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ROMANTICISM AND CULTURES OF PRINT

Nordic Romanticism

Translation, Transmission, Transformation

Edited by Cian Duffy · Robert W. Rix

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Palgrave Studies in the Enlightenment,
Romanticism and Cultures of Print

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SELECTED CHRONOLOGY

1689 Publication of *Antiquitatum Danicarum de causis contempte a Danis adhuc gentilibus mortis libri tres* [Three books of Danish antiquities on the reasons for the death defiance of the heathen Danes] (1689).

1694 Publication of Robert Molesworth's *Account of Denmark, as it Was in the Year 1692* and Jodocus Crull's *Denmark Vindicated: Being an Answer to a Late Treatise Called, An Account of Denmark*.

1750–1770 Establishment of the so-called German Circle at Copenhagen, including Gerstenberg, Klopstock, and Münster, under the auspices of Frederik V of Denmark and his foreign minister, Andreas Peter Bernstorff.

1756 Publication of *Monuments de la mythologie et de la poesie des celtes et particulièrement des anciens scandinaves* [Monuments of the mythology and poetry of the Celts, in particular of the ancient Scandinavians] by Paul Henri Mallet, professor of belles lettres at Copenhagen University.

1759–1800 Land-use Reforms in Denmark.

1770 Publication of Thomas Percy's *Northern Antiquities: or, Description of the Manners, Customs, Religion and Laws of the Ancient Danes, and other Northern Nations*, an expanded translation of Mallet's *Monuments*.

1770 Establishment of freedom of the press in Denmark by Johann Friedrich Struensee, physician to Christian VII of Denmark and de facto ruler of the country when the king was incapacitated by mental illness.

1773 Establishment of the Danish-Norwegian-German composite state.

1775 Death of Caroline Matilda (10 May); publication of Nathaniel Wraxall's *Cursory Remarks Made in a Tour Through Some of the Northern Parts of Europe*; Friederike Brun's first journey to Germany and subsequent publication of her travel diary.

1779 Publication of *Danske Sange af det ældste Tidsrum, indholdende blant andet nogle Danske og Norske Kongers Bedrifter. Af det gamle Sprog oversatte* [Danish songs from the oldest times, containing among other things the deeds of some Danish and Norwegian kings. Translated from the old language].

1782 German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe writes the poem 'Erlkönig', based on Danish ballad tradition.

1784 Publication of William Coxe's *Travels into Poland, Russia, Sweden and Denmark*.

1789 The 'Holger Feud': cultural conflict between German and Danish circles at Copenhagen, with Jens Baggesen as the major protagonist.

1792–1793 Publication of Jens Baggesen's *Labyrinten – eller Reise gennem Tydskland, Schweitz og Frankerig* [The Labyrinth – or Journey through Germany, Switzerland, and France], a semi-fictionalised account of a journey made in 1789.

1796 Publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark*.

1796 Publication of Matthew Gregory Lewis's *The Monk: A Romance*, which includes a translation of the Danish ballad 'The Water King'.

1798 Samuel Taylor Coleridge shows an interest in contemporary Danish literature whilst in Germany with William and Dorothy Wordsworth (September–October).

1801 The Battle of Copenhagen (2 April). Britain attacks Copenhagen to break up the League of Armed Neutrality which had been defying the British blockade on French ports; after intense fighting, Denmark surrenders; the Danish navy is partly destroyed and the remaining ships seized.

1802 Publication of Giuseppe Acerbi's *Travels Through Sweden, Finland and Lapland, to the North Cape in the Years 1798 and 1799*.

1805 The Danish travel writer Andreas Andersen Feldborg meets Lord Nelson in London (26 August) to discuss Feldborg's recently published *Tour in Zealand, in the Year 1802* (1805).

1807 The Bombardment of Copenhagen (2–5 September). Britain attacks Denmark again to prevent the partly restored Danish navy from coming under French control. Denmark surrenders after Copenhagen has been shelled for three days, with much of the city devastated and many civilians killed.

1807–1817 Publication at Copenhagen of Peter Foersom’s Danish translations of the plays of Shakespeare.

1807 The establishment of the Danish Royal Commission for the Preservation of Antiquities (Oldsagskommisionen)

1808–1809 The Finnish War, fought between Russia and Sweden. The culmination of decades of intermittent conflict between the two countries over control of the north-eastern part of Sweden.

1809–1810 The Swedish writer Erik Gustaf Geijer spends a year in England.

1811 Publication of James Edward Smith’s English translation of Linnaeus’s Lapland journal.

1813 Denmark declares state bankruptcy.

1813 Publication of Germaine de Staël’s *De l’Allemagne*, which is quickly translated into English.

1814 The Treaty of Kiel, which brings an end to the Napoleonic wars in the north of Europe; Denmark is granted possession of Greenland but forced to cede Norway to Sweden.

1815 Publication at Copenhagen of Grimur Jónsson Thorkelin’s edition of *Beowulf*.

1815 Publication at London of Andreas Andersen Feldborg and William Sidney Walker’s edition of *Poems from the Danish*.

1817 Publication at Copenhagen of Knud Lyne Rahbek’s Danish translations of Byron’s poetry.

1818 Sweden adopts a new constitution and establishes the House of Bernadotte as the new royal household of Sweden and Norway. Jean Bernadotte, a former general in Napoleon’s army, becomes King Karl Johan of Sweden and Norway.

1819 Publication in *The Westmorland Gazette* of Thomas De Quincey’s essays ‘Danish Origins of the Lake District Dialect’.

1821–1822 Publication in *Blackwood’s Magazine* of the ‘Horae Danicae’ essays on modern Danish drama.

1823 Publication of the first English translation of Grimms tales.

1824 Publication of Andreas Andersen Feldborg’s *Denmark Delineated*.

1826 Publication of George Borrow’s *Romantic Ballads, Translated from the Danish*.

1829 The pastor and writer Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig, a key figure in nineteenth-century Danish culture, visits England for the first time.

1830–1870 The ‘grain-sales period’ in Denmark.

1832 The Swedish royalist newspaper *Fäderneslandet* publishes a partial translation of Thomas Medwin's *Journal of the Conversations of Lord Byron* (1824).

1834 Publication of the first Swedish, Danish, and German translations of Harriet Martineau.

1841 The Swedish liberal newspaper *Dagligt Allehanda* reports on the successful prosecution for blasphemy of Edward Moxon, who published Percy Shelley's *Queen Mab* (1813) in his edition of *The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. The paper disagreed with the verdict and praised the radical qualities of Shelley's work.

1845 Publication of the first English translations of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales.

1848 First Schleswig War between Denmark and Schleswig-Holstein (supported by Prussia)

1889 Publication by the Swedish poet Verner von Heidenstam of the literary manifesto *Renässans: nå ord om en annalkande ny brytningstid inom litteraturen* [Renaissance: a few words on the coming new era in literature], which is instrumental in promoting translation, transmission, and transformation of European Romantic literature in Sweden.

1892 Publication of the first volume of the Swedish periodical *Ord och bild*. The periodical would become a key vehicle for the reception of British Romantic writing, in translation, in Sweden.

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INTRODUCTION: ‘A SEALED BOOK TO THE WORLD AT LARGE’

Nordic Romanticism: Translation, Transmission, Transformation explores the varied and complex interactions between national Romanticisms in Britain, Denmark, Germany, Norway, and Sweden in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Our essays examine the reception and influence of Nordic Romanticism in Britain and Germany, the reciprocal impact of British and German Romanticism in the Nordic countries, and the interactions between various national Romanticisms in Scandinavia, showing how the German language, in particular, often functioned as a medium for cultural exchange. Taken as a whole, our essays suggest that to fully understand the range of these individual national Romanticisms we need to see them not as isolated phenomena but rather as participating, via translation and other modes of circulation and reception, in a transnational or regional Romanticism configured around the idea of a shared cultural inheritance in ‘the North’. In so doing, we not only draw attention to some key figures, trends, and processes in Nordic romanticism, and their significance for other European literatures, but also contribute to the ongoing scholarly investigation of Romanticism itself as a European phenomenon by showing how the development of Romanticism in the different national traditions which we examine was driven, to a large extent, by the circulation of ideas and texts through wider, northern European networks of cultural exchange.

Something of the intricacy and range of these networks can be introduced by considering a relatively minor essay which was published in a relatively minor periodical, on 11 August 1827, by a relatively significant British Romantic-period writer: Thomas De Quincey, ‘the English Opium

Eater', whose reputation-making *Confessions* had run in the *London Magazine* six years earlier. The essay in question is a short 'sketch' of the well-known German poet Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, which De Quincey had translated, 'with a good deal of compression, and some little change in the arrangement', from the Danish of Jens Baggesen.¹ De Quincey had begun to learn Danish a decade earlier, in 1807, when his brother Richard (known to the family as 'Pink') was taken prisoner during the British assault on Denmark in September of that year.² 'A Danish book, which has never been translated', he assures the readers of the *Post*, 'although printed and well published at Copenhagen, Kiel, and Altona, may fairly be considered a sealed book to the world at large'.³ The particular Danish book which De Quincey had in mind in this case was Baggesen's semi-autobiographical travel narrative, *Labyrinten* [The Labyrinth] (1792–3): the earliest travel narrative published in Danish and one of the founding texts of Danish literary Romanticism. Although not to be compared to 'Mr. Wordsworth', De Quincey says, Baggesen is nevertheless a 'writer of some note'.⁴ And hence De Quincey's sense that his translation of Baggesen's recollections of Klopstock should have a twofold 'adventitious interest' for the readers of the *Post*: both as an 'authentic memorial' of the 'habits, conversation and personal qualities' of the 'celebrity' German poet and on account of the 'conspicuous place' occupied by Baggesen himself 'in the modern Danish literature', to whose *Labyrinten* the readers of the *Post* are also now being introduced.⁵

There is an element of playful self-promotion to all this, of course: De Quincey is signalling that he is amongst the 'not twenty people in Great Britain, merchants excepted, who cultivate any acquaintance with the Danish language or literature'.⁶ But De Quincey is also making a serious claim about the importance of translation in bridging the gap between different national literatures, a claim which he had already made in his

¹ De Quincey, 'Klopstock, from the Danish', quoted from *The Works of Thomas De Quincey*, gen. ed. Grevel Lindop, 21 vols. (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2000–2003), 5: 20, 21.

² De Quincey's knowledge of Danish is probably most familiar to scholars of British Romanticism, today, from his 1819–1820 essays on the 'Danish Origin of the Lake Country Dialect'. For a detailed study of De Quincey's engagement with Denmark and Danish, see Cian Duffy, *British Romanticism and Denmark* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2022), 99–104.

³ De Quincey, 'Klopstock, from the Danish', quoted from *Works*, 5: 21.

⁴ De Quincey, 'Klopstock, from the Danish', quoted from *Works*, 5: 21.

⁵ De Quincey, 'Klopstock, from the Danish', quoted from *Works*, 5: 20, 21.

⁶ De Quincey, 'Klopstock, from the Danish', quoted from *Works*, 5: 21.

1821 essay on the German Romantic writer Jean Paul Richter, where he uses a botanical metaphor to explain how the 'literatures of whatsoever land [...] unless crossed by some other of different breed [...] all tend to superannuation'.⁷ More than just a characteristic instance of what De Quincey, in his essay on Richter, describes as the 'exotic, but congenial, inoculation' of English literature with translations, however, De Quincey's rendering of Baggesen's 'memorial' in the *Post* also points to other, more complicated and subtle ways in which 'different' national literatures could be 'crossed' by and with each other at the time.⁸ For one thing, Baggesen met Klopstock only because Frederik V of Denmark, whose court was eager to promote German rather than French influences on Danish culture, had, in 1751, invited the German poet to take up residence in Copenhagen, and it was there that he completed his magnum opus, the epic poem *Der Messias* [The Messiah] (1773). Hence, it is difficult to describe Klopstock, uncomplicatedly, as a *German* poet. For another, as De Quincey points out, his translation in the *Post* was not the only first-hand account of Klopstock to have reached England: Samuel Taylor Coleridge had already published, in *The Friend* for 21 December 1809, William Wordsworth's recollections of meeting Klopstock, in Goslar, during the winter of 1798–99.⁹ But since Wordsworth's 'memorandum' was, as De Quincey observes, 'omitted' from the 'second and *reformed* edition' of *The Friend* (1818), it was 'never in any proper sense *published* (having been printed amongst the mountains of Cumberland, and circulated only by the post)'.¹⁰ It is important to remember, then, with De Quincey, that

⁷Thomas De Quincey, 'Jean Paul Frederick Richter', quoted from *Works*, 3: 18. In point of fact, De Quincey's translation of Baggesen's 'memorial' of Klopstock is the earliest English translation from *Labyrinth*, and, in 1822, De Quincey had also begun, but never completed, an English translation of another work by Baggesen: his Danish translation, from the Latin, of Ludvig Holberg's *Nicolai Klimii Iter Subterraneum* (1741). As Musgrove points out in his edition of De Quincey's abandoned manuscript, De Quincey seems to have begun the project not 'as an academic exercise, nor as a piece of self-instruction in Danish, but in order to produce a readable English version for publication', perhaps prompted by his friend Robert Pearse Gillies who had published in *Blackwood's Magazine* in the summer of 1820, some translations from another key Danish Romantic writer: Adam Oehlenschläger. See S. Musgrove, *Niels Klim, being an incomplete translation by Thomas De Quincey from the Danish of Ludvig Holberg, now edited from the manuscript by S. Musgrove*, Bulletin of Auckland University College, 42/5 (1953), 1–37 (11, 15).

⁸Thomas De Quincey, 'Jean Paul Frederick Richter', quoted from *Works*, 3: 18.

⁹De Quincey, 'Klopstock, from the Danish', quoted from *Works*, 5: 21.

¹⁰De Quincey, 'Klopstock, from the Danish', quoted from *Works*, 5: 21.

publication alone does not guarantee widespread *circulation* or *availability*. And finally, of course, we have De Quincey's own avowed praxis as a translator, thinking nothing of 'a good deal of compression, and some little change in the arrangement', a praxis which reminds us not only of the complex understanding of *translation* during the Romantic period but which also raises questions for the literary historian about the extent to which one could consider the availability of a *translation* as equivalent to the *circulation* of the original work. In short, then, restoring De Quincey's ostensibly unremarkable essay in the *Post* to its wider cultural-historical context makes quickly apparent something of the intricacy of the interactions between British, German, and Scandinavian cultural texts during the Romantic period. Those interactions, and the questions which they raise about translation, publication, circulation, and the reciprocal influences of national literatures, are our subject in *Nordic Romanticism*.

ROMANTICISM AND 'THE NORTH'

The connection between Romanticism and the national has been a significant strand of academic discussion since the seminal debate between Arthur Lovejoy and René Wellek, in the first half of the twentieth century, about whether or not Romanticism could or should be identified as a coherent, pan-European phenomenon.¹¹ Historians of Romanticism and historians of nationalism have often tended implicitly to side with Lovejoy's insistence on the need to discriminate between different 'Romanticisms', not only within but also between national traditions. There are sound reasons for this, of course. For one thing, a key distinguishing feature of the kinds of cultural text which we call 'Romantic' is the celebration of vernacular landscapes and languages, whether it be Johann Gottfried Herder's emphasis on *Volk* and its legacy to the German *Sturm und Drang* movement, William Wordsworth's responses to the English Lake District and its inhabitants, Johan Christian Dahl's paintings of Norwegian landscapes and peasants, Adam Mickiewicz's epic treatment of the history of Poland in *Pan Tadeusz* (1834), or the Danish agricultural landscapes celebrated in the Romantic paintings which Thor Mednick considers in his essay in our volume. For another, the Romantic period in various national

¹¹ See Arthur O. Lovejoy, 'On the Discrimination of Romanticisms', *PMLA* 39/2 (June 1924), 229–53; and René Wellek, 'The Unity of European Romanticism', *Comparative Literature* 1/2 (Spring 1949), 147–72.

contexts around Europe tended to coincide with the emergence not only of the idea but also of the geo-political reality of modern nation states from the turmoil of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. And hence, for influential historians of nationalism, like Joep Leerssen, the history of nationalism, at least in its modern form, begins with so-called Romantic nationalism, which, according to Leerssen, presents 'nations as natural human categories, each defined in its individual identity' through 'the articulation and instrumentalisation of collective self-images, derived from an opposition against different, other nations'.¹²

A similar premise is visible in many influential, academic histories of individual, national romanticisms, such as Linda Colley's *Britons* (1992; 2009) and Peter Mortensen's, *British Romanticism and Continental Influences* (2004).¹³ For historians of Romanticism in Scandinavia, in particular, there has been a tendency to link national Romantic movements, such as the Danish Guldalder ['Golden Age'] or Swedish Frihetstiden ['Age of Freedom'] to an exponential increase in national introspection, visible across a range of cultural and socio-economic practices, following diminished international presence consequent upon the Napoleonic Wars.¹⁴ In a Danish context, for example, this introspective dynamic is clearly visible in the paintings by Lundbye, Dreyer, and others, discussed by Lone Kølbe Martinsen and Gertrud Oelsner and by Thor Mednick, in their essays in our volume, which forge links between the artefacts of the ancient past still visible in the landscape and the future socio-cultural direction to be taken by Denmark. As Cecilia Wadsö Lecaros and Carl-Ludwig Conning make clear in their essays in our volume, a similar process manifests itself in mid-nineteenth-century Sweden in the increasingly evident desire to find alternatives to previously dominant German and French cultural influences.

More recently, however, scholars have begun to return again to the idea of Romanticism as a European phenomenon—a new emphasis visible, for

¹² See Joep Leerssen, *National Thought in Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 21, and 'Notes towards a definition of romantic nationalism', *Romantik* 2 (2013), 9–35 (28).

¹³ For more on the centrality of the Romantic period to the emergence of nationalism and the modern nation state in Britain, see also Colin Kidd, *British Identities before Nationalism* (1999).

¹⁴ English-language examples of such histories include Bente Scavenius, *The Golden Age in Denmark* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1994) and Michael Roberts, *The Age of Liberty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

example, in anthologies like Stephen Prickett's *European Romanticism* (2010) and Paul Hamilton's *Oxford Handbook of European Romanticism* (2015). A key concern of this new scholarship has been (remembering De Quincey's idea of 'congenial inoculation') to document how different national Romantic traditions interacted across national borders. Major studies by contributors to this volume—Saglia's *European Literatures in Britain, 1815–1832* (2018) and Duffy's *Romantic Norths: Anglo-Nordic Exchanges, 1770–1842* (2017) and *British Romanticism and Denmark* (2022)—have begun to outline the ways in which Romanticism might better be understood less as a national than as a *regional* phenomenon, and as based more upon perceptions of common cultural inheritance than upon an insistence on difference and differentiation. The present volume continues and extends this line of thinking, focusing on the articulation, through various forms of circulation and reception, across a range of different modes of enquiry and genres of cultural productivity, of a regional Romanticism encompassing the North Sea littoral and often, though not always, predicated upon (constructions of) the classical Scandinavian past.

As a number of our essays make clear, there are of course precedents for this model of a 'northern' Romanticism which stretched across national borders in a variety of Romantic-period cultural texts. Perhaps the most familiar of such precedents can be found in Germaine de Staël's *De la littérature dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales* (1799), which—as our essays by Duffy, Rix, and Saglia observe—distinguishes (fairly problematically, it must be said) between what de Staël calls the literatures of 'the east', which may be 'traced to Homer', and of 'the north', which she sees exemplified in the poems of Ossian.¹⁵ But one can also find precedents within the Nordic countries too. In their essay in this volume, for example, Lone Kølle Martinsen and Gertrud Oelsner trace in a selection of Danish Romantic-period painting the persistent motif of the *sonderweg*, or 'special path', taken by the Nordic countries following the defeats of the Napoleonic wars, an idea which finds notable early expression in the work of N. F. S. Grundtvig, one of the major cultural architects of modern Denmark.

As these precedents also make apparent, however, the question of how exactly one might define 'the North' has long been vexed, for thinkers both within and outside the Nordic countries. Hendriette

¹⁵ Germaine de Staël, *The Influence of Literature upon Society*, 2 vols. (London, 1812), 1: 269.

Kliemann-Gliesinger is absolutely correct to note, in this respect, how 'throughout time the North has symbolised different regions with shifting extensions, the particular definition depending upon the context and the viewpoint, the intention and the interests of the observer'.¹⁶ And hence, for de Staël and many of her contemporaries, as we argue in this volume, it was perfectly possible to talk about Britain and Germany as part of 'the North' because the criteria of inclusion were cultural rather than geographic. A number of scholars working today in the Nordic countries, in both English and in Scandinavian languages, have returned to this question of the definition of 'the North'—and often agree in pointing to the Romantic period as the moment in which the modern understanding of 'the North', in Scandinavia and beyond, began to take shape. In the introduction to her anthology *Northbound* (2007), for example, Karen Klitgaard Povlsen points to what she sees as the 'central' role of the Romantic period in this respect.¹⁷

We extend this scholarship, too, in *Nordic Romanticism* and follow those who, like Peter Fjågesund, seek to offer 'a macro-cultural perspective' on the history of imaginings of 'the North', again both within the Nordic countries and beyond.¹⁸ But whilst we talk in this volume about a 'Nordic Romanticism' gathered around the North Sea littoral, the reader will also note that amongst the Nordic countries, Denmark, in particular, plays a prominent role in many of our essays. That this should be the case can be explained by the particular geo-political and cultural constructions of the North at the historical moment on which we focus. Denmark and Norway had been combined as a single state under the Danish crown from 1523 until 1814, when, under the Treaty of Kiel, Norway was forcibly ceded to Sweden. Hence, Denmark, for much of the period covered by this volume, remained the largest of the Nordic countries in terms of population and territorial extent. Denmark also served at the time as an important gateway to and from the north, in terms of travel, trade, and the circulation of ideas. Denmark became the centre for the study and revival of classical Scandinavian culture, with Copenhagen, in particular, serving

¹⁶ Hendriette Kliemann-Geisinger, 'Mapping the North' – Spatial Dimensions and Geographical Conceptions of Northern Europe', in Karen Klitgaard Povlsen (ed.), *Northbound: Travels, Encounters, and Constructions, 1700–1830* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2007), 395–400 (395).

¹⁷ Povlsen (ed.), *Northbound*, 15–16.

¹⁸ Peter Fjågesund, *The Dream of the North: A Cultural History to 1920* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2014), 17.

as the engine for the antiquarian revival both within the Nordic countries and beyond. And of course, many of the classical Scandinavian ballads which circulated across the North Sea littoral during the late eighteenth century and Romantic period were also Danish in origin, if often mediated via the German language. But all this said, the focus on Denmark in many of our essays should by no means be taken to imply that Denmark was the sole point of contact, with the Nordic countries, for the Nordic Romanticism which we map in this volume. Conversely, as our essays by Cecilia Wadsö Lecaros and Carl-Ludwig Conning make clear, there were significant, and often still undocumented, cultural exchanges between Britain and Sweden during the Romantic period and after which we examine here, exchanges in which translation and periodical culture played a key enabling role.

NORDIC ROMANTICISM IN TRANSLATION AND CIRCULATION

Early academic studies of translation were primarily interested in the linguistic aspects of moving a text from the source to the target language. However, since the 1980s, new research directions have emerged as scholars have steadily added to purely empirical, language-based approaches. As Venuti notes, a narrow focus on linguistics may 'unduly restrict [translation's] role in cultural innovation and social change'.¹⁹ Accordingly, research now often involves interdisciplinary analyses with linguistics featuring as just one of a number of disciplines drawn upon in the discussion of what happens when a text is translated. Translation, in other words, is increasingly being understood as only a single component in wider processes of cultural exchange.²⁰ Several of our essays extend this ongoing investigation of how translation enables the transmission of new ideas, ideologies, and cultures across linguistic borders. One significant consequence of this new understanding of the relationship between translation and cultural exchange is an emphasis on transnationalism, that is to say, on cultural groupings which cross national and linguistic borders. One of the larger claims of this volume is that Romanticism was, to a considerable

¹⁹ Lawrence Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 21.

²⁰ Significant work in this vein includes Susan Bassnet, *Translation Studies*, fourth edition (London: Routledge, 2013); André Lefevere, *Translation, History and Culture* (London: Routledge, 2002); David Katan, *Translating Cultures* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1999); and Itamar Even-Zohar, *Polysystem Studies*, special edition of *Poetics Today* 11, no. 1 (1999).

extent, exactly such a transnational phenomenon: we map, here, how texts travelled across borders as material objects that can be traced in terms of concrete events and the particular people who acted to make these events happen. Only later did the Romantic ideas that flowed across European boundaries become fastened to distinctively national or ethnic discourses. This is one of the paradoxes which our essays confront: the process by which Romanticism in very real ways began as a series of ideas that gained international momentum but subsequently became synonymous with various forms of nationalism. By the end of the eighteenth century, French had replaced Latin as the undisputed lingua franca of European science, politics, and culture. The digital humanities project *The French Book Trade in Enlightenment Europe*, which focuses on the Swiss publisher and bookseller, Société Typographique de Neuchâtel, provides a good example of how extensively French publishing reached every corner of Europe. Between 1769 and 1794, the Société published around 220 volumes (including translations into French) and sold around 400,000 copies of 4000 different books.²¹ Hence, the availability of a translation in a Nordic language is not necessarily a reliable index of the extent to which works of the European Enlightenment were in circulation in Scandinavia.

One of the books that the Société redistributed was instrumental in making classical Scandinavian culture a major driver for the development of Romantic ideas across Europe. This was the history of Denmark compiled by the Swiss scholar Paul Henri Mallet and published at Copenhagen, with the support of the Danish government, which evidently hoped the book would help counteract the prevailing international view of Denmark as a backward and despotic state.²² First published in French, in order to maximise the potential readership, Mallet's *Introduction à l'Histoire de Dannemarc, où l'on traite de la religion, des moeurs, des loix, et des usages des anciens Danois* (1755) [Introduction to the history of Denmark, or concerning the religion, the manners, the laws, and the customs of the ancient Danes] gained immediate and widespread traction in Europe. Even more important, and also published at Copenhagen, was Mallet's

²¹ See the project website: *Société Typographique de Neuchâtel Online Database Archive* (<https://fbtee.uws.edu.au/stn/interface>). See also Fania Oz-Salzberger, 'The Enlightenment in Translation: Regional and European Aspects', *European Review of History* 13, no. 3 (2006), 385–409 (399–400).

²² For changing international perceptions of Denmark in the Romantic period and their influence on the development of Romanticism in Denmark and abroad, see Duffy, *British Romanticism and Denmark*.

companion volume to *l'Histoire*: French translations from the Edda and a Swedish legendary tale which he brought out together under the title *Monumens de la mythologie et de la poésie des Celtes, et particulièrement des anciens Scandinaves* (1756) [Monuments of the mythology and poetry of the Celts, and in particular of the ancient Scandinavians]. Icelandic literature had previously been available only in Latin translations. Now, for the first time, it became available in a modern European language and therefore accessible to a much wider, general readership: Mallet's works were subsequently translated not only into Danish, but also into German (1765–1766) and English (1780), feeding the burgeoning interest in vernacular literatures, and especially in ancient Germanic and Scandinavian poetry, in the second half of the eighteenth century.

As many of our essays make clear, the idea of the 'ancient North' became a significant motif of Romanticism both within the Nordic countries and around Europe. A key catalyst for this significance, which also illustrates well the complexity of the cultural practices which could be involved in the idea of 'translation' at that time, are the poems of Ossian. The Scottish antiquary James Macpherson, who published these lengthy fragments of epic verse narrative between 1760 and 1763, claimed that they were the work of a third-century Gaelic bard, called Ossian, which he had collected from surviving (mostly oral) sources in the Scottish Highlands and translated, as closely as possible, into English. The poems were an instant hit and were translated into several European languages over the next sixty years, eventually counting Goethe and Napoleon amongst their many admiring readers. Controversy was equally instantaneous, however: a long-running debate followed concerning the authenticity of the poems (most scholars now agree that Macpherson considerably expanded upon those few sources which he did actually find in manuscript, or copied down, and simply invented others).²³ One immediate consequence of the Ossian phenomenon was that medieval Nordic poems were all of sudden also in high demand around Europe. This was partly helped by the fact that the Nordic (i.e. Germanic) and Celtic traditions were often not clearly separated. Mallet, for example, had used the term 'Celtic' for the Icelandic texts which he translated, and the prominent supporter of Germanic vernacular literature, Germaine de Staël, did not, in her important writings on European literature, significantly distinguish

²³For an overview of European responses to the Ossian poems, see Howard Gaskill (ed.), *The Reception of Ossian in Europe* (London: Bloomsbury, 2004).

the poems of Ossian from what had come out of Scandinavia. Conversely, as we have seen, she saw Ossian as essentially one with '[t]he works of the English and German, with some of the Danish and Swedish writings [that] may be classed as the literature of the North'.²⁴ As the English critic Leslie Stephen observed in relation to this blurring of national, ethnic, and cultural boundaries: 'the Northern races were a unit; Celt and Scandinavian both lived in the North, and represent bogs and moors and wind-swept seas in general'.²⁵

Mallet's seminal texts were written in French, but if we take a longer historical perspective on the dissemination of classical Scandinavian literature throughout Europe in the late eighteenth century and Romantic period, it becomes clear (as de Staël recognised) that the German language played a dominant role. In Germany, Johann Gottfried Herder took an interest in what he called *Volks poesie* [poetry of the people], which he discussed with much fervour in his essay, 'Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker' [Extract from a correspondence about Ossian and the Songs of Ancient Peoples] published in 1773. Herder subsequently included translated excerpts from three Ossian poems along with a selection of Old Norse poetry and Danish ballads in his two-volume *Volkslieder* (1778–9), an anthology of 'folk' or vernacular poetry which was well-received by antiquarians and literary scholars around Europe. In Britain, as Lis Møller and Robert W. Rix have shown, Herder's German versions of Danish ballads were retranslated into English in the late eighteenth century by influential writers including Matthew 'Monk' Lewis and Walter Scott.²⁶ German, in other words, became a mediating language for Danish and Old Norse texts.

A number of our essays bring out the importance of the German language as a kind of clearing house for the circulation of Romantic ideas and

²⁴ Germaine de Staël, *A Treatise on Ancient and Modern Literature* (London, 1803), 274.

²⁵ Leslie Stephen, 'The Cosmopolitan Spirit in Literature', in *Studies of a Biographer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 247–79 (272).

²⁶ See Lis Møller, 'Travelling Ballads: The Dissemination of Danish Medieval Ballads in Germany and Britain, 1760s–1830s', in *Danish Literature as World Literature*, eds. Dan Ringgaard and Mads Rosendahl Thomsen (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 31–51; Lis Møller, "'They dance all under the greenwood tree": British and Danish Romantic-Period Adaptations of Two Danish "Elf Ballads"', in *Romantic Norths: Anglo-Nordic Exchanges, 1770–1842* (London: Palgrave, 2017), 129–52; and Robert W. Rix (ed.), *Norse Romanticism: Themes in British Literature, 1760–1830*, Romantic Circles Praxis Series (2012): <https://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/norse/html/about.html>.

texts across the north of Europe. Anna Lena Sandberg describes the importance of bilingualism to the career of the Danish poet Jens Baggesen, who began writing in German but went on to publish Romantic works alternately in Danish and German throughout most of his literary career. Cian Duffy points out how the leading Danish Romantic poet Adam Oehlenschläger also composed alternately in Danish and German, and translated many of his Danish works into German, a practice which helped to establish him not only as the preeminent national poet of the day, but also as a poet who could be seen to speak for a wider regional area of 'the North'. As we have seen, this more capacious concept of a 'northern' literature was addressed explicitly by de Staël (whose work is discussed by several of our contributors), who distinguishes the literature of the north (Germany, England, and Scandinavia), which she finds Romantic, original, and free, from that of the south (primarily France and Italy), which she finds classical, conservative, and restrictive. Andreas Hjort Møller's essay also explores the role of the German language and the German population in Copenhagen as a vehicle for the promotion of Romantic ideas in Denmark. Johann Hartwig Ernst von Bernstorff, the Danish minister of foreign affairs who had invited Mallet to work in Copenhagen, came from a North-German noble family and worked to establish a circle of German literati in the Danish capital. It was he who, in 1751, invited Klopstock to Copenhagen in order to finish *Der Messias*. The German poet and critic Heinrich Wilhelm von Gerstenberg lived in Copenhagen from 1762 to 1775 and there published his *Briefe über Merkwürdigkeiten der Litteratur* (1767) [Letters on the peculiarities of literature], which included an enthusiastic appreciation of Shakespeare, but also several positive references to Ossian, English folk ballads, and, importantly, to Old Norse poetry. Gerstenberg includes a German translation of the skaldic poem 'Höfuðlausn', attributed to the tenth-century Icelandic poet Egill Skallagrímsson, which had previously been translated by Mallet. Having been inspired by the interest in Old Norse poetry amongst Copenhagen circles, Gerstenberg also wrote a long poem supposedly spoken by an Old Norse skald, 'Gedicht eines Skalden' [Poem of a skald], which helped to introduce a Norse aesthetics to German letters. As Hjort Møller shows, this German cultural presence in the Danish capital was hugely influential for the cultural life of both countries.

Romanticism in Scandinavia is often said to have begun with Adam Oehlenschläger's *Digte* [Poems], which was published on Christmas Day 1802 (dated 1803), and which featured several adaptations of older