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ALSATIAN KNOWLEDGE AND EUROPEAN CULTURE

Jérémie-Jacques Oberlin, Language, and the Protestant *Gymnase* in Revolutionary Strasbourg[1]

I. Situating the Problem: The French Context

Much of French history has been written in the context of a battle between Paris and the provinces. Political and social historians have made considerable efforts to write provincial history from a non-Parisian point of view – the classics of *Annales* social history and most microhistories are set in provincial contexts – but cultural historians have had more difficulty getting out from under Parisian hegemony, a hegemony that reaches well beyond French boundaries and turns the plural *provinces* into the singular *province*[2]. Nevertheless, a few contributions in the last decade have examined central issues from the periphery: André Burguière and Jacques Revel's survey of French history avoids a tone of inevitability in its account of the construction of a Paris-dominated France; three major American monographs consider Breton religion and politics, provincial religious uses of revolutionary rhetoric, and the overlap of French and Spanish peripheries; and two recent articles explore the relationship between provinciality and metropolitan culture[3].

1 An earlier version of this article was delivered as a paper at the annual meeting of the Northeastern American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, Fordham University, Lincoln Center, New York City, 8 October 1994, where it benefited from the written comments of Colin Jones. The author thanks Bryant Ragan for providing that occasion and Denis Crouzet for inviting him to present another version, 19 December 1996, in the séminaire de DEA at the Université de Paris-Sorbonne. David Bell, Rudolph Binion, and Joel Reed provided very helpful suggestions along the way.

2 On the construction of *la province*, see Alain Corbin, Paris-province, in Pierre Nora, Les lieux de mémoire, 3. Les France, 1. Conflits et partages, Paris 1992, p. 776–823.

3 In Burguière and Revel, Histoire de la France, see especially L'espace français, Paris 1989, which considers the discovery and creation of French space, and L'état et les conflits, Paris 1990, which includes Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's chapter on »les minorités périphériques«, essentially a treatment of minorités linguistiques. Caroline Ford, Creating the Nation in Provincial France: Religion and Political Identity in Brittany, Princeton 1993; Suzanne Desan, Reclaiming the Sacred: Lay Religion and Popular Politics in Revolutionary France, Ithaca 1990; Peter Sahlins, Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees, Berkeley 1989. Michael Kugler, Provincial Intellectuals: Identity, Patriotism, and Enlightened Peripheries, in: The Eighteenth Century 37 (1996) p. 156–173, while not particularly concerned with France, includes France within a European context, and, by focusing on identity, transcends the more sociological typology of Roger Emerson, in: The Enlightenment and Social Structures, in: City and Society in the Eighteenth Century, ed. Paul Fritz and David Williams, Toronto 1973, p. 99–124; Stéphane Gerson, Parisian Littérateurs,

Among the studies of the construction of nationalism from a peripheral perspective is an article by David Bell on Alsatian culture and the problem of nationalism. Elsewhere, Bell has explored the issues of pre-Revolutionary »nationalism«, language, and religion, seeing the French state as, in a sense, picking up where the church had left off, but the article on Alsace has the added virtue of being set in a precise location. Bell remarks on the need to study the *pays conquis*, which became French relatively late and relatively inconsistently. He provides a good description of the literary culture of Strasbourg, and he identifies two trends in the eighteenth century: a tradition of Civic Humanism with its roots in the Renaissance and Reformation, and a German literary culture that centered on the university and attracted some of the leading writers of the late eighteenth century. In that latter context one finds a debate also about levels of culture, whether French or German, and the challenge posed by popular speech. One is tempted to see Alsatian culture in the eighteenth century as largely a form of resistance to absolutist or Revolutionary centralization, and he concludes that partly as a result of the interruption of 1871–1918 something of the particular culture survives[4].

Bell has identified Alsatian culture by reversing poles, by viewing both French and German cultures from an Alsatian perspective. But rather than emphasize elements of resistance, one may also view Alsatian culture as playing a more original role. Rebecca McCoy's study of Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines emphasizes accommodation of religious, linguistic, and political differences outside the context of a major city[5]. Strasbourg's intellectuals engaged in some such accommodation, but their urban base provided the strength from which to initiate cultural change; not just resisters or transmitters, they were active intermediaries or interveners between cultures, creators of an evolving cultural identity. Indeed, Strasbourg provided possibilities for transcending identities from either side of the Rhine. It provided connections well beyond France and the German states. In their Humanist incarnation, cultivated *Strasbourgeois* were not just glorifying the city's past and refighting the Reformation

Provincial Journeys and the Construction of National Unity in Post-Revolutionary France, in: Past and Present 151 (1996) p. 141–173, recognizes the discovery of the category of »the provinces« but also falls back on the Parisian center.

4 David A. Bell, Nation-Building and Cultural Particularism in Eighteenth-Century France: The Case of Alsace, in: Eighteenth-Century Studies 21 (1988) p. 472–490. See also Bell, Lingua Populi, Lingua Dei: Language, Religion and the Origins of French Revolutionary Nationalism, in: American Historical Review 100 (1995) p. 1403–1437, which he kindly sent me in typescript, and Recent Works on Early Modern French National Identity, in: Journal of Modern History 68 (1996) p. 84–113. A long-term perspective on Alsatian identity can be found in Jean-Marie Mayeur, Une mémoire-frontière: L'Alsace, in: Pierre Nora, Les lieux de mémoire, 2. La nation, 2, Paris 1986, p. 63–95. On the importance of cultural and associational life in the evolution of Alsatian identity since the sixteenth century, see Bernard Vogler, Réflexions sur l'identité régionale, in: Revue des Sciences Sociales 16 (1988–89) p. 13–15.

5 Rebecca K. McCoy, The Culture of Accommodation: Religion, Language, and Politics in an Alsatian Community, 1648–1870, PhD. Diss., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill 1992. Some of her work has been published as McCoy, The Société Populaire at Sainte-Maire-aux-Mines: Local Culture and National Identity in an Alsatian Community during the French Revolution, in: European History Quarterly 27 (1997) p. 435–474, and Alsatians into Frenchmen: The Construction of National Identities at Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines, 1815–1851, in: French History 12 (1998) p. 429–451.

– though to some extent they were doing that – but also reconfiguring the Greek and Roman pasts[6]. And they did so in cultural institutions that had developed since the Renaissance and represented more durable entities than the literary societies discussed by Bell or the provincial academies studied by Daniel Roche[7]. They were exploring the cultural map of Europe, discovering historical and geographic connections that transcended national and linguistic boundaries. The basic work on Enlightenment-era geography emphasizes the discovery of a wider world in a Eurocentric discipline, but it is worth noting that Europe itself was under construction[8].

Intellectuals in Strasbourg could take an independent look at French, German, and European space. In part, their decentered position derived from a Protestant religious heritage that was confirmed even under Louis XIV, as well as an older experience of political independence. They could remain »citizens without sovereignty«, as Daniel Gordon has put it, somewhat longer than Parisian-based intellectuals[9]. Indeed, as will be seen below, even the Napoleonic period saw a continuation of Enlightenment ideals in Strasbourg, where Bonaparte's vision of the Roman imperium had a particular resonance in terms of Augustan imagery, European geography, and opportunities for employment.

For the intellectuals of Revolutionary Alsace, the Revolution was not simply an outside Parisian force but an occasion for working out complex cultural issues on a yearly or monthly basis. One needs to understand, as Michel de Certeau put it, where historical actors were located[10]. He particularly wanted to know about the sense of place or identity of the local informants of the abbé Grégoire in his effort to study the various *patois* of France and to explore the possibility of their suppression. Clearly the different informants took different positions on linguistic terrorism, identifying more or less with the government, more or less with the regional élite, more or less with the total population. What we have is a series of attempts, by Grégoire, by his informants, by Certeau, by ourselves, to rethink and remake the cognitive map of France[11].

6 Bell, Nation-Building (see n. 4) p. 482.

7 The fundamental work on provincial academies is Daniel Roche, Le siècle des lumières en province: Académies et académiciens provinciaux, 1680–1789, Paris 1978, but the essays in Roche, Les républicains des lettres: Gens de culture et Lumières au XVIII[e] siècle, Paris 1988, go deeper into questions of provincial identity and history.

8 Numa Broc, La géographie des philosophes: Géographes et voyageurs français au XVIII[e] siècle, Paris 1975.

9 See Daniel Gordon, Citizens without Sovereignty: Equality and Sociability in French Thought, 1670–1789, Princeton 1994.

10 Michel de Certeau, Dominique Julia, and Jacques Revel, Une politique de la langue. La Révolution Française et les *patois*: L'enquête de Grégoire, Paris 1975, particularly chap. 2, »Le lieux du discours«. He says the same about writers of history in Certeau, The Writing of History, trans. Tom Conley (New York, 1988), especially chap. 2, »The Historiographical Operation.«

11 On cognitive mapping, see the remarks of Fredric Jameson, Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism, Durham 1991; on the concept of mapping and personhood, albeit at a non-élite level, see David Warren Sabean, Power in the Blood: Popular Culture and Village Discourse in Early Modern Germany, Cambridge 1984, p. 30–36. More original than the arguments of the Vovelle and Furet camps in all the publishing during the bicentennial of the French Revolution are the nine volumes of Serge Bonin and Claude Langlois, Atlas de la révolution française, Paris 1987–1996. The cognitive map of Revolutionary France is hardly reducible to the familiar hexagon.

This article explores how issues of cultural identity were played out in the life and work of Jérémie-Jacques Oberlin, a Strasbourg intellectual who could not simply accept or resist Parisian hegemony but found himself negotiating with it, often seizing the initiative, and generally contributing to a cultural life that partook equally of the local and the cosmopolitan. Such a cultural life involved both scholarly communication among *érudits* and mundane planning for the education of children. Through such implementation, it involved the continuation of the local Enlightenment beyond the Revolution, and it is visible in his diverse works, both published and unpublished, and especially his addresses that accompanied the printed academic programs of the Protestant *gymnase* of Strasbourg, the principal source for this study[12].

II. The Oberlins and the Alsatian Context

Jérémie-Jacques and his better known younger brother Jean-Frédéric Oberlin were sons of a professor at the *gymnase* and of the daughter of a professor; their parents were attracted to Pietism and influenced by the Moravian Brethren. The brothers Oberlin were heirs to an important intellectual tradition, shared an interest in educational reform, consulted each other when making important decisions, and even married sisters (themselves daughters of yet another Strasbourg professor). But their life experiences were quite different. Jean-Frédéric or Johann Friedrich (1740–1826), for whom Oberlin College is named, was a liberal and rather mystical Lutheran pastor in the wilds of the Vosges. He had pietistic and virtually Swedenborgian tendencies but managed to become an animator of French culture, elementary and vocational education for both sexes, economic development, and spiritual life in the Ban-de-la-Roche, a mountainous, Francophone *(patois)* Protestant region surrounded by German-speaking Catholics. Most of the secondary literature on Jean-Frédéric emphasizes his place in the history of ecumenical thought and secondarily the history of education, and a recent museum exhibition devoted to him gave local politicians an opportunity to discuss the economic and cultural development of Alsace within a context of the construction of Europe. He called himself an »evangelical Catholic«, maintained cordial relations with people of different confessions, and has been described by Pierre Chaunu as a Pietist of the Enlightenment. He wrote many sermons and carried on a busy correspondence with many eminent Europeans, but published little. His modest residence became something of a pilgrimage site for Protestants and mystics, and a visit by Jakob Michael Lenz occasioned his description of the poet's insanity which served as the principal source for Georg Büchner's work[13].

12 The series of programs is bound together, beginning with Programma ad Orationem Inauguralem qua Jeremias Jacobus Oberlinus Munus Professoris Ordinarii Logicae et Metaphysicae, Strasbourg, 1782, and ending with Jeremie Jaques Oberlin, Correspondant de l'Institut National, Professeur de l'Académie Protest. de la Conf. d'Augsbourg, Directeur et les Instituteurs du *Gymnase* à leurs Concitoyens, Strasbourg, 1806, Bibliothèque Nationale R1078 (1–47). Archival sources for the *gymnase* are found in Archives du Chapitre de Saint-Thomas, Archives Municipales, Strasbourg.

13 The standard biography is Camille LEENHARDT, La vie de Jean-Frédéric Oberlin 1740–1826, Paris 1911, with an édition populaire, Toulouse 1914. On religious thought, see H. STROHL, Etudes sur Oberlin, Paris 1926. On education, Edmond PARISOT, Un éducateur moderne au XVIII[e] siècle:

The less famous elder brother, Jérémie-Jacques (1735–1806), following literally in the father's footsteps, pursued an academic career in Strasbourg. After studying at the *gymnase* and with the famous historian Johann Daniel Schoepflin at the university, he became his father's assistant at the *gymnase*. Intellectually, he would continue the practices of Schoepflin, who, in recent scholarly literature, has emerged as the embodiment of Strasbourg's Enlightenment; institutionally and historically, he would experience the Revolutionary and Napoleonic opportunity to implement change. The historiographical focus on Schoepflin champions Enlightenment cosmopolitanism against Revolutionary nationalism and Parisian centralization. A focus on Oberlin reveals the continued pursuit of Enlightenment ideals[14]. Over the years he took on a range of academic tasks: from teaching his own courses and organizing Schoepflin's collection of antiquities to becoming a university professor, director of the library, editor of Latin classics and German medieval literature, and *Gymnasiarque*, principal administrator of the *gymnase*. All commentators agree that for most of his career he was *surchargé de cours*. That may explain his ability to survey a broad curriculum, but it also may have prompted a certain resentment toward the *Ancien Régime*. There is little modern secondary literature on Jérémie-Jacques, yet he was the more active publisher, working in ancient history, literary criticism, education, and linguistics, and playing a role in Revolutionary politics in Strasbourg. While Jean-Frédéric was teaching his peasant flock to speak and write in French or, if necessary, in German and, in effect, suppressing the regional *patois*, Jérémie-Jacques was writing a study of that language and thereby helping to preserve it. When the Revolution came, linguistic politics took on a new urgency, with direction from Paris. Jérémie-Jacques became the abbé Grégoire's Alsatian informant[15]. But

Jean-Frédéric Oberlin (1740–1826), Paris 1907. More recent studies, emphasizing ecumenicalism, include François Goursolas, J.-F. Oberlin: Le Pasteur »Catholique-Evangélique«, Paris 1985, with preface by Pierre Chaunu, and Erich Psczolla, Jean-Frédéric Oberlin, 1740–1826, Strasbourg 1985, trans. by Monique and Jean-Pierre Meyer from German edition of 1979. The most useful work in English is John W. Kurtz, John Frederic Oberlin, Boulder 1976. The museum exhibition took place at the Musée Alsacien à l'Ancienne Boucherie, 1 Feb.–20 May 1991; see the catalog, Malou Schneider and Marie-Jeanne Geyer, Jean-Frédéric Oberlin: le divin ordre du monde, 1740–1826, Steinbrunn 1991.

14 The classic work on Strasbourg's Enlightenment is Jürgen Voss, Universität, Geschichtswissenschaft und Diplomatie im Zeitalter der Aufklärung: Johann Daniel Schöpflin (1694–1771), Munich 1979. In the long-term history of Alsace, the eighteenth century marks a period of cultural flowering and of integration within France; Bernard Vogler, Histoire culturelle d'Alsace, Strasbourg 1993. A more recent collective work is Bernard Vogler and Jürgen Voss, Strasbourg, Schoepflin et l'Europe au XVIII[e] siècle, Bonn 1996, whose introduction claims that the French Revolution brought Strasbourg's European vocation to an end (p. ix). For a more thorough version of that argument, see Voss, Das Elsass als Mittler zwischen deutscher und französischer Geschichtsschreibung im 18. Jahrhundert, chap. 6 in Voss, Deutsch-französische Beziehungen im Spannungsfeld von Absolutismus, Aufklärung und Revolution, Bonn 1992 (Pariser Historische Studien, 36) p. 90–120.

15 The autobiography of Jérémie-Jacques appears in Programma (1782) (see n. 12). The eulogies include D. E. Stoeber, Eloge de Jérémie-Jacques Oberlin … prononcé le 17 mars 1807, Strasbourg 1807, and Théophile Frédéric Winckler, Notice sur la vie et les écrits de Jérémie-Jacques Oberlin, extrait du Magasin encyclopédique, numéro de mars 1807. The introduction to Rüdiger Brandt (ed.), Jeremias Jakob Oberlin: Abhandlungen zu Konrad von Würzburg und Ulrich Boner, Stuttgart 1988, and Chantal Vogler, Jeremias Jacob Oberlin im Sturm der Revolutionsjahre, in:

he had already been producing scholarship in the area, viewing regional speech from a non-Parisian urban perspective. It was also a Protestant perspective that differed from the Catholic, which had lurched between the alternatives of translation and suppression[16].

Like others in the Protestant élite, the brothers cautiously welcomed the Revolution of 1789 but dissented from particular policies and found themselves targets of repression in 1793–94[17]. Jean-Frédéric was the bearer of French culture in the countryside; one early biographer referred to him as breaking down the barbarism of the Ban-de-la-Roche and conquering it for France[18], and Jean-Frédéric himself was still associating the French language with salvation in a sermon of 1825[19]. Cooperation with Jacobin language policies posed no problem, and the isolation of the region provided protection. Even when his church was closed in April 1794, Jean-Frédéric held meetings in the guise of a *société populaire*, where the idea of the good Christian was identical to that of the good republican citizen. Jérémie-Jacques was more directly involved in the politics of the era, serving as municipal councillor and as administrator in the Strasbourg district and Bas-Rhin department, and getting caught up in class and language conflicts in the city. He was arrested during the night of 2–3 November 1793, exiled from Strasbourg, and imprisoned in Metz, where he still managed to pursue his linguistic studies. He returned in ten months and continued his career as teacher, administrator, intellectual, notable, and politician. It was in the semester-by-semester programs for the *gymnase* that he worked out an amalgam of local, French, and European culture in the changing political climate of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Strasbourg.

Cultural identity for intellectuals in Alsace was, as Bell has indicated, resistant to crude nationalism, whether French or German, and Oberlin would be eulogized in an era of nationalism as one of the key intellectual mediators between the banks of

Francia 25 (1998) p. 199–220, are the most recent scholarly treatments of the life and work. Georges Livet has written the biographical entry in Nouveau dictionnaire de biographie alsacienne, Strasbourg, 28 (1996) p. 2875–2877. For a French treatment of the linguistic scholarship, see Jean Schneider, Un lexicographe de langues médiévales, Jérémie-Jacques Oberlin, in: De la plume d'oie à l'ordinateur: Etudes de philologie et de linguistique offertes à Hélène Nais, numéro spécial de Verbum, Nancy 1985, p. 153–163. A selection from the Essai sur le *patois* lorrain des environs du comté du Ban de la Roche, fief royal d'Alsace, Strasbourg, 1775, appeared in Certeau, Une politique, and an entire reprint has been made available by Slatkine Reprints, Geneva 1970.

16 Bell, Lingua Populi, Lingua Dei (see n. 4).

17 Chantal Vogler (see n. 15) presents the Revolution as a catastrophe in the context of Oberlin's career. However, a strong dissent from a proposal to nationalize Protestant religious goods in 1790 indicated active engagement in the Revolutionary debates rather than simple opposition to the Revolution. See Jérémie-Jacques Oberlin, Mémoire sur la motion de M. Matthieu, Procureur Syndic du District de Strasbourg, concernant les Protestants d'Alsace, pour servir de suite au discours de M. Koch sur ladite motion, Strasbourg 1790. For a discussion of the challenge the Revolution posed to the Protestant community of Alsace, see Jean Richerateau, Le rôle politique du professeur Koch, Strasbourg 1936, where both Koch and Oberlin are presented as »opportunists«, liberal particularists who accepted the Revolution while defending the privileges and interests of the Protestants of Alsace.

18 D. E. Stoeber, Vie de J. F. Oberlin, pasteur à Waldbach, au Ban-de-la-Roche, Strasbourg 1831, p. 132.

19 »Exhortation à bannir les patois«, in: Leenhardt, La vie (1911) (see n. 13) p. 423–424.

the Rhine[20]. But the cosmopolitanism of Strasbourg in his own day should not be limited to two nations, and his vision went beyond the provincial patriotism inherent in the Paris-province dichotomy. Daniel Roche has taken us beyond the typology of cities, which leaves them isolated in particular categories, to understand the role of travel and letters in an Enlightenment that was about communication transcending the particularity of place. Yet the ambivalent identity of the provincial vis-à-vis Paris that Roche describes was inappropriate in Strasbourg.

The letters Jérémie-Jacques received in Latin, German, French, English, and Italian testify to his continued cosmopolitanism and membership in the Republic of Letters, which was as *épistolaire* as it was *salonnière*[21]. He was associated with academies in Rouen, Cortona, London, and Cassel as well as Strasbourg and Paris, having been a corresponding member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres since 1772 and named corresponding member of the Institut early in 1797. In the academic programs, he clearly had to deal with the latest politically correct line from Paris. But this did not mean he had to betray his principles, and within certain constraints he created a multicultural universe, not only of French and German, but of Latin and Greek and a reinterpreted local memory and civic pride. To call it cosmopolitan is to mark the survival of the Enlightenment[22]. To call it multicultural is perhaps to succumb to presentist temptations – one might prefer the less provocative »multilingual« or »syncretic« – but both terms express something of the Humanist culture Jérémie-Jacques preserved and developed.

From his position in Strasbourg, Jérémie-Jacques combined historical, geographical, and linguistic interests. Travel was an important component of his thought even if he rarely traveled himself. He studied and edited local manuscripts and published and analyzed classical and medieval texts of broad significance. His scholarly work mapped the antiquities of the western world[23]. His study of medieval literature and of local *patois* was a way of understanding the long history of language and connectedness between regions[24]. He had appreciated the linguistic complexity of Europe before the abbé Grégoire asked him to think about the linguistic constitution of France. Beside the Humanist scorn for medieval barbarism, which made it easy to adopt some Revolutionary attitudes, he had an appreciation for the authentic medievalisms in popular speech, recognizing survival of élite culture in plebeian places.

His 1776 tour of the French Midi and Paris, which he recounted first in a French manuscript and later in a Latin address, was a way of seeing the old Latin world and

20 Louis Spach, L'archéologue J. J. Oberlin, in: Bulletin de la Société pour la conservation des monuments historiques d'Alsace, 2 série, vol. 1, 2e partie, Mémoires (1863) p. 121.

21 Letters received by Oberlin are to be found in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Salle des Manuscrits, Fonds Allemand: 192–204. On the important role of the salon, see Dena Goodman, The Republic of Letters, Ithaca 1994.

22 For another case of wanting to save the Enlightenment from the excesses of the Revolution, see Jeffrey Merrick, Family and Festivals: Social Integration and Disintegration in Morellet's Critique of the French Revolution, in: History of European Ideas 17 (1993) p. 599–614.

23 For example, Museum Schoepflini, Strasbourg 1770, and Orbis antiqui monumentis suis illustrati primae lineae, Strasbourg 1776.

24 See, for example, Diatribe de Conrado Herbipolita, Strasbourg 1782, De poetis Alsatiae eroticis, Strasbourg 1786, his edition of Johann Georg Scherz, Glossarium germanicum medii aevi ..., Strasbourg 1781–1784, and Essai sur le *patois* lorrain, Strasbourg 1775.

the physical and literary monuments of modern France[25]. He and his contemporaries referred to monuments in a metaphysical way; they marked his cognitive map of the world and included books, manuscripts, libraries, works of art, scientific collections, technological wonders, and languages. At each stage of his journey, his counterparts in the Republic of Letters directed him to the most important *lieux de mémoire*. Roche used Oberlin's account of his visit to Nîmes to describe Jean-François Séguier's Enlightenment world of the Midi, which maintained some contact to the north. The manuscript as a whole reveals an even broader scope and suggestions of intellectual links that were hardly limited to his physical presence. The late twentieth-century Internaut, connecting instantly between web-sites, should not forget the dramatic leaps across time and space that were possible in the culture of the Enlightenment. A text transports Oberlin from Mormoiron, near Carpentras, to Persia, a stuffed owl from Montpellier to North America. A Chinese bronze dragon evokes thoughts of Egypt and of the mythic beast of Tarascon, where he has recently toured. He alternates comments on Roman ruins with notes that he had taken lessons in *patois*. Some of his most impassioned remarks concern canals. Seeing the Canal du Midi fed an interest he had developed in the history of canals in the ancient and modern worlds. He saw them as major »channels of communication«[26]. When teaching, he was conscious of training students to be good travelers as well, and he published on objects and ruins they brought to his attention[27]. His meticulous, illustrated study of the Roman forum, a place he had never actually seen, made of him a »virtual« archeologist[28]. His correspondence with the abbé Grégoire indicates a steady flow of educated travelers and scholarly books between Paris, Strasbourg, and points east[29].

When he published the first guides to his own city and region, he was working for locals and travelers alike, yet another way of creating channels of communication[30].

25 The French manuscript, »Journal des remarques faites dans un voyage par la France en 1776«, is in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Salle des Manuscrits, NAF 10040.

26 This work was inspired by a proposal of the Académie des Inscriptions, first in 1769 and then in 1771: »Quels ont été, depuis les temps les plus anciens, jusqu'au 4ᵉ siècle de l'ère chrétienne, les tentatives des différens peuples pour ouvrir des canaux de communication, soit entre diverses rivières, soit entre deux mers différentes, soit entre des rivières et des mers; et quel en a été le succès?« See Stoeber (see n. 18) p. 18–19.

27 See, for example, Lettre de M. Oberlin … à M. le Comte de Skawronsky, … sur un bijou dont ce seigneur a fait l'acquisition à Rome, Strasbourg, 1779. Skawronsky had studied at the Diplomatic School in Strasbourg in 1774; Voss, Universität (see n. 14) p. 182, n. 217. On the role of travel in early modern European education, I have benefited from a lecture by Jean Boutier, Religion et voyages en Europe aux XVIᵉ et XVIIᵉ siècles, given in the D.E.A. seminar at the Université de Limoges on 3 February 1993.

28 J. J. Oberlin, Exposé d'une découverte de M. le Chevalier de Frédenheim, Sur-Intendant des Batimens et du Musée de Stockholm faite au Forum Romanun, en janvier MDCCLXXXIX, Strasbourg 1796.

29 See the Lettres de Grégoire à J-J Oberlin, ed. by Ch. Pfister, Mémoires de la Société d'Archéologie Lorraine 42 (1892) p. 333–373.

30 The series began with the Almanach de Strasbourg (1780); he turned to the province in the Almanac d'Alsace (1782); the Almanach du département du Bas-Rhin (1792) reflected Revolutionary administrative units. The »Correspondance pour la confection et l'ordre à établir dans l'Almanac« is found in the Archives du Préteur Royal, Archives Municipales de Strasbourg, AA 2055. Bottin and Fargès-Méricourt produced subsequent guides.

It was a record of past traditions and recent accomplishments. He combined basic information, advertisements for his latest publications, discussions of European literature, and accounts of recent archeological finds. Meanwhile his brother was keeping a perpetual calendar, a cyclical almanac listing anniversaries of events since the beginning of time[31]. Jérémie-Jacques opted for historicism and the needs of Francophone visitors. His beloved canals, built with state direction, broke through provincial isolation. His almanacs would do the same. Educational institutions and Republicans of Letters might associate themselves with state activities, whether Roman imperial, French absolutist, constitutional, republican, or even Napoleonic, but all régimes needed to be courted, educated, and sometimes suspected (as were the intellectuals by the state).

III. The Programs

The programs and orations presented by Oberlin begin with his naming as Professor of Logic and Metaphysics at the university in 1782 and his inauguration as *Gymnasiarque* in the fall of 1787 and then, with a gap in 1794, run semi-annually through the fall of 1806[32]. In the spirit of Renaissance Humanism they appeared in Latin through the fall of 1789. By spring 1790 they were written in the vernacular German, but with no change in the daily schedule or curriculum. More substantive changes occurred in 1793, but the programs were still appearing in German. While imprisoned, Oberlin produced a French translation of both texts from 1793 and an extract from fall 1792. French remained the language of publication from spring 1795 (Germinal, an III) through fall 1806 and Oberlin's death[33].

Judging by these semi-annual publications, the period from the end of the Terror to the Empire was characterized by a juggling of cultures on a consistently French ground. Only when one focuses on the period 1792–1794 can the use of French be called linguistic terrorism. Thereafter, it is a language of compromise and negotiation, not only with Parisian authorities but with the local and European Renaissance and Enlightenment heritage. The theme of meeting the needs of one's time does not stop with Thermidor but continues into the Empire. Oberlin was working with a certain idea of Enlightened Europe, rooted in Renaissance and Reformation, still fighting superstition, and seeking a place in the modern urban world.

As Patrice Higonnet has deftly shown, shifts in language policy were rooted in the ideological demands of the Revolution; linguistic »political correctness« was a way of pretending to create universal harmony without making fundamental economic changes[34]. However, Higonnet's argument, while perfectly convincing from a Parisian or »national« perspective in its account of changing *régimes*, is too neat

31 Ms Oberlin, Archives Municipales de Strasbourg, Ms 206: Registre de la main d'Oberlin, Almanach historique, p. 43.
32 All are bound in B.N. R1078 and identified here by month and year.
33 However, Latin lectures were published in years XII and XIII, and bilingual (French and German) programs for the Academy were produced in years XIV and XV.
34 Patrice L.-R. Higonnet, The Politics of Linguistic Terrorism and Grammatical Hegemony during the French Revolution, in: Social History 5 (1980) p. 41–69.

when viewed from an Alsatian point of view[35]. It also lays great emphasis on the role of the *écoles centrales* and lycées as creators of cultural distinction for the »haute bourgeoisie«, but Oberlin's political strategy in the Directory and Consulate was to present the *gymnase* as an intermediate school, linking the more popular primary education to the new, more privileged secondary institutions. In this way, Oberlin's stance may be understood as one of pluralist multiculturalism vs. élite political correctness and of greater chances for social ascent and emulation; the shift to French could serve more than one agenda and, as Higonnet also points out, was part of a longer-term development. In the nineteenth century, within a French context, the school would try to balance the humanistic interests of Oberlin with the practical needs of a growing population of »petits bourgeois«, but the »classes industrielles« that appealed to the broader population would be suppressed in 1879. In that way, the school followed a pattern of socio-cultural division and »embourgeoisement« described in the literature on European education[36].

In his youth, Oberlin had spent eight months in Montbéliard, long an independent center of Protestantism, residing with an aunt who translated Corneille into German; from her he learned French, which was not yet taught at the *gymnase*. One of his students later wrote that French became Oberlin's language of preference to be used among friends, in letters, and in the family. By contrast, his francophile younger brother preferred German on such occasions. In several of the programs, Jérémie-Jacques noted the importance of the founding of a chair in French in 1751, but the historian of the *gymnase*, Rodolphe Reuss, expressed some uncertainty about the use of French in the school[37]. Greek went from being required to being an elective offered only in private lessons. More hours were spent in French, fewer in German and Latin. But introductory French was probably taught in German, as were most courses, even as official documents were changing from Latin to French[38].

Oberlin's inaugural speech of 1782 provided an autobiographical résumé. His lectures in the period 1783–spring 1788 concerned medieval German literature, rhetoric and logic, and Greek and Latin literature; his classical literary citations evoked themes of public safety and love of country. From fall 1788 through fall 1789, while still employing Latin, he focused greater attention on France, arguing that French was a second vernacular for students in Alsace, addressing issues of natural philosophy and logic by comparing Bernardin de Saint-Pierre to Descartes on sensation and thought, and calling for greater consideration of geography.

35 Martyn Lyons makes a similar point, although his characterization of Higonnet's position tends to simplify it. See Politics and *Patois*: the linguistic policy of the French Revolution, in: Australian Journal of French Studies 18 (1981) p. 264–281.

36 See in particular the works of Fritz Ringer, Education and Society in Modern Europe, Bloomington 1979; Fields of Knowledge: French Academic Culture in Comparative Perspective, 1890–1920, Cambridge 1992.

37 Rodolphe Reuss, Histoire du *Gymnase* Protestant de Strasbourg pendant la révolution (1789–1804), Paris 1891, p. 16–17 on use of language until the Revolution. For a survey of the school's history, see Pierre Schang and Georges Livet, Histoire du *Gymnase* Jean Sturm: Berceau de l'Université de Strasbourg 1538–1988, Strasbourg 1988.

38 See also Paul Lévy, Histoire linguistique d'Alsace et de Lorraine, Paris 1929.

The impact of the events of 1789 is evident in the German lecture of spring 1790, hailing a new era of freedom and harmony and praising the French nation and king. In a rhetorical approach typical of the time, Oberlin expressed astonishment at the speed of change: *Kaum hatte man in Jahrhunderten zu hoffen gewagt, was einige Wochen bei uns zu Stande gebracht haben*. He evoked the challenge of citizenship: *Und möchte jene Wahlfähigkeit unsre werthesten Mitbürger belehren, dass von nun an auch ein grösseres Mass der Kenntnisse erfordert werde!* He argued that fatherly conduct *(väterliche Führung)* must replace slavish compulsion *(sklavischen Zwang)* and that, for public utility, books must be available in three languages: Latin, German, and French.

Municipal authorities, who in the early years of the Revolution were friendly to the school, had attended the spring 1790 ceremony and were welcomed again in fall. Students praised them in German. The faculty welcomed them in French. The mayor addressed the students in German concerning the instruction of youth, the zeal of teachers, and the importance of the forthcoming constitution. Oberlin's spring 1791 address took for a theme the Latin tag: *Festina lente*, but his message about taking proper time in school, about building and digesting, while delivered in German, described French as a second mother tongue *(unsre Zweite Muttersprache, die Französische);* that was a common strategy for justifying the continued study of Latin and Greek. That such different languages might be complementary was a common eighteenth-century idea, as Linda Colley's study of the construction of British identity demonstrates for Welshmen with »two native languages«[39].

Festina lente evoked memories of Augustus and of constitutional reform. In a Latin lecture given in summer 1791, Oberlin analyzed the crisis of the *ancien régime* and the early events of the Revolution. The ideas were familiar: an incoherent constitution, immorality of the élite, stupidity, superstition, venality. A new rational division into departments *(nova divisione in octoginta tres regiones partiti)* replaced an incoherent collection of provinces. Oberlin unveiled his own Latin version of the Constitution *(Summa rei publicae salus ex libertate legitima ...),* which was easily presented as a call to study, for it advocated dispelling the clouds of ignorance, liberating people from superstition, explaining the laws, and forming good citizens[40]. Similarly, the fall 1791 program linked citizenship to education. It began with Cicero *(Sapiens solus vere liber est)* and then, in German, hailed France *(Heil dem Reiche! Heil dem Volke der Franken!)* and praised the French king for accepting the Constitution. It paid close attention to events in Paris, watching for the potential impact on the *gymnase* of the Talleyrand Report *(Vorschlag des ehmaligen Bischofs von Autun).* It concluded with the *Römische Tafel der Französischen Grundsätze*, and the demand that it be in every citizen's head and heart.

Oberlin's spring 1792 speech discussed responsibilities of parents and children as well as teachers and focused on pedagogical reform. Teachers must lecture well and

39 Linda Colley, Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837, New Haven 1992, p. 373.

40 His comment reads: *Laborandum est deinceps doctoribus in scholis et academiis, ut magis magisque ignorantiae nebulam dispellant, verae sapientiae et sincerae pietatis principiis tironum animos imbuant, a superstitione liberent, cognitione legum officiorumque exornent, mores emendent, bonos cives forment.*

explain the importance of their subject. Politics had some influence on the curriculum in fall 1792, as the instructor of religion, geography, and history was now responsible for teaching *der Französischen Staatsverfassung*, but Oberlin's eulogy of Johann Leypold prompted a look back at the school's history, allowing him to discuss his own teacher Schoepflin, the teaching of history, Latin and German literature, and the role of education in the maintenance of freedom.

The programs of 1793 appeared in German, but later Oberlin translated them into French with an exculpatory introduction: *Ayant embrassé la révolution dès son aurore avec transport, j'ai mis d'abord la déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen entre les mains de la jeunesse; et dès l'instant que la République fut décrétée par la Convention nationale, je me suis hâté de conformer, de concert avec les régens des classes, l'enseignement au gouvernement républicain.*

He explained the programs themselves as follows: *Ces programmes contiennent ma profession de foi et expriment mon desir de communiquer mon sincere attachement à la République aux nombreux éleves qui fréquentent nos écoles.*

In spring, like Rousseau in »Emile«, he quoted Plato on instruction of youth in founding the Republic and on the importance of *bonnes mœurs* and *crainte de Dieu*. He addressed the language question by using the example of Rome, where philosophy and politics were still discussed in Greek, thus providing a bilingual model: *La langue grecque alloit chez eux de pair avec la latine, comme chez nous les langues française et allemande.* In fall he evoked the anniversary celebration of 10 August in Paris and discussed the problem of enemies within and without and the important contribution of student-soldiers sacrificing themselves for state and republic. This was Oberlin at his most politically correct, but it was hardly out of character to be celebrating civic virtue. Nevertheless, multiculturalism gave way to nationalism when he described future peace and prosperity, praising French climate, soil, production, commerce, science, and even his dear canals. The address ended: *Que Dieu bénisse nos armes! Vive la République!*

His arrest followed. For Reuss, it began a decade of uncertainty, a period of flirtation with the national system – competition came from the Catholic *collège royal* or *national* in the planning for the *école centrale* or *lycée* – until full emergence as a kind of preparatory division of the private Protestant *académie* in an era of Napoleonic stability. Oberlin certainly crafted his program according to the times, but he expressed a consistent vision. Upon reopening the *gymnase* in Germinal an III, he argued that the school had always fitted instruction to contemporary circumstances:

Depuis la naissance de notre Gymnase son enseignement a constamment suivi l'esprit du siecle. Ceux, qui l'ont dirigé, de même que les instituteurs ont toujours eu l'attention d'accommoder l'instruction aux circonstances, pour former des éleves, qui pussent concourrir au bien public et au salut de la patrie dans les différens états, qu'ils alloient embrasser. He rehearsed the origins of the school: from the Renaissance literary society of the late fifteenth century to the Reformation and the foundation of the school in 1537 by the magistrate and diplomat Jacques Sturm and the first faculty member Jean Sturm[41].

41 Jacques Sturm's life was treated in greater detail in the program of Germinal an XIII. For a more recent treatment, see Roger Chartier, Marie-Madeleine Compère, and Dominique Julia, L'éducation en France du XVI^e^ au XVIII^e^ siècle, Paris 1976, p. 159–161.

Jean Sturm was the subject of an *éloge* in Vendémiaire an XII. Intermediary between Paris and the German world, recommended by Erasmus to found the *gymnase*, *Sturm devint l'oracle de l'Europe.* Oberlin surveyed Sturm's works on education and his curricular reforms in both Bavaria and Alsace. The text from year III brought Reformation hostility to the Catholic Church up-to-date. The program from the year XII marked a return to religious foundations, as *La Religion et une saine Morale* replaced *La Constitution Républicaine et une bonne et saine Morale* in the curriculum. Sturm's works on oratory and on Latin literature and eloquence then received attention[42]. Cicero was Sturm's model in both cases, and Sturm was clearly Oberlin's. Sturm had sent disciples all over Europe, but he had had the advantage of teaching students in a longer curriculum, not just preparing them for lycée or académie. He also represented a humanist ideal that was occasionally forgotten in the school's past, particularly in the seventeenth century.

Recollection of the founders placed the school in a historical context[43]. The connection with the Renaissance was natural; thus, Oberlin discussed the Humanist Juan Luis Vivès, like Sturm recommended by Erasmus, and the idea of nourishing the mind[44]. The Renaissance, moreover, provided the link to the ancients, and Oberlin found many ways of putting his classical erudition to practical use in the school's ceremonies. The address of Vendémiaire an VI used a Greek coin as an occasion to speak of the origins of the *gymnase* and the beginnings of civilization in Greece. Thus, he linked Greece to his own institution and found a Greek model for France, for example, in the Olympic games when handing out academic prizes in Germinal an VII. Both texts also raised issues of war and peace, as did the Germinal an IX program, where the latest lull in the Napoleonic wars provided an occasion to discuss the Roman empire and Roman commemorations of peace, complete with Oberlin's explication of a commemorative medal in Latin. Programs included illustrations of the object and French translation of the Latin legend. Like Jean-Frédéric, who plastered his rural classrooms with pictures and labels in different languages, Jérémie-Jacques was offering *leçons de choses.*

These particular lessons incorporated Napoleonic propaganda, as the Peace of Amiens occasioned a return to the theme of peace permitting the development of the arts, commerce, and letters[45]. Oberlin discussed an allegorical painting in Nuremberg on the seven liberal arts sleeping in wartime and a comparable painting in Strasbourg. Mars was generally opposed by the muses, but the latter triumphed in Enlightened times, and these were Enlightened times. Under Napoleon, Paris remained the capital of European Enlightenment: *Athènes est dans Paris.* But such influences were felt in all *chefs lieux des départemens.* The educational structure of

42 Germinal an XII and Vendémiaire an XIII.

43 Another local Renaissance hero, Jacques Wimpheling of Sélestadt, was the subject of Oberlin's last three addresses. In Fructidor an XIII (1805), he reviewed the essentials of Wimpheling's career. On 30 mars 1806, he discussed the educational ideas of Wimpheling, who regretted not knowing Greek but understood the need to abandon medieval books and saw the importance of antiquities. Finally, Oberlin treated Wimpheling's moral philosophy on 26 septembre 1806, »De Integritate«, written in the form of a letter of advice addressed to young Jacques Sturm.

44 Vendémiaire an VIII.

45 Germinal an X.

France was still being developed, and Oberlin seized the opportunity to point out that his school cost the state nothing. A private institution would have a national role to play.

The school and the city found their places in the history of civilization, the theme of the program of Vendémiaire an XI. It began with Athens and Rome. Then came the barbarian invasions, but Charlemagne founded the University of Paris, and Frederick II and Alfonso the Wise encouraged progress. Italy experienced the Renaissance with the likes of Petrarch and Boccaccio, and along came local hero Gutenberg, the subject of a famous study by Oberlin[46]. When the fall of Constantinople sent *savants* west, the Medici took advantage, as did others in Germany, France, and elsewhere. François I created new chairs at the university and founded the Collège Royal and Bibliothèque Nationale. Then came Jean Sturm. A discussion of Italian painters like Raphael, Leonardo, and Primaticcio moving north gave Oberlin the chance to describe allegorical paintings of the Renaissance: monumental representations of monuments. He argued for continuity from the Renaissance through the eighteenth century, but then in the Revolution came the problem of the *horde*. A savant is automatically *suspect et criminel*. But Napoleon, *vainqueur de Marengo*, has rehabilitated the muses (he also visited the city of Strasbourg on the day of the distribution of prizes in 1805). The possibility of government support was a theme in Germinal an XI, when he recommended the *gymnase* as preparing students for the soon-to-be-established *lycées*; he also prepared for disappointment by writing admiringly of the rare individuals who became scholars despite a lack of support.

In his historical survey, Oberlin found most of the obstacles to civilization in the Middle Ages. In Germinal an VI he discussed the corruption of rhetoric. The Latin taught in the » trivial schools« of the Middle Ages was terrible, the philosophy of the period absurd, history neglected. The problem wasn't Latin itself but its quality and use[47]. The text of Vendémiaire an IX also focused on the backwardness of medieval education, this time with examples of bad Greek.

Some barbarism was recent. By Vendémiaire an IV he spoke of limiting the damage created by the Revolution. The Terror was represented as a time of barbaric vandalism, but the Convention was praised for moving against such a policy. He saw merit in ideas of decentralization of the educational system, and went on to discuss the Reformation context of the Republic of Letters in Strasbourg. Then he described the three essential objects of study in every school: natural history, geography (with use of atlases and other tools employed by his brother), and the metric system (an occasion to mention Greek origins of *mètre*, *litre*, *gramme* ...). Oberlin was opting for the moderns while his curriculum balanced them with the ancients.

Speaking against the excesses of the Revolution did not mean rejecting the Enlightenment. Indeed, in Germinal an IV he reaffirmed the principles of the Enlightenment against Rousseau's skepticism: *Quoiqu'en dise le célebre auteur du Contract social, les sciences bien cultivées, et les arts exercés avec intelligence et*

46 Jérémie-Jacques Oberlin, Exercice public de bibliographie: Essai d'annales de la vie de Jean Gutenberg, inventeur de la typographie, Strasbourg an IX.

47 That address concluded with a call to defeat the English, pacify Europe, and attend to the problems of education.

assiduité épurent les mœurs[48]. The problem was not enough Enlightenment. He lauded Enlightenment-era reforms in the region, particularly in rural schools, such as those founded by his brother, who offered mathematics and geography and trained *conductrices* to teach *tricotage* to girls. Jean-Frédéric had turned his *presbytère* into a *cabinet d'histoire naturelle* and built up the parish library collection. Jérémie-Jacques called for the study of natural history and the destruction of prejudice and superstition.

Whenever he observed the evolution of the curriculum he agreed that the ancient languages had been too dominant, but he worried that the pendulum had gone too far the other way. He argued in Vendémiaire an X that *il faut garder un sage milieu*. Alsatians, he pointed out, have two mother tongues, but Latin is the mother of French, and advanced students who will go on in the sciences will need some Greek. In another plug for Greek, he pointed out that even educated people make mistakes because they don't know what is Greek and what is Latin in a French root (a point he had made in German in spring 1791). His most important argument for the good of the school, however, was that it was providing good preparation for students to move on to the *école centrale*.

The *école centrale* was the Directorial solution to the most persistent structural problem in all educational plans of the 1790s: the secondary level. R. R. Palmer has demonstrated how, whether in the Talleyrand Report of 1791, the Condorcet Plan of 1792, or other ideas of the Convention, Directory, or Consulate, the » lack of articulation« between primary and secondary levels was crucial[49]. It was the key to whether the system would follow one track or two. By the time of the Directory the philosophic legacy of Condorcet had won out over the egalitarian one, and the Idéologues triumphed over the democrats. Oberlin joined this debate with the need to find a proper niche for the *gymnase*. In Vendémiaire an V he paid attention to Fourcroy's report of 25 Messidor on the vacuum between primary schools and the new *écoles centrales*. Oberlin placed the *gymnase* there but also proposed a fourth level: *écoles supérieures* for erudition and Enlightenment. He favored a savant such as Leibnitz over the *bel esprit* Diderot. But he didn't want overspecialization. Medical doctors, for example, should also study philosophy. In Germinal an V he returned to more methodological questions he had treated in German: teach appropriately at each level for students. It was a mistake of the past to begin with dead languages; now natural history and geography would capture children's imaginations. Again Festina lente. Treat students and teachers well. Follow the example of educational reform in Baden. He concluded with a return to the idea that the *gymnase* should serve as the model for *écoles intermédiaires* or *secondaires*.

It was unrealistic to expect large numbers of students to advance, but Oberlin claimed that in a spirit of emulation students would compete for prizes[50]. Emulation

48 In Vendémiaire an VIII he again criticized what he called Rousseau's absurdities.

49 R. R. Palmer, The Improvement of Humanity: Education and the French Revolution, Princeton 1985. Palmer writes of »lack of articulation« in discussing the law of 3 Brumaire an IV (p. 231–232), but it is a problem that runs through the 1790s and Palmer's book.

50 On the role of émulation in educational thought since the Enlightenment, Palmer (see n. 49) p. 24–25.

might also benefit teachers, with rewards going to those producing large numbers of good students. But different students have different needs. New methods had to be found. He again looked to his brother for agreeable and effective methods of education. The program of Germinal an VIII discussed the challenge of teaching a group of students. One must teach material in a natural progression, taking cues from John Locke on human understanding. Teachers must induce students to make discoveries on their own or to think they have. Despite his background in the classical humanities, he was obviously concerned about modernizing and attracting many more students[51]. When he reported on the death of his colleague Johann Daniel Beyckert, who had taught French and mathematics and who had made a revolutionary career as well (elected *commissaire de police, juge de paix, officier municipal*, arrested in Brumaire an II, released in Thermidor), he was indicating that service in the Revolution was still to be valued.

IV. Conclusion

Jérémie-Jacques Oberlin was a compromiser, but a consistent one. His multicultural Strasbourg was a Humanist and Enlightened Republic of Letters, from Old Regime to Empire. But of course it was a Protestant and male republic, even if he mentioned a number of scholarly Catholics and women. He paid little attention to schoolgirls or to the subordinate classes, to say nothing of the mass of Catholics, let alone the Jews, who also contributed to Alsatian society and, in small numbers, evidently began attending the school in 1800. But within understandable limits of protecting his institution and intervening in national debates, he was proposing a lot.

Oberlin's ideas indicate that we need to reconceptualize our understanding of provincial culture and provincial knowledge. His multi-cultural humanism had a vitality that contrasts markedly with nineteenth-century stereotypes of provincial life[52]. Some historians have taken seriously the cultural and intellectual life of the provinces, but their studies focus on the second half of the nineteenth century[53]. The first half is less well known, yet it extended the active intellectual life of the eighteenth century. Recent articles that have attempted to fill that gap have also emphasized the role of Paris in the construction of the idea of the provinces.

51 In the 1780s, the school's students were drawn from Strasbourg's shopkeeping and artisanal petite bourgeoisie. See the graphic representation in Dominique JULIA, Atlas de la révolution française 2: L'enseignement 1760–1815, Paris 1987, p. 39.

52 See, for example, Theodore Zeldin's chapter, »Provincials«, in ZELDIN, France 1848–1945, volume 2, Oxford 1977.

53 See, for example, Daniel J. SHERMAN, Worthy Monuments: Art Museums and the Politics of Culture in Nineteenth-Century France, Cambridge, Mass. 1989, and Mary Jo NYE, Science in the Provinces: Scientific Communities and Provincial Leadership in France, 1860–1930, Berkeley 1986. For a recent collection on cultural transfer between the French and German worlds across the nineteenth century, see Etienne FRANÇOIS, Marie-Claire HOOCK-DEMARLE, Rainer MEYER-KALKUS, Michael WERNER (dir.), en collaboration avec Philippe DESPOIX, Marianne – Germania: Deutsch-französischer Kulturtransfer im europäischen Kontext. Les transferts culturels France-Allemagne et leur contexte européen, 1789–1914, Leipzig 1998.

A neo-provincialism, rooted in the Enlightenment and surviving the Revolution, transcended both antiquarianism (itself hardly deserving to be scoffed at or fully separated from the humanist context) and archaic, reactionary attachment to the *pays*[54]. The Oberlins, but particularly Jérémie-Jacques, were among the cultural notables of the era. There were others, but they have been obscured by the lights of Paris, which attracted the » provincial great men« of Balzac, and ignored by specialists of the later nineteenth century. Were the Oberlins representative of a broader tendency? Perhaps they might be called intellectual or cultural federalists (even after Federalism had been suppressed). Federalism had been an appropriate temptation for Alsatian Protestants, as for residents of provincial cities with long experience of relative autonomy[55]. We need more work on provincial culture after the Terror in order to see if the political term, appropriated much later in the ideologies of Barrès and Maurras, might be applied in a new way[56]. Indeed, federalist diversity might better represent the cultural universe of Strasbourg than the vaguer, and usually pejorative, notion of provincialism. Whatever the term, the reality was one that intellectuals saw as following the model of a Roman imperial world whose provinces, simultaneously Roman and Germanic, had no reason to feel inferior.

In the case of Jérémie-Jacques, the religious context provided a liberating marginality with respect to Paris and a certain connectedness with respect to a wider world. Even though the literature pays less attention to his religion than to that of his brother, his Protestantism helped form his identity, Protestant institutions his career. His proximity to, or inclusion in, the German cultural world was also obviously important. But it was a German intellectual life unencumbered by German principalities or universities. The first volume of Nicholas Boyle's monumental biography of Goethe describes the great man of the age as alone transcending such limitations, but the intellectuals of Alsace didn't need to transcend them[57]. They did have to deal with Paris, but it was for the most part neither a Paris of the Terror, which didn't last long, nor a Paris of nineteenth-century snobbery, still under cultural construction. And there was no opposite German pole to make political adherence to France difficult.

Higonnet reminds us that according to Saint-Just, *en mission* in Alsace in late 1793, it was impossible to be *Allemand de langue et patriote de cœur*[58]. However, Oberlin's programs indicate the survival of a multilingual culture, whose participants could continue to say, as the professors of the Université Protestante de Strasbourg had put it when they wrote the Comité d'Instruction Publique of the Assemblée

54 I wish to thank Colin Jones for his suggestion of the term, »neo-provincialism«.

55 On the acceptance and rejection of federalism, see Paul R. HANSON, Provincial Politics in the French Revolution: Caen and Limoges, 1789–1794, Baton Rouge 1989.

56 On the regionalisms of Barrès and Maurras, see Robert GILDEA, The Past in French History, New Haven 1994, p. 179–180.

57 Nicholas BOYLE, Goethe: The Poet and the Age, Vol. I, The Poetry of Desire (1749–1790), Oxford 1991.

58 HIGONNET (see n. 34) p. 54. Martyn Lyons, in claiming a lack of political will to achieve »linguistic nationalism«, rejects Higonnet's idea of »linguistic terrorism« and repeats a line attributed to Napoleon: *Laissez à ces braves gens leur dialecte alsacien; ils sabrent toujours en français,* LYONS (see n. 35) p. 270–271.

Nationale in April 1792, *Nous pensons en allemand pour sentir en françois*[59]. What did they mean? To think in one language and feel in another is more than just resistance or compromise. They understand both languages. In the letter where that line appears, the professors pushed the complex, European nature of their institution. It was a Protestant Republic of Letters with an emphasis on freedom of thought. It reached out to England, Switzerland, Holland, and the thirteen American colonies, not just the German world. And in a very practical way, the professors argued that Strasbourg could be the school of Europe. The history of travel, the humanist tradition of the city, and the Napoleonic conquests that would soon push the geographic center of France east made Strasbourg a potential competitor in the cultural construction of Europe. The world Oberlin had set out to discover in his French tour of 1776 and in his long-term scholarly work was now to be remade in ways that Oberlin saw as both Enlightened and imperial.

In the short term, and even until the late twentieth century, it was a losing battle. Napoleon would be defeated, Paris would keep Strasbourg in a provincial position, and then the city and Alsace would experience the back-and-forth rivalry between France and Germany. Even within the intellectual context of the nineteenth century, French-German differences would narrow Strasbourg's focus. Successors to Oberlin in the German world would opt for Hellenism as a mode of thought[60]. Greece would be to Germany what Rome had been to France, but Oberlin wanted to hold them together. Oberlin's view was not shared by all in Strasbourg, even by all in the *gymnase*. His was one important tendency. He fell into a tradition of Humanism that was sometimes challenged from within. In the seventeenth century, the challenge had come from religious orthodoxy. In the nineteenth century, from nationalists. For Germans, the character of Jakob (Jacques) Wimpheling was no longer the representative of European Humanism, but a precursor of German nationalism[61]. Under the Nazis, the school was named for Jakob (Jacques) Sturm, seen as more German than Jean, for whom it was renamed after the war[62]. And yet it maintained an emphasis on bilingualism in its curriculum throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and played a key role in the education of the city's middle class.

Perhaps now Oberlin's contribution can be better appreciated. Strasbourg has found new cultural and political life in the construction of Europe. The religious and pedagogical ideas of Jean-Frédéric Oberlin made him the more famous brother in the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century, but his cultural world represented a departure from the Enlightenment Humanist tradition that ran from Schoepflin to

59 »Adresse de l'Université Protestante de Strasbourg au Comité d'Instruction Publique de l'Assemblée Nationale«, Ms, Archives du Chapitre de Saint-Thomas, 185, p. 17, Archives Municipales de Strasbourg.

60 Anthony J. La Vopa, Specialists Against Specialization: Hellenism as Professional Ideology in German Classical Studies, in: German Professions, 1800–1950, ed. Geoffrey Cocks and Konrad H. Jarausch, New York and Oxford 1990, p. 27–45. See also La Vopa, Grace, Talent, and Merit: Poor Students, Clerical Careers and Professional Ideology in Eighteenth-Century Germany, Cambridge 1988.

61 Simon Schama, Landscape and Memory, New York 1995, p. 93. For an appreciation of the importance of the Strasbourg Cathedral, see p. 236–237.

62 Schang and Livet (see n. 37) includes a memoir of the school in the Nazi period.

Jérémie-Jacques, whose »channels of communication« may prove the more useful legacy for the turn of the twenty-first century.

Appendix

Programs and Lectures in B.N. R 1078.

Latin

1. 4 June 1782. Inaugural speech. Autobiography.
2. 8 May 1783. Lecture on German medieval literature.
3. 13 November 1783. Lecture on textual study and German dialects.
4. 1 October 1787. On rhetoric and logic.
5. Easter 1788. On Greek and Latin literature.
6. 1 October 1788. On French as second vernacular and on literary genres.
7. 5 April 1789. On natural philosophy and logic.
8. 5 October 1789. On geography.

German

9. Easter Monday 1790. Hailing Revolution and triumph of Enlightenment.
10. Michaelis 1790. On politics and education.
11. Winter 1790–91. Professor Hermann lectures in Latin on natural science.
12. Easter Monday 1791. On making haste slowly.
13. Summer 1791. Latin lecture on crisis of old régime and Revolution.
14. Michaelis 1791. On constitution and education.
15. Easter Monday 1792. On roles of parents, children, and teachers.
16. 1 October 1792. On the *gymnase*.
17. Easter Monday 1793. On Greek and Roman republics.
18. 30 September 1793. On constitution, patriotism, and Revolutionary emergency.

French

19. Floréal an II. Translations of 17 and 18.
20. 17 Germinal an III. On history of *gymnase*.
21. 2 Vendémiaire an IV. On limiting damage of Terror.
22. 4 Germinal an IV. On reaffirming Enlightenment.
23. 4 Vendémiaire an V. On reconstructing the schools.
24. 19 Germinal an V. On appropriate teaching methods.
25. 4 Vendémiaire an VI. On Greek origins of *gymnase*.
26. 15 Germinal an VI. On importance of practical education.
27. 1 Vendémiaire an VII. On *émulation*.
28. 11 Germinal an VII. On competition and Olympic Games.
29. 1 Vendémiaire an VIII. On Vivès and Humanism.
30. 11 Germinal an VIII. On teaching and on child development.
31. 3 Vendémiaire an IX. On medieval backwardness, Strasbourg's humanist tradition, and providing model secondary school.
32. 12 Germinal an IX. On peace and Roman model and medal.
33. 7 Vendémiaire an X. On languages, *un sage milieu*, and the *école centrale*.

34. 23 Germinal an X. On Peace of Amiens and Renaissance letters.
35. 1 Vendémiaire an XI. On periodizing history of civilization.
36. 14 Germinal an XI. On government role in education, geniuses who haven't had support, and *lycées*.
37. An XII (1803-1804). Latin lecture by Schweighaeuser in Academy on administrative developments and curriculum.
38. 2 Vendémiaire an XII. *Eloge à Jean Sturm*.
39. 5 Germinal an XII. More on Sturm. On oratory, eloquence, émulation, and repetition of medieval darkness in revolution.
40. 5 Vendémaire an XIII. More on Sturm. Our task is to send students on to *lycée* or *académie*.
41. 20 Germinal an XIII (1805). On Jacques Sturm.
42. 14 Vendémiaire an XIII. Latin lecture in Academy by J. D. Braun on ecclesiastical law.
43. 13 Brumaire an XIII. Oberlin gives Latin lecture in Academy on ancient monuments and classical and religious texts.
44. Winter 1805–1806. Program of courses at Protestant Academy.
45. 30 Fructidor an XIII (1805). On Jacques Wimpheling and his idea for *gymnase*. Anticipation of Napoleon's visit.
46. 30 March 1806. More on Wimpheling and instruction.
47. 26 September 1806. More on Wimpheling and morals. His conflict with the Augustinians.