



Résumé version anglais

As source and then object of the history of the French Revolution, the press has been the subject of numerous works since the 1980s. However, when studied in a cross-border context and examined in its form and content, it can still shed new light on political culture in the era of revolutions.

For a long time, the newspapers printed in the Upper Rhine during the French Revolution were mainly studied for their capacity to document the jacobine ideas propagated by around fifteen editors from Strasbourg and Mainz, who became visible because of their political commitment. This thesis considers newspapers with regard to the diversity of their geographical and ideological anchors to bring to light one of the vectors of politicisation in a cross-border context, where linguistic issues played a determining role. It is based on a corpus of over 80 periodicals published on both sides of the Rhine border between 1789 and 1804.

Viewed from the most discriminating angle, that of the languages used, the Upper Rhine press, which flourished at key moments in political history, in particular those marking changes of regime (1791-1793, 1796-1798, 1800), appears to be predominantly German-speaking and aimed at well-informed readers with a political culture that needed updating.

The typology developed in this thesis reveals that the newspapers appear to be dominant and belong essentially to the category of “gazettes”, seven of which manage to maintain their existence throughout the period under consideration, whilst others appear on a more occasional basis and seem to correspond to peaks in publication.

Although they became rarer between 1791 and 1793, a period during which newspapers of opinion appeared to be in the majority, newspapers of information tended to dominate journalistic space once again under the Directory and especially under the Empire, which saw the rise of the “feuilles d’annonces”.

Moreover, this overview of the press has had the benefit of highlighting the close link between the target reader and the civic body, both of which widened during the first years of the Revolution in Alsace and Mainz, then narrowed from the Directory onwards.

The proposed typology of newspapers has also revealed that impartiality, defined as a willingness to provide information without privileging one political culture over another, is considered as one of a journalist’s qualities.

By examining the editorial strategies implemented by the actors who brought these newspapers into existence and by reconstructing the relations they established with the institutions in power, this thesis sheds light on the way editors and printers worked to promote their political ideas in order to impose themselves in a revolutionary social and political space. By taking into consideration the modes of action chosen by the different actors of the

newspapers, it becomes clear that the fate and motivations of the editors and printers were not necessarily identical, the former seeking to continue to publish their political culture by denouncing, circumventing and diverting censorship in the pages of their newspapers, the latter being more concerned with the economic aspect and perpetuating their enterprise. This thesis also sheds light on the relationship to the frontier maintained by the actors of the newspapers, through a study of the case of Mainz (1792-1793) and by observing the ways in which they conveyed political information. The study of the use of heterolingualism and translation in favour or against republicanism in 1792 shows the experience of a culture stemming from the Enlightenment and common to the Upper Rhine, and not only of an adherence or not to the Revolution. The identification of this common culture reflected in the press and the analysis of the political positioning of the editors makes it possible to re-examine the subject of the porosity of the border.

Finally, the Upper Rhine press, observed in its form and contours appears to be a tool for politicisation that goes beyond the framework of Jacobinism. It shows the spread of a political culture that is most often faithful to the policies of successive governments and only very rarely conveys a protesting thought.