

meager knowledge of neighboring nations' respective polar past. Much has changed over the past three decades. The thirty-one chapters provide a wide range of topics and perspectives—largely political, environmental, and post-colonial. These entail analyses focused on national perspectives, such as efforts to create a Soviet Arctic, and on broader trans- and internationally oriented studies such as representations of the polar regions in historical fiction; and the connections between mining and colonialism in the circumpolar north. Many of these studies draw upon resources from several humanistic and social science disciplines, and use a wide range of source materials from archival documents to archaeology and oral history. Indigenous experiences and perspectives receive admirable attention. In this respect the volume will surely prove critical for efforts to rethink and re-conceptualize the historical study of the polar regions. It will contribute to elevating the academic status of historical scholarship on the polar regions.

The lack of a unifying theme, or even thematic clustering into sub-groups, might disturb some readers. Given the wealth of topics and methodological perspectives represented by the chapters, the volume provides a unique resource to allow scholars to broaden their horizons. It is not designed to provide a good read from cover to cover; the physical weight alone of the over 830-page hard-cover book should dissuade leisurely reading in a comfy chair, bed, or hammock.

As impressive as this volume may be, it remains slanted towards English-language scholarship. Although science is invoked and discussed in many chapters, the historically significant role of science in polar activities deserves more extensive analyses than is provided. Of course, to be fair, such a volume is dependent on those scholars willing to contribute. One of the editors endeavored repeatedly to recruit this reviewer and other historians of polar research in Scandinavian countries, only to hear that other commitments precluded participation.

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Jorunn Joiner, *Remembering Classical Scandinavia in Britain, 1760–1830*, Lund: Lund University 2024, ISBN 9789189874480, 232 pp.

The fascination with the past is not a new phenomenon, and the past often serves as a canvas onto which our own ideas, values, and ideals are projected, sometimes more clearly than as a realistic representation of past histories and stories. This fascination for the past and projection of ideas is given space in Jorunn Joiner's doctoral thesis *Remembering Classical Scandinavia in Britain, 1760–1830*, which she defended at Lund University in September 2024.

Joiner's study examines how British cultural texts from the period between 1760 and 1830 move beyond a general interest in Scandinavian history and motifs, and start to construe what she terms "classical Scandinavia" as a form of cultural memory. The thesis draws on Aleida and Jan Assmann's works on cultural memory, in particu-

lar Aleida Assmann's understanding of living memory and cultural memory, thereby situating Joiner's analysis in the broader field of research on how societies remember and reimagine the past.

A terminological contribution lies in Joiner's use of the term "classical Scandinavia" instead of the more commonly used terms "Norse" or "Gothic." This terminological choice allows her to highlight the parallels between impact and influence of classical antiquity and Scandinavian motifs and history on British Romantic literature. While this terminology highlights the comparable modes of engagement found in the literature of the studied period, it does not necessarily account for the more prevalent use of the grotesque and the dark in texts engaging with Scandinavia.

Joiner's chosen period, 1760–1830, bridges the transition from Neoclassicism to Romanticism and early Victorian period, thereby closing the gap between literary periods. Her corpus of cultural texts is not bound to generic boundaries and includes a variety of different texts concerned with classical Scandinavia, though no novels are studied. The thematic approach used provides insights into what kind of different shapes specific ideas may have taken but suffers the disadvantage that a chronological progression of these ideas, for example through intertextual analyses, is to be set aside, as Joiner herself also points out.

In the texts featured in this study, Joiner argues, classical Scandinavia is portrayed as an undiscovered past, or a nearly forgotten past. This framing, she suggests, actualises the question of remembrance and the use of classical Scandinavia in the construction of cultural memory and British ethno-cultural identity. In this context, Joiner identifies necromancy as a metaphor for reviving the past as a key motif that highlights Romantic antiquarianism's urge to preserve the memory of the past. This conceptual metaphor structures the thesis and connects its four thematic vignettes, which are given space in a chapter each: *Odin*, *Stone Circles*, material remains, which she, maybe a bit tongue-in-cheek calls *Things*, and *The Scald*.

In the metaphorical burial practice Joiner constructs, Odin functions as the dead hero, buried with his material belongings, his grave marked by a stone circle, and his life and death being commemorated by the scald, thus tying the seemingly disparate vignettes into a cohesive interpretative framework. Throughout the thesis, Thomas Percy's English translation of Paul Henri Mallet's *Introduction à l'histoire de Danemark* (1755) and *Monumens de la mythologie et de la poesie des Celts* (1756) serves as a backdrop for the analysis due to it being the source of inspiration to several of the examined texts from between 1760 and 1830.

In the first thematic chapter, on Odin, Joiner presents analyses of texts belonging to different genres, with the oldest being Thomas Penrose's "The Carousel of Odin" (1775) and the youngest being William Drummond's "Odin" (1817), as well as Henry Fuseli's paintings of Odin. The analyses are contextualised by brief references to Odin in the *Poetic Edda*, though these could have been expanded on further to illustrate more clearly the differences in portrayal in the Old Norse sources and their British reimaginings. Joiner draws the conclusion that representations of Odin illustrate the migration of the character, tying these representations to ethno-cultural movements in Britain at the time.

In the following chapter, on Stone Circles, the focus lies on the depictions of standing stones in cultural texts, such as in William Wordsworth's "Salisbury Plain"

(1793–1794). Stone circles, Joiner argues, were portrayed as visible remnants of the past, offering a location onto which imaginations could be projected, while also frequently comparing British monuments with Scandinavian stone circles, tying Britain and Scandinavia closer together, thus offering tangible sites for ethno-cultural identity formation.

In the third chapter, devoted to objects and material remains, Joiner discusses both imaginary and real objects, such as the sound of shields or golden horns and their portrayal in British cultural texts. Joiner argues that objects function as conduits or windows into the past. She also touches upon the process of losing and finding objects as the process of unearthing memories and imagining past aesthetics. Joiner acknowledges, however, that her own analysis is missing the materiality of texts, and while the portrayal of textual remains may also be an interesting avenue to explore in the future, she uses this limitation to motivate her last theme, the figure of the scald.

The scald, as Joiner puts forward in the fourth and final thematic chapter of her thesis, serves a twofold function in the texts analysed in this thesis. He is, Joiner argues, both connected to nature, through his portrayal as a primitive poet, and a commemorator of the past and the dead heroes and therefore a mediator between the past and the present, nature and human. Importantly, Joiner points out, British authors may have perceived themselves as standing in the tradition of scalds, renegotiating and mediating what, and how the past is to be remembered.

The last chapter of the thesis is dedicated to a rather short conclusion, where Joiner reiterates the importance of classical Scandinavia for the identity construction in Britain between 1760 and 1830, and points out that classical Scandinavia not only encompassed what we today understand as early Scandinavian history but rather is to be understood as a construction and (re)imagination of the past, where the unknown was interpreted in relation to the known.

Joiner's thesis offers valuable insights into several of the ideas and themes that shaped British portrayals of early Scandinavian history and Norse mythology between 1760 and 1830. Her interpretative framework, based on the metaphor of burial practice is simple, original and effective, though I had wished for it to be more explicitly revisited in the conclusion to conceptually link all parts of the thesis. *Remembering Classical Scandinavia in Britain, 1760–1830* appears as an ambitious study, not least because of the number of texts examined, of cultural memory and (re)imagining of the past. Joiner also opens several avenues for future research that hopefully will be explored at some point in the future.

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