíšil (ed.), *Litteraria Humantias. Crossroads of Cultures: Central Europe. Kreuzwege der Kulturen: Mitteleuropa. Křižovatky kultury: Střední Evropa. Перекрестки культуры: Средняя Европа*, Facultas Philosophica, Universitas Masarykiana, Brno, 2002, pp. 75-129. Aleksandra Nuč explored the influence of the Slovene translations of the *Imperial Law Gazette* on the stabilization and standardization of the vocabulary of the Slovenian language: A. Nuč, *Slowenische Translatoren treffen auf Asklepios. Die Übersetzungen des Reichsgesetzblattes ins Slowenische am Beispiel der Gesetzestexte über pharmazeutische Berufs- und Hochschulausbildung im Zeitraum von 1849 bis 1918*, Doctoral thesis, University of Graz, 2017; A. Nuč, *Der vergessene Kontrolltranslator Josip Srituar: Die slowenische Übersetzung des Reichsgesetzblattes aus translationspolitischer Sicht*, in A. Nuč, M. Wolf (eds.), *Das habsburgische Babylon, 1848-1918*, Praesens, Vienna, 2020a, pp. 177-192. Equally, Nuč explored the role of the *Law Gazette's* translation activities in the creation of a Slovenian translation culture: A. Nuč, *Die slowenischen Übersetzungen des Reichsgesetzblattes der Habsburgermonarchie: Dimensionen der Translationskultur zwischen 1849 und 1918*, in P. Kujamäki, S. Mandl, M. Wolf (eds.), *Historische Translationskulturen. Streifzüge durch Raum und Zeit*, Narr, Tübingen, 2020b, pp. 17-32. Andreea Odoviciuc stresses that the lack of sufficient legal termini constituted a big challenge for the linguistic creativity of the Romanian translators of the *Imperial Law Gazette*: A. Odoviciuc, *Sprache, Macht und Übersetzen in der habsburgischen Bukowina*, in A. Nuč, M. Wolf (eds.), *Das habsburgische Babylon, 1848-1918*, Praesens, Vienna, 2020, p. 155.

societies. It is a human activity that installs, adapts and changes rules and procedures in both social and political spheres, thus affecting the interactive behaviour of individuals and organizations, as well as of political entities.[26] In the context of translation and interpreting, the definition suggests that these mediation activities might be understood as processes which result from – and at the same time shape – the constant negotiation of the norms governing an institution or organisation and impacting on the agents involved.[27] Furthermore, the interaction with other fields of social life is an important aspect. The historical moments of 1848 and the subsequent legislation thus contributed to the burgeoning of new – and strengthening of existing – institutions which were responsible of translation and interpreting.

Beyond the legal context presented so far, there were several other institutions entrusted with providing translation and interpreting services. In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this was mainly the "Section for Ciphers and Translating", which had the task to "manipulate" intercepted letters, decipher foreign communications written in code, and set up new secret offices outside Vienna for the surveillance of mail. Particular attention was attributed to the post that arrived every two weeks from the Ottoman Empire, for which special translators were on hand.[28] Another department attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was equally concerned with translating and interpreting: the "Literary Bureau". It was established in 1868 and dealt with press affairs insofar as it was meant to influence the public opinion abroad through the press. For this purpose, translators had to produce a daily review of the most important European dailies and weeklies, which was sent to the Emperor every day. The Bureau analysed newspapers in German, Czech, English, French, Hungarian, Italian, Polish and Russian. Additionally, and especially after the outbreak of the Great War, the translators' task was to create material about the Monarchy in various languages for the express purpose of "propaganda abroad".[29] The Ministry of War hosted the "Evidence Bureau", the directorate of military intelligence, where interpreters were trained for the espionage and interception service. Clearly, these activities necessitated personnel with excellent linguistic skills, and the Evidence Bureau seems to have faced persistent problems in finding qualified staff. Here, too, the outbreak of the Great War implied a considerable expansion of the workload,

[26] Vgl. H. Keman, *Institutionalization: social process*, in Encyclopædia Britannica, 2018, [Online] at https://www.britannica.com/topic/institutionalization, accessed on 5/10/2021.

[27] Translation policy played a vital role in promoting institutionalization. For more details on this role in the Habsburg context with a focus on the capital of Vienna, see M. Wolf, *Habsburg Vienna: The institutionalization of translation in a hybrid city, 1848-1914*, in L. D'hulst, K. Koskinen (eds.), *Translating in Town. Local Translation Policies During the European 19th Century*, Bloomsbury, London, 2020, pp. 41-64.

[28] Vgl. H. Hubatschke, *Ferdinand Prantner (Pseudonym: Leo Wolfram), 1817–1871. Die Anfänge des politischen Romans sowie die Geschichte der Briefspionage und des geheimen Chiffredienstes in Österreich*, 6 vols., Doctoral thesis, University of Vienna, 1975.

[29] F. Rottensteiner, *Das Literarische Büro. Pressepolitik, Organisation und Wirksamkeit 1877-1918*, Doctoral thesis, University of Vienna, 1967, p. 48.

especially in the area of intercepting telephone conversations, inspecting prisoners of war and doing all sort of work in the POW camps. Consequently, ordinary language skills were not enough, and the authorities sought people who could excellently speak the various languages and dialects.

So far, it has become obvious that many attempts had been made to institutionalize the interpreting and translation activity. Except for the mediating agents in the last two bureaus, it can be claimed that the intricate communication system of the Habsburg Monarchy was constituted mostly by bi- or plurilingual civil servants, whose work required not only linguistic skills, but also quick wits in adapting to countless different permutations of language needs. However, there were no professional training programmes for interpreters and translators, except for the Oriental Academy, which trained linguistic mediators for the diplomatic service, mainly for the Ottoman Empire. Thus, the level of institutionalization was relatively low, especially when judged against the gigantic administrative apparatus of the pluricultural Empire. Given the enormous need for linguistic and cultural mediation activities, large parts of the population in need of such services tacitly agreed to get by in everyday situations without the help of translators or interpreters, although the call for such help based on professional training became louder over the years. However, the outbreak of the Great War shifted all relevant efforts towards the military side of the interpreting and translating activity.

5. Conclusions

By way of conclusion, I would like to point to the elements which make up the culture-constructing character of the translation practices adopted in the late Habsburg Monarchy. These elements can be associated with various factors in time and space. First, the historical context shows that the tensions resulting from the legislation regarding nationalities and languages in the aftermath of the 1848 uprisings and the nationalist conflicts in the last decades of the nineteenth century, culminating in the assassination of the successor to the Habsburg throne in 1914 which triggered the Great War, played a major role in shaping the translation and interpreting activity in that period. Also, bi- and plurilingualism is a constitutive element in the construction of cultures. According to the territory in question, and particularly in relation to the legislation in force and to the degree of institutionalization, this bi- and plurilingualism, as has been shown, was at the very basis of the translation and interpreting activity and, at least seemingly, did not require a professional and differentiated training for translators and interpreters. The presentation of the various mediation practices has given evidence that this is particularly true of the legal interpreting and translation field in the Monarchy. The third central factor was hardly touched upon here: it is the lack of consciousness detectable in the vast field of administration and legislation with reference to the requirement of sufficient linguistic, cultural and mediating competence of the agents involved. It seems, therefore, that resorting to the colleague next door, who had grown up with two or more languages, and who still had some command of the required language, was too tempting. And there is little

wonder that the belief in multilingualism as a sufficient prerequisite for the translation activity has persistently been maintained to our day.

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