

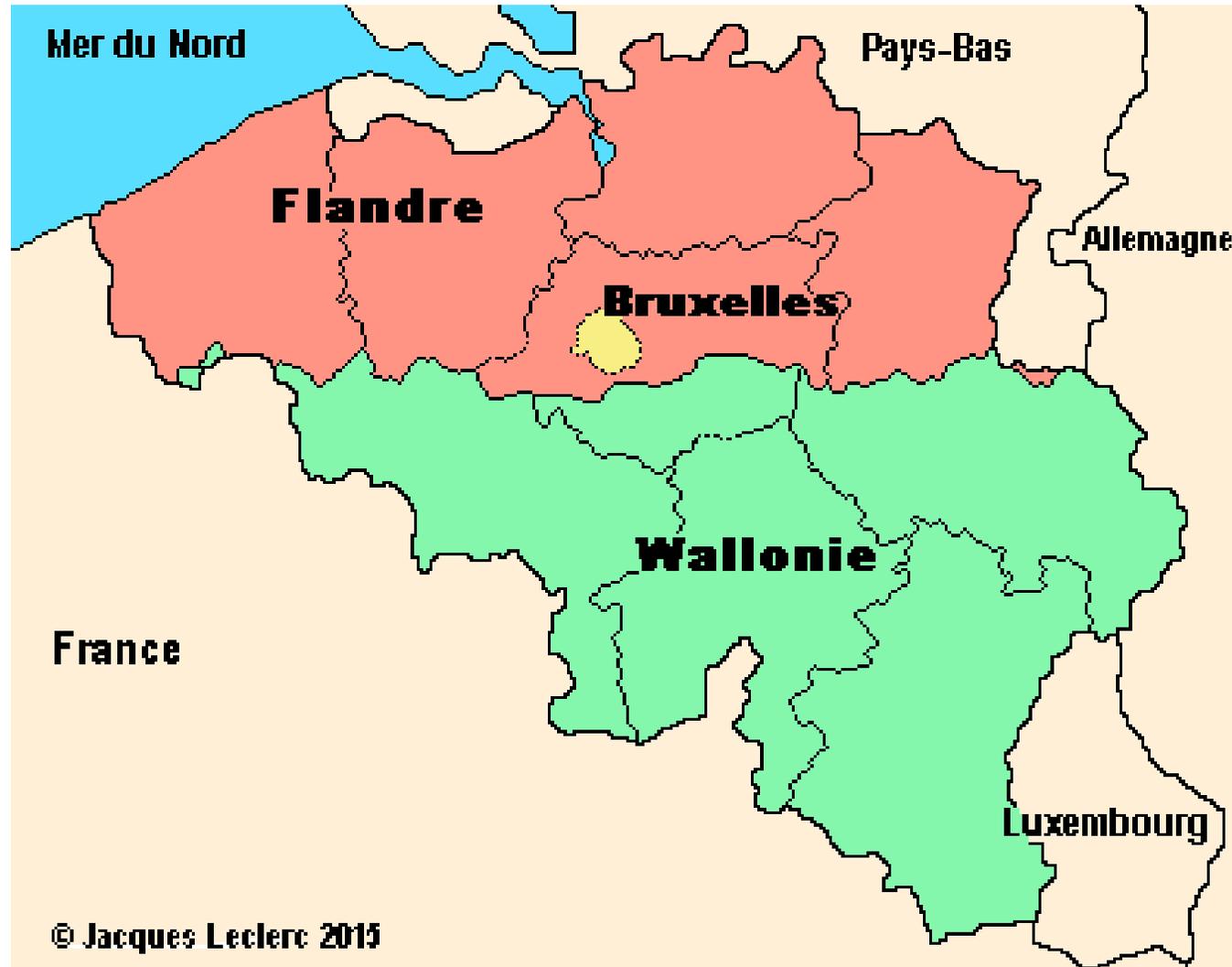
# Translating minorities

**Between Belgium, Flanders and the Others.**

**Literary translation practices and beliefs in Wallonia (1850-1930)**

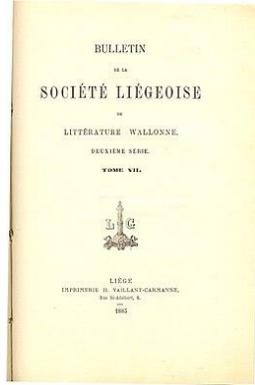
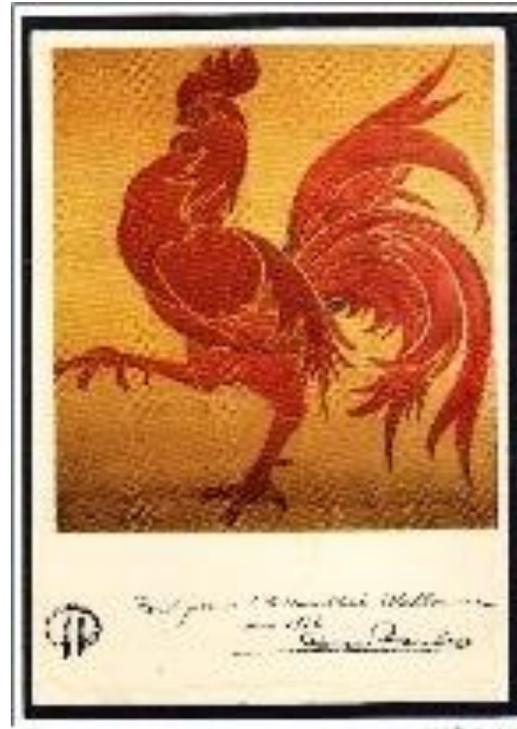
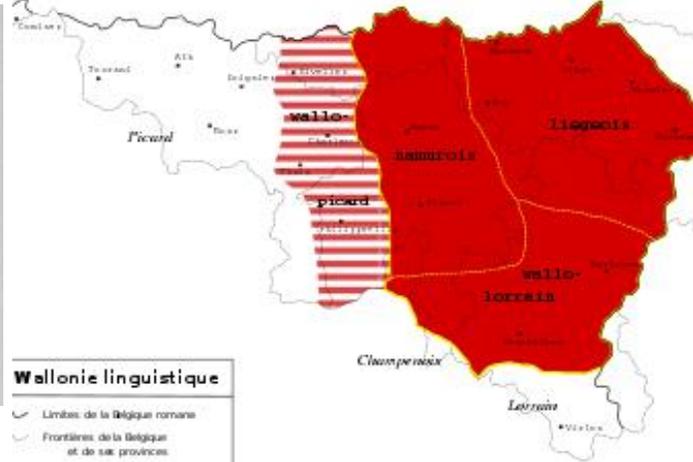
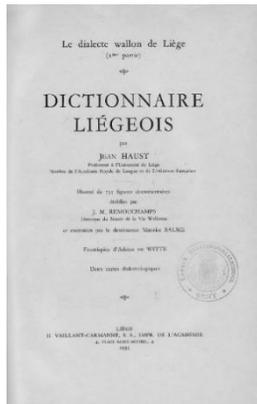
Maud Gonne (ULiège – UOC – MSCA-IF)

# Wallonia and regional identity building

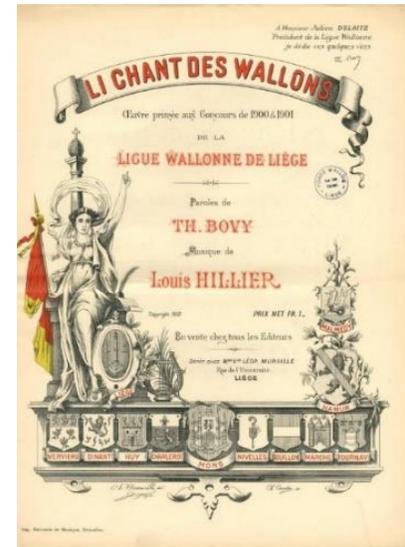
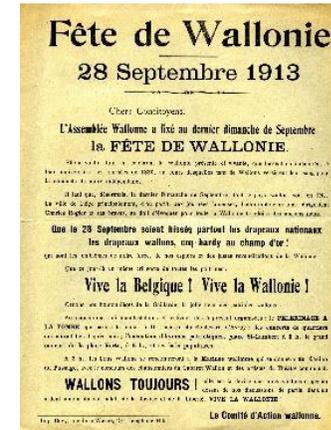


# Late Romantic identity quest

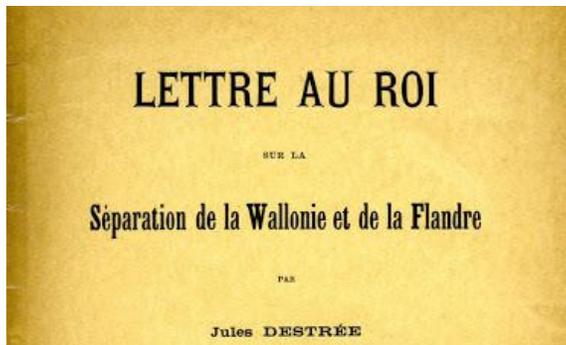
## Walloon Language preservation



## Cultural and literary development



## Political autonomy



## French as only national language

« L'obligation d'apprendre le flamand ? Jamais ! »

# Paradoxical language claims

## **Language and society**

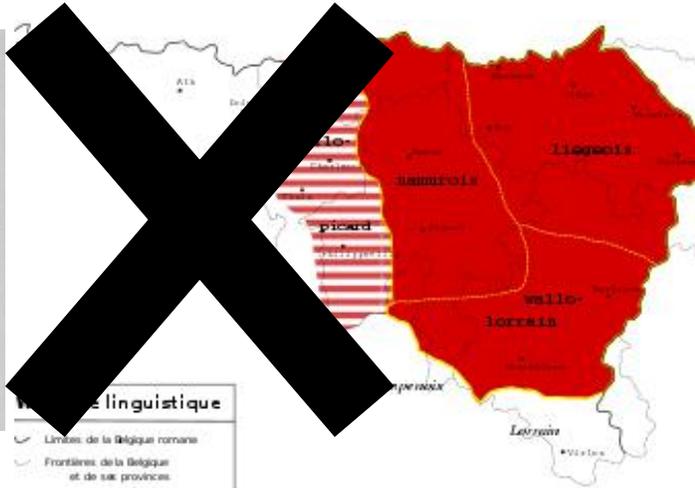
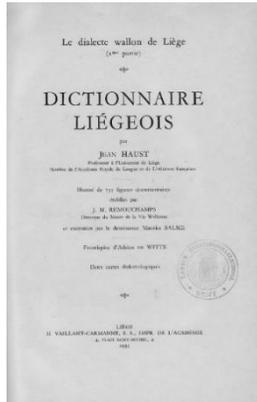
- **French** at the national and international levels
- Walloon(s) at the regional and local levels
- Flemish(s) at the regional and local levels

## **Language and literature**

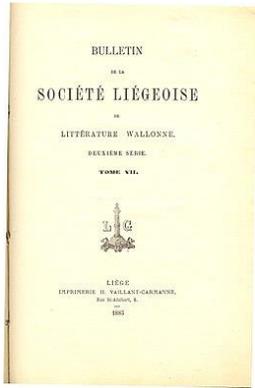
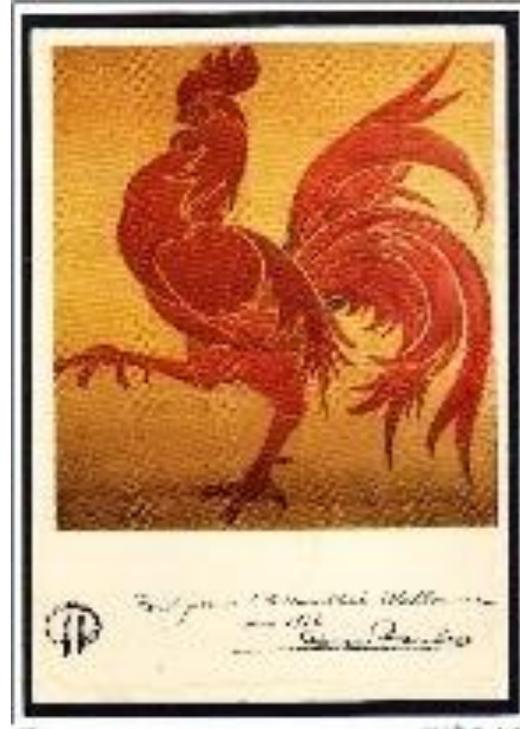
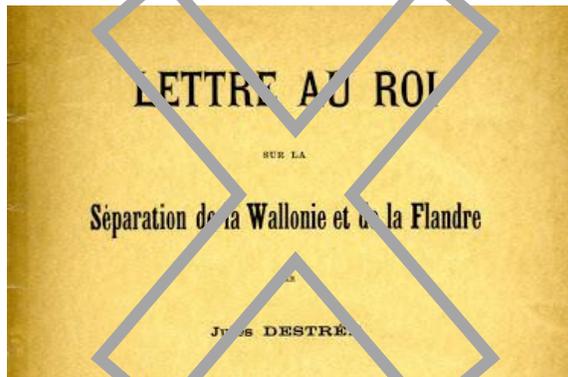
- Revival, defense and revalorization of Walloon literature
- Development of Francophone literature

# The prognostic of a failure?

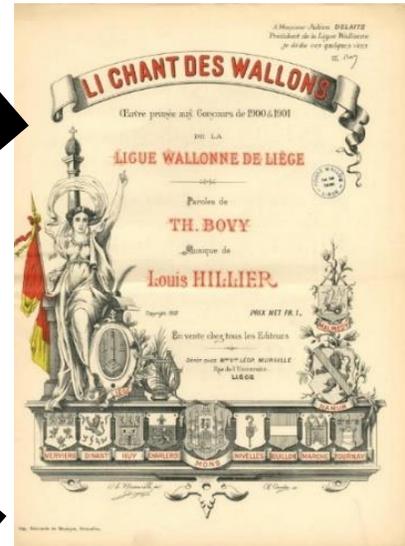
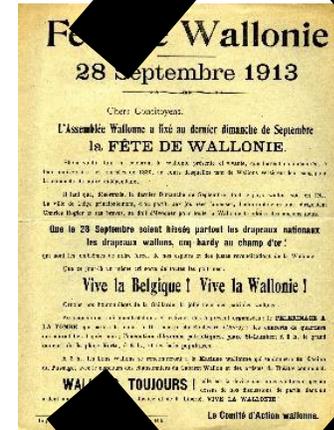
## Walloon Language preservation



## Political autonomy



## Cultural and literary development

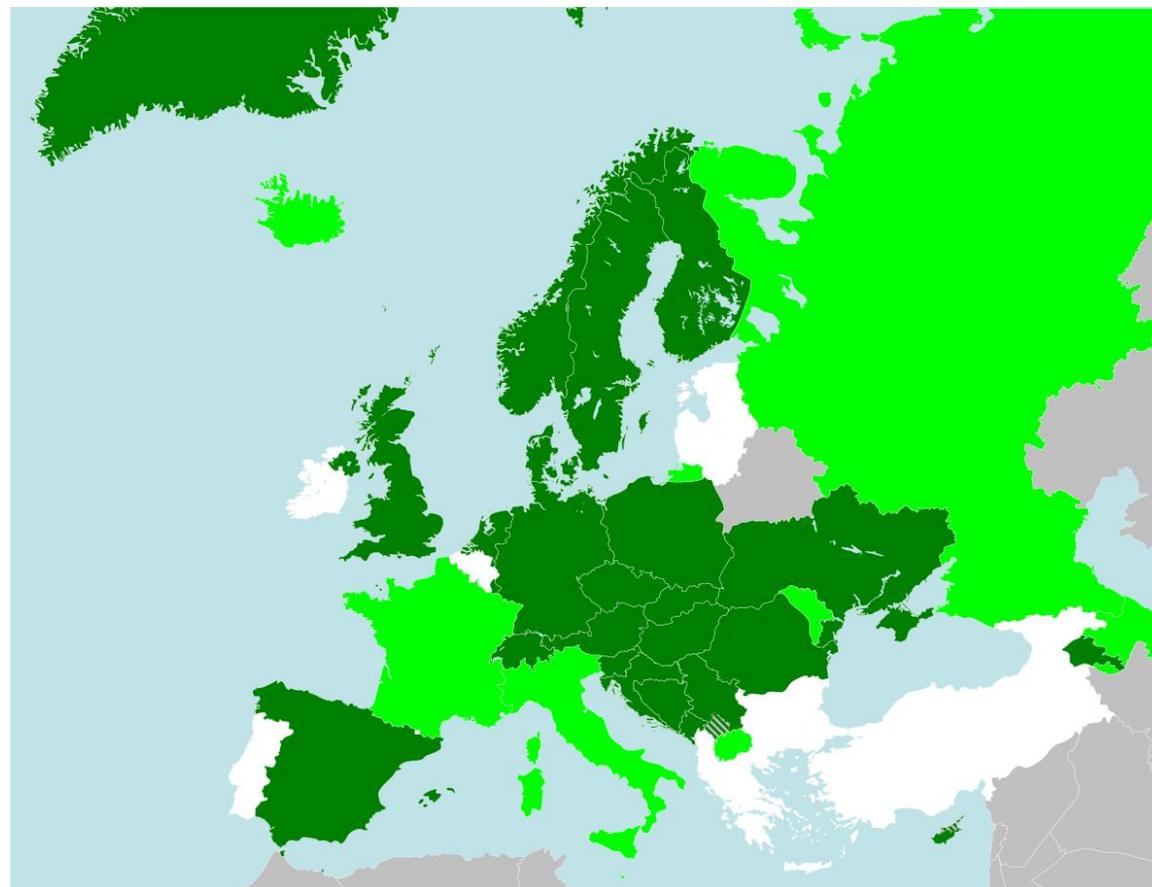


## French as only national language



## EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

GIVING REGIONAL  
AND MINORITY  
LANGUAGES A SAY!



The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages is the European convention for the protection and promotion of languages used by traditional minorities. [...] Regional or minority languages are part of Europe's cultural heritage and their protection and promotion contribute to the building of a Europe based on democracy and cultural diversity (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-charter-regional-or-minority-languages>)

# Concepts and questions

To think the place of Walloon literature in Belgian (inter-)cultural history

# Peripheral literatures in Belgium between 1850 and 1930

**Belgian (Francophone) literature** = Major literature in French from Flanders, Brussels, Wallonia:

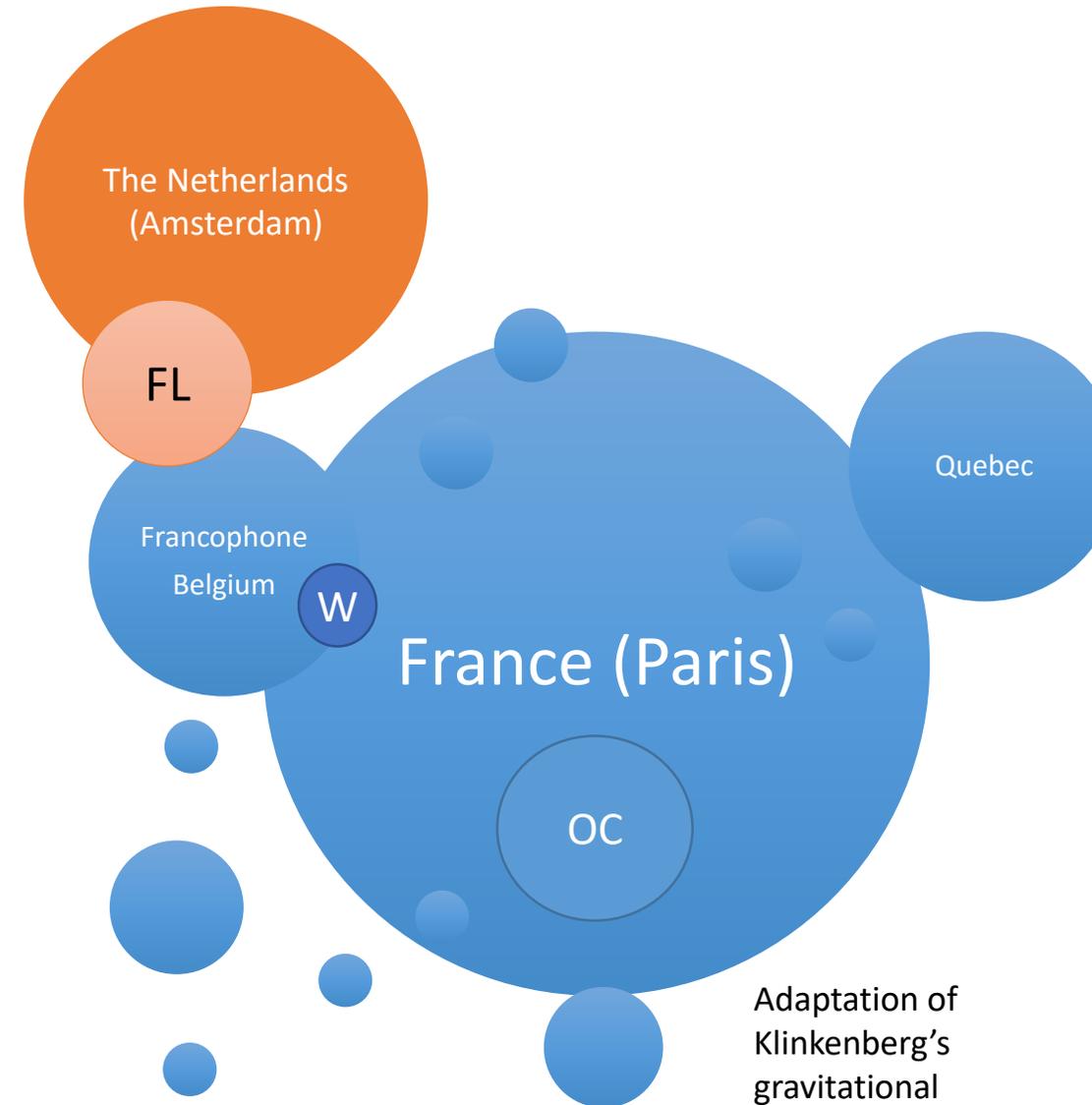
- Dominated by the hypercentralization of Paris
- **Minor literature** = written by a minority in a major language (Deleuze & Guattari 1975)

**Flemish (Dutch speaking) literature**

- Dominated by the Dutch literary field
- **Minor literature** = written by a minority in a 'major' language (! Dialectal divergences)
- **Minorized** in Belgium (dominant Francophone field)

**Walloon (Walloon speaking) Literature**

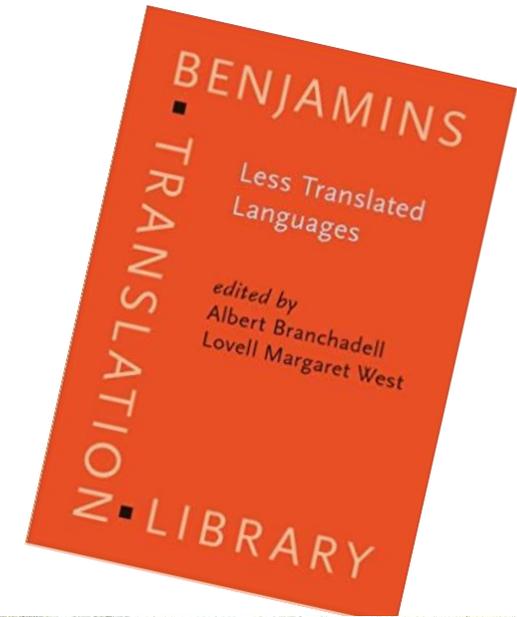
- Dominated by the Belgian (Francophone) literary field
- **Ultraminor literature** = written by a minority in a minority language
- **Minorized** as folklore (dialectology)

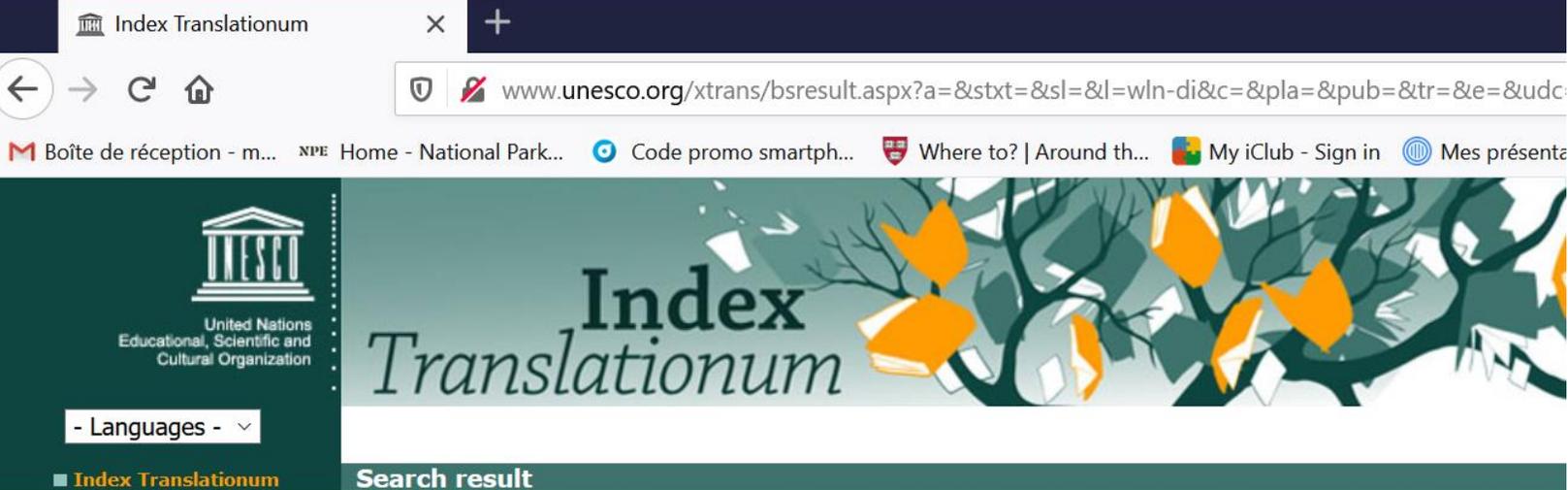


Adaptation of  
Klinkenberg's  
gravitational  
model (1981)

# Other criteria's to think about Walloon literature?

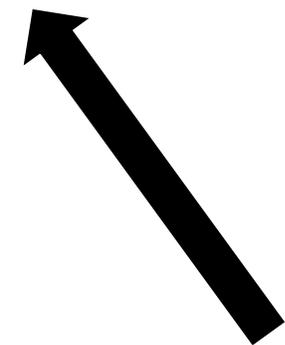
- Less translated languages
  - “All those languages that are less often the source of translation in the international exchange of linguistic goods, regardless of the number of people using these languages” (Branchadell 2005: 1)
- Importance of the ratio intranlations-extranlations/  
import-export
- Orality and performance (*pasqueye*, *cramignons*, plays)
  - Oral literature suffers the negative stereotyping associated with non-literate cultures (Bandia 2011)
  - Translation assumes a mediating role between the perceived timelessness of the primitive “other” and the modernising West (Bandia 2011)
    - (cfr. Internal colonialism <Lafont 1971)
  - Difficulties to retrace the circulation of oral literature





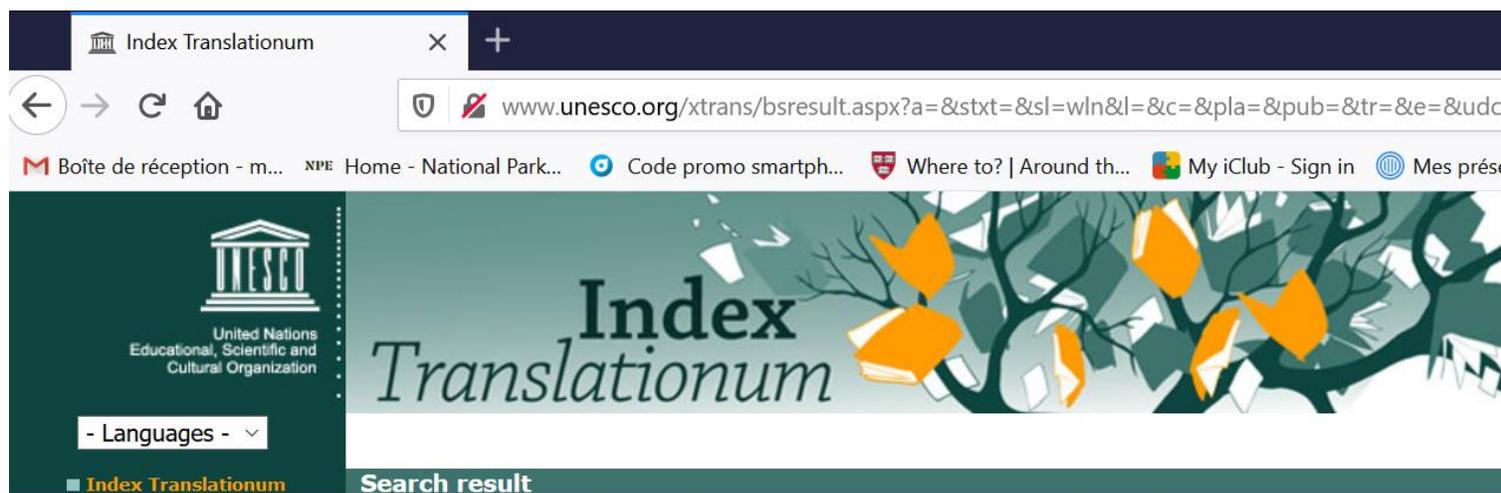
Your query was: **Target language = wln-di AND year from 1850 to 1940**

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**0 records  
Intratlation**

**0 records  
Extratlation**



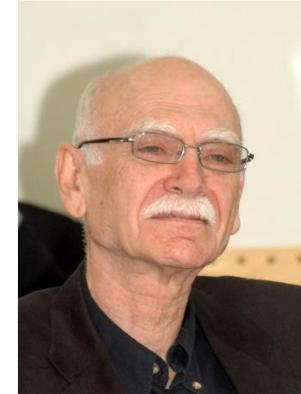
Your query was: **Original language = wln AND year from 1850 to 1940**

**0 records found in Index Translationum database**

# Translations and transfers for the maintenance and survival of literary systems (Even-Zohar 1990)

- Conditions

- When a polysystem has not yet been crystallized
- When a literature is either “peripheral” or “weak”
- When they are turning points or literary vacuums



- Functions

- To put into use its newly founded (or renovated) tongue for as many literary types as possible
- To make it serviceable as a literary language and useful for its emerging public
- To benefit from the experience of other literature to fulfill a repertoire

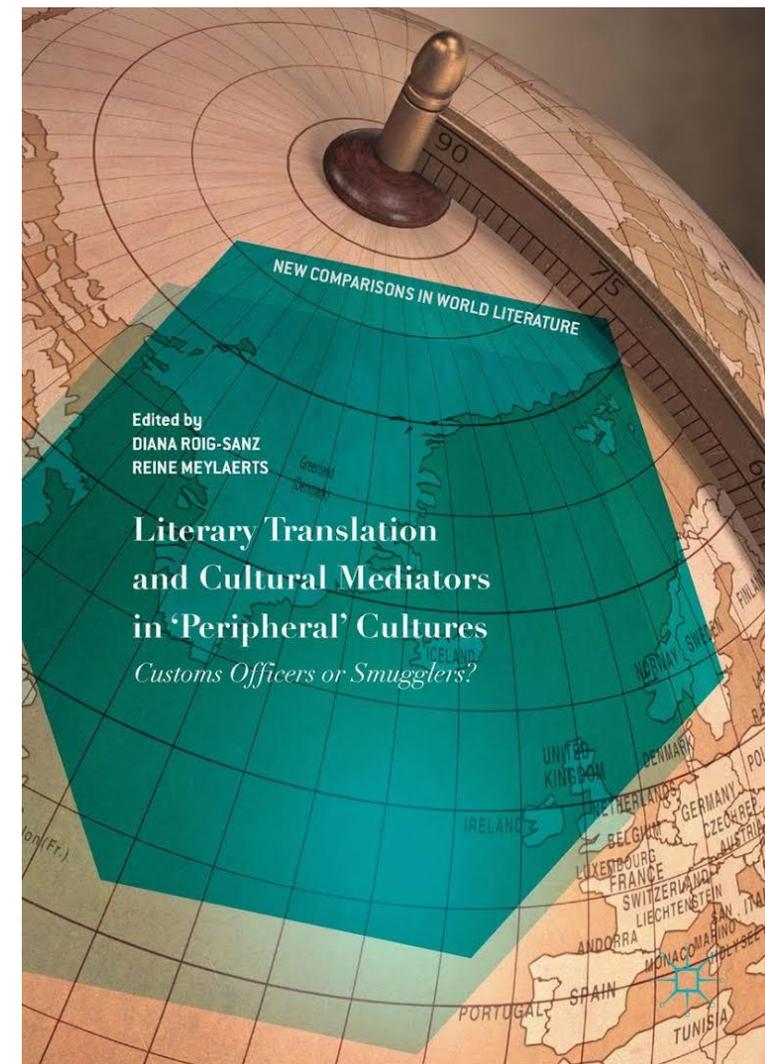
- Consequences:

- Dependence of the peripheries on the centers

# Translation policy for literary development

As State policies with regard to translation are invariably part of the politics to enhance and promote national culture, they imply import as well as export strategies [...] for peripheral and semi-peripheral countries, the very existence of their national literature on the international scene depends on such policies

(Heilbron & Sapiro 2018: 184-185)



# Translating minorities and paradoxes (Cronin 1995)

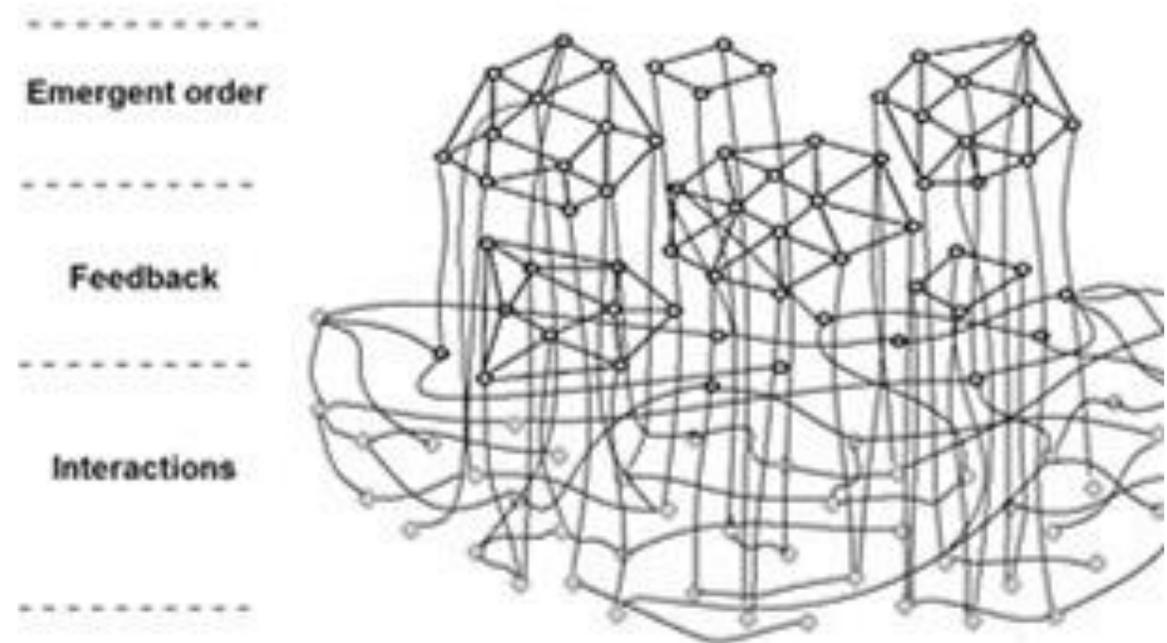
- Pressure to translate for minority cultures
  - As the continued existence of the language and the self-perception and self-confidence of its speakers
- Translation maintains asymmetrical power relationships
  - “As languages operating in a multilingual world with vastly accelerated information flows from dominant languages, **they must translate continually in order to retain their viability and relevance as living languages. Yet, translation itself may in fact endanger the very specificity of those languages that practice it, particularly in situation of diglossia**” (89)
- Translation is not always necessary to ensure communication
- Translation beliefs: the values assigned to translation (Meylaerts 2017)

# How to think Wallonia beyond these binaries?

- How to embrace complexity?
  - To consider minor – minor relationships (Lionnet and Shih 2005)
    - interconnectedness and entanglements (Werner and Zimmermann 2006)
  - To take into account orality (Bandia 2011)
  - To study mediators and concrete connections (Meylaerts 2017)
  - To accept paradoxes and unpredictability (Cronin 1995, 2003)
  
- To think Walloon literature as a complex system

# Complex systems

- Complex systems (Morin 1991, Heylighen 2008, Marais 2014)
  - Complex systems, such as organisms, societies or the Internet, have properties—emergent properties—that cannot be reduced to the mere properties of their parts. Moreover, the behavior of these systems has aspects that are intrinsically unpredictable and uncontrollable, and cannot be described in any complete manner (Heylighen 2008)
- Emergence
- Self-organization
- Openness of the (eco-)system
- Networks and translations
- Positive and negative feedbacks



# Literary intranlations and extranlations in Wallonia (1850-1930)

In progress

# Aims of studying import-export processes

- “The bigger you are, the less you translate into your language” (Pym & Chrupala 2005)
  - Probably more intranlations than extranlations for Walloon literature
  - Probably innovative centers and imitating peripheries
- Not to confirm what we know BUT
  - To examine the organization of the minor literary field beyond the dominated-dominant framework
  - To detect unexpected linkages, networks and mediators
  - To understand the emergence and difficult stabilization of the Walloon literary system

# Corpus challenges

- Printed Walloon literature in books (1850-1930) *versus* orality and performance
- Books *versus* journals
- Completeness and accessibility
- Translation recognition in databases
  
- COVID

But

- Little enough to unravel (?)

< Database Liège Province

- 3262 publications between 1850 and 1930
- 30 intranlations (?)

# Walloon case (1850-1930): Intranslations

## Translated authors from major languages (= FRENCH)

- Molière (<FR)
- La Fontaine (<FR)
- Racine (<FR)
- Bible



- Octave Mirbeau, Alphonse Daudet
- Vaudevilles (<Walloon or French authors?): Joseph André, Adelin Bayot, Eugène Brioux, Maurice Carez, Clément Deforet, Auguste Devigne, Edmond Etienne, A-P Lannoy, Joseph Laubain, Emile Lebas, Nicolas Cornet, Matrat and J. Conti.

## Translated authors from peripheral languages

- Frédéric Mistral (<Occitan)
- Béarn (<Occitan)
- Paul-Auguste Arène (<Occitan)
- Joseph Roumanille (<Occitan)
- Gr. H. Grandea (<Romanian)
- Th. Felix (<Lorrain)



# Walloon case (1850-1930): Extratranslations

## Translated authors into major languages

- Henri Simon (>FR)
- Edouard Remouchamps (>FR)
- Nicolas Defrecheux (>FR + GER)
- François Renkin (>FR)
- *Li Voyèdje di Tchôfontin.ne* (>FR)
- Charles-Nicolas Simonon (>FR)



Nicolas Defrêcheux

Poète Wallon

1825-1874

## Translated authors into peripheral languages

- Georges Willame (>Occitan)
- Nicolas Defrecheux (>FL)
- Théophile Bovy (>FL)
- Vivier de Streel (>Occitan)

# The Walloon case (1850-1930): Interlingual translations and plagiarism

## From one Walloon to another

- Edouard Remouchamps
- Guy Marchal
- Albin Souldo
- Henri Hurard
- Louis Bodart
- Eloi Boncher
- Achille Viart
- ...

## Plagiarisms of foreign drama models

- Sophocles
- Machiavelli
- de Rojas
- Molière
- Gogol
- Tchekhov
- Pagnol
- Goldoni
- ...

# First observations and expected results

- A lot of retranslations of the same canonical authors (Molière, Mistral)
  - evolution of Translation strategies and beliefs
- Most translations concern theater adaptations and short genres
  - consolidation of existing target repertoire (based on orality) rather than filling repertoires gaps (with other genres)
- French is the main source and target language
  - culture, diglosia and bilingual profile of mediators
- Numerous inter peripheral linkages > Minor transnationalism
  - But indirect translations via French (according to Maquet 1996)
  - But unidirectional (Occitan into Walloon)
- Numerous intralingual translations
  - Intelligibility between Walloons?
  - Demonstration of purism
- No translations from Flemish (intranational linkage)
- Fact of a little network of mediators, such as Jean Haust

Conclusion/discussion

# Why are minor cultures/literatures relevant from a broader perspective?

- All languages are potentially (ultra)minor languages
  - Important to understand their logics
- To understand success (identity) mechanisms
  - By studying less successful or failed language/cultural projects
- To preserve the world's language ecology
  - Design of sustainable Translation policies
- Minority cultures are more often than not necessary to legitimate and fuel central cultures
  - Articulate the world-systems complexity
- Minority cultures develops alternative routes and models
  - Interperipheral relationships
  - Alternative repertoires

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