

Introduction: Eighteenth-Century Crossroads

The eighteenth century is often depicted as the harbinger of an Age of Revolutions. Old regimes, both on a metaphorical and a concrete level, were about to fall and be replaced with something radically new. But the ideals of the Enlightenment – political and religious tolerance, freedom of thought, the belief in human rationality and progress – lived side by side with traditional values: political stability, religious unity, control of dangerous thoughts, the belief in divine providence, and a past golden age. The people of the eighteenth century lived at this crossroads of old and new paths. It is often said that it is first in the eighteenth century we find humans that we immediately can understand and intuitively feel we share something with. We are as post-modernists descendants of these first modern humans. The literary remains, diaries, letters, protocols and other sources let us peer into the minds and lives of the people at this turbulent and critical moment in human history – a time when old beaten tracks met new roads leading into the future. The contributions to this volume of *Sjuttonhundratålet: Nordic Yearbook for Eighteenth-Century Studies* all deal in various ways with the Old and the New. It is about ingenuity and classical erudition, the rights of women and control of sexual behaviour, military life and new markets, religious tolerance and commercial liberty.

THOMAS BREDSORFF (Copenhagen) points out that “originality” should not be seen through the lens of Romanticism. Using the foremost figure of the Danish Enlightenment, Ludvig Holberg, as an example, he shows that even importation might be an ingenious undertaking, when measured according to eighteenth-century standards. In the eighteenth century, importation in the form of ideas, hidden quotes and stylistic features, etc., was not seen as a sign of laziness or lack of ingenuity, but rather as the pleasurable activity of knowledge. And Holberg did this. The paper points out that in many ways Holberg was an intelligent and witty importer of ideas originally put into circulation by English and French

philosophers, using quotes from both ancient Greek and Latin literature. But as Bredsdorff points out, there are two areas in which Holberg was most probably original: the equality of sexes, and pedagogics. Throughout his writings, Holberg advocates equal rights for women, and suggests much less authoritarian methods in education; methods it took about 200 years to acknowledge in the official Scandinavian educational systems.

BONNIE CLEMENTSSON (Lund) examines the regulations laws against incestuous relationships in eighteenth-century Sweden. At the time, Sweden had among the strictest legislations in Europe concerning marriage between relatives, primarily justified by religious arguments. By looking at dispensation applications for marriage between relatives, Clementsson unveils a wide range of strategies to circumvent what the law decreed. The article unearths the arguments that were used in the dispensation applications in order to persuade the authorities, and how the decision-makers responded to these arguments. The number of applications rose significantly in the latter half of the century, which seems to indicate, according to Clementsson, a change of attitudes. Different values in society, whether religious or not, affected the way kinship and relationships were apprehended. Of great importance was whether the applicants were good Christians and the relationships honourable or not. But there was one decisive circumstance, Clementsson finds, which always led to a refusal of the application: namely, when marriages crossed different generations.

PETRI TALVITIE (Helsinki) focuses on soldiers and how they negotiated their everyday life in Sveaborg, a fortress that was under construction during the mid-eighteenth century outside Helsinki. Sveaborg was a prestigious project for the Swedish kingdom, and it thus followed that the latest technical methods and solutions in fortress- and garrison-building were to be used. Thousands of soldiers, with their families, were transferred to the building site from various regions in Sweden. The construction of Sveaborg fortress also had an impact on the economic life of Helsinki, boosting both legal and illegal markets. Using source material from civilian and military courts, Talvitie explores how soldiers in Sveaborg managed their situation, new for many of them. Soldiers were ill-paid, which could lead them to survive daily life by stealing and selling stolen goods. Their criminality was very much related to their economic situation and can be seen as a survival strategy.

HARRY R:SON SVENSSON (Stockholm) deals with questions concerning religious tolerance, immigration laws, and freedom of trade. As a case study, Svensson focuses on the integration of a Jewish immigrant, the trader and entrepreneur Fabian Philip, in the economic life of the naval city of Karlskrona in southern

Sweden. Not until 1779 were Jews allowed to settle in Sweden. The climate for setting up businesses for members of the Jewish parish in Karlskrona was, according to Svensson, not so hostile as previous research has suggested. By reinterpreting known sources and adding some new ones, the article gives a revised picture of Jewish integration in Karlskrona. Svensson finds it useful to apply the Port Jews concept of Victor Karády in order to describe the unique social context of naval cities. Karlskrona, as well as Gothenburg, with its internationally orientated production, made room for a new sort of social stratum in the early capitalistic system.

ERIC CULLHED (Uppsala) carries out in his article on the Swedish eighteenth-century poet Johan Henric Kellgren a kind of reception history, describing how older literary motifs of the Renaissance are transformed into late eighteenth-century poetry. Cullhed shows that Kellgren's epigram "On a bust of Propertius", posthumously published in 1796, is not as it has earlier been claimed an autobiographical farewell from Kellgren on his deathbed, but is actually – which the author himself declared – a translation of an epigram by the Italian Renaissance poet Guido Postumo Silvestri of Pesaro. Cullhed continues by situating Postumo's poem in its intertextual field, and discussing how it makes use of common tropes and motifs in the classical and Neo-Latin ekphrastic epigram traditions. He also traces its textual history, particularly concerning the Danish translation by the Danish philologist Frederik Plum, which was actually the one Kellgren interpreted.

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This volume contains, furthermore, two shorter essays: Jan Ragnar Hagland's analysis of two eighteenth-century Norwegian ABC-books, and Hrefna Róbertsdóttir's useful overview of Icelandic publications concerning the seventeenth and eighteenth century that have been published during the last ten years. And, as usual, this yearbook has a rich section of reviews of books from the Nordic countries and beyond, covering new dissertations and other scholarly works from a wide range of disciplines. New for this volume is that we have assigned a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) to all articles, short essays and reviews. From this year we can also offer a complete backlist of older volumes of the yearbook online, from the first in 2004 to the last online-published one of 2012. We will successively publish newer issues online at <http://septentrio.uit.no/index.php/1700/issue/archive>. The homepage of the printed yearbook is, as before, <http://www.1700-tal.se/pub>

licerade_arsskrifter.html. The deadline for contributions to the next volume is 1 January 2015, and we very much welcome articles and other material relating to all aspects of the eighteenth century.

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