Words in Space and Time

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The process of construing speech through the technologies of writing (scripts) and printing produced a lot of new Einzelsprachen (languages) from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. This process accelerated when, in the wake of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, the concept of Einzelsprache was secularized. No longer did a “proper” language have to be identical with the “holy tongue” of the original or approved translation of a “holy book.” The only continuity from this previously normative equation was script. New Einzelsprachen, generated by the now officially and legally approved translation of the Bible into vernaculars, almost always retained the “holy tongue’s” script. It was the Latin alphabet in the case of the vernacular Einzelsprachen of Roman Catholics, Cyrillic for Orthodox Slavophones’ and Romancephones’ languages, or the Hebrew abjad in the case of the vernaculars employed for writing and printing by Judaists (Jews). The rise and functional separation of secular Einzelsprachen from this or that “holy tongue” was also underwritten by the normative separation of state and church, especially in the wake of the religious wars. After the conclusion of the Thirty Years’ War in 1648 with the so-called Peace of Westphalia (a series of treaties signed at the Westphalian cities of Osnabrück and Münster), a new political norm of sovereignty was accepted in Western and Central Europe. This development gave rise to the centralized territorial state, whose ruler (typically, a monarch) enjoyed the exclusive right to decide about the religion of the realm in line with the principle, cuius regio, eius religio (whose realm, his religion). People professing another religion (or denomination) either had to convert to the state’s religion or leave. This normative principle of religious homogeneity underpinned the sovereign centralized territorial state. In this normative insistence on the homogeneity of the state’s population, the early territorial state is the direct forerunner of the modern nation-state, whose population (construed as a nation) must be homogenous in one way or another. In today’s Central Europe this normative homogeneity is typically of a linguistic character.

Entrusting a polity’s inhabitants to the ruler’s exclusive rule with no interferences from outside (“abroad”) impacted language building and use in any territorial state. Already in 1492 in his grammar of Castilian (Spanish), Antonio de Nebrija famously proposed that “language has always been the perfect instrument of empire.” This grammar of the then coalescing secular Einzelsprache of Castilian was the first-ever written in Castilian, not in Latin. Nebrija fittingly dedicated his unusual book to Queen Isabella I of Castile, who initially was unable to grasp the work’s staggering importance for the success of the joint rule of her and her husband (King Ferdinand II of Aragon) over Spain and its nascent maritime empire. In the year of this grammar’s publication, Spain commenced its conquest (“discovery”) of the Americas (“New World”). Hence, in the wake of the Reformation and Counter-Reformations, rulers not only decided about the religion of their subjects, but increasingly on the Einzelsprache that was to be used for governance. In this manner, the concept of state (or official) language emerged. Previously there was not much discussion on this subject, because by default it was the “holy tongue” (and script) of a given religion’s “holy book” that served this function.

In 1539, the French King François I signed the Ordinance of Villers-Cotterêts. The document’s articles 110 and 111 effectively made French the main official language in the Kingdom of France. Importantly, this piece of legislation remains part of the French law to this day. Then, in 1583, an Accademia della Crusca (“Academy of the Bran”) was founded in Florence. The academy’s main task was the compilation and publication of an authoritative dictionary of the (West) Romance vernacular of the Duchy of Florence, already made famous and prestigious by the medieval “vernacular” poets, Dante Alighieri and Francesco Petrarca, in the fourteenth century. (Obviously, both poets wrote their “serious” works exclusively in Latin.) This “academic” dictionary, Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca, was published in 1612. Its title did not feature the described (or rather, created) Einzelsprache’s name, typically referred to as “Florentine” or “Tuscan,” before it became widely known as “Italian,” following the founding of a Kingdom of Italy as the Italian nation-state in 1861.

Rather than by a specific legal decision, it was mostly the evolving day-to-day practices of scribal work at royal and ducal chanceries that tended to “officialize” local vernaculars as spoken by a polity’s elite (or the monarch’s court, aristocracy, nobility, clergy and burghers), typically in the capital and its vicinity. Authoritative (academic) grammars and dictionaries standardized the approved elevated form of a coalescing Einzelsprache as already employed for the translation of the Bible. On the other hand, poets writing in such a newly formed language aspired to make it “famous” by emulating the genres and topics popularized by neo-Latin, Tuscan (“Italian”) and French poets. The Académie française, founded in 1635 in the French capital of Paris, made this manner of standard-
izing a secular Einzelsprache into a “norm of (Western) civilization,” including its normative dictionary, Le Dictionnaire de l’Académie française (again, no name of the concerned language in the title), whose first complete edition came off the press in 1694.

However, it was difficult to fully emulate this ideal in early modern Central Europe. The prestige of Latin, coupled with political power ideologically buttressed by the Catholic Church, remained enormous. The sociopolitical unity ensured by the neutral “holy tongue” of Latin was of more importance for the Habsburgs and Poland-Lithuania, faced with the continuing “holy wars” with the Islamic Ottoman Empire and the Orthodox Muscovy, than throwing the state’s or dynastic resources in favor of this or that coalescing Einzelsprache. Such a move in these highly multiethnic and polyglot polities could have dangerously weakened or even nullified this crucial sociopolitical unity. Furthermore, rather than being increasingly centralized, like the Kingdom of France, the Holy Roman Empire, as a confederal structure for a plethora of territorial states, had no designated capital. Hence, like in the case of the Apennine Peninsula with its numerous polities that sided with different West Romance vernaculars, this Empire’s many contesting political-cum-cultural centers promoted their own (often confessionally legitimized) forms of Germanic as the “correct Einzelsprache” of German. In 1617, in emulation of Tuscany’s Accademia della Crusca, a Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft (“Fruchtbringender Society”) was founded at Weimar, which then was the capital of the Protestant Duchy of Saxe-Weimar. Despite its popularity, this society was short-lived and came to an early end in 1680. The Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft’s task of standardizing (Luther’s “High”) German was not achieved, which is not surprising given the ravages and upheavals of the Thirty Years’ War. However, one of the society’s members, the poet-soldier Caspar Stieler, managed to single-handedly compile an extensive dictionary which was published in 1691, titled bilingually as Der Deutschen Sprache Stammbaum und Fortwachs, oder Teutscher Sprachschatz/Teutonica lingua semina et germina, sive lexicon germanicum. Apart from featuring the variously rendered name of the described Einzelsprache (Deutsch/Teutscher, or Teutonic/Germanic in Latin), this dictionary indicated the continued importance of Latin in Central Europe. Furthermore, from the turn of the eighteenth century the empire’s elites, when choosing a vernacular that would become their elevated status, exchanged Latin for French rather than the “peasant idiom” of Teutsch. This attitude was even more pronounced east of the Holy Roman Empire, in Poland-Lithuania and across the partitioned lands of the Kingdom of Hungary, where the nobility and clergy stuck to Latin and French. The two West Romance Einzelsprachen of Latin and French usefully separated these elites from the unfree masses of serfs, bound to the land, and toiling for free for the comforts of their “social betters.”

The rise of the homogenously Protestant and relatively centralized territorial states in Scandinavia, far away from the Ottoman Empire and (to a degree from) Muscovy, seemed to be a perfect ground for replicating the French success of making the capital’s speech into an Einzelsprache of worldly power and prestige. However, both Denmark and Sweden were sparsely populated. These two kingdoms’ economies were weak compared to that of Poland-Lithuania and, most importantly, much of Denmark’s and especially Sweden’s manpower and capital were lost in the failed attempts to build an empire in continental Europe. A Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab (Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters) was founded in the Danish capital of Copenhagen only in 1742. The publication of this Academy’s authoritative dictionary (Videnskabernes Selskabs Ordbog), without the described Einzelsprache’s name in its title, was begun in 1793 but not completed until 1905. The dictionary’s compilers modeled it on Samuel Johnson’s A Dictionary of the English Language (1755) rather than on the academic dictionaries of French or Tuscan, which during this age of religious conflict, in Protestant eyes, were tainted by the Catholicism of their authors and benefactors.

The story of the Swedish Royal Academy (Kungliga Vetenskapsakademien), established in 1739 in Stockholm, is similar. Although the academicians began working on an authoritative dictionary of Swedish (Svenska Akademiens ordbok) in 1786, its first volume was published more than a century later in 1898. This reference work has not been completed yet and its most recent thirty-seventh volume (covering letter V) was released in 2017. (The plan is now to publish the last volume in 2024.) Until the mid-nineteenth century, the academy had a formidable competitor, the Societas regia scientarum Upsaliensis (Royal Society of Sciences in Uppsala), founded in 1710. As signaled by its Latin name, this Society published its members’ works exclusively in Latin until 1865. If one had a command of this language and French, what would a scholar or aristocrat need Swedish for? A Swedish or Polish-Lithuanian scholar, or a noble siding with the long-established tradition of writing and reading in Latin, could comfortably fall back on the French historian and philologist Carolo Dufresne (Charles du Fresne) du Cange’s authoritative three-volume dictionary of Latin, Glossarium medice et infima Latinitatis (Dictionary of Medieval and Late Latin), published in Paris to much acclaim in 1678. Subsequently, seven increasingly enlarged editions of this reference work became available, the last one consisting of ten volumes (1883–1887). In turn, reprints of this latest edition were produced in 1937–1938 in Paris and between 1954–1959 in Graz.

Since the sixteenth century, the Societas Jesu (Society of Jesus), founded in 1540, built and maintained an extensive educational system that consisted of elementary and secondary schools, alongside academies in the role of regional or state universities. Latin was the system’s sole medium of instruction, though local vernaculars were allowed in early elementary education to facilitate the acquisition of Latin. This formidable educational system waned in France and Spain, where the local Einzelsprachen of French and Spanish replaced Latin as the main medium of education. However, in the Holy Roman Empire, the Kingdom of Hungary, Poland-Lithuania, and Scandinavia, education was available predominantly through Latin, as provided by Jesuits or Protestants eager to emulate the Societas Jesu’s unprecedented educational success. In Central Europe’s Catholic and Protestant areas, practically all male
nobles had a working command of Latin until the mid-nineteenth century.

That is why the dissolution of the Society of Jesus in 1773 was a turning point in the region's history of language politics. It was an additional shock to the wobbling statehood of Poland-Lithuania, which a year earlier, in 1772, had been shorn of much of its territory by the Habsburgs, Prussia, and Russia, in the event that later became known as the first partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In order to prevent a collapse of the almost exclusively Jesuit-run educational system, a Komisja Edukacji Narodowej (KEN, Committee of National Education) was founded in 1773 to take over this system. In Europe KEN was the first-ever ministry of education. Apart from secularizing the former Jesuit educational system, KEN also began replacing Latin with Polish as the main medium of instruction, thus making it into an increasingly more accepted Einzelsprache in its own right. Although the efforts came to an abrupt end when Poland-Lithuania was erased from the political map of Europe in the course of the third partition in 1795, Russia preserved this Polish-language educational system in its own partition zone that contained almost two-thirds of the former commonwealth's lands. What is more, the Order of Jesus, surviving in the Russian Empire, helped operate this Polish-language system (in which Latin played an important role) until 1820. During the 1820s, the Polish-medium University of Wilno (Vilnius) was Russia's largest university, meaning that at that time about half of the Tsar's subjects with tertiary education graduated from this university. Another quarter obtained their higher education at the German-medium University of Dorpat (today's Tartu in Estonia) in Livland (Lithuania) province (also known as Livonia). Similarly, western Russia's post-KEN educational system ensured that half of the empire's people with a knowledge of reading and writing were literate in Polish. In addition, the former Polish-Lithuanian nobles and their descendants accounted for two-thirds of all Russia's nobility. From the Tsar's perspective there was no Poland, so the burgeoning Einzelsprache of Polish could be safely adopted for the sake of developing the multilingual and polyethnic Russian Empire.

A similar line of thinking prevailed in Prussia, which was made into a Slavic-Germanic country with the acquisition of so much of former Poland-Lithuania's territory, including the Commonwealth's capital of Warsaw. A bilingual Polish-German educational system was developed for Prussia's partition zone of former Poland-Lithuania. In 1800 this system was completed with an academy-like Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk/Gesellschaft der Freunde der Wissenschaften (Society of Friends of Learning). The fully bilingual philologist of Swedish origin, Samuel Linde, was a leading member of this Society and an important official in this bilingual educational system. He compiled an authoritative six-volume dictionary of Polish (Słownik języka polskiego) that was published in Warsaw between 1807 and 1814, when this city served as the capital of the Napoleonic protectorate of the Duchy of Warsaw (1807–1815). Thanks to this lexicographic achievement, Polish finally became a fully-fledged Einzelsprache. At the Congress of Vienna, Russia took over most of this Duchy and made it into an autonomous (Congress) Kingdom of Poland. In this Kingdom's French-language Constitution granted by the Tsar, for the first time ever in history, Polish was explicitly made into an official language of a territory (Articles 28 and 33) by a legal act. The Society of Friends of Learning and the aforementioned University of Wilno were dissolved in the wake of the failed Polish-Lithuanian nobility's uprising against the Tsar in 1830–1831. Russian replaced Polish in the function of the official language and medium of education across Russia's partition zone, and was made into the leading official language, alongside Polish, in the Congress Kingdom.

The modernizing (Westernizing) reforms in the Russian Empire copied the extensive use of Latin as the leading language of scholarship and education. This led to a distancing of the state from the Orthodox Church, which traditionally saw the Latin (“Polish”) letters as a “devil’s alphabet.” For many Muscovian/Russian literati Poland-Lithuania's Polish and Cyrillic-based Ruthenian offered a convenient bridge to Latin and the world of western learning. Not surprisingly, when Russia's first academy was established at St Petersburg in 1724 it adopted the Latin name of Academia Scientiarum Petropolitana, which was retained until the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. The academy’s official language was Latin (and at times German) until 1773, then replaced with French, and after the Napoleonic wars, gradually with Russian, though German continued to be also used until the late nineteenth century. In 1783, the philosophical segment of the St Petersburg Academy of Sciences was shaped into an Académie impériale de Russie. Before it was collapsed back into the original academy in 1841, in emulation of the Académie française, the Académie impériale de Russie was required to produce a dictionary of the Russian Empire's language. The first edition of this academic dictionary (Словарь Академий Российской Словutar’ Akademii Russiskoi) was published in six volumes between 1789 and 1794. In the introduction several different names were employed for referring to this then coalescing Einzelsprache.

In 1755 the Russian polymath Mikhail Lomonosov was tasked with establishing the University of Moscow, which—from the perspective of the present-day borders—is Russia's oldest institution of tertiary education. Quite uniquely at that time, Lomonosov proposed to make the empire's Slavic vernacular into this university’s leading medium of education. He had gleaned this idea that secular learning and scholarship were possible in other languages than Latin in the late 1730s during his studies at the University of Marburg in the Landgraviate of Hesse-Kassel, in the Holy Roman Empire. Some Marburg professors had delivered seminars and lectures in vernacular German instead of the still dominant Latin. The problem was that Russian had not been yet made into an Einzelsprache as understood in Western and Central Europe. To this end, Lomonosov wrote a grammar of Muscovian (or the Slavic vernacular of Moscow) in this vernacular, as an Einzelsprache-in-the-making, which was published in 1755. He composed his work in discussion with and against the Polish-Lithuanian scholar and Orthodox Archbishop Meletius Smotrytsky's highly influential grammar of (Church) Slavonic. Smotrytsky had written this grammar (1619) in order to provide the Polish-
Lithuanian Commonwealth’s Uniate and Orthodox faithful with a western-style description of Slavonic and in order to stop the rising popularity of Polish and Russian. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Smotrytsky’s grammar was republished many times in Poland-Lithuania and Muscovy, decisively contributing to the codification of the Russian (Muscovian) recession of (Church) Slavonic.

Two years after the publication of his grammar of Russian (Rossiiskii), Lomonosov proposed in 1757 that a Russian language should be composed of “three styles” (тихие стили). The “high style,” or basically (Church) Slavonic, was to be employed for official and celebratory ends, or the literary genres of tragedy and ode. On the other hand, he urged writers to employ the “middle style” (that is, Slaveno-Russian)—characterized by a mixture of Slavonic and the Muscovian vernacular—for composing elegies, dramas, satires, and stories. In turn, Lomonosov proposed to see the vernacular of Muscovian as a “low style,” which would be appropriate for writing comedies, letters, songs, or fables. This was a rare moment of very conscious language engineering. Lomonosov developed a toolkit with which Russia’s Slavophone Orthodox elite—when not busy reading and conversing in French, Polish, German, or Latin, or praying in (Church) Slavonic—tinkered and increasingly sided with the middle style. Subsequently, the shock of Napoleon’s 1812 invasion of Russia weaned the Empire’s Orthodox nobility off French, opening a space for a wider employment of Russian in state offices and publishing. This space widened even more during the 1830s when Polish was removed from official use across Russia’s western provinces (that is, the empire’s partition zone of Poland-Lithuania). At the same time, the Russian name of the Russian language was changed from Rossiiskii to today’s Russkii. Symbolically, the writings of Alexander Pushkin, who flourished as a poet at the turn of the 1830s, are seen as the turning point when finally, Lomonosov’s middle style was firmly equated with the Russian language as it is understood today. In reality, however, it was a gradual process that was also facilitated by the second edition of the academic dictionary (1806–1822) and the 1847 publication of the authoritative four-volume dictionary of Church Slavonic and Russian (Словарь церковнославянского и русского языка Slovar’ tserkovnoslavianskogo i russkogo iazyka), which decided which Slavonic words also belonged to Russian, and which did not, thus drawing a clear line of separation between these two languages. Ironically, until the Bolshevik Revolution Russian was “modernized” (Westernized) through calquing (that is, translating literally and otherwise closely adopting) French terms and expressions. The fourth edition of Le Dictionnaire de l’Académie française was translated into Russian and made into a normative French-Russian dictionary (1773–1786), followed by the translation of the Slovar’ Akademii Rossiiskoi into French, which spawned an equally normative French-Russian dictionary (1799–1802).

Yet if an Einzelsprache was really to become the everyday language of a polity’s entire population, all the country’s children would have to attend school to acquire, first, the Einzelsprache itself, and subsequently other knowledge through its medium as the language of instruction. The concept of compulsory elementary education for all the inhabitants in a realm budded in the western Holy Roman Empire at the turn of the seventeenth century. The first large country that dared to implement this norm was Prussia in 1717, followed by the Habsburg hereditary lands within the Holy Roman Empire in 1774, and the Habsburg’s Kingdom of Hungary in 1775. At that time this ideal of full literacy turned out to be impossible to actualize, usually due to insufficient financing and a lack of teaching staff. Furthermore, most of the peasantry were serfs, whose labor was required in their lord’s fields, including peasant children. Eventually, full literacy was achieved in the German Empire and the “Austrian half” of Austria-Hungary only in the 1870s. In other parts of Central Europe—apart from Russia’s Protestant Baltic provinces of Estland, Livland (Livonia) and Courland—the ideal of full literacy became an accepted norm only in the interwar period, and its implementation was achieved as late as the second half of the twentieth century.

Like in Poland-Lithuania, the 1774 and 1775 educational reforms in the Habsburg hereditary lands were a reply to the dissolution of the Society of Jesus. There was no one else but the state to take over the Jesuit educational system. Soon it was decided that retaining Latin was an obstacle to popular education, so in 1784 this language was replaced with German as the medium of instruction and administration across the Habsburg hereditary lands within the Holy Roman Empire, and two years later, in 1786 in the Kingdom of Hungary. Grassroots noble backlash against this reform slowed the implementation of this measure in the former case, and succeeded at reverting it in the latter, when in 1790 Latin was reinstated in Hungary. The use of German in an official capacity was extended to the Habsburg’s partition zone of Poland-Lithuania, crowned with the replacement of Polish with German as the medium of instruction at the University of Cracow in 1805. Four years later, in 1809, Polish was reinstated at this university when Cracow found itself within the boundaries of the Duchy of Warsaw. In 1815 the Congress of Vienna made Cracow and its vicinity into a Free City of Cracow with Polish as its official language. This de facto Austrian protectorate survived until 1846 when the Austrian Empire annexed it, meaning that Polish was again replaced with German. Meanwhile, in the Hungarian lands of the Austrian Empire, Hungarian superseded Latin in 1843, though in Croatia and Slavonia the process was not completed until 1847.

The persistence of Latin in the Kingdom of Hungary was partly due to the fact that Hungarian had not been developed into a full-fledged Einzelsprache in its own right by the mid-nineteenth century. A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia (Hungarian Academy of Sciences, MTA) was founded in 1825 in Pozsony (today’s Slovak capital of Bratislava). But in reality, it was inactive until 1830. In 1827 the MTA relocated to Buda, where the Hungarian capital had been moved from Pozsony (or Preßburg in German) in 1784. The work on an academic dictionary of Hungarian commenced in the mid-1840s, but almost immediately was stopped in tracks by the 1848 revolutions, which in Hungary culminated in an anti-Habsburg rebellion, known in Hungarian historiography as the Hungarian War of Independence. Finally, the six-volume A magyar nyelv
szótára (Dictionary of the Hungarian Language) came off the press between 1862 and 1874. Tellingly, it was a joint work, commenced by the Benedictine monk and philologist Gergely (István) Czuczor and completed by the jurist and linguist János Fogarasi. The former compiler’s ecclesiastical background was an echo of the Jesuits’ Latin-language educational system.

The ideology of ethno-linguistic nationalism, as formulated in 1812 during the Napoleonic wars, had become one of central Europe’s leading political forces by the mid-nineteenth century. An important dimension of this process was the growing identification of Fraktur (or the Gothic type) with Germanness, which led to the replacement of this type with Antiqua for writing and printing the Protestant Einzelsprachen of Scandinavia and the Baltic littoral. Following the decline of the Hanseatic League in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Luther’s (High) German replaced this League’s Low German as the preferred written language along the southern North Sea and Baltic littorals. When no power center chose to be associated with a budding Einzelsprache, the Bible was not translated into it, no academy was founded to support it, and no authoritative dictionary of it was produced. As a result, such a nascent language faded into obscurity. Obscurity in this case means the restriction of a language to predominantly oral usage, with little and dramatically decreasing employment in writing. The concept of Einzelsprache entails that no “proper” language can be recognized as such unless it is extensively employed for official written purposes and publishing.

A similar fate befell Lingua Franca on the Mediterranean shores as it was gradually replaced with Tuscan and French in its role of the dominant medium of mutual, and increasingly written, communication between sailors from the Ottoman Empire and Christian Europe. The “question of language,” or of the relations between Latin and the vernaculars within the West Romance dialect continuum, displayed similar dynamics to the relations between (Church) Slavonic and the Orthodox Slavophone Einzelsprachen. It was a game of degrees of separation with no clear-cut borders established any time soon. Venice’s maritime empire in the Adriatic and eastern Mediterranean made Venetian into the main lingua franca in these areas, however, the Republic’s elite preferred to read and write in Tuscan. In the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, included in 1442 among the lands ruled by the King of Aragon (today in north-eastern Spain), official Latin was replaced with local Romance vernaculars, namely Neapolitan and Sicilian, though these were highly Latinized. Latin was both these budding Einzelsprachen’s “high style.” But the growing fame and prestige of Tuscan (Italian) meant that since the turn of the sixteenth century Neapolitan and Sicilian literati chose to write in this northern language or stuck to Latin. An Accademia Pontaniana, founded at Naples in 1443, did not support a project of an authoritative dictionary of Neapolitan. The academy patronized poets and singers who used Neapolitan, but scholarly or any other “serious” work was written either in Latin or Tuscan. Meanwhile, the growing prestige of the Imperial Einzelsprache of Castilian (Spanish) brushed off onto Spain’s Mediterranean possessions, including these two kingdoms of Naples and Sicily. After 1535 it became popular to refer to Castilian as “Spanish,” courtesy of Juan de Valdés’s influential treatise Diálogo de la lengua published in Naples in 1535. (Then Naples was Christian Europe’s second largest city after Paris.) Seven years later, in 1542, the Spanish Viceroy closed the Accademia Pontaniana for the sake of propagating the official use of Spanish in place of Latin and Tuscan. Following the War of Spanish Succession (1701–1714) Spain was centralized, meaning the liquidation of local territorial autonomies, especially in the lands of Aragon, between 1707 and 1716. The legal documents instituting this new order are known collectively as the Decretos de Nueva Planta and made Spanish (Castilian) the sole official language of the Kingdom of Spain. This decision was given a sound scholarly underpinning when a Real Academia Española (Royal Spanish Academy) was founded in Madrid in 1713. This Academia published a six-volume authoritative (academic) dictionary of Spanish Diccionario de Autoridades between 1726 and 1739.

The early modern period in Western and Central Europe saw a generalized drive to build secular (vernacular) Einzelsprachen through authoritative grammars and dictionaries, produced by official academies, in turn founded by the state or monarch. State power was increasingly coupled with an Einzelsprache to the exclusion of any others that did not enjoy such state support. The authorized translation of the Bible into a coalescing Einzelsprache and its widespread use in administration, publishing, and education were required to complete this process of linguistic engineering. However, in the Ottoman Empire at the acme of its political and military power during the seventeenth century, it was not deemed advisable to follow the ways of the “Franks,” as Christian Western Europeans had been collectively dubbed in the Middle East since the crusades. The Arabic of the Quran was sufficient to support the ideal of writing correctly in this language, while the corpus of Sufi writings and court poetry played the same role for maintaining the standard of Persian. On the other hand, in the case of Osmanlıca the correct usage based on the well-established traditions of the written employment of this Einzelsprache in the imperial administration. However, the Sultan’s court was de facto the final arbiter in this regard. How courtiers and court scribes tended to write in Osmanlıca set the changing standards of this language’s proper usage.

However, both Western and Ottoman attitudes to written language met and intensively interacted in the Ottomans’ autonomous Transylvania, Walachia, and Moldavia. The use of Latin letters for writing Walachian (Romanian) in Transylvania and the imposition of Roman (Greek) with its specific alphabet as the official language in the Danubian Principalities of Walachia and Moldavia amply demonstrated that languages were not inherently (or by any divine will) wed to the script of a “holy tongue.” These examples, even more so than in Western Europe, prepared the ground for conscious linguistic engineering during the nineteenth century when ethnolinguistic nationalism swept across Central Europe. Similar processes unfolded in the Habsburg’s Military Borderland located in this area of historic Hungary that faced the Ottoman Empire, that is, in today’s western and northern Croatia and northern Serbia. To ensure the loyalty of the crucial Borderland’s inhab-
itants to the Habsburg monarch, serfdom was abolished, and peasants were allowed to follow their religion of choice, including Orthodox Christianity. The Latin and Orthodox alphabets were used side by side. Fraktur was employed for writing and printing in German, while Antiqua for Croatian and Hungarian. With time, Church Cyrillic was also joined by Russia’s Graždanka across the Military Borderland, when Orthodox authors began to write more secular books. The Franciscan Joakim Stulli (Joakim Stulić) from the Republic of Ragusa (Dubrovnik) compiled a six-volume Latin-Italian-Illyrian (Croatian) dictionary, *Lexicon latino–italico–Illyricum/Rječoslòxje slovinsko-italiansko-latinsko /Vocabulario italiano-illirico-latino*, which was published in 1801–1810 in Buda and Ragusa (Dubrovnik). Vuk Karadžić’s 1818 Serbian-German-Latin dictionary (Српски рјечник истолкован њемачким и латинским ријечма/Serbsko-Deutsch-Lateinishes Wörterbuch) published in Vienna, introduced the idea that it would be possible to replace Church Slavonic with vernacular Serbian also for written purposes. However, (Church) Slavonic and Slaveno-Serbian (a mixture of the Russian recension of Slavonic with Serbian vernacular, quite similar to Lomonosov’s “middle style”) remained the official language of Serbia until the 1860s.

Across the frontier in Ottoman Bosnia, the scriptural unity of the Islamic world allowed for the rise of Slavophone vernacular literacy in Arabic letters to which the codifiers of today’s Bosnian language often refer to. In the Rum (Roman, that is, Orthodox) Millet the New Testament Greek language removed almost two millennia from Demotic (vernacular Greek) remained official, then also in the nation-state of Greece, and for that matter until 1976. This diglossia (or the use of different languages, or divergent forms of a language in different spheres of life) between the standard Arabic of the Quran and the vernacular Arabic (“dialects”) continues to this day. Jews, whether they resided in the Ottoman Empire or elsewhere across Central Europe, stuck to their “holy tongue” of (Biblical) Hebrew. This explains why Yiddish used to be disparagingly referred to as a “jargon” by many Jews themselves until the mid-twentieth century, while numerous Sephardim of the Ottoman Empire abandoned their Spanyol in favor of French during the nineteenth century. Interestingly, Armenians were more ready to follow the Western model of building Einzelsprachen, mainly thanks to the Catholic Armenian foundation of San Lazzaro degli Armeni (Սուրբ Ղազար) in Venice, as established by Mkhitar Sebastatsi (see Map 8). In 1749 and 1769 he and his pupils published the two volumes of an extensive dictionary of the Grabar (Classical Armenian), which in some parts was paired with Ashkharabar (New Armenian). Tellingly Ashkharabar (Աշխարհաբար) literally means “secular, non-ecclesiastical language,” while Grabar (Grabar) means “literary, written language.” The former name encapsulates the Western concept of Einzelsprache as a secular language, decoupled from a Church, “holy book,” or religion. A full century after the completion of Sebastatsi’s dictionary, in 1869, also in Vienna, a large Ashkharabar-Grabar dictionary came off the press. Its enlarged second edition appeared in 1910. Thus, the boundary and continuities between these two were firmly established. This foundation was the first Armenian “academy of sciences,” (self-)tasked with the construction and standardization of a modern Armenian language, like Tuscany’s Accademia della Crusca or the Académie française.

Quite symbolically, the repeated reinforced separation of a “holy tongue” and a secular Einzelsprache also marked the boundary between the politics of early modernity dominated by religion and the modern age of ethnolinguistic nationalisms. The Western and Central European story of building Einzelsprachen was closely intertwined with secularizing and popularizing the use of writing and publishing, with an eye to deploying it for statehood building, legitimation, and maintenance. It was a messy process of moving from the norm of the divine right to rule to that of *cuius regio, eius religio*, and then to the modern national norm of *cuius regio, eius lingua* (whose realm, his language).