

Ruth Hemstad, Jannicke S. Kaasa, Ellen Krefthing and Aina Nøding (eds.), *Literary Citizenship in Scandinavia in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2023).
xii+330 pp.

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There is a tendency in some scholarly circles to consider Scandinavia, which geographically speaking is a peninsular pendant to continental Europe, as too far away and too far north to be counted – a cultural and political periphery.¹ The anthology *Literary Citizenship in Scandinavia in the Long Eighteenth Century* seeks to remedy this view. This book is a diverse volume of texts discussing the relationship between various Scandinavian readerships and literary texts to and from Scandinavia and the rest of Europe. In this anthology readers become acquainted with the transnational dissemination of religious and secular books, descriptions of demonic possessions, periodicals in Latin and vernacular Scandinavian languages, lecture notes, moral tales, libelous royal biographies, the Norwegian constitution of 1814, missionary stories for children, educational magazines, as well as censorship and press freedom in the Scandinavian countries in the 18th and 19th Century, and a new database of 18th Century Norwegian book collections.

The book's contributors are mostly Norwegian, but features a couple of Danes, the occasional Swede and one Englishman. The emphasis remains on the history of books and print culture in Denmark-Norway, with some expansion into and comparison with Sweden. As the editors explain in the introduction, one of the aims of the book is to 'expand opportunities for non-Scandinavian scholars to track the journeys of printed books, illustrations and news, and their social effects, further north' (4). *Literary Citizenship in Scandinavia* succeeds in this mission by, in

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¹ See for example Peter Burke *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Routledge, 2009), where the Scandinavian countries are barely mentioned.

various chapters, providing an overview of censorship and the political circumstances surrounding print culture and literary communities, as well as on the readership of specific works and literary genres. Jon Haarberg's chapter on the use of Martin Luther's *Kleiner Katechismus* in Norway from the Reformation to the 1960s serves as a short introduction to Norwegian history of literacy and education, as well as to the specific Norwegian linguistic context.

However, this is not to say that the book is mainly of interest to non-Scandinavian scholars. Within a Norwegian context the period covered is generally not afforded the amount of interest shown to the 19th Century, and connections between Scandinavia and the rest of Europe, not to mention the rest of the world, are not very well known. This book brings much needed nuance to the understanding of especially Danish and Norwegian book history and print culture, and the comparative approach linking these two countries with Sweden sheds light on significant similarities and differences.

The book's chapters are printed roughly in chronological order of the material studied, which brings into question the 'long eighteenth century' of the book's title. The eighteenth century encountered here is long indeed, spanning from the early 16th to the late 19th century. One may argue that most of the articles are centered around the 1700s, thus placing the main body of the book within the designated century. However, as the editors and contributors of the book undoubtedly are aware of, the paratext influences the reading of the texts at hand. There is an argument to be made that the titular emphasis on the eighteenth century causes material from other centuries to be considered mainly in light of the Enlightenment, as either leading up to it, or a continuation of it. Of course, the choice of a book's title is affected by a variety of considerations, an obvious one in this case being that this publication is part of the series *Knowledge and Communication in the Enlightenment World*. Considering how this book is a result of the research project *Literary Citizens of the World. Tracing Transnational Crossroads of Books in Early Modern Norway, 1519-1850*, maintaining the stated time frame of the project might have done the resulting anthology more justice.

While *Literary Citizenship in Scandinavia in the Long Eighteenth Century* is a versatile publication filling a Scandinavian gap in scholarship on European book and media history, there are areas of study that are missing from this book. Perhaps due to the Enlightenment focus, there is an emphasis on the political and the didactical, and on how the Northern periphery was part of a transnational European network of ideas. However, there were ways of being connected to European literary culture without belonging to the *bourgeoisie*, or reading novels and periodicals. Apart from Ellen Krefting's highly readable chapter on biographies of the scandalous lives of people in power – and even this chapter emphasises the political as-

pects of such literature, rather than its entertainment value – there is in this book a significant *lacuna* in terms of literary sources of enjoyment. Not only does this reinforce the old-fashioned hierarchy of ranking the efferent above the aesthetic, or, in this case, political history above social history, but to a certain extent it leaves out the lower classes, whose cultural connections to the rest of the world is evident in such media as chapbooks and songs. There are occasional mentions of popular songs or broadside ballads (a medium specific to the anglophone world, which in content is the generic sibling of the Scandinavian ‘skillingviser’/‘skillingvisa’), but no discussion of their significance or role in society. Such songs are a veritable treasure trove of texts disseminating news, ideas and entertainment to a diverse audience all over Europe, including to and from the Scandinavian countries.² Chapbooks (‘folkebøker’), cheap print versions of classic tales circulating between oral tradition and print, also formed a pan-European genre providing common folk with a shared repertoire of stories throughout the time covered by this book. There is certainly a need for additional Swedish material, but also for an expansion of the notion of what Scandinavia was, with further inclusion of the Faroes, Greenland, Iceland, Swedish-speaking Finland and areas in the Baltic region, not to mention the colonies overseas.

Literary Citizenship in Scandinavia is filled to the brim with impressive archival work, at its best when the contributors manage to open the door of the archive and bring the reader to the threshold between the texts themselves and the bewildering throng of editions, translations and diverse readerships, i. e., when the discussion goes beyond citizenship to the actual citizens that were using the literary texts studied by the authors. There is much more material and many more citizens to be studied in this vein.

² For examples, see *ARV Nordic Yearbook of Folklore* (Vol. 74, 2018); Anna Katharina Richter, *Transmissionsgeschichten: Untersuchungen zur dänischen und Schwedischen Erzählprosa in der frühen Neuzeit* (A. Franke, 2009).