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## A Brief Introduction to the Louisiana Civil Code Spanish Translation Project

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# A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE LOUISIANA CIVIL CODE SPANISH TRANSLATION PROJECT

Mariano Vitetta\*

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The Center of Civil Law Studies (CCLS) at the Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center is pleased to announce the continuation of the Louisiana Civil Code Translation Project. This ambitious effort to make the Civil Code available in other languages started with the translation into French, completed in 2016.<sup>1</sup> A translation into Spanish has been contemplated since the inception of the project in 2009. Now, four years after the completion of the French translation, the Spanish translation is in full swing.

## I. WHY TRANSLATE THE LOUISIANA CIVIL CODE INTO SPANISH?

Spanish is the official or national language of twenty-one countries and it is estimated that more than 580 million people speak Spanish as a native, second, or foreign language.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, the Louisiana Civil Code is known for having been influential in

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1. This translation is accessible for free at <https://perma.cc/7AHF-N4GG>. The print version was published as CODE CIVIL DE LOUISIANE. ÉDITION BILINGUE (Olivier Moréteau ed., Société de législation comparée 2017). Also, see Olivier Moréteau, *The Louisiana Civil Code Translation Project: An Introduction*, 5 J. CIV. L. STUD. 97 (2012).

2. INSTITUTO CERVANTES, EL ESPAÑOL: UNA LENGUA VIVA. INFORME 2019, available at <https://perma.cc/LE8J-AD6L>.

Latin American codification.<sup>3</sup> The promoters of this project believe that if the Code is available in Spanish, it will be more easily available for scholars from Latin America and Spain who cannot read English. Therefore, the Code in Spanish will be a good resource to inform future amendments in these countries, as well as a good showcase for Louisiana law in the rest of the world. Last but not least, translating the Code into Spanish also pays homage to the Spanish legacy in Louisiana.<sup>4</sup>

As Spanish is a language spoken in so many countries, there is wide linguistic variation depending on the country where it is used. These differences, which are significant but which in no way hinder understanding among speakers of the different countries, also exist in the realm of the law. The goal in this translation is to reduce those differences to the minimum. While using a Spanish that satisfies every single Spanish-speaking reader is a chimera, efforts will be made to use what some call international or neutral Spanish, though the translation may end up having more of a Latin American, rather than Iberian, sound.

## II. THE TRANSLATION TEAM

The Louisiana Civil Code Spanish Translation team is spearheaded by Olivier Moréteau, CCLS Director. Mariano Vitetta, an LSU LL.M. 2020 graduate and presently CCLS Research Associate, is the translator in charge, with the support of María Natalia Rezzonico as assistant translator and reviser.

As in the French translation, this project includes a Validation Committee, made up by distinguished experts in the civil law, codification, and legal translation. As of the date of publication of this note, these are the members of the Validation Committee (in alphabetical order): Jimena Andino Dorato (Montreal, Canada),

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3. See, e.g., Agustín Parise, *Influence of the Louisiana Civil Code of 1825 in Latin-American Codification Movements: The References to Louisiana Provisions in the Argentine Civil Code of 1871*, 35 TUL. EUR. & CIV. L.F. 33 (2020).

4. Louisiana was Spanish for 31 years, from 1769 until 1800.

Francisco Alterini (Buenos Aires, Argentina), Ignacio Alterini (Buenos Aires, Argentina), Ricardo Chiesa (Buenos Aires, Argentina), Alejandro Garro (New York, New York), Aniceto Masferrer (Valencia, Spain), Luis Muñiz Argüelles (San Juan, Puerto Rico), Agustín Parise (Maastricht, Netherlands), Julio César Rivera (Buenos Aires, Argentina), Andrés Sánchez Herrero (Rosario, Argentina), and Lécia Vicente (Baton Rouge, Louisiana).

These experts have the possibility of providing feedback before publication and also help by providing assistance upon request when the translation team stumbles upon a particular problem. The involvement of these experts also helps to give prestige to the project and hopefully they will be instrumental in making the Spanish translation reach a larger audience.

### III. THE TRANSLATION PROCESS

Publishing extracts of the translation in the *Journal of Civil Law Studies* is part of the overall plan to make the Spanish translation visible in the academic community. The natural destination of the Spanish translation will be the dedicated website Louisiana Civil Code Online (LCCO) curated by the CCLS: <https://lcco.law.lsu.edu/>. There, the translation will remain available for free, together with the English and French versions, for everybody, and like the French and English versions, will be updated regularly to reflect future legislative changes. Hopefully, in the future the CCLS may publish a print English-Spanish edition of the Louisiana Civil Code and, resources permitting, a trilingual edition.

The CCLS team hopes that by making the translation available to the public in this publication and online, comments will be received from readers from all over the world. The team is committed to giving serious thought to any feedback it receives, so that just like its French predecessor, the Spanish translation may be improved with the help of readers.