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ALASTAIR MATTHEWS

Medieval Denmark and its Languages

The Case for a More Open Literary Historiography

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ABSTRACT: This chapter makes the case for a literary history that accounts for the multilingual nature of medieval Denmark, giving particular attention to Danish, German, and Latin. It relates such a project to current research interests such as crossing the boundaries of national philologies; demonstrates the need for it by reviewing existing surveys of the period; and outlines some lines of enquiry, including the translation and transmission of texts, that it could pursue.

KEYWORDS: Danish; Denmark; German; Latin; literary history; Low German; Middle Ages

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INTRODUCTION

Embracing, or at least including a nod toward, the rhetoric of openness is by now almost *de rigueur* when it comes to setting the agenda for research on the literature of the Middle Ages.¹ The origins of national

1 I would like to thank Simon Skovgaard Boeck, Steffen Hope, Lars Boje Mortensen, and the editors of the present volume for reading and commenting on drafts of this chapter. — For the trends in medievalism described here, cf. e.g. Joep Leerssen, ‘Literary Historicism: Romanticism, Philologists, and the Presence of the Past’, *Modern Language Quarterly*, 65 (2004), pp. 221–43; *Mittelalter im Labor: Die Mediävistik testet Wege zu einer transkulturellen Europawissenschaft*, ed. by Michael Borgolte and others (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2008); Nadia R. Altschul, *Geographies of Philological Knowledge: Postcoloniality and the Transatlantic National Epic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); *Histories of Medieval European Literatures: New Patterns of Representation and Explanation* (= *Interfaces: A Journal of Medieval European Literatures*, 1 (2015)) <<https://doi.org/10.13130/interfaces-4960>>; *Europe: A Literary History, 1348–1418*, ed. by David Wallace, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Mark Whittow, ‘Sources of Knowledge; Cultures of Recording’, *Past and Present*, 238, suppl. 13 (2018), pp. 45–87; Peter Frankopan, ‘Why We Need to Think About the Global Middle Ages’, *Journal of Medieval Worlds*, 1.1 (2019), pp. 5–10 <<https://doi.org/10.1525/jmw.2019.100002>>. The rise of these interests is also reflected in the appearance of journals and book series such as *Medieval Worlds: Comparative & Interdisciplinary Studies* (<http://www.medievalworlds.net/medieval_worlds?frames=yes> [accessed 20 January 2020]) and *Beyond Medieval Europe* (ARC Humanities Press; <<https://arc-humanities.org/our-series/arc/bme/>> [accessed 20 January 2020]).

philologies in the context of nineteenth-century nation-building are widely recognized, and with this awareness has come the pursuit of more open discourses that cross, question, and break down the disciplinary, political, and cultural boundaries associated with modern nation states. These efforts to rethink approaches to literature before the current era have made much of adopting, on the one hand, a European perspective and questioning, on the other, what is meant by ‘Europe’ and how it functions as a potentially limiting point of orientation. This in turn dovetails with the growing scholarly interest in a ‘global’ Middle Ages. Work on the ‘insular Middle Ages’, the Atlantic, northern and eastern Europe, Byzantine Studies, Africa, or connections with the Arab world — the list is not exclusive — can all be seen as an expression of this process.²

Yet tensions remain — imbalances in the attention being given to different regions, languages, and approaches that may be due to more than just the truism that it is not possible to cover everything. The present chapter responds to one particular case in point. It follows on from my Marie Curie Fellowship, ‘Northern Narratives: The Poetics of Cultural Contact between Germany and Scandinavia in the Middle Ages’ (2015–17). One of the conclusions to emerge from that project is that there is still a pressing need to open up the writing of medieval literary history in the case of German in Denmark. I say ‘still’ because the desideratum is not a new one. It, and the intellectual context behind it, had already been identified by Vibeke Winge almost thirty years ago, long before topics such as multilingualism and the questioning of nationally oriented scholarship became fashionable in the philologies:

2 *Crossing Borders in the Insular Middle Ages*, ed. by Aisling Byrne and Victoria Flood (Turnhout: Brepols, 2019); *Studies in the Medieval Atlantic*, ed. by Benjamin Hudson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); *Historical Narratives and Christian Identity on a European Periphery: Early Historical Writing in Northern, East-Central, and Eastern Europe (c. 1070–1200)*, ed. by Ildar H. Garipzanov (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011); Ian Johnson, ‘A Perspective from the Far (Medieval) West on Byzantine Theories of Authorship’, in *The Author in Middle Byzantine Literature: Modes, Functions, and Identities*, ed. by Aglae Pizzone (Boston: De Gruyter, 2014), pp. 277–94; François-Xavier Fauvelle, *The Golden Rhinoceros: Histories of the African Middle Ages*, trans. by Troy Tice (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018); *A Sea of Languages: Rethinking the Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History*, ed. by Suzanne Conklin Akbari and Karla Mallette (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

Aus einer größeren Perspektive gesehen ist es m.E. notwendig, die dänische Kultur-, Sprach- und Literaturgeschichte unter dem Aspekt der Mehrsprachigkeit darzustellen. Bis heute ist das jedoch noch nie versucht worden. Das Verhältnis zu unserem südlichen Nachbarn spielt in historischen Darstellungen immer eine große Rolle, jedoch ist diese infolge einer Rückprojizierung der nationalen Konflikte des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts meistens eine recht negative.³

(From a wider perspective, it is in my view necessary to present Danish cultural, linguistic, and literary history in terms of multilingualism. Up to now, however, that has never been attempted. Relations with our southern neighbour always play a significant role in historical accounts, but it is, as a consequence of the back-projection of the national conflicts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, generally a markedly negative one.)

The following pages advocate and lay the groundwork for a project that would finally begin to fill this gap where premodern literature is concerned. I begin with a necessarily brief overview (or reminder) of the extent of the German presence in Denmark in the period, before demonstrating how it has been marginalized in Danish literary historiography in recent decades. I consider possible explanations for this, including a continued influence of the factors mentioned by Winge. I then present some ways in which Danish, German, and Latin could be brought together in a genuinely inclusive history of literature in the broadest sense of the term. Finally, I consider how such a project could be developed further, from its potential to inform our understanding of specific locations, such as Odense, to the connections that could be drawn with current themes, such as diversification and multilingualism, in Modern Languages teaching and research.

GERMANS AND GERMAN IN DENMARK

It is a fact that the history and culture of (generally northern) Germany and Denmark were intertwined in the Middle Ages. Following

3 Vibeke Winge, *Dänische Deutsche — deutsche Dänen: Geschichte der deutschen Sprache in Dänemark 1300–1800* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1992), pp. 4–5. Translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

the breakdown of the Danish ‘North Sea empire’, ‘the major ambitions of Danish kings were [...] directed [...] east and south along the land frontiers of Jutland and the shores of the Baltic Sea. [...] In each case Danish ambitions came into conflict with the interests of German princes, institutions, and populations.’⁴ Large parts, or even all, of the realm were pawned and effectively in the hands of German aristocrats at various points.⁵ Numerous Danish kings and queens were of German descent,⁶ and there was a substantial presence of German merchants and craftsmen — not entirely without conflict, but marked also by a degree of convergence evident in, for instance, intermarriage.⁷ This state of affairs went hand in hand with the use of German in Denmark.⁸ Early linguistic influence is apparent in a twelfth-century tombstone in Føvling (Jutland) on which part of the name is a loanword from Low German,⁹ and evidence of proficiency in German can be found in the account in Saxo’s *Gesta Danorum* (History of the

4 For a historical overview, see Alan V. Murray, ‘The Danish Monarchy and the Kingdom of Germany, 1179–1319: The Evidence of Middle High German Poetry’, in *Scandinavia and Europe 800–1350: Contact, Conflict, and Coexistence*, ed. by Jonathan Adams and Katherine Holman (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), pp. 289–307 (pp. 289–92; quotation: pp. 289–90).

5 See e.g. Anders Leegaard Knudsen, ‘Kongeriget Danmark i 1332 — et fallitbo’, *Historisk Tidsskrift* [Denmark], 108 (2008), pp. 321–40.

6 For the German royal connections following Margaret I, see Steinar Imsen, ‘The Union of Calmar — Nordic Great Power or Northern German Outpost?’, in *Politics and Reformations: Communities, Politics, Nations, and Empires: Essays in Honor of Thomas A. Brady, Jr.*, ed. by Christopher Ocker and others (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 471–89.

7 See Bjørn Poulsen, ‘Late Medieval Migration across the Baltic: The Movement of People between Northern Germany and Denmark’, in *Guilds, Towns, and Cultural Transmission in the North, 1300–1500*, ed. by Lars Bisgaard, Lars Boje Mortensen, and Tom Pettitt (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2013), pp. 31–56 (pp. 47–49 on intermarriage); importantly, Poulsen also addresses the two-way nature of migration between Germany and Denmark. On the specifically Hanseatic aspect, see Kilian Baur, *Freunde und Feinde: Niederdeutsche, Dänen und die Hanse im Spätmittelalter (1376–1513)* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2018), pp. 231–40, 333–38 (with extensive references). For the shifting extent to which ‘nationalistic’ sentiment was expressed in medieval Danish historical writing, see Anders Leegaard Knudsen, ‘Interessen for den danske fortid omkring 1300: En middelalderlig dansk nationalisme’, *Historisk Tidsskrift* [Denmark], 100 (2000), pp. 1–32.

8 The indispensable study remains Winge, *Dänische Deutsche — deutsche Dänen*. It should, however, be born in mind that it is not an exhaustive catalogue of material, and that details may need reassessing in the light of more recent research, some of which is also drawn into this chapter.

9 See Niels Houlberg Hansen, ‘The Transformation of the Danish Language in the Central Middle Ages: A Case of Europeanization?’, in *Denmark and Europe in the Middle Ages, c. 1000–1525: Essays in Honour of Professor Michael H. Gelting*, ed. by Kerstin Hundahl, Lars Kjær, and Niels Lund (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 111–38 (p. 128).

Danes) of a legate sent by Valdemar I to Henry the Lion in 1176: ‘Wal- demarus [...] Henricum, quem stabulo suo preposuerat, Germanice uocis admodum gnarum in Saxoniam dirigi curat’ (The Danish king [...] arranged to have Henrik, his master of the horse, sent to Saxony, because the man was tolerably conversant with the German tongue).¹⁰ It is also very likely that the northern German poet Rumelant von Sachsen performed strophes concerned with Danish politics on a visit to Denmark in the later thirteenth century.¹¹ The written record, however, does not begin until the fourteenth century. Alongside the production of numerous *Urkunden* in (Low) German for private, political, and administrative purposes — the *schra* of the so-called Elende Lav (Foreigners’ Guild) in Odense (1435) is one well-known example — historiographical and legal texts were translated into German.¹² This material needs to be viewed alongside Danish works based on German sources or models, such as *Dværgekongen Laurin* (Laurin the Dwarf King; earliest manuscript c. 1500), the Danish *Lucidarius* (generally dated to the fourteenth century), or *De gamle danske Dyrerim* (The Old Danish Rhyming Bestiary; fifteenth century).¹³

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- 10 Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum*, ed. by Karsten Friis-Jensen, trans. by Peter Fisher, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2015), xiv. 54. 18. See Winge, *Dänische Deutsche — deutsche Dänen*, p. 36.
- 11 The strophes concerned (v. 8, vi. 10, x. 3–5) relate to the 1286 assassination of Eric V and to his successor, Eric VI; they are best read alongside the commentary in *Die Sangspruchdichtung Rumelants von Sachsen: Edition — Übersetzung — Kommentar*, ed. and trans. by Peter Kern (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014). See further Murray, ‘Danish Monarchy’, pp. 294–306 (also covering other German political poetry on Danish kings, for which the case for performance in Denmark is less convincing); Reinhold Schröder, ‘Rumelant von Sachsen, ein Fahrender aus Deutschland in Dänemark’, in *The Entertainer in Medieval and Traditional Culture: A Symposium*, ed. by Flemming G. Andersen, Thomas Pettitt, and Reinhold Schröder (Odense: Odense University Press, 1997), pp. 15–44.
- 12 An initial overview is provided in Winge, *Dänische Deutsche — deutsche Dänen*, pp. 46–85; the historiographical material is discussed in more detail below.
- 13 On these and other texts, see *Dansk litteraturs historie*, ed. by Klaus P. Mortensen and May Schack, 5 vols (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2006–09), I (2007), pp. 132–39; Winge, *Dänische Deutsche — deutsche Dänen*, pp. 78–83; the survey of translations in Vibeke Winge, ‘Zur Übersetzungstätigkeit Niederdeutsch-Dänisch und Dänisch-Niederdeutsch von 1300 bis Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts’, in *Niederdeutsch in Skandinavien*, 6 vols (1987–2005), III, ed. by Lennart Elmevik and Kurt Erich Schöndorf, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie, 6 (Berlin: Schmidt, 1992), pp. 30–36; Marita Akhøj Nielsen, ‘Dværgekongen Laurin: Litteraturhistorisk baggrund’, in *Tekster fra Danmarks middelalder og renaissance 1100–1550 — på dansk og latin* <<https://tekstnet.dk/dvaergekongen-laurin/about>> [accessed 12 February 2020]; Britta Olrik

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The treatment of the German tradition in existing literary histories of Denmark stands at odds with the situation that has just been described.¹⁴ Consider, for instance, *Dansk litteraturs historie* (Danish Literary History; 2006–09), a multivolume collaborative survey that has the status of a ‘standard work’. The project aims emphatically to understand Danish literature from a European and international perspective.¹⁵ As the foreword puts it: ‘Den danske litteratur sættes derfor ind i en europæisk og — for nyere perioders vedkommende — international sammenhæng, som tydeliggør, hvordan dansk litteratur til stadighed har udfoldet sig i et samspil med andre litteraturer og kulturstrømninger’ (Danish literature is therefore set in a European and — where more recent periods are concerned — international context that makes clear how Danish literature has constantly unfolded in an interplay with other literatures and cultural currents).¹⁶ In many respects, the project lives up to these ambitions. Where the German-speaking areas in the premodern period are concerned, we learn, for instance, about Johan Snell, the first printer in Denmark, who came to Odense from Lübeck in the late fifteenth century, or the German sources for most of the stories in the late medieval/early modern *folkeboøger*.¹⁷

Only marginally addressed, however, is the use of German for textual production within Denmark. In the 188 pages that cover developments up to 1500 — to take an arbitrary cut-off point — this is recognized in no more than three sentences; the sole text to be mentioned by name in this context is the *Jyske Lov* (Jutish Law), which was translated into Low German in the fourteenth century.¹⁸ This state

Frederiksen, ‘Dyrerim, De gamle danske’, in *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, ed. by Phillip Pulsiano and Kirsten Wolf (New York: Garland, 1993), p. 145.

14 For a discussion of national literary historiography — including two of the surveys considered here — in the Scandinavian countries, see Annika Olsson, ‘Challenging the Bodies and Borders of Literature in Scandinavia: Methodological Nationalism, Intersectionality and Methodological Disciplinarity’, in *Rethinking National Literatures and the Literary Canon in Scandinavia*, ed. by Ann-Sofie Lönnngren and others (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), pp. 30–51.

15 See p. 112 below on the intellectual context for this.

16 *Dansk litteraturs historie*, ed. by Mortensen and Schack, I, p. 13.

17 *Ibid.*, I, pp. 200–01, 132–34.

18 *Ibid.*, I, pp. 22, 89, 92. For an introduction to the German translation of the *Jyske Lov*, see Seán Vrieland, ‘A Reunited Law: AM 6 8vo’, *Manuscript of the Month*, 15 Febru-

of affairs cannot, as the examples later in this chapter will show, be explained simply by a lack of surviving material in German to include; and it is all the more striking when compared with the attention that is given to the literary use of Latin in Denmark. The imbalance can thus be seen not as a result of simply excluding anything that is ‘not (in) Danish’ but to indicate a challenge posed by German in particular.¹⁹ The ironic result is that, despite the programme laid out in the foreword, the sense of Denmark as set apart from what is now the larger neighbour to the south is reinforced: there is a readiness to acknowledge influence *from* (primarily northern) Germany, but the notion of literary activity in German *within* Denmark seems difficult to countenance in any detail.

This is not an isolated example; similar tendencies can also be observed in other literary histories. Three can be mentioned here, one from another collaborative study and two from enterprises with a single author. (i) *Hovedsporet: Dansk litteraturs historie* (The Main Line: Danish Literary History; 2005) also reflects to a degree on concepts of Danish identity and the European context for Danish literature.²⁰ But German is all but written out of the linguistic-literary developments in the Middle Ages, which are presented in terms of the schematic sequence: orality–written Latin culture–written Danish culture.²¹ Consequently, the discussion of the medieval period concentrates on writing in Latin and Danish; German is mentioned only twice in over eighty pages (translations of the *Compendium Saxonis* and the *Jyske Lov*).²²

(ii) Pål Dahlerup’s *Dansk litteratur: Middelalder* (Danish Literature: Middle Ages; 1998) and its later extension, *Sanselig senmiddelalder* (Late Middle Ages of the Senses; 2010), do mention German material on occasion (e.g. the translations of the *Rimkrønike* (Rhythm-

ary 2020 <<https://manuscript.ku.dk/motm/a-reunited-law-am-6-8vo/>> [accessed 7 April 2020].

19 But see also pp. 120–21 below on the need to consider languages other than German as well.

20 *Hovedsporet: Dansk litteraturs historie*, ed. by Jens Anker Jørgensen and Knud Wentzel ([n.p.]: Gyldendal, 2005), e.g. pp. 17–18, 20–22.

21 *Ibid.*, pp. 85, 103–04.

22 *Ibid.*, pp. 97, 102; the discussion of the medieval period spans pp. 59–142. For the *Compendium*, see p. 116 below.

ing Chronicle) and the *Jyske Lov*),²³ but there is no effort to address German systematically alongside the Danish and Latin traditions. Emblematic of this is the framework formulated for the *Middelalder* volume, where the starting point is the ‘national language’, broadened where necessary to include Latin:

Jeg har valgt det hovedprincip, at ‘dansk’ her betyder *tekster der foreligger på dansk sprog*. [...] Princippet kan imidlertid ikke strengt overholdes. Det brydes for dette binds vedkommende af latindigterne, hvor ‘dansk’ betyder, personer, der kan tale dansk, men ikke gør det, eller personer bosiddende i Danmark, der skriver (om danske emner) på et fremmed sprog.²⁴

(The main principle I have chosen is that ‘Danish’ here means *texts that are found in the Danish language*. [...] The principle, however, cannot be strictly observed. In this volume, it is set aside in the case of the Latin poets, where ‘Danish’ means people who can speak Danish but do not, or people living in Denmark who write (about Danish subjects) in a foreign language.)

(iii) The first volume of Anne-Marie Mai’s *Hvor litteraturen finder sted* (Where Literature Takes Place; 2010–11), finally, addresses the problem of German/Danish identities, particularly with regard to language,²⁵ mentions the multilingual nature of later centuries,²⁶ and

23 Pil Dahlerup, *Dansk litteratur: Middelalder*, 2 vols (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1998), II, pp. 99–100; Pil Dahlerup, *Sanselig senmiddelalder: Litterære perspektiver på danske tekster 1482–1523* (Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2010), p. 89. Saxo ebook. For the *Rimkrønike*, see p. 116 below.

24 Dahlerup, *Dansk litteratur*, I, p. 38 (italics in original). Dahlerup’s confused understanding of the relationship between language and ‘Danishness’ is obvious on the only occasion when she acknowledges the extent of the German presence. In the context of the relatively late appearance of the courtly romance in Denmark, she suggests as a possible alternative to the assessment that Denmark had been ‘bagefter’ (left behind) in this respect: ‘Ridderromaner kan være blevet læst højt på tysk gennem hele middelalderen, en sandsynlig hypotese pga. den store tyske kulturindflydelse og de mange tyske dronninger’ (The courtly romances may have been read aloud in German throughout the entire Middle Ages, a likely hypothesis given the considerable German cultural influence and the many German queens; II, p. 238). The extensive role of German evidently *can* be recognized when it is convenient — in order to support a particular image of Danish literary history — so the reader cannot help but ask why it is treated as an afterthought elsewhere.

25 Anne-Marie Mai, *Hvor litteraturen finder sted*, 3 vols ([n.p.]: Gyldendal, 2010–11), I: *Fra Guds tid til menneskets tid 1000–1800* (2010), pp. 12–16. Saxo ebook.

26 See e.g. *ibid.*, I, pp. 348, 369, 480.

acknowledges earlier German connections and the Low German translation of the *Rimkrønike*.²⁷ But the latter is the exception that proves the rule in the picture drawn of the manuscript culture of medieval Denmark: ‘Håndskrifternes sprog var oftest latin, men også dansk sprog blev anvendt, og der findes både håndskrifter med runer og med latinske bogstaver’ (The language of the manuscripts was most often Latin, but the Danish language was also used, and manuscripts are found with both runes and Latin letters).²⁸

THE INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT

The reasons for the infrequent juxtaposition of the German and Danish literary-historical strands, as we might call them, are complex, and should not be seen reductively in any one national context alone.²⁹ The East Norse tradition, to which Danish belongs, has historically tended to receive relatively little attention of any kind compared to the more ‘canonical’ West Norse/Icelandic material,³⁰ and institutional structures in the United Kingdom, for instance, do not necessarily lend themselves to the building of bridges between Old Norse and German Studies. The particular definition of literature that is adopted

27 Ibid., I, pp. 52, 158, 57.

28 Ibid., I, p. 57; similarly the section on ‘Håndskrifter på latin og dansk’ (Manuscripts in Latin and Danish; pp. 70–74).

29 Noteworthy in this respect, for instance, are the remarks in the foreword to a literary history (albeit of Scandinavia more generally) edited by a Swiss scholar and released by a German publisher: ‘Bereiche, die [...] gar nicht oder nur ansatzweise behandelt werden, sind etwa die in fremden Sprachen (Lateinisch, Deutsch [...]) verfasste Dichtung’ (Areas that [...] are not treated at all, or only in outline, include literature composed in foreign languages (Latin, German [...]); Jörg Glauser, ‘Vorwort’, in *Skandinavische Literaturgeschichte*, ed. by Jörg Glauser, 2nd edn (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2016), pp. viii–xviii (p. xv)). On the Glauser history, see Lars Boje Mortensen and Tuomas M. S. Lehtonen, ‘Introduction: What Is Nordic Medieval Literature?’, in *The Performance of Christian and Pagan Storyworlds: Non-Canonical Chapters of the History of Nordic Medieval Literature*, ed. by Lars Boje Mortensen and Tuomas M. S. Lehtonen with Alexandra Bergholm (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), pp. 1–41 (pp. 14–15). See also the remarks on *Europe: A Literary History*, ed. by Wallace, on pp. 119–20 below. It would be rewarding, but beyond the scope of this chapter, to look beyond Denmark and envisage a medieval literary history of the wider Nordic and/or Baltic literary space in terms of the languages that were actually used there.

30 See Jonathan Adams, ‘Indledning: Østnordisk filologi — nu og i fremtiden’, in *Østnordisk filologi — nu og i fremtiden*, ed. by Jonathan Adams (Copenhagen: Universitets-Jubilæets danske Samfund, [n.d.]), pp. 11–13.

in any given case will also affect the range of material that is included. Nonetheless, it is highly likely that modern cultural interpretations of Denmark's relationship with Germany are also involved. As alluded to in Winge's remarks (p. 105 above), against the background of the two Schleswig wars in the nineteenth century and the German occupation in World War II in the twentieth, tensions (if not outright antagonism) have marked not only academic scholarship but also more popular mindsets.

Images of the Hanseatic League that position it as a German force in opposition to Danish interests are an obvious example of this: the Peace of Stralsund that concluded the war between Denmark and the League in 1370 has been interpreted as 'Unterdrückung durch ein expansives Deutschland' (subjection by an expanding Germany).³¹ Such understandings appear to have become so deeply set as to prevent even a single Danish town from joining the 'Hanse Today' network, the aim of which is explicitly 'to bring about closer economic, cultural, social and national ties across Europe'.³² Something of this mentality was captured by the linguist, academic, and publisher Jørn Lund when he acerbically commented: 'Tysk er det sprog og den kultur, der har påvirket dansk mest gennem hele det historiske forløb. Men det er der mange, der ikke vil være ved' (German is the language and culture that has had the greatest influence on Danish through the whole course of history. But there are many who do not want to acknowledge this).³³

Nevertheless, some aspects of the situation to which Winge and Lund refer have begun to change. In the public sphere, one could point to the 2020 Danish–German 'friendship year' declared to mark the centenary of the plebiscites that led to North Schleswig/Southern Jutland becoming part of Denmark.³⁴ In an academic context, meanwhile, scholarship from various angles has argued against setting Den-

31 See Baur, *Freunde und Feinde*, p. 11.

32 See *ibid.*, pp. 11–12, 15–36. For the 'Hanse Today', see <<https://www.hanse.org/en/>> [accessed 18 September 2020].

33 Professor Higgins [Jørn Lund], 'Tysk', *Folkeskolen*, 26 May 2006 <<https://www.folkeskolen.dk/42837/tysk>> [accessed 17 April 2019]. On the pseudonym, see 'Jørn Lund', in *Wikipedia* <[https://da.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jørn_Lund_\(professor\)](https://da.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jørn_Lund_(professor))> [accessed 17 April 2019].

34 'The 2020 Commemoration' <<https://genforeningen2020.dk/the-2020-commemoration/>> [accessed 21 January 2020].

mark apart from Germany in particular and from the European cultural sphere more generally. This includes, for example, work on the German–Danish borderlands in which ‘the sharp edges of national boundaries begin to blur, and several layers of identity surface side by side.’³⁵ Danish historiography on the Middle Ages has likewise been concerned to question the paradigm of ‘essential differences between the societies of Western Europe on the one hand and Denmark and the Scandinavian countries on the other’, and to approach medieval Denmark in an emphatically European context instead.³⁶ The influence of Middle Low German on the Scandinavian vernaculars, including Danish, has also long been recognized.³⁷ When it comes to the role played by German in the specifically literary history of the Danish Middle Ages, however, the picture remains fragmented. Studies on individual themes and works can be found, particularly in the context of projects on the wider German–Scandinavian literary and linguistic interface,³⁸ but a comprehensive account is lacking.

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- 35 Peter Thaler, *Of Mind and Matter: The Duality of National Identity in the German–Danish Borderlands* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2009), p. 19.
- 36 Kerstin Hundahl and Lars Kjær, ‘Introduction’, in *Denmark and Europe in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Hundahl, Kjær, and Lund, pp. 1–7 (p. 2). Further examples would include Nils Hybel, *Danmark i Europa 750–1300* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanums Forlag, 2003); *Danmark og Europa i senmiddelalderen*, ed. by Per Ingesman and Bjørn Poulsen (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2000).
- 37 The literature here is extensive. Starting points may be found in *Contact between Low German and Scandinavian in the Late Middle Ages: 25 Years of Research*, ed. by Lennart Elmevik and Ernst Håkon Jahr (Uppsala: Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien för svensk folkkultur, 2012); Vibeke Winge, *Pebersvend og poltergejst: Tysk indflydelse på dansk* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2000); *Niederdeutsch in Skandinavien*, vols 1–4, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie, 4–7 (Berlin: Schmidt, 1987–1993), vols 5–6 [in one] (Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 2005). See further also Hansen, ‘Transformation of the Danish Language’, pp. 128–36.
- 38 Cf. e.g. contributions to ‘Deutsch-Skandinavische Literatur- und Kulturbeziehungen im Mittelalter’, ed. by Sieglinde Hartmann and Stefanie Würth, *Jahrbuch der Oswald von Wolkenstein Gesellschaft*, 16 (2006/07), 1–346, and *Niederdeutsch in Skandinavien*, III, ed. by Lennart Elmevik and Kurt Erich Schöndorf, IV, ed. by Hubertus Menke and Kurt Erich Schöndorf. Conversely, other accounts give no more than perfunctory attention to the medieval period; e.g. *Scandinavia and Germany: Cultural Crosscurrents*, ed. by Jennifer M. Hoyer and Jennifer Watson (= *Scandinavian Studies*, 91.4 (winter 2019)).

TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH

The closest existing counterpart to the project I have in mind is Winge's study. Yet its focus — and it does not claim otherwise — is on linguistic history: the primary concern is to describe the German used in Denmark in terms of dialectal features, the transition from Low to High German, the social background of its users, and so on.³⁹ Matters such as textual or narrative structure, differences between source and translation, or the circulation and function of themes, motifs, and genres are addressed at best tangentially in an analysis of this kind. Second, although it recognizes the fundamentally multilingual nature of medieval Denmark,⁴⁰ Winge's study introduces the Danish and Latin traditions primarily where they inform discussion of the German material in any particular case, rather than covering them in parallel to it. What forms might an attempt to do just that in a new literary history take? Some possibilities, with examples drawn primarily from historical writing, are presented below; in practice, there will obviously be overlaps between them.

(i) One possibility is to present the material in terms of cross-language rubrics such as the emergence of a written tradition on parchment (later also paper) in roman script for the three languages.⁴¹ In this context, Latin is documented from the eleventh century; the oldest known coherent text of Danish origin is Canute IV's 1085 letter of donation to the church of St Lawrence in Lund (the earliest copy is

39 See e.g. Winge, *Dänische Deutsche — deutsche Dänen*, pp. 1–5.

40 *Ibid.*, pp. 1–2, 4–5. See also pp. 120–21 below.

41 The formulation is intentionally narrow for the purposes of this example, and excludes other media (such as inscriptions, runic and otherwise) and the use of runes in manuscripts (on the latter see e.g. Britta Olrik Frederiksen, 'The History of Old Nordic Manuscripts IV: Old Danish', in *The Nordic Languages: An International Handbook of the History of the North Germanic Languages*, ed. by Oskar Bandle and others, 2 vols (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2002–05), 1 (2002), pp. 816–24 (p. 821)). Introductions to such matters can be found in Nils Hybel and Bjørn Poulsen, *The Danish Resources c. 1000–1550: Growth and Recession* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 82–95; Robert Nedoma, 'Der Beginn volkssprachlicher Schriftlichkeit im alten Skandinavien: Eine Skizze', in *Anfangsgeschichten: Der Beginn volkssprachiger Schriftlichkeit in komparatistischer Perspektive/Origin Stories: The Rise of Vernacular Literacy in a Comparative Perspective*, ed. by Norbert Kössinger and others (Paderborn: Fink, 2018), pp. 275–301 (pp. 275–82, 298–99); Jakob Povl Holck, 'Cultural Contacts and Genres of Runes — Danish Literacy around 1300', in *Literacy in Medieval and Early Modern Scandinavian Culture*, ed. by Pernille Hermann (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2005), pp. 151–63.

preserved in a twelfth-century manuscript),⁴² and the earliest specifically narrative text is the *Passio Kanuti* (Passion of Canute), written in Odense by an anonymous author between 1095 and 1101 (but known only from a sixteenth-century copy).⁴³ We know that Danish was being used to write down legal texts from as early as around 1170.⁴⁴ The first texts in German, finally, appear to have been the fourteenth-century *Urkunden* mentioned above; the earliest that can be said with certainty to have originated in Denmark is from 1329, issued by Christopher II in Ringsted.⁴⁵ Identifying the appearance of these strands is merely one way in which one can do justice to the co-existence of the three languages. It is not intended to valorize a search for ‘firsts’ of which our knowledge can only ever be conditional because of the possibility of lost material. Instead, it points to how the interest in beginnings and origins that is associated with the narratives of national philologies⁴⁶ can be redirected (or expanded) to address this plurality, rather than levelling it in order to map teleologically the course of one single future national language. A juxtaposition along these lines could, for example, be used to compare and contrast the rise of Danish and German as vernaculars in terms of stages such as literization, literarization, and librarization.⁴⁷

(ii) The trajectory of particular texts as they passed from one language to another can also be traced. An example of this is the afterlife of Saxo’s *Gesta Danorum* in languages other than Latin.⁴⁸ His influence

42 ‘Knud den Helliges gavebrev, 1085’, *danmarkshistorien.dk* <<https://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/knud-den-helliges-gavebrev-1085/>> [accessed 17 February 2020].

43 For the dating, see Haki Antonsson, ‘Sanctus Kanutus rex’, in *Medieval Nordic Literature in Latin: A Website of Authors and Anonymous Works c. 1100–1530*, ed. by Stephan Borgehammar and others <https://wikihost.uib.no/medieval/index.php/Sanctus_Kanutus_rex> [accessed 24 January 2020].

44 See Per Andersen, ‘Dating the Laws of Medieval Denmark: Studies of the Manuscripts of the Danish Church Laws’, in *Denmark and Europe in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Hundahl, Kjær, and Lund, pp. 183–202; Per Andersen, *Legal Procedure and Practice in Medieval Denmark* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), p. 71.

45 Winge, *Dänische Deutsche — deutsche Dänen*, p. 49.

46 See e.g. Norbert Kössinger and others, ‘Introduction’, in *Anfangsgeschichten/Origin Stories*, ed. by Kössinger and others, pp. 7–8 (p. 8).

47 On this sequence, see Lars Boje Mortensen, ‘Latin as Vernacular: Critical Mass and the “Librarization” of Book Languages’, in *Anfangsgeschichten/Origin Stories*, ed. by Kössinger and others, pp. 71–90 (pp. 71–80).

48 It is worth noting that changes in the accentuation of the ‘anti-German’ aspect of Saxo’s original work do not necessarily map onto changes in the language of its

can be felt in the *Gesta Danorum pa danskæ* (History of the Danes in Danish),⁴⁹ and the *Compendium Saxonis* (a compressed and stylistically simplified version; c. 1342–46)⁵⁰ was one of the sources for the fifteenth-century Danish *Rimkrønike*.⁵¹ The *Rimkrønike* was in turn translated into German (very likely still in Denmark, in the orbit of the royal household) as the *Niederdeutsche Chronik aller koninge tho Denemarken* (Low German Chronicle of All the Kings of Denmark).⁵² In addition, the *Compendium* was translated directly into German in two versions, both of which can be linked to a Danish context. Copenhagen, Royal Library, Gammel kongelige Samling 819 2°, a manuscript of one of these versions, was ‘completed 22 February 1476 at Skanderborg Castle, Jutland’ and ‘written for Erik Ottesen Rosenkrantz (ca. 1427–1503), who [...] held the highest office in the royal household’; the other version, the *Denscke Kroneke* (Danish Chronicle), was very probably printed (on the basis of an earlier manuscript) by Matthäus Brandis in Odense in 1502.⁵³

adaptations/reuses; see Anders Leegaard Knudsen, ‘The Use of Saxo Grammaticus in the Later Middle Ages’, in *The Birth of Identities: Denmark and Europe in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Brian P. McGuire (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1996), pp. 147–60.

- 49 The modern reader should be aware that this text is not a straightforward translation of Saxo into Danish but a short work that draws on a range of earlier material. See Anders Leegaard Knudsen, *Saxostudier og rigshistorie på Valdemar Atterdags tid* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanums Forlag, 1994), pp. 17–19 (with a dating to c. 1300); ‘Gesta Danorum: Kulturhistorisk baggrund’, in *Tekster fra Danmarks middelalder og renæssance 1100–1550 — på dansk og latin* <<https://tekstnet.dk/gesta-danorum/about>> [accessed 14 February 2021] (with a dating to the late fourteenth century).
- 50 See Lars B. Mortensen, ‘Compendium Saxonis’, in *The Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, ed. by Graeme Dunphy, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 1, p. 484 (the *Encyclopedia* is henceforth abbreviated as *EMC*).
- 51 Knudsen, *Saxostudier og rigshistorie*, pp. 67–68.
- 52 Reimer Hansen, ‘Bruder Nigels dänische Reimchronik niederdeutsch’, *Niederdeutsches Jahrbuch*, 25 (1899), pp. 132–51 (pp. 132–33).
- 53 See e.g. Anders Leegaard Knudsen, ‘Compendium Saxonis & Chronica Jutensis’, in *Medieval Nordic Literature in Latin*, ed. by Borgehammar and others <https://wikihost.uib.no/medieval/index.php/Compendium_Saxonis_%26_Chronica_Jutensis> [accessed 20 February 2020] (quotation); Knudsen, *Saxostudier og rigshistorie*, pp. 37–62; Mortensen, ‘Compendium Saxonis’; Christine Stöllinger-Löser, ‘“Denscke Kroneke”’, in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexikon*, 2nd edn, 14 vols (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1978–2008), xi (2004), cols 344–46; Martin Przybilski, ‘Denscke Kroneke’, in *EMC*, 1, p. 516. Various datings and places of printing for the *Denscke Kroneke* will be encountered in the literature. I follow here Wolfgang Undorf, ‘Print and Book Culture in the Danish Town of Odense’, in *Print Culture and Peripheries in Early Modern Europe: A Contribution to the History of Printing and the Book Trade in Small European and Spanish Cities*, ed. by Benito Rial Costas (Leiden:

(iii) Alternatively, specific individuals and institutions can be foregrounded. For instance, Johannes Nicolai/Jens Nielsen from Ålborg — plausibly the prior of the Helligåndskloster — not only copied (at least a large part of) Copenhagen, Arnamagnæan Institute, 372 2° (completed in 1482), which contains a Middle Low German *Historienbibel*, but also produced a number of manuscripts in Danish, featuring in particular the *Jyske Lov*.⁵⁴ The Cistercian abbey of Ryd/Rüde in Schleswig,⁵⁵ meanwhile, is well known to scholars of medieval Danish history and historical writing as the place where the Latin *Annales Ryenses* (Annals of Ryd) were probably composed in the late thirteenth century. The influence of the annals on Danish historiography and their ‘strong anti-German tone’ is often noted.⁵⁶ That the

Brill, 2012), pp. 227–48: ‘Its publication has been attributed by bibliographers to either Lübeck or to the Danish provincial towns of Schleswig or Ribe, and the publication date has been established as between 1490 and 1502. We now know that it was most likely printed by Matthæus Brandis during his stay in Odense 1502’ (p. 244). For the relation of the print to the manuscripts and the Latin text, see Vibeke Winge, ‘De denscke kronike — der niederdeutsche Saxo’, in *Vulpis Adolatio: Festschrift für Hubertus Menke zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. by Robert Peters, Horst P. Pütz, and Ulrich Weber (Heidelberg: Winter, 2001), pp. 919–28. On Rosenkrantz, see Henry Bruun, ‘Rosenkrantz, Erik Ottesen’, in *Dansk biografisk leksikon*, 3rd edn, ed. by Sv. Cedergreen Bech, 16 vols (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1979–84), xii (1982), pp. 332–33 <http://denstoredanske.dk/Dansk_Biografisk_Leksikon/Monarki_og_adel/Hofmester/Erik_Ottesen_Rosenkrantz> [accessed 13 March 2020].

- 54 Jürgen Wolf, *Die Sächsische Weltchronik im Spiegel ihrer Handschriften: Überlieferung, Textentwicklung, Rezeption* (Munich: Fink, 1997), pp. 90–91, 174–76; Brigitte Derendorf, ‘Die mittelniederdeutsche “Historienbibel VIII”’, *Niederdeutsches Wort*, 36 (1996), pp. 167–82 (esp. pp. 170–71, 180–82). AM 372 2° also contains Old Danish material (on fol. 138^v). consisting of two sententiae in Latin and Old Danish translation. A digitization of the manuscript can be viewed at <<https://handrit.is/en/manuscript/imaging/da/AM02-372>> [accessed 13 August 2020]. Views differ on whether Nicolai was the manuscript’s only scribe, but this does not affect the argument here. On the other manuscripts produced by Johannes Nicolai, see Ellen Jørgensen, *Studier over danske middelalderlige Bogsamlinger* (Copenhagen: Bianco Lunos bogtrykkeri, 1912), p. 65 n. 1 (NB: Wolf’s claim that Nicolai was also the scribe of ‘Lob- und Preisbücher[]’ would appear to be the result of a mistranslation of Jørgensen’s ‘Lobvøger’); Britta Olrik Frederiksen, ‘57. The Jutland Law’, in *Living Words & Luminous Pictures: Medieval Book Culture in Denmark: Catalogue*, ed. by Erik Petersen ([n.p.]: Det Kongelige Bibliotek; Moesgård Museum, 1999), pp. 44–45.
- 55 This should be seen in the wider context of the role played by religious institutions in cultural mediation, most obviously perhaps the Vadstena abbey, where, for instance, it is likely that the lost source of the Swedish and Danish versions of the Middle Low German *Seelentrost* (Consolation of the Soul) originated; see Margarete Andersson-Schmitt, ‘“Siælinna thröst” und seine Varianten’, in *Niederdeutsche in Skandinavien*, III, ed. by Elmevik and Schönörf, pp. 70–76. See also pp. 120–21 below.
- 56 Lars B. Mortensen, ‘Annales Ryenses’, in *EMC*, 1, p. 85 (quotation); *Danmarks middelalderlige annaler*, ed. by Erik Kroman (Copenhagen: [n. pub.], 1980), p. 149.

abbey also helped to mediate historical writing in German in later medieval Denmark, however, is not so widely recognized: the manuscript Copenhagen, Royal Library, Gammel kongelige Samling 1978 4°, which includes a version of the so-called *Sächsische Weltchronik* (Saxon World Chronicle), was copied there by Johannes Vicken in 1434.⁵⁷ The version of the *Weltchronik* in that manuscript is also of interest because it appears to have been used in a work known as the *Mittelniederdeutsche Weltchronik* (Middle Low German World Chronicle); the manuscript Copenhagen, Arnamagnæan Institute, 29 2° of the latter contains a preface noting that it was written/copied at the behest of Eggert Frille, son of a Schleswig nobleman and an influential associate of Christian I of Denmark.⁵⁸

(iv) Finally, the material circulation of texts across territorial borders can be investigated. The surviving text of the *Niederdeutsche Chronik aller koninge tho Dennemarken*, for example, is a copy made by Johann Russe of a (now lost) source captured from the Danes in the Battle of Hemmingstedt in 1500. Russe's copy was then itself captured — along with the other historiographical texts he assembled in the same codex, such as the 'anti-Danish' *Holsteinische Reimchronik* (Rhymed Chronicle of Holstein) — when Ditmarschen was conquered by the Danes in 1559.⁵⁹ To cases such as this we could add further material such as the Low German translation of

57 Wolf, *Sächsische Weltchronik*, pp. 85–86.

58 It is appealing to postulate a connection with Ryd and/or the manuscript of the *Sächsische Weltchronik* there, as has in fact been done in the past. The two earliest manuscripts of the *Mittelniederdeutsche Weltchronik* are indeed both from the fifteenth century, but the chronicle itself extends only to the mid-fourteenth century and could thus have been completed prior to the copying of the Ryd manuscript. Winge, *Dänische Deutsche — deutsche Dänen*, pp. 82–83; Wolf, *Sächsische Weltchronik*, pp. 229–31; Els Oksaar, 'Eine neuentdeckte mittelniederdeutsche Weltchronik des 15. Jahrhunderts', *Niederdeutsches Jahrbuch*, 85 (1962), pp. 33–46. On Frille, see Thelma Jexlev, 'Frille, Eggert', in *Dansk biografisk leksikon*, ed. by Bech, v (1980), pp. 13–14 <http://denstoredanske.dk/Dansk_Biografisk_Leksikon/Samfund,_jura_og_politik/Myndigheder_og_politisk_styre/Rigsråd/Eggert_Frille> [accessed 13 March 2020].

59 For the circumstances, see Hansen, 'Bruder Nigels dänische Reimchronik niederdeutsch', pp. 132–33; Paul H. Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), pp. 199–201; William L. Urban, *Dithmarschen: A Medieval Peasant Republic* (Lewiston: Mellen, 1991). For the content of the manuscript, see *Holsteinische Reimchronik*, ed. by Ludwig Weiland, in *MGH Deutsche Chroniken*, 2 (Hanover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1877), pp. 609–33 (p. 612); Ursula Kundert, 'Holsteinische Reimchronik', in *EMC*, 1, p. 812 (quotation).

the *Speculum humanae salvationis* (Mirror of Human Salvation) that was probably produced in Germany but came to Denmark by or in the sixteenth century, during which it was annotated in Danish.⁶⁰ In many cases, of course, a reconstruction of the exact circumstances of such transfer processes is no longer possible. Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum* (History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen), to take an example involving writing in Latin, was used in several works of Latin historiography originating in Denmark (including Saxo) and has a clear Danish transmission in the guise of the *B* manuscripts, but precisely how the work made its way to Denmark or what form its early circulation there took is unknown; particular attention has been given to the so-called Sorø manuscript, which is believed to have existed in Denmark in the twelfth century.⁶¹

PRACTICALITIES AND FURTHER PERSPECTIVES

The suggestions above are not exhaustive; they represent merely four ways in which the material can be organized, four pathways that can be taken through it. The focus has primarily been on the production of texts, understood in a broad sense that encompasses copying and translation as well as 'original' output, but future work could give greater prominence to readers and the consumption of texts in the literary space; the circulation of Latin works that entered Denmark from the German sphere, on which the case of Adam of Bremen touches, is one example of this. Other approaches could also be added with the help of contemporary projects that explore the writing of literary history outside a national framework. The place-based 'itineraries [...]' drawn

60 Hans Blosen, 'Ein mittelniederdeutsches "Speculum humanae salvationis" in dänischem Gebrauch', in *Vulpis Adolatio*, ed. by Peters, Pütz, and Weber, pp. 71–88. Digitization: <<http://www5.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/219/eng/>> [accessed 13 August 2020].

61 See Bernhard Schmeidler, 'Einleitung', in Adam von Bremen, *Hamburgische Kirchengeschichte*, 3rd edn, ed. by Bernhard Schmeidler, MGH SS rer. Germ. (Hanover: Hahn, 1917), pp. vii–lxvii (pp. xvii–xxix); Inger Ekrem, 'Essay on Date and Purpose', in *Historia Norwegie*, ed. by Inger Ekrem and Lars Boje Mortensen, trans. by Peter Fisher (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2006), pp. 155–225 (p. 159); Werner Trillmich, 'Einleitung', in *Quellen des 9. und 11. Jahrhunderts zur Geschichte der hamburgischen Kirche und des Reiches*, ed. by Werner Trillmich and Rudolf Buchner, 7th edn, Freiherr vom Stein-Gedächtnisausgabe, 11 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2000), pp. 137–58 (pp. 155–56).

together through links of travel, trade, religious practice, language, and literary exchange' employed in the recent *Europe: A Literary History, 1348–1418*, edited by David Wallace, are just one possibility.⁶² Given that not a single location in modern-day Denmark features in the anthology,⁶³ it would be all the more rewarding to trace such currents and connections in the case of locations such as Odense.⁶⁴ That city has already figured several times in the preceding pages, from the *schra* of the Elende Lav, to the printer Johan Snell, to Brandis's print of the *Denscke Kroneke*. We might add to this the adaptation of Alanus de Rupe from Latin into Danish by an Odense priest, Herr Michael, in 1496. He was commissioned by the consort of King John of Denmark, Christina of Saxony, who was also active in the mediation of cultural activity more widely, such as — if one is concerned to draw links with Art History — supporting the workshop of the German artist Claus Berg, likewise in Odense.⁶⁵

It would ultimately be important to bring further languages into the picture as well, particularly if we consider the extent of the areas under Danish control at one time or another in the Middle Ages.⁶⁶

62 David Wallace, 'Introduction', in *Europe: A Literary History*, ed. by Wallace, I, pp. xxvii–xlili (p. xxviii).

63 Most of the material I have discussed falls outside the chronological scope of the Wallace history, so a direct criticism on that level would be unfair. However, in the introduction, the project is framed emphatically as an effort to overcome restrictive understandings of Europe and the limits of national approaches to medieval literary history. This agenda is bound so closely to the chronological points of reference that one could be forgiven for thinking the period has a representative status. This becomes problematic when the demarcation silently perpetuates one of the very imbalances that the anthology aspires to campaign against. For further criticism of the structuring of literary history in terms of such narrow parameters, also with reference to Wallace and Denmark, see Lars Boje Mortensen, 'Litteraturhistorisk tid — kan middelalderen afskaffes?', *temp — tidsskrift for historie* (forthcoming).

64 I am planning a separate study on this topic.

65 See Mette Nordentoft, 'Zum (nord)europäischen Stemma des Passionstraktates Heinrichs von St. Gallen', in *Niederdeutsch in Skandinavien*, IV, ed. by Menke and Schöndorf, pp. 168–95 (pp. 189–92); Bridget Morris, 'Christian Poetry: East Norse', in *Medieval Scandinavia*, ed. by Pulsiano and Wolf, pp. 72–73 (p. 73). Worth mentioning in the present context is Nordentoft's theory that Christina was also behind the translation into Danish of Heinrich von St. Gallen's German-language *Extendit manum* tract. Figures such as Berg can be set in a wider context; cf. e.g. the case of the German artist Albertus Pictor, who painted the interior of churches in Sweden: *Den mångsidige målaren: Vidgade perspektive på Albertus Pictors bild- och textvärld*, ed. by Jan Öberg, Erika Kihlman, and Pia Melin (Stockholm: Sällskapet Runica et Mediaevalia, 2007).

66 Cf. Winge, *Dänische Deutsche — deutsche Dänen*, p. 2: 'Dänemark war im hier untersuchten Zeitraum (1300–1800) ein multilinguales Land mit dänisch-, norwe-

The question of geographical and chronological demarcation would require a separate discussion, but the Kalmar Union (1397–1523), at least, must be mentioned briefly. Several of the texts we have encountered enter into connections with the Swedish textual tradition in this context. A Swedish translation of the *Gesta Danorum pa danskæ*, for instance, is preserved in a *Sammelhandschrift* (Stockholm, Royal Library, D 4) that was probably produced in Vadstena in the first half of the fifteenth century and contains material in Swedish, Latin, and Low German.⁶⁷ *Dværgekongen Laurin*, meanwhile, is preserved in a manuscript (Stockholm, Royal Library, K 47; c. 1500), apparently written by scribes from Jutland, that also includes the Danish versions of the Old Swedish *Eufemiasvisor* (Eufemia Poems), which were crucial in the mediation of courtly narrative and culture to Denmark.⁶⁸ Finally, one of the questions raised by the *Rimkrønike* is whether it or the Swedish *Lilla rimkrönika* (Little Rhyme Chronicle; fifteenth century) should

gisch-, schwedisch- und deutschsprechenden Bürgern' (Denmark was, in the timespan considered here (1300–1800), a multilingual country with Danish-, Norwegian-, Swedish-, and German-speaking inhabitants).

- 67 See Knudsen, *Saxostudier og rigshistorie*, p. 17; Jonas Carlquist, *Handskriften som historiskt vittne: Fornsvenska samlingshandskrifter — miljö och funktion* (Stockholm: Sällskapet Runica et Mediaevalia, 2002), pp. 97–103; Elena Brandenburg, *Karl der Große im Norden: Rezeption französischer Heldenepik in den altostnordischen Handschriften* (Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto, 2019), pp. 67–75.
- 68 See the description of K 47 in *Tekster fra Danmarks middelalder og renæssance 1100–1550 — på dansk og latin* <<https://tekstnet.dk/manuscript-descriptions/stockholm-k47-lang-beskrivelse>> [accessed 28 January 2020]; Regina Jucknies, 'Through an Old Danish Lens? Precious Stones in the Late Medieval Danish Reception of Courtly Literature', in *The Eufemiasvisor and Courtly Culture: Time, Texts and Cultural Transfer*, ed. by Olle Ferm and others (Stockholm: Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, 2015), pp. 162–75 (pp. 163–64); Britta Olrik Frederiksen, '61. Courtly Romances', in *Living Words & Luminous Pictures: Catalogue*, ed. by Petersen, pp. 48–49. The findings of the conference 'The Eufemiasvisor and the Reception of Courtly Culture in Late Medieval Denmark' (Zurich, September 2018) should provide an important contribution to our understanding of the Danish *Eufemiasvisor* (programme at <https://www.ds.uzh.ch/_files/uploads/agenda/821.pdf> [accessed 4 March 2020]). The case of the *Eufemiasvisor* once again underlines the wider cross-cultural context for this project: the Old Swedish originals were themselves translations, in part from 'continental' sources, commissioned by Queen Eufemia of Norway some two centuries earlier, very likely in the context of the project of marrying her daughter to Duke Eric Magnusson of Sweden; see e.g. Stefanie Würth, 'Eufemia: Deutsche Auftraggeberin schwedischer Literatur am norwegischen Hof', in *Arbeiten zur Skandinavistik: 13. Arbeitstagung der deutschsprachigen Skandinavistik, 29.7.–3.8.1997 in Lysebu (Oslo)*, ed. by Fritz Paul (Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 2000), pp. 269–281 (pp. 278–80).

be credited with primacy in introducing the monologue form.⁶⁹ Recognizing the roughly contemporary circulation of historical writing in German *in addition to* the question of Swedish influence promises a better understanding of the environment in which this canonical work of Danish vernacular historiography appeared.

A project of this kind would require a substantial amount of research both to assemble the material to be considered and to establish some of the basic facts about it — or at least to acknowledge uncertainty where it is present. In the *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, one of the standard reference works in the field, for instance, the *Mittelniederdeutsche Reimchronik* mentioned earlier is categorically stated to have originated in Germany.⁷⁰ This is not an unreasonable assertion per se, particularly if one assumes completion of the work in chronological proximity to the final events mentioned in it.⁷¹ Apart from the modern locations of the manuscripts, however, no indication is given of the Danish textual networks in which the work participated and without which its context cannot be fully understood. Seemingly straightforward statements of this kind become problematic when considered from the broader perspective advocated in this chapter. A reassessment of them depends on philological basic research that may not necessarily be glamorous or easily ‘marketable’, but is nonetheless necessary if an accurate understanding of the wider picture is to be obtained. Some of the relevant information and material is readily accessible, some of it less so; it is scattered across well-known handbooks and niche specialist literature from a number of medieval philologies, as well as other disciplines such as History and Religious Studies. Even this work — let alone that of subsequent interpretation, presentation, and analysis — is likely to go beyond what could be fully accomplished by a single person on their own.

What I have sought to do here is to demonstrate the breadth and inherent interest of the material, as well as the need finally to do justice to it; in realizing that objective, collaboration and sharing would be

69 See Pernille Hermann, ‘Politiske og æstetiske aspekter i Rimkrøniken’, *Historisk Tidsskrift* [Denmark], 107 (2007), pp. 389–411 (pp. 402–03 with n. 14); on the *Lilla rimkrønika*, Olle Ferm, ‘Lilla rimkrönikan’, in *EMC*, II, p. 1032.

70 Stephen Mark Carey, ‘Mittelniederdeutsche Weltchronik’, in *EMC*, II, p. 1115.

71 See n. 58 above.

crucial. The result would not only provide a much-needed understanding of medieval literary culture in a neglected part of northern Europe, but also allow connections to be drawn with more far-reaching debates. One could ask, for instance, whether the one-sided focus on Danish alongside and/or in opposition to Latin in existing literary histories is related to instrumentalization of the concept of a ‘vernacular’ in a colonialist context.⁷² Such questions, in turn, point to the relevance of this project beyond Medieval Studies alone. My ‘home’ discipline, German Studies, for example, is characterized by its own concern with openness in the guise of calls such as that — to quote just one initiative — to embrace ‘texts in or about German culture [...] written by or about under-represented and historically marginalised groups, with the aim of helping to expand and diversify the German Studies curriculum.’⁷³ The relevance of the sources discussed here to themes such as marginalization, migration, multilingualism, and diversity, and to the teaching and study of texts outside the traditional canon, ought to be obvious.⁷⁴ It is in wider contexts such as this that the project I envisage is ultimately to be understood.

72 Starting points for such reflection include Shyama Rajendran, ‘Undoing “the Vernacular”: Dismantling Structures of Raciolinguistic Supremacy’, in *Critical Race and the Middle Ages* (= *Literature Compass*, 16.9–10 (September–October 2019)); Lars Jensen and others, ‘Denmark and its Colonies’, in *A Historical Companion to Postcolonial Literatures — Continental Europe and its Empires*, ed. by Prem Poddar, Rajeev S. Patke, and Lars Jensen (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), pp. 57–103; *Anfangsgeschichten/Origin Stories*, ed. by Kissinger and others; *The Vulgar Tongue: Medieval and Postmedieval Vernacularity*, ed. by Fiona Somerset and Nicholas Watson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

73 *Expanding German Studies: An Interactive Bibliography for Teachers and Lecturers* <<https://germanstudiesbibliography.wordpress.com/>> [accessed 18 September 2020]. Mention should also be made of similar efforts in Scandinavian Studies, such as the anthology *Rethinking National Literatures*, ed. by Lönngren and others.

74 Appreciation of this relevance is not necessarily to be taken as a given. At the time of writing, for instance, out of over one hundred entries in the *Expanding German Studies* bibliography, merely four covered the medieval period. For a recent demonstration, focusing on Lübeck, of the potential of Low German sources to inform understandings of transnationalism in a premodern context, cf. Elizabeth Andersen, ‘Translation, Transposition, Transmission: Low German and Processes of Cultural Transformation’, in *Transnational German Studies*, ed. by Rebecca Braun and Benedict Schofield (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020), pp. 17–41.

Alastair Matthews, 'Medieval Denmark and its Languages: The Case for a More Open Literary Historiography', in *Openness in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Manuele Gragnolati and Almut Suerbaum, *Cultural Inquiry*, 23 (Berlin: ICI Berlin Press, 2022), pp. 103–23 <https://doi.org/10.37050/ci-23_06>

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