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The Baltic through European Eyes in the Nineteenth Century: A Contribution to Regional History

La Baltique au regard des voyageurs européens au XIX^e siècle : une contribution à l'histoire régionale

Abstract : While in the past, travelling had been limited to a limited number of explorers for political, technological and cultural reasons, in the nineteenth century, it increasingly tended to be a favoured, though not entirely democratized, pastime for wealthy or subsidized European travellers fascinated by the discovery of remote places. Far from describing the world as a radical novelty, they conveyed images, discourses, and aesthetic and ideological codes that shaped their sensory experiences and the format of their adventures as well. Whether it was a chosen destination or an entry point towards Russia or Asia, the Baltic Sea was an object of growing attention from both ordinary travellers and scientists, attracted by the magic and peculiarities that were to be found in this Nordic region. This article aims to show how the Baltic region, and especially the Baltic provinces, were received and represented during the nineteenth century in travel and scientific literature, primarily in France, and to examine to what extent these areas were considered as a peripheral but integral part of Europe. Thanks to numerous chosen accounts, it also seems clear that in spite of its considerable cultural, linguistic and historical diversity, the Baltic area did form a specific region, apparently identified with the sea that gave it its name and its personality.

Résumé : Si le voyage a été pendant longtemps réservé à un nombre restreint d'explorateurs pour des raisons à la fois politiques, techniques et culturelles, celui-ci tend de plus en plus au XIX^e siècle à devenir le passe-temps favori, quoique non démocratique, de riches touristes ou de globe-trotters subventionnés européens, fascinés par la découverte des espaces lointains. Loin de décrire le monde comme une nouveauté radicale, ils véhiculent des images, des discours, des codes esthétiques et idéologiques qui façonnent leur expérience sensorielle ainsi que le format de leur aventure. Qu'elle soit choisie comme destination principale ou comme point d'entrée vers la Russie ou l'Asie, la mer Baltique a fait l'objet d'une attention croissante de la part des simples voyageurs et des scientifiques attirés par la magie et les singularités qui caractérisent cette région nordique. Cet article vise à montrer comment la région de la Baltique, et plus particulièrement les provinces baltes, ont été perçues et représentées au cours du XIX^e siècle dans la littérature de voyage et scientifique, notamment en France, et dans quelle mesure celles-ci ont été considérées comme une partie périphérique mais intégrante de l'Europe. Grâce à de nombreux récits choisis, nous souhaiterions également montrer qu'en dépit de sa diversité culturelle, linguistique et historique important, la région de la Baltique formait une région spécifique, de toute évidence identifiée avec la mer qui lui donne son nom et sa personnalité.

Keywords : Baltic, Scandinavia, Finland, travel, exploration, tourism, nineteenth century.

Mots-clés : Baltique, Scandinavie, Finlande, voyage, exploration, tourisme, XIX^e siècle.

I spent some time in the Danish archipelago,
One short time, but such is our fate on Earth
Where pleasure or happiness alas lasts there hardly.
Evil only persists and returns frequently.

I liked the druidic depths of its wood,
Its big meadows interspersed by flowers like stalls,
Its golden-eared fields that no grass corrupts,
Which change in form and aspect every month.

I especially liked the sea; the squalid streamed Baltic Sea,
That a fleet of seals travelled back and forth in the distance,
So terrible in winter, so merciful in summer.

And this deep grey sky bright and pure as her,
Mysterious palace, whose roof glitters,
And which Odin has such a long time inhabited.

“In the Baltic Islands,” *Sonnets*, Armand de Flaux, 1864¹

¹ Armand de Flaux, *Sonnets. Voyages-Fantaisie-Sentiment* (Paris: 1864), 29. All translations of foreign language texts are by the author.

For centuries, travelling across Europe was an economic necessity as well as a useful pastime for traders and other merchants, as well as for aristocrats and individuals looking for adventure. As early as the seventeenth century, private correspondence, some of which was published posthumously, attests to an increase in travel and to the affirmation of a model that the ‘gilded youth’ (especially the British) would continue to follow throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century. This model appeared for the first time in a work by Richard Lassels, *An Italian Voyage*, published in Paris in English and French in 1670 and 1671, in which the author refers to the ‘Grand Tour’ and gives it a very specific meaning.² This ‘Grand Tour’ primarily concerned the wealthy and leisured upper classes of English society who were free to travel. The purpose was to travel around France according to an ideal route which, after the crossing the English Channel, passed through the main regions of France (Brittany, the Loire valley, Gascony, Provence, etc.) and ended in Paris, where the education of young people was brought to completion in the splendour and pleasure of private salons. Very quickly, the ‘Grand Tour’ was followed by a *Giro de Italia*, which, from Milan to Torino, Florence, Venice, Rome, and even Naples, concluded the initiatory course necessary for every gentleman worthy of the name. Soon, Italians, Germans, Swedes, Danes, Poles, and Moravians mingled with Englishmen on the roads of France and Italy, then on those of Germany, which was added onto the beginning or end of the tour, having acquired refined ways, a sense of beauty and the rudiments of classical culture, without which a civilized man was nothing.³

The practice of initiatory trips, which could last from one to five years, experienced increasing success in the eighteenth century and was no longer limited to aristocratic circles. Although no two trips were identical (because of variations in the places of departure, financial pressures, personal preferences, state of health or surprises that happened along the way, for example) there are some similarities, especially the prerequisite for travel to France and Italy mentioned above, which if necessary also involved Dresden, Berlin and Vienna. In these routes, northern Europe is only mentioned rarely and fairly late, as was central and eastern Europe, certainly because of the wars that affected most European powers throughout the century, but also because travellers considered these regions devoid of culture and

² *Ibid.*

³ James Buzard, *The Grand Tour and after (1660-1840)*, in Peter Hulme, Tim Youngs (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (London, 2002), 37-41; Jean Boutier, “Le grand tour : une pratique d’éducation des noblesses européennes (XVI^e-XVIII^e siècles)”, in Jean Boutier, François Moureau, Gilles Bertrand, and Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire (eds.), *Le voyage à l’époque moderne* (Paris: 2004), 7-21.

interest.⁴ At most, Denmark or Sweden were visited, and even then only from the years 1770-1780, outside of the 'Grand Tour' that continued to fascinate young people, such as one Dutch marine officer who in 1789 published in book form twenty-four letters he had written to a friend.⁵

To be completely fair, I must mention the very difficult travelling conditions that characterised the Baltic region until the end of the eighteenth century. Land roads, when they existed, were in very poor condition, with the exception perhaps of France, and were subject to many tolls, notably in Germany because of numerous rivers to be crossed; not to mention those of Poland or even of Germany, except in the south where real efforts of improvement were carried out.⁶ Only a handful of passengers ventured on land roads that lead to Russia via Courland or Narva. Thus, speaking about the roads of Lithuania, William Coxe (1748-1828), who accompanied several young people from prominent families across the continent as a tutor, noted that, 'the roads in Lithuania are entirely neglected, being little better than pathways winding through the thick forest without the least degree of artificial direction; they are frequently so narrow as scarcely to admit a carriage; continually obstructed by stumps and roots of trees, and in many parts so exceedingly sandy that eight small horses could scarcely drag us along.'⁷

Fortunately, sea routes and inland navigation (including canals) largely compensated for the deficiencies of land transport. Thanks to the development of maritime trade with the Hansa in the Middle Ages, then in particular with the development of Dutch and English sea power in Early Modern times, the Baltic Sea became a privileged region of exchange thanks to 'Bergslagen and Uppland in Sweden [which] produced most of Europe's iron and copper, while Finland, Ostrobothnia, Savo and Karelia supplied the quasi-totality of tar and of pitch,' without mentioning grains and flax from the Baltic countries, Russia, Poland, Pomerania and Denmark, which supplemented Western production very effectively.⁸ As a consequence, the population of capital cities and large coastal cities, such as Copenhagen, Stockholm, Riga, Tallinn, Danzig and St. Petersburg, greatly increased,

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Voyage en Suède, contenant un état détaillé de la population, de son agriculture, de son commerce et de ses finances* [I. F. Henry Drevon, Pierre Frederik Gosse] (The Hague: 1789).

⁶ Walter Horace Bruford, *Germany in the Eighteenth century: the Social Background of the Literary Revival* (London: 1935, 1971), 161-162.

⁷ William Coxe, *Travels in Poland, Russia, Sweden, and Denmark. Volume 1* (London: 1802), 237.

⁸ Matti Klinge, *Le monde baltique* (Helsinki, 1994, 1997), 77-79; Fernand Braudel, *Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme, XV^e-XVIII^e siècle. 3. Le temps du monde* (Paris: 1979), 294-303. See also David Omrod, *The Rise of Commercial Empires. England and the Netherlands in the Age of Mercantilism, 1650-1770* (London: 2003).

becoming not only essential centres of European trade, but also centres of culture and of civilisation under the aegis of ‘enlightened despots,’ like Catherine II of Russia, Gustav III of Sweden or Frederick II of Prussia. At the same time, the new English fascination with the wilderness of Scotland’s Highlands and the Hebrides, which heralded the coming of Romanticism,⁹ and the discovery of the Baltic horizons by German erudites, like Johan Gottfried Herder, in spite of the frustration which marked his stay in Riga as a pastor and teacher from 1764 till 1769,¹⁰ opened the way for a new curiosity such as expressed by Sir Nathaniel William Wraxall, not without condescension, in his work *A Tour round the Baltic thro’ the Nordic countries of Europe*, published in 1775.¹¹ Thus, from the 1780s, the ‘Grand Tour’ expanded towards the Baltic Sea and Russia. The best example of this was given by William Coxe during the two trips he made in 1778-1779 and 1784 together with Lord Herbert, son of the count of Pembroke, then with Samuel Whitbread II, son of the famous and wealthy English brewer.¹² For the most educated passengers, a new pilgrimage replaced even the necessary detour to Switzerland to see Voltaire until 1778, which no longer followed the road to Geneva, but to Königsberg on the Baltic Sea where Emmanuel Kant lived, ‘rebuked and silenced for the time by a reactionary Government,’ and whom zealous supporters from all Europe came to see, considering him a ‘Second Messiah.’¹³

⁹ See Samuel Johnson, *A Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland* (London, 1775); James Boswell, *Journal of a tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson* (London, 1785). See also Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England, 1727-1783* (London: 1989), 471-476.

¹⁰ See Patricia Rehm, *Herder et les Lumières. Essai de biographie intellectuelle* (Hildesheim: 2007), 37-38.

¹¹ ‘The refinement and civilization of modern manners has rendered it no difficult matter to inspect kingdoms and provinces, to which access was formerly barred by bigotry, barbarism and want of all police. Even Spain is not now impervious to curiosity, and superstition is declining in these her favourite dominions. But notwithstanding this diminution of the traveller’s powers of entertainment, by excluding any address to the imagination, there are still objects sufficient left to interest the *attentive* and curious mind. Certain parts of the globe are, however, infinitely more exuberant in the materials for producing elegant delight than others. In some they are so plenteously scattered that stupidity or insensibility itself must catch a portion of their power of pleasing. In others, they lie deeper beneath the surface, and like unpolished gems only glitter in the eye of clear and perspicuous observation. Of this last description are the kingdoms which I am about to visit; covered during many months with snow and wrapt in all the horrors of a polar winter: unpolished in their manners, and still retaining the vestiges of Gothic ignorance or barbarism, they present not many charms to tempt the traveller.’ Nathaniel William Wraxall, *A Tour round the Baltic thro’ the Nordic countries of Europe* (London: 1775, 4th edition 1807), 4.

¹² Anthony Cross, ‘Les Britanniques et le voyage au Nord (*Northern Tour*)’, in Jean-Pierre Poussou, Anne Mézin, Yves Perret-Gentil (eds.), *L’influence française en Russie au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: 2004), 383-391.

¹³ William Wallace, *Kant* (London: 1882; Charleston: reprint 2008), 75-82.

This new interest in travelling, however, was quickly affected by the revolutionary wars that set Europe ablaze from 1792 and that prolonged the Napoleonic saga until 1815. Even though war was not always an obstacle (sometimes, on the contrary, even an additional motive of curiosity¹⁴ with ‘war tourism,’ to use the expression of Ralf Pröve¹⁵), travel remained nonetheless marginal compared with the previous years which had been marked by a relative democratisation of the ‘Grand Tour’ and the development of family tourism among lower social and less educated categories of the population. Indeed, and especially for British people, the practice of extended travel across Europe largely ceased up to the collapse of the First French Empire, in favour of more limited adventures, for example in the Scottish Highlands, or much more exotic ones, as in South America, in India or in China.¹⁶ Among the rare passengers audacious enough to risk going through a continent in wartime, there was John Carr (1732-1807), a rich retired lawyer, native of Devon, who, taking advantage of the Peace of Amiens signed in 1802 between England and France, hastened to cross the English Channel fuelled by the desire to see for himself the people about whom all kinds of rumours had circulated since the beginning of hostilities against Austria ten years earlier.¹⁷ Emboldened by his success, he tried his luck a second time in 1804, this time towards Northern Europe, because William Pitt’s Britain had been at war with Napoleon’s France since May 1803; ‘The angry decrees of renovated war had closed the gates of the south; the north alone lay expanded before me.’¹⁸

Just as after the Seven Year War, which for several years deprived the gilded youth of the pleasure of travelling up and down Europe, the return to a lasting peace in 1815 was the starting point for a spectacular increase in trips across Europe, if this can be judged by the considerable multiplication of narratives and memoirs over subsequent decades. Indeed, this infatuation for travel reached such proportions that

¹⁴ See Françoise Knopper, Alain Ruiz (eds.), *Les voyageurs européens sur les chemins de la guerre et de la paix au temps des Lumières au début du XIX^e siècle* (Bordeaux: 2006).

¹⁵ Ralf Pröve, “Le tourisme de guerre au XVIII^e siècle. Typologie des modes de perception de l’armée et de la guerre dans les témoignages des contemporains”, in *Ibidem*, 157-165.

¹⁶ Buzard, *op. cit.*, 38; Roy Bridges, “Exploration and Travel outside Europe (1720-1914), in Hulme, Youngs (sous la dir.), *op. cit.*, 53-57.

¹⁷ John Carr, *A Stranger in France, or A Tour from Devonshire to Paris* (London: 1803).

¹⁸ John Carr, *A Northern Summer, or Travels round the Baltic, through Denmark, Sweden, Russia, Prussia and part of Germany in the year 1804* (London: 1805; Hartford: 1806), 14. He adds discreetly: ‘if she [the North] is less enchanting thought I perhaps she is the less known and wherever man is, (women of course included) there must be variety: she has hitherto been contemplated, clad in fur, and gliding with the swiftness of a light cloud before the wind, upon her roads of shining snow. I will take a peep at her in her summer garb, and will endeavour to form a nosegay of polar flowers.’

the true traveller, in order to distinguish himself from the common tourist, from that point on had to make real efforts of imagination to avoid imitating and repeating the now classic 'Grand Tour.' In that sense, the Baltic Sea region not only provided the opportunity to discover territories little or poorly known, but also to avoid 'the wake of the tour, for one of whom they might even be mistaken.'¹⁹ As John Carr said, in a rather circumspect way:

The angry decrees of renovated war had closed the gates of the south; the north alone lay expanded before me; if she is less enchanting, thought I, perhaps she is the less known, and wherever man is, (women of course included) there must be variety: she has hitherto been contemplated, clad in fur, and gliding with the swiftness of a light cloud before the wind, upon her roads of shining snow. I will take a peep at her in her summer garb, and will endeavour to form a nosegay of polar flowers.²⁰

Contrary, however, to the end of the eighteenth century, transport made considerable progress in the space of some years, starting with the stream navigation, which progressively supplanted the sailing navy in England, and then on the continent. From years 1820-30, regular sea lines developed towards Hamburg, St. Petersburg and other harbours of the Baltic Sea.²¹ The tonnage and the number of ships crossing the Sea did not stop increasing, to the benefit of England and the Netherlands, and even more so Prussia and Russia from 1830s, much more than France, which received many more vessels from the Baltic Sea than it sent there.²² At the same time, leisure and tourist navigation affected the Baltic Sea, which visitors sought to discover as much for the splendour of the palaces in Copenhagen, Stockholm or St. Petersburg as for places full of magic which interspersed this inland

¹⁹ Buzard, *op. cit.*, 49.

²⁰ Carr, *A Northern Summer*, *op. cit.*, 4.

²¹ The first Swedish steamboat, *Oscar*, entered the harbour of Riga on 8 June, 1830.

²² Tourasse, F.N. Mellet, *Essai sur les bateaux à vapeur appliqués à la navigation intérieure et maritime de l'Europe* (Paris : 1828-1829), 23. The decline of British trade in the Baltic Sea was a matter of concern for Parliament in July 1844. To the question: 'How do you account for the great preponderance that foreign shipping has obtained in the Baltic trade within the last 14 or 15 years, and the proportionate diminution in the employment of British tonnage?' an expert ship owner answered: 'Because other trades were better worth following; the Baltic trade is one of labour more than capital. I never think of competing with capital against labour. There is no inducement for our ships to go, but there has been an inducement from Liverpool to the Prussians, because they have the advantage of getting back freight. They may make 150 £ perhaps in a small vessel, which to a poor man will make all the difference in the result of the voyage.' *Reports from Committees. British Shipping ; Merchant Seamen's Fund. 1 February-5 September 1844*, Volume VIII (London: 1844), 74.

sea, such as Helgoland that Peter Sachs considered already in the seventeenth century to be ‘the island described by Virgil in the first book of Aeneid, the island where the Trojans took refuge after the storm raised against them by the implacable Juno.’²³

However, the travel stories relating to the Baltic Sea are not uniform; three types of publication can be basically differentiated: scientific works, travel narratives that were ‘alternative’ to the Grand Tour, and narrations describing the Baltic Sea as part of a trip to Russia. The first type of work belongs to the great tradition of the eighteenth century, such as that by Linnaeus, *Öländska och gothländska resa* and *Wästgöta resa*, published in 1745 and 1747, or of *Travels into Poland, Russia, Sweden and Denmark* already mentioned, published by William Coxe in 1786.²⁴ Among the important works from the beginning of the century, unquestionably the *Tableau de la mer Baltique* from Jean-Pierre Catteau-Calleville (1759-1819) deserves mention, published in two volumes in 1812.²⁵ Born in Brandenburg, not far from Danzig, to a Huguenot family, he was destined very early for the evangelical ministry, which he served in Stockholm in 1783 before undertaking several trips that took him to France, to Switzerland, to Germany, then to Scandinavia where he learned languages, history and especially geography. He first published a *Tableau general de la Suède* in Lausanne in 1789, then three years later, *Tableau des états danois considérés sous les rapports du mécanisme social* in Paris, which earned him the recognition of the Swedish academies. It is therefore as a geographer that he undertook the study of this large inland sea that is the Baltic, one ‘of the most considerable of the globe’ and he was worried about correcting its lack of ‘publicity.’²⁶ Catteau-Calleville accomplished several trips for that purpose in the Baltic Sea where he stayed for long periods to draw up the most complete picture possible of this complex space by mixing physical, geographical, historical and commercial approaches. The result was a treatise of more than 700 extremely detailed pages that treated every aspect of the subject, from the ‘position of the basin, its expanse, its outlines,’ to the ‘phenomena of the Baltic Sea,’ that is to say currents, saltiness, and temperatures, navigation and trade harbour by harbour, including production linked to fishing and ‘geographical and historical notions on these most considerable islands.’²⁷

²³ Xavier Marmier, *Un été au bord de la Baltique et de la mer du Nord* (Paris: 1856), 301.

²⁴ Linné’s journeys would be published in German in 1856 as *Reisen durch das Königreich Schweden, welche auf Befehl der hohen Obrigkeit, zur Verbesserung der Naturkunde, Haushaltungs- und Arzneykunst.*

²⁵ Jean-Pierre Catteau-Calleville, *Tableau de la mer Baltique: considérée sous les rapports physiques, géographiques, historiques et commerciaux, avec une carte, et des notices détaillées sur le mouvement général du commerce, sur les ports les plus importants, sur les monnaies, poids et mesures*, 2 Vol. (Paris: 1812).

²⁶ *Ibid*, Vol. 1, VIII.

²⁷ See the table of contents in *ibid*, Vol. 1, 353-355 and Vol. 2, 355-358.

Also notable is the work of Conrad Malte-Brun (1775-1826), who tried hard to restore the *grandeur* of French geography faced with the growing domination of German scholars. As his real name Malte-Conrad Bruun shows, he was also a native of northern Europe, coming from a landowners' family in Jutland. Similarly to Catteau-Calleville, he was promised by his father to the ecclesiastical estate. His university studies in Copenhagen, and especially his commitment in favour of liberal ideas, drove him very quickly in another direction, that of criticism of absolutism and of support of Scandinavism, before being banished from France in 1799, then banished by the Danish government one year later.²⁸ Afterwards, all his efforts went into endowing his adopted country with a treatise of geography that did not yet exist, contrary to Germany and Great Britain. As a result, sixteen volumes in eight folios were published between 1804 and 1807 under the generic title *Géographie mathématique, physique et politique de toutes les parties du monde*. In 1807, he also published *Tableau de la Pologne*, at the request of Napoleon after the armies of Empire crossed the Vistula, before dedicating himself to his *Précis de la géographie universelle* in six volumes and especially to the *Annales des voyages, de la géographie et de l'histoire*, a periodical collection, of which 24 volumes were published from 1808 to 1826. He was the pioneer of this new discipline in France. Malte-Brun never ceased being interested in the North and in the cause of Scandinavism, as can be seen by his many articles posthumously published in 1828 in the *Mélanges scientifiques et littéraires de Malte-Brun* dedicated to the islands of the Baltic Sea (Bornholm, Ertholm, Helgoland) and his political activism as 'hyperborean patriot' in favour of Denmark and Norway.²⁹

Although the tradition of scientific journeys in the Baltic Sea dwindled in the course of next decades to the advantage of more distant and more exotic adventures, other people would follow these distinguished geographers and contribute to describing the Baltic Sea, and also Northern Europe as a whole, with fervour and rigour. Among these, several great names can be mentioned, such as Johan Georg

²⁸ H. Arnold Barton, *Scandinavia in the Revolutionary Era, 1760-1815* (Minneapolis: 1986), 224-225, 241-243. He published in 1796 the *Aristocrats Catechism*, a social pamphlet, which resulted in a conviction by Danish justice. Malthe Conrad-Bruun, *Aristokraternes Catechismus, eller kort og tydelig Anviisning til den aleene saliggjørende politiske Troe* (Copenhagen: 1796).

²⁹ Disappointed by Napoleon, accused of having left Norway in the hands of Bernadotte to the detriment of Gustav V, he joined Louis XVIII whose apologia he would write in 1815. Jean-Jacques Nicolas Huot, "Notice sur la vie et les écrits de Malte-Brun", in Malte-Brun, *Géographie universelle ou description de toutes les parties du monde. Tome I* (Paris: 1853), 1-9; *Mélanges scientifiques et littéraires de Malte-Brun*, 3 vol., ed. M. J. Nachet (Paris, 1828); A. V. Arnault, A. Jay, E. Jouy, J. Norvins *et al.*, *Biographie nouvelle des contemporains ou dictionnaire historique et raisonné de tous les hommes qui, depuis la Révolution française, ont acquis la célébrité. Tome XII* (Paris: 1823), 335-338.

Kohl, Alexandre Daumont and Xavier Marmier. Johan Georg Kohl (1808-1878), born to a wine merchants' family in Bremen, first studied law in Göttingen, Heidelberg and Munich until the death of his father in 1830, which forced him to become tutor to rich aristocratic families for several years, first that of the count von Manteuffel in Courland, then that of Stroganov in St. Petersburg.³⁰ Thanks to his savings, he travelled repeatedly across the Baltic countries and Russia, on which he wrote various publications, notably *Die deutsch-russischen Ostseeprovinzen* in 1841.³¹ He also published a synthetic volume in English one year later, called *Russia*, which earned him considerable publishing success.³²

Contrary to Malte-Brun, and to a certain extent Catteau-Calleville, the approach chosen by Kohl was meant to be more didactic than scientific, more personal also, with the use of the first person and without critical apparatus or bibliography. He set out to describe the main German cities with meticulous care: Libau (Liepaja), Mittau (Jelgava), Riga, Dorpat (Tartu), and Reval (Tallinn) as well as the different populations that inhabited these provinces (Latvians, Estonians, Germans, Russians and Jews) whose origins, geographical establishment and customs he studied. Therefore, subjective judgements are not exempt from his discourse. While he says, for example, that the Germans 'did not direct their efforts merely to political supremacy, but to the actual possession of the country,' by imposing 'their language, their arts, and their religion, upon the conquered nations, at the same time that they despoiled them of their rights.'³³ Kohl also does not hesitate to describe the Latvians and the Estonians in not very scientific terms. Thus, he says about the former:

Since the earliest period of which we have any record, every Lette has always brewed his own beer, and built his own house, and every family has always made its own clothes; there was therefore no occasion and no opportunity for tailors, masons, brewers, and other tradesmen to spring up. Every household has always kept a great deal to itself, without associating much with others; and this has

³⁰ *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, Volume 16 (Leipzig: 1882), 425-428.

³¹ Johan Georg Kohl, *Die deutsch-russischen Ostseeprovinzen oder Natur- und Völkerleben in Kur-, Liv- und Estland*, 2 volumes (Dresden/Leipzig: 1841).

³² The full title of Johan Georg Kohl's second book is, *Russia. St. Petersburg, Moscow, Karkoff, Riga, Odessa, the German provinces on the Baltic, the steppes, the Crimea and Interior of the Empire*, 2 volumes (London: 1842). Johan Georg Kohl would also publish in 1846 two volumes dedicated to Denmark under the title *Reisen in Dänemark und den Herzogthümern Schleswig und Holstein*, and two other volumes dedicated to the coast and the islands of the Danish dukedoms *Die Marschen und Inseln der Herzogthümer Schleswig und Holstein* (Dresden/Leipzig: 1846).

³³ Kohl, *Russia*, *op. cit.*, volume 2, 366.

prevented the rise of great and powerful families. Society remained anarchical because every man desired to remain independent and isolated on his own bit of land. *It is probably on account of this repelling and unsocial spirit, that a race, gifted with so many talents and so much natural intelligence, should have remained for hundreds of years so thoroughly insignificant and useless.*³⁴

As for Estonians, they were seemingly very different from Latvians, according to their ‘national character’:

They never greet one another in a friendly manner on meetings, as even the lowest Russians do; and even a German, if he does not happen to be their master, receives no sign of recognition. *Deceitfulness, treachery, laziness, the Esthonian shares with most other serfs; and these qualities he possesses in a far higher degree than the Russian, who is as faithful and industrious as a serf can possibly be.*³⁵

If morals appear more civilised in Mittau, Dorpat or Riga, it is, after all is said and done, because these cities are entirely dominated by the most distinguished class, that of noblemen, rich traders, large property owners, mostly German. Often, the German noblemen allowed their peasants, or even their serfs, to obtain their freedom, to become artisans and even to acquire very soon ‘German cultivation and manners,’ so that it became difficult to differentiate them from true Germans and thus they were considered to be ‘half Germans’ (*Halbdeutsche*).³⁶ Although it is true that renowned names of Livonia were freemasons and supporters of the Enlightenment, and effectively willing to liberate the peasants from serfdom because of their ideals, many others acted in this way under duress of laws on the emancipation of serfs introduced by Russia starting in 1816-1817, and to avoid the worst.³⁷ A key point of the work touches on this subject: the progress of the Russian Empire in the strengthening of its power, both economic and political, had been considerable since 1815, in spite of the attempts at resistance on the part of German elites. This occurred notably in Riga where German-Russian opposition was

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 375. Emphasis added by the author.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 383-384. Emphasis added by the author.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 319-323, 366-367.

³⁷ Juhan Kahk, *Bauer und Baron im Baltikum. Versuch einer historisch-phänomenologischen Studie zum Thema “Gutherrschaft in den Ostseeprovinzen”* (Tallinn: 1999), 127-132.

translated into physical space ('Old German Riga' faced the new Russian outskirts) and in the struggle of influence for control of the city.³⁸

Finally, Frenchmen were also interested in the Baltic Sea, even though during the years 1820-1840 the infatuation of scientists and the educated public focused rather on the great exploration missions around the globe, as well as to the South Pole, by Hyacinth of Bougainville (1824-1826), Dumont d'Urville (1826-1829, 1837-1840) and Laplace (1829-1832, 1837-1840).³⁹ In 1834, the *Voyage en Suède* was published by Alexandre Daumont, possible son of Louis-Marie-Céleste, count of Aumont,⁴⁰ royal officer in the service of Louis XVI, who was banished with Louis XVIII to Mittau in 1798 before being brought into the service of the Swedish army from 1805 until 1814 as a general.⁴¹ This explains the intimacy with which Charles XIV John considered him, as he received him in a private audience twice at his arrival and at his departure from Stockholm, and also his interest for a country closely related with his family name.⁴² Certainly, Alexandre Daumont did not speak Swedish, according to his own words, but thanks to this relationship and to other friendships, he had access to many official documents, which make his work more than a simple travel narrative and instead, an extremely precise picture of the state of the kingdom.⁴³ It took him about a week to travel from Le Havre to Elsinore (Helsingør) on the *Jeanne d'Arc*, a French three-master. Daumont was immediately

³⁸ 'Almost all the privileges of the Russian Baltic provinces, as well as those of the cities of Riga, Reval, the University of Dorpat, etc, as those of the landowners and nobility, have been for some time in danger, and have been frequently altered and limited by the Russian government. Nowhere, however, do the Russians so loudly call for equal rights with the Germans as at Riga, where they have collected in greater numbers than at any other Baltic city, and where the internal hostility and friction between the two nationalities appear to have reached a greater degree of bitterness than any where else.' Kohl, *Russia*, *op. cit.*, volume 2, 327.

³⁹ See Hélène Blais, *Les voyages français dans le Pacifique. Pratique de l'espace, savoirs géographiques et expansion coloniale (1815-1845)*, Thèse de doctorat, E.H.E.S.S. (Paris: 2000); Jules Dumont d'Urville, *Voyage autour du monde: exécuté par ordre du Roi sur la corvette de Sa Majesté "la Coquille" pendant les années 1822, 1823, 1824 et 1825*, 12 volumes (Paris: 1826-1828); *Voyage au Pôle sud et dans l'Océanie sur les corvettes "l'Astrolabe" et "la Zélée", exécuté par ordre du Roi pendant les années 1837-1838-1839-1840 sous le commandement de M. J. Dumont-d'Urville, capitaine de vaisseau*, 10 volumes (Paris: 1842-1846); Hyacinthe de Bougainville, *Journal de la Navigation Autour Du Globe de la Frégate Thétis et de la Corvette L'Espérance* (Paris: 1837).

⁴⁰ M. le chevalier de Courcelles, *Dictionnaire historique et biographique des généraux français*, Tome I (Paris: 1820), 247-250. His real name would consequently be Adolphe Henri Aimery d'Aumont (1785-1849).

⁴¹ Alexandre Daumont, *Voyage en Suède contenant des notions étendues sur le commerce, l'industrie, l'agriculture, les mœurs, les usages, les coutumes de ses habitants, etc.*, 2 volumes, Paris, 1834. Very little is known about Alexandre Daumont, who is often wrongly identified with Antoine Mary Philippe Louis of Orléans Montpensier, born though in 1824 and for that reason cannot be the author of this *Voyage*.

⁴² *Ibid.*, Tome premier, 119-127; Tome deuxième, 337-340.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, Tome premier, XXXVI-XXXVIII.

‘struck with surprise and admiration’ by the Sund, surely the most beautiful maritime panorama of Europe after Constantinople and Naples.⁴⁴ The conditions of navigation had little changed, it seems, and were still dependent in the 1830s on the winds and the currents, even though there was already in Sweden as in Denmark a regular steamship service between Stockholm and several important cities of the Baltic Sea (Åbo, St. Petersburg, Lübeck, Uppsala, Norrköping), as well as between Gothenburg and Copenhagen. The trip then took him from Helsingborg to Jönköping across Scania, before arriving at Stockholm, then from Uppsala to Dalecarlia, before finally returning to the Swedish capital. This quick and partial route was, however, accompanied by detailed descriptions of cities, landscapes, morals and Swedish traditions, which reflect the interest of contemporaries for popular ethnography and folklore.⁴⁵ This *Voyage en Suède*, however, more closely resembles the scientific volumes in the style of Malte-Brun than a true travelling experience, because many chapters were dedicated to the different facets of Swedish society and of the State (army, Church, nobility, public education, etc.), as his critics do not hesitate to point out, such as Xavier Marmier who speaks of a ‘collection of rather curious documents... drowned in an indigestible style.’⁴⁶

Although Xavier Marmier judges his compatriot severely, it is because he knows his subject perfectly, not only because he studied and learned the Scandinavian languages in addition to German, but especially because the travels which he took in Northern Europe, from Iceland to Finland and in the Baltic provinces of the Russian Empire over several years, reveal a deep knowledge and a tangible fascination for the Nordic territories. Marmier (1808-1892) was not born on the banks of the Baltic Sea but in the Franche-Comté, in Pontarlier, within a family with no connections to the maritime world. The ‘travelling fever’ overtook him, however, very early from the moment he left his native region when he was twenty years old, first going to Paris, where he had a job as a secretary, then to Germany in 1831 where he learned the language and studied there as a self-educated person. There, he acquired an intimate knowledge of German and of German literature, which allowed him to write many articles for the *Revue des Deux Mondes* and the

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Tome premier, 39-45.

⁴⁵ The author admits honesty however that the basic information related to Dalecarlia was drawn from the Swedish work published in 1827 by Christian Didrik Forssell entitled *Ett år i Sverige. Taflor af svenska almogens klädedrägt, lefnadssätt och bemseder, samt de för landets historia märkvärdigaste orter*, which would be translated and published in Stockholm in 1836.

⁴⁶ Xavier Marmier, *Lettres sur le Nord (Danemark, Suède, Norvège, Laponie et Spitzberg) et sur l'Islande. Tome I* (Brussels: 1841), 5.

Nouvelle Revue Germanique, of which he became secretary thanks to Alfred de Vigny.⁴⁷ In the space of a few years, Xavier Marmier, a ‘true apostle of Germanism’,⁴⁸ established himself as a well-known translator, a poet and a prose writer ‘à la plume facile’ and acquired considerable notoriety with his first works, notably his *Études sur Goethe*.⁴⁹

In 1836, thanks to François Guizot (one of the great figures of French political life) Marmier boarded the ship *La Recherche*, whose mission was to find the crew of *La Lilloise*, a ship that had disappeared off Greenland, but also to explore Iceland and the ‘Green Land.’⁵⁰ Accompanied by distinguished specialists from all disciplines, Xavier Marmier was in particular tasked by the *Académie française* with evaluating the great Icelandic poetic and literary traditions, notably sagas, as well as describing the customs of the people and making a report on the moral and political state of Iceland.⁵¹ The first conclusions were published without delay in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* under the title *Lettres d’Islande* from 1836, before being gathered and edited in 1837 in a volume of the same name.⁵² In a remarkably simple and clear style, Marmier alternates between descriptions of Iceland itself and its inhabitants, passing from Reykjavik to the living conditions of the fishermen, from geysers to public education, and from sagas to Nordic mythology.⁵³ The most amazing aspect of his story is that he learned the Icelandic language, as well as Danish, and immersed himself in a considerable amount of material in nine different languages. These accomplishments allowed him to publish other works and articles,⁵⁴ and especially to prepare new expeditions, again onboard *La Recherche*, to Denmark (Faroe Islands), Sweden and Norway in 1837-1838, then to Lapland and Spitsbergen

⁴⁷ See the ‘official’ biography of Xavier Marmier by Wendy S. Mercer, *The Life and Travels of Xavier Marmier (1808-1892). Bringing World Literature to France* (Oxford: 2007).

⁴⁸ André Monchoux, *L’Allemagne devant les lettres françaises de 1814 à 1835* (Paris: 1953), 158.

⁴⁹ Xavier Marmier, *Études sur Goethe* (Paris/Strasbourg, 1835); “Souvenirs de voyage”; “Feuilles volantes. Souvenirs d’Allemagne”, *Nouvelle Revue Germanique*, Tome XIII, n.52, 1833, 340-356, 356-363.

⁵⁰ “Chronique de la quinzaine”, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 14 May 1836, Tome 6, 509-510.

⁵¹ The instructions given to Xavier Marmier have been published in Paul Gaimard (sous la dir.), *Voyage en Islande et au Groënland exécuté pendant les années 1835 et 1836 sur la corvette “La Recherche”*, Vol. 1 (Paris: 1838), 54-56.

⁵² Xavier Marmier, “Lettres sur l’Islande”, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, August 1836-February 1837, Tomes VII-VIII; *Lettres sur l’Islande* (Paris: 1837).

⁵³ Marmier, *Lettres sur l’Islande*, *ibid.*

⁵⁴ Xavier Marmier, “Poètes et romanciers du Nord - Oehlenschlaeger”, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Tome X, 1837, 792-811; “De l’état de la littérature et de l’instruction en Danemark avant le XVI^e siècle”, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Tome XIII, 1838, 507-522; *Histoire de la littérature en Danemark et en Suède* (Paris: 1839); Paul Gaimard (ed), *Voyage en Islande et au Groënland exécuté pendant les années 1835 et 1836 sur la corvette “La Recherche”. Littérature islandaise par Xavier Marmier* (Paris: 1843).

in 1839, all after having been named professor of foreign literature at Rennes university.⁵⁵ Two years later, he published the result of his travels and research in two volumes entitled *Lettres sur le Nord*, which gave particular attention to the Baltic Sea, from Schwerin to Copenhagen, from Lund to Stockholm, and from Hammerfest to Umeå, before mentioning the journey to Norway and Spitsbergen.⁵⁶

As with Iceland, the author could hardly hide his fascination for the peoples he met, whether peasants of Mecklenburg, proud descendants of Wends, or the Danes, happy promoters of popular education, possessors of ‘these soft virtues of the populations of the North, which forever render the poor boreal lands dear to the one fortunate enough to know them.’⁵⁷ The picture he paints, however, was not overly indulgent as he does not soften the economic and political realities when he describes the fate of Finnish peasants of Northbothnia (Norrbotten), whose ‘field is for him as like a lottery, to which every year he gives the fruit of his labours and savings with new hope and new resignation,’ often scourged by famine, but also full of joy and courage when it is a good year.⁵⁸ Fortunately, as in Æfver Torneå (Övertorneå), while the barley hardly ripens at this degree of latitude, ‘inhabitants of this coast have an important resource in the fishing of salmon, which is almost always very abundant’ and ‘they also produce some tar, and have begun making some potash with birch leaves.’⁵⁹ When leaving Umeå onboard the ship *Nordland*, Xavier Marmier could not help betraying his attachment for this region, which he had travelled through for months:

When the boat tacked, when the cannon gave the signal of departure, I turned round towards this Northern land where I had been so happy to travel. I said goodbye to her with tears in my heart, and when she disappeared from my eyes, when I thought I was alone on the open sea, it seemed to me that I had just buried one of the golden dreams of my youth.⁶⁰

The list of the travellers who were enthralled by the North and the Baltic Sea would be even longer if we added to this list of scholars all those men and women who went through these areas to expand upon the traditional Grand Tour or

⁵⁵ Marmier, *Lettres sur le Nord*. Tome I, *op. cit.*, 6.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*; Xavier Marmier, *Lettres sur le Nord (Danemark, Suède, Norvège, Laponie et Spitzberg) et sur l'Islande*. Tome II (Brussels : 1841).

⁵⁷ Marmier, *Lettres sur le Nord*. Tome I, *op. cit.*, 17-22, 29-37, 80-82.

⁵⁸ Marmier, *Lettres sur le Nord*. Tome II, *op. cit.*, 43-47.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 71.

simply out of obligation before reaching Russia. While the discovery of the Baltic Sea remained the prerogative of the adventurous or the privileged in the years 1780-1820, this was less and less the case over the following decades, notably because of the new opportunities that modern transport provided, primarily steam travel, which spread from 1840-1850, but also the railway, which linked Dover and Ostend to several important harbours on the Baltic Sea (Hamburg, Bremen, Kiel, Stettin), via Cologne and Dortmund, to Denmark, from 1848-1850.⁶¹ In 1855, during a new journey to the Baltic Sea, Xavier Marmier was witness to this transportation revolution, which unfortunately caused deep disruption to the 'art of travel' and to which 'the Germans, who so piously worship the past, abandoned everything.'⁶² Indeed, the democratisation of travel is clearly visible from the 1830s with the publication of the first travel guides in Great Britain then in Germany, in particular John Murray's *Redbooks* and Karl Baedeker's *Reisehandbücher*.⁶³ Soon, thanks to the initiative of James Cook, the beginning of organised trips would end up popularising this leisure activity and making it a particularly profitable activity.⁶⁴

For the time being, the Baltic Sea remained fairly removed from these technical innovations. Certainly, steam navigation developed progressively in Denmark, in Sweden-Norway, in Finland and in the Baltic provinces, enabling long-distance connections between Kiel and Göteborg or Lübeck and St. Petersburg, but the majority of goods and passenger maritime traffic still travelled by sail up to the middle of the 1840s.⁶⁵ In addition, road transport continued to be the most

⁶¹ Nicole Piétri, *Évolution économique de l'Allemagne du milieu du XIX^e siècle à 1914* (Paris : 1982), 55-63.

⁶² Xavier Marmier, *Un été au nord de la Baltique et de la mer du Nord*, *op. cit.*, 2-4.

⁶³ The first travel guides in reality appeared much earlier, from the end of the eighteenth century, but it was necessary to wait for the revolution of modern transportation, the development of middle classes and the new techniques of printing in the nineteenth century for tourist publications to become a flourishing and popular activity. See Alan Sillitoe, *Leading the Blind. A Century of Guidebook Travel 1815-1914* (London: 1995); Kevin J. Hayes, "Baedeker Guides"; Massimiliano Demata, "Murray's Handbooks", in Jennifer Speake (ed.), *Literature of Travel and Exploration: An Encyclopedia* (London: 2003), Vol.1, 58-60; Vol.2, 830-831.

⁶⁴ The first trips, in 1841, concerned only Britain. Trips towards the continent were organised only from 1855. It is worth noting that for James Cook, 'travel was not just an economic activity aimed at making money' and 'had a social or moral dimension,' since his goal also was to democratize 'the right of the rising middle and professional classes and of women to travel overseas for educational and recreational purposes,' as well as to allow the English working class to get away 'from the squalor of the industrial cities...and from the problems of health and alcohol generated there.' James Elliott, *Tourism: Politics and Public Sector Management* (London: 1997), 23-24.

⁶⁵ A very good example is given by S.S. Hill who made a 'Grand Tour' in the Baltic Sea from London to Hamburg, then from Kiel to Copenhagen, before reaching Christiania (Oslo), Göteborg, Stockholm,

convenient and simplest form of travel, either from Helsingborg towards Jönköping and Stockholm, or from of Danzig, Königsberg, Libau or Memel (Klaipeda) towards Vilnius or Riga and St. Petersburg.⁶⁶ Scandinavian roads—at least the main thoroughfares—had improved considerably since the beginning of the century.⁶⁷ Contrary to the descriptions of the Italian explorer Giuseppe Acerbi in 1804,⁶⁸ there were many post stations at that time, such that ‘in every important city, two-seat carriages or horse-drawn wagons with benches’ could be obtained, as well as accommodation because, in Sweden as in Norway, ‘the post houses serve as inns throughout the entire kingdom and always give the most necessary objects to the travellers.’⁶⁹ The same was true for the roads in Livonia and Estonia, which a number of travellers took towards Russia, even though these were often made of a thick layer of sand. For Thomas Brown, who traversed the region between Polangen (Palanga) and Mittau at the beginning of the century, the ‘roads themselves [were] upon the whole very good,’ thanks to the comfort provided by the relay stations run by postmasters, who ‘are generally Livonians, Courlanders, or Germans.’⁷⁰ Yet, those who crossed these regions during the bad season had quite the opposite impression, such as Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859), the famous German naturalist, geographer and explorer, who encountered serious difficulties between Königsberg and Memel because the roadways were covered with ice and with the rise in water level in the spring. Notwithstanding, the itinerary between Memel and Dorpat of over 450 kilometres only lasted six days and thus shows ‘the speed with which they

Åbo, Helsingfors and St. Petersburg. S.S. Hill, *Travels on the Shores of the Baltic. Extended to Moscow* (London: 1854).

⁶⁶ *Itinéraire général des postes et relais: à l'usage des personnes qui voyagent sur le continent européen* (Paris: 1822); Mariana Starke, *Information and Directions for Travellers on the Continent* (London: 1829).

⁶⁷ Samuel Laing, a famous Scottish writer-traveller notes in 1838: ‘I left Fahlun early, and could only get to this place [Sala], a distance of about 70 miles, after midnight. The road execrably bad, at which I was surprised; the Swedish roads in general being proverbially good. The main roads are so; but the cross-country roads where the population is thin cannot be kept up by the Swedish system of statute labour. In Norway, the system succeeds better, because the roads are fewer, and the duty apparently better attended to than now in Sweden.’ Samuel Laing, *A Tour in Sweden in 1838: Comprising Observations on the Moral, Political, and Economical State of the Swedish Nation* (London: 1839), 231.

⁶⁸ Giuseppe Acerbi, *Voyage au Cap-Nord par la Suède, la Finlande et la Laponie, Tome premier* (Paris: 1804), 4-5.

⁶⁹ With one slight difference in Norway, where in ‘all relay stations, they find sleeping accommodations, though often rather poor ones, and furthermore they are badly sustained, if they did not take nourishment.’ Albert Montémont, *Voyages nouveaux par mer et par terre: effectués ou publiés de 1837 à 1847 dans les diverses parties du monde, Vol. 5. Europe* (Paris: 1847), 293-294, 298.

⁷⁰ Thomas Brown, *The reminiscences of an old traveller throughout different parts of Europe* (London: 1843), 170-172.

travelled in Russia, including during the season most disadvantageous to travel.⁷¹ Except perhaps in the regions where climatic conditions and the small number of inhabitants did not justify the building of real roads, such as in Lapland, the road network of the Russian Empire was greatly renovated and expanded on orders of Alexander I, then Nicolas I, not only on main routes between St. Petersburg and Moscow or Warsaw and St. Petersburg, as the German agronomist and economist August Haxthausen mentions in 1847, but also in the Baltic provinces with, for example, the opening of a new mail road between Tilsit (Sovetsk), Mittau and St. Petersburg in 1833.⁷²

With the multiplication of maritime links from London, Ostend and now Le Havre, the crossing of the North Sea became accessible to a broader part of the European population. From then on, Copenhagen, Stockholm, St. Petersburg were the new fashionable destinations of the French, British and German middle classes, who could visit the capitals of the North and the royal palaces of Bernadotte and the Romanov dynasties at their leisure. The German, Swedish and Russian steam shipping lines of the Baltic Sea, which multiplied in years 1830-1840, were thus involved in a keen competition that benefitted the passengers: the frequency of departures increased, the accommodation expenses at stopovers decreased, the time of passage was shortened thanks to technical progress, and the cost of transport was reduced with the increase in maritime traffic.⁷³ Elizabeth Eastlake (1809-1893), author and British art critic, was one of these new kinds of travellers who had the privilege of crossing the Sund in Elsinore (Helsingør) and of discovering Denmark. After a rough crossing, her arrival in the Danish capital resulted in mitigated comments: she certainly appreciated the 'picturesque and pleasing' streets of Copenhagen, the multi-coloured houses, the channels with boats all in a row; yet, she could not hide her disappointment of her visit to Christiansborg, the Danish royal palace, which she considers not really worth visiting except for a few works of art.⁷⁴ Through her personal judgements, Elizabeth Eastlake is an example of the development of modern tourism, with the desire to convey subjective impressions;

⁷¹ Hanno Beck (ed.), *Alexander von Humboldts Reise durchs Baltikum nach Russland und Sibirien 1829* (Stuttgart: 1983), 35-39.

⁷² August Haxthausen, *Etudes sur la situation intérieure, la vie nationale et les institutions rurales de la Russie. Vol. 1* (Hannover: 1847), 78-79; Walter McKenzie Pintner, *Russian Economic Policy Under Nicholas I* (Ithaca, New York), 1967, 134-135.

⁷³ Moritz J. Fränzl, *Statistische Übersicht der Eisenbahnen, Canäle und Dampfschiffahrten Europas und Amerikas: nach allen einzelnen Staaten zusammengestellt und verglichen* (Vienna: 1838).

⁷⁴ [Elizabeth Rigby Eastlake], *A Residence on the Shores of the Baltic, described in a series of letters. Volume 1* (London: 1841), 22-28.

there was no longer the need to ‘travel usefully,’⁷⁵ that is, to transmit scholarly knowledge on places, countries and peoples. Indeed, she only devotes a few lines to her trip across the Baltic Sea to St. Petersburg, while her arrival in the Russian capital and the description of streets and buildings are the subjects of long passages.

However, was it still possible to be original when so many travellers and specialists had already skilfully described the palaces on the banks of the Neva or the splendour of Hermitage? Surely not. As Eastlake admits honestly, ‘To attempt to describe in one letter a building groaning with the accumulated collections of an ambitious, unsparing, absolute, and, in some few instances, discriminating Imperial dynasty—one which would require visits of weeks in succession, and engross a volume of description—would be as vain as to pretend to comprise the British Museum in a few pages.’⁷⁶ The only adventurous moment of her journey took place when leaving St. Petersburg in November, when the bad season forced the young woman to take the snowy road that led to Reval where one of her sisters lived. She then made the gruelling trip during several days through cold, wild and snowy spaces, with relay stations and the precarious living conditions of the inhabitants of Ingria and Estonia, in Jamburg (Kingisepp) as well as in Narva.⁷⁷

If adventure still existed, it was necessary to reach the boundaries of the Baltic Sea or to go beyond them to find it, as did Léonie d’Aunet, who boarded the ship *La Recherche* with the crew towards Spitsbergen. This young woman, with evidently no scientific background, nor any of the qualities required to participate in such adventure, and whose presence was technically forbidden on the ships of the French Royal Navy, nevertheless possessed an essential trump card, that of being the wife of the painter Augustus Biard, whom the leader of expedition absolutely wanted to take with him. Thanks to this friendly blackmail, she not only crossed the immense Arctic ocean, but also the snowy forests of Finland on sleds to complete the ‘Grand Tour’ in the opposite direction via Fahlun, Stockholm, Ystad, Greifswald and Berlin.⁷⁸ More than a simple travel narrative, Léonie d’Aunet tried her hand at anthropology and at philology of ‘these curious Finnish provinces’ by describing

⁷⁵ This expression is borrowed from Marek Bratun, ‘L’art de voyager utilement selon Lichel-Georges Mniszech d’après un manuscrit inconnu,’ *La Revue Française*, numéro spécial ‘La culture des voyageurs à l’âge classique: regards, savoirs et discours.’ <http://revuefrancaise.free.fr/Bratun.htm>.

⁷⁶ Eastlake, *op. cit.*, 65, 130-131.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 109-127.

⁷⁸ Léonie d’Aunet, *Voyage d’une femme au Spitzberg* (Paris: 1854), 1-5. She published her adventure under her maiden name. She experienced some glory in the Parisian salons and was presented to the celebrities of the epoch, of which Victor Hugo, with whom she would have a long-lasting love affair between 1843 and 1851, the date at which the writer was exiled to Brussels and definitively separated from his mistress.

paganism, *runas*, poems and folk songs. The Finns are described as ‘a strong and vigorous race...tall’ with ‘blonde hair generally, pale blue or grey eyes, very white skin,’ and were deeply fond of ‘order and work,’ were ‘persevering and industrious,’ every family was ‘self-sufficient, cultivating their fields, building their houses, building their furniture, utensils and shoes, weaving their cloth and drape, and furthermore teaching their children, because in their country, as in Sweden and in Norway, all the peasants know how to read and write.’⁷⁹

Another way of distinguishing one’s writing consisted in describing in a most detailed way the new achievements of the Nordic countries, especially the impressive Göta Canal, which links the North Sea and the Baltic Sea, inaugurated by Charles XIV Jean with great pomp in 1832. In only a few years, the Göta Canal would become a major tourist attraction just as much as an essential route for international trade, in spite of the narrowness of the many locks that prohibited the passage of high-sea ships.⁸⁰ Travellers who set out on the ‘blue ribbon of Sweden’ were struck by the beauty of the landscapes and more even by the technical feat achieved by the Swedish nation, for the trifling sum of 10.5 million rixdalers, that is 23 million francs, and which mobilised thousands of soldiers. For this reason, Thomas Brown writes at the entrance of Trollhätta Canal:

At Trohletta, we see the famous cataract and canal, the most stupendous of the kind in the north of Europe. The water proceeds from the Wenner lake, and falls by three different declivities into the river Gotha, 126 feet below the surface of the Wenner. The canal is cut through a solid granite rock to the extent of 4000 feet, and is 11 feet deep, and 21 broad. It has 9 basins, 5 of which are cut through a rock 110 feet high, with various sawmills in the neighbourhood of the falls.⁸¹

Success was such that the maritime link between Göteborg and Stockholm through the Göta Canal resulted in the commissioning of four steamships and the publication in French of a tourist guide in 1838, which was intended to attract the public’s fascination and naturally to help them prepare ‘the most pleasant trip possible to undertake in Sweden during summer.’⁸² In this respect, it is surprising

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 291-307.

⁸⁰ About the origin and realisation of the project, see Gustaf Adolf Lagerheim, “Notices sur les canaux de Trollhätta et de Gothie,” in *Annales des ponts et chaussées*, 1^{er} semestre 1834, Paris, 315-336; Alexandre Daumont was the first European to give a detailed description of the Canal. See Daumont, *Voyage en Suède. Tome deuxième, op. cit.*, 50-53.

⁸¹ Brown, *op. cit.*, 278.

⁸² *Manuel des passagers, voyageant sur le canal de Gothie, avec les bateaux à vapeur allant entre Stockholm et Gothembourg: et notice sur les endroits remarquables, les églises et les châteaux situés sur la route* (Stockholm: 1838).

that Xavier Marmier makes no mention of the Göta Canal in his *Lettres sur le Nord* published in 1840, a fact that Victor de Nouvion, journalist and historian, pointed out with ill-will in order to better underline the importance of his own endeavour, which was to describe in detail the crossing of the Göta Canal, something that nobody before him had ever done.⁸³ Like all his contemporaries, de Nouvion was astounded by this ‘extraordinary work,’ which he considers ‘to be no less amazing than all those of the ancient civilisations,’ to such an extent that he even dedicated two articles of more than fifty pages each to the Canal in his *Nouvelles Annales des Voyages* in 1841.⁸⁴ The majesty of the landscape at the entrance of Trollhätan, the massive size of the undertaking, but also the hospitality of the Swedes are depicted with lyricism and, even though everything is not beauty and harmony as in Vänern, with its general warehouse of Värmland irons,⁸⁵ the numerous excursions that the passing of locks allowed were so many occasions ‘to make a pencil sketch, to pick in order to examine it, a pale flower of the North, to go to visit a villa, or to ring at the gate of a noble domain,’ excursion which in the end he ‘found to be too rare and too short.’⁸⁶

The Three Years’ War (the First Schleswig War), in which Denmark fought Prussia and the combatants of Schleswig and Holstein from 1848-1851, unquestionably had the effect of reducing the flow of travellers towards the Baltic Sea, as did the Crimean war between Imperial Russia and the alliance of the Ottoman Empire, the United Kingdom, France and kingdom of Sardinia, which spread from the Åland islands and the gulf of Finland from 1854 till 1855.⁸⁷ As in the previous centuries, however, it seems that the risks incurred were not enough to dissuade the practice of a sort of war tourism, even in this period of the accelerated

⁸³ Victor de Nouvion, “Fragment d’un voyage en Suède, de Gothembourg à Stockholm, par le Canal de Gothie,” *Nouvelles annales des voyages et des sciences géographiques*, Tome Deuxième, Paris, 1841, 265.

⁸⁴ The second part was published the same year in the same review. See Victor de Nouvion, “Fragment d’un voyage en Suède, de Gothembourg à Stockholm, par le Canal de Gothie (suite),” *Nouvelles annales des voyages et des sciences géographiques*, Tome Troisième, Paris, 1841, 129-186.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, Tome Deuxième, 295.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, Tome Deuxième, 304-306. See also Frank Hall Standish, *Notices on the Northern Capitals of Europe* (London: 1838), who dedicated a few pages to the Göta Canal in a much less pictorial style (chapter XXVIII, 202-209).

⁸⁷ See Gerd Stolz, *Die schleswig-holsteinische Erhebung. Die nationale Auseinandersetzung in und um Schleswig-Holstein von 1848/51* (Husum: 1996); Nick Svendsen, *The First Schleswig-Holstein War, 1848-50* (Solihull: 2008); Trevor Royle, *Crimea: The Great Crimean War, 1854-1856* (London: 2000); Alain Gouttman, *La guerre de Crimée (1853-1856). La première guerre moderne* (Paris: 2006); César Lecat de Bazancourt, *L’Expédition de Crimée. La Marine française dans la mer Noire et la Baltique, Vol. II* (Paris: 1858), 202-423. This book contains a large number of documents copied from the French Navy’s archives.

modernisation of weaponry.⁸⁸ This was the case of Reverend Robert Edgar Hughes, a former professor at Magdalen College in Cambridge, who did not appear to realise the danger of his undertaking of going to the Baltic Sea twice, in 1854 and 1855, onboard the *Pet*, a rather small sailing boat.⁸⁹ Full of the calm self-assurance of the British aristocracy and the pre-conceived notions of another age, this gentleman could not help but first give his impression of the Danes and the Germans. While the Danes 'are very English in manner and appearance,' and therefore worthy of being respected, the Germans are represented on the other hand in not very flattering terms.⁹⁰ Moreover, everything is measured by the yardstick of Britain, and cleanliness seems to be the absolute criterion according to which the degree of civilisation is measured.⁹¹ Having crossed the Baltic Sea without a hitch, Hughes joined the British fleet off the island of Gotland in August 1854, impatient to witness the crushing of the Russian fleet by the Royal Navy. Having been invited to dine aboard the *HMS Otter*, he learns that operations in the Gulf of Finland will be limited to a blockade. Fortunately, a joint French-British military action must be led on the Åland islands, thus he rushed to join the bulk of the fleet already gathered there, so that he could witness with infantile enthusiasm the disembarking of the French troops and the destruction of the Russian fortifications of Bormasund.⁹²

Not content with this first experience, Hugues returned to the Baltic Sea the following summer for the resumption of the naval operations that winter had interrupted: 'Everything promised an active and eventful campaign; an admiral was appointed to the command, who possessed the confidence of the service [the Royal Navy]; all deficiencies in the *matériel* were to be supplied; gunboats in swarms, floating batteries of marvellous power, and still more marvellous form; and mortar boats equipped in new and singular fashion were devised and promenaded through

⁸⁸ Lawrence Sondhaus, *Naval warfare, 1815-1914* (London: 2001), 55-63.

⁸⁹ Robert Edgar Hughes, *Two summer cruises with the Baltic fleet, in 1854-5, being the log of the 'Pet' yacht* (London: 1855).

⁹⁰ 'Often, when travelling in Germany, I have looked in vain among the flat sided, broad footed, wide faced, low caste natives, for some trace of kindred race and origin with ourselves; but in Denmark you are constantly encountered by groups who would pass muster anywhere for the Anderson girls or the Johnsons; and upon inquiry they will probably prove to be the Johannsen girls or the Andersens.' *Ibid.*, 33.

⁹¹ The words 'clean' or 'cleanliness' come back again and again as a leitmotiv in description of persons, cities or ships. See, for example, *Ibid.*, 4, 13, 57 and especially 122-123, where the Russians are described in the most crude terms for their dirtiness and their stench. The author reaffirms his statements in the second edition published in 1856 in spite of often virulent criticisms. The most lively of which was undoubtedly that published in February 1856 in *The Eclectic Review*. See *The Eclectic Review*. M.DCCC.LVI, January-June (London: 1856), 199.

⁹² Hughes, *op. cit.*, 91-134.

the columns of the morning papers.⁹³ The *Pet*'s crew once again set off to the Baltic Sea, passing by Copenhagen without great pleasure, before joining the combined fleet which had been carrying out a blockade over the gulf of Finland since April and occupied *de facto* the island of Nargen (Nargön in Swedish, Naissaar in Estonian).⁹⁴ Hugues then observes with excitement the naval operations led by the British fleet at Kotka, on the Finnish coast, then against the fortress of Sveaborg, off Helsinki in July and August, 1855, which the artillery shot, supported by both fleets, reduced to nothing after two days and two nights of intense bombing.⁹⁵

Other passengers also took part in war tourism, but for less narcissistic reasons, such as Antonio Gallenga, Italian author and journalist, who had already covered several conflicts in Europe for the *Times* of London and also followed the Second Schleswig War in 1864.⁹⁶ The stakes were high because 'the question to be settled is where the rights of a nation begin and end—where its pretensions should be resisted as coming into collision with those of other nations.' Yet, while no one questioned the right of the Germans 'to make Germany,' perhaps it was true that 'the Germans have got into an odd way of confounding Germany with the German Empire, and are wondrously apt to stretch the limits of their present nationality to the full extent of their old imperial ambition.'⁹⁷ Although Gallenga was a journalist sympathetic to the Danish cause, he was also a traveller and a curious observer of the social, economic and cultural reality of Schleswig and of Holstein, which he explored 'in every direction, walking briskly over the hard frozen highways.' It would certainly take too long to summarize in only a few lines the richness of his narrative, but it is important to underline the effort the author makes at impartiality in his analyses by admitting, for example, that the 'danification' of Schleswig after 1851 or the Constitution of 1863 were unwise.⁹⁸ All in all, right was clearly on the Danish side, more even so after the invasion of Austro-Prussian forces on 1 February 1864. The general opinion could be summed up as follows:

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 172.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 186-190, 206-214.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 213-266. Hugues wanted to brag by telling the 'epic poem' on board of the *Pet* in front of Sveaborg after its destruction. While inspecting the Russian shore 'to see what damage we had really done and what progress the enemy had really made in raising and arming new works of defence,' he ran the risk of being hit by Russian artillery; but noting that the Russian gunners tried in vain to sink the sailing boat, he exclaimed: 'We could not help laughing with delight to see their abortive and ungenerous missiles plunge stupidly one after the other into the hissing waves,' 262-263.

⁹⁶ Antonio Carlo Napoleone Gallenga, *The Invasion of Denmark in 1864*, 2 Vol. (London : 1864).

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, 6-7.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, 61-66, 88-91, 112-113.

Whatever the Germans may say, therefore, and whatever may be thought of the above enumerated grievances, it is difficult to resist the conviction that the Danes have neither the tastes nor the arts of a petty searching tyranny, and that, relying upon the strength of their arms, they never imposed upon their Schleswig subjects a heavier yoke than they were willing to bear themselves. They may have been wrong in their wish to make the Schleswigers a part of themselves, and it is difficult to say into what new errors one unlucky original blunder may have led them; but had the Germans given in to that only point on which it was unluckily so impossible for them to yield, there would scarcely, perhaps, have arisen another subject of difference or complaint between the two races. There is here an affair of nationality and nothing more.⁹⁹

It is hardly surprising to learn that German war tourists demonstrated quite different opinions regarding the reasons and responsibilities in this conflict. The most famous of them was Theodor Fontane (1819-1898), the great novelist, poet and also author of travel narratives with the *Wanderungen durch die Mark Brandenburg*, which earned him great popularity.¹⁰⁰ In reality, entering Schleswig and Holstein was not Fontane's idea but his editor's, asking him to collect information about the past and the present of the dukedoms after the Austro-Prussian victory in order to write a book. Fontane accepted without much hesitation because he needed the money, and also because he had felt a natural sympathy towards the 'Schleswig-Holsteinians' since at least 1848.¹⁰¹ Fontane did not stop railing against the British press, which took wholeheartedly took Denmark's side, and against any solution that would violate Germany's rights over the totality of the dukedoms.¹⁰² The work that Fontane published in 1866 was not, however, a travel narrative, but a book of political and especially military history (*Kriegsbuch*), whose purpose consisted in giving proof of and in glorifying the Austro-Prussian intervention, recalling the 'liberation' of Schleswig in very patriotic terms.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, 69.

¹⁰⁰ Theodor Fontane, *Wanderungen durch die Mark Brandenburg*, 5 Vol. (Berlin : 1862-1889).

¹⁰¹ Theodor Fontane, *Aus meinem bunten Leben: ein biographisches Lesebuch* (Aus Briefen zusammengestellt von Gabriele Radecke und Walter Hettche) (Munich : 1998), 101-102 ; Gilbert Krebs, "Fontane et la révolution de 1848", in Marc Thuret (ed.), *Theodor Fontane. Un promeneur dans le siècle* (Paris: 1999), 57-58.

¹⁰² See the letter written in London on January 27, 1864 in Theodor Fontane, *Unechte Korrespondenzen*, Vol. 2, edited by Heide von Streiter-Buscher (Berlin: 1996), 1097.

¹⁰³ 'The Austrian regiments were welcomed during their crossing of the city [Schleswig] in a loud joy...Windows and doors flew pretty flowers towards each of the soldiers, in spite of wintertime...We were free; nowhere the liberation of Danish yoke was felt more deeply than here; no city suffered as much as Schleswig.' Theodor Fontane, *Der Schleswig-Holsteinsche Krieg im Jahre 1864* (Berlin: 1866), 87.

After the definitive solution to the Schleswig-Holstein question by Prussia in 1866, the Baltic Sea regained its calm until the following century, as did the travellers through that region, accompanied from then on with detailed guides, Murray's *Handbook* and the *Baedeker*, published respectively in 1839 and 1879, the latter in English and German.¹⁰⁴ Less sought out than Western Europe or even the Eastern Mediterranean, Northern Europe and the Baltic Sea remained however attractive destinations for modern tourists attracted by the big cities of the North as new centres of economic, intellectual and cultural life.¹⁰⁵ Whether fond of modernity, fascinated by Scandinavian or Russian painters and composers, or attracted by popular song festivals which multiplied throughout the Baltic provinces from the 1870s, there were plenty of reasons to travel through the Baltic Sea, while land and maritime transportation developed with an increasing pace from the years 1850-1860 and allowed for quick connexions in all directions.¹⁰⁶ At the same time, travel became somewhat banal; there were no more 'Nordic adventures,' except perhaps in Norway and in Lapland, which had always held a strong fascination.¹⁰⁷ Perhaps the reason for this trivialisation of travel was the development of modern tourism, such as with the seaside resorts and the curative hot springs that thrived from Travemünde to Rügen, from Öregrund to Parnü, from Hanko to Jurmala.¹⁰⁸ What is sure, in any case, it is that the golden age of travel came to an end, what Theodor Fontane underlined with cruel irony in 1873:

Mass travelling belongs to the peculiarities of our time. Erstwhile travelled favoured individuals, now every man and woman travels. Chancery clerk's women visit a

¹⁰⁴ John Murray, *A hand-book for travellers in Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Russia* (London: 1839); Karl Baedeker, *Schweden und Norwegen nebst den wichtigsten Reiserouten durch Dänemark* (Leipzig: 1879); *Sweden and Norway. Handbook for Travellers* (London: 1879). A French edition was also published in 1885.

¹⁰⁵ It is curious, in this respect, that Alan Sillitoe recalls neither Northern Europe, nor the Baltic Sea in any of the seventeen regional chapters of his work dedicated to travel guides in Europe from 1815 till 1914. Sillitoe, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁶ Klinge, *op. cit.*, 124-129; Markku Kuisma, "Les facteurs de l'industrialisation en Finlande et dans les pays nordiques au XIX^e siècle," *Revue d'Histoire Nordique*, n°1, 2nd semestre 2005, 54-71; T.K. Derry, *A History of Scandinavia. Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland* (London: 1979), 250-257.

¹⁰⁷ Many travel narratives were published in France during the last decades of the nineteenth century, among them Albert Vandal, *En karriole à travers la Suède et la Norvège* (Paris: 1877); Jules de Guerne, *Un voyage en Laponie. Souvenirs d'une mission scientifique* (Paris: 1882); Paul du Chaillu, *Un hiver en Laponie* (Paris: 1884). With regard to Norway, see Ludwig Passarge, *Drei Sommer in Norwegen: Reiseerinnerungen und Kulturstudien* (Leipzig: 1881). Passarge became the principal German translator for Henrik Ibsen and Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson.

¹⁰⁸ Klinge, *op. cit.*, 130-132.

climatic health resort at the foot of the Kyffhäuser, comfortable shopkeepers lean their heads upon easy chairs, and members of a small-urban protection guild read while admiring the castle at Reinhardsbrunn where Duke Ernst has killed 50,177 pieces of game in twenty-five years. They take down the imposing number in their pocket book and are glad about the day when they will be able to work out at their leisure how many pieces that means each day. All the world travels.¹⁰⁹

The Baltic Sea and Northern Europe as a whole attracted a growing number of travellers in the course of this long nineteenth century that stretched up to the First World War. At first scientific, the purpose of travel for many was to explore, to study this inhospitable periphery of Europe, starting with the 'Nordic Mediterranean,' which had a lot of hidden traps for experienced navigators, in spring as in winter, as evidenced by the difficulties encountered by the French and British fleets during the Crimean war. However, a lot of pleasant surprises awaited travellers who ventured to the coasts of the Baltic Sea, from the beautiful and grandiose landscapes to the qualities of hospitality and of generosity that underlined almost all the narratives. Soon the geographers, historians and philologists were joined by new travellers, tired of the routine imposed by the 'Grand Tour' in France and in Italy. Their goal was to distinguish themselves from their fellow human beings and to bring new knowledge and original anecdotes about the people who were so kind as well as so rustic, outside the privileged classes, of course. Often also, the crossing of the Baltic Sea was a necessary trip on the road to Russia, which was the main destination. By road, when possible, and especially by sea, travel was long and hard, requiring frequent stopovers in post houses or in the coastal resorts.

With time, however, modernity made its way across the North Sea and the Sund to reach the Baltic Sea and to spread the technical knowledge that very quickly enabled the acceleration of exchanges with the external world and the development of Nordic travels. Articles and travel books dedicated to Scandinavian and Baltic Europe thus continued to increase, as well as novels, with the support of specialised magazines and editors who understand their readers' new infatuation with the solitary open spaces of the Big North and the gentle customs of the Baltic and Scandinavian peoples.¹¹⁰ While some travellers had the noble goal of being useful

¹⁰⁹ Theodor Fontane, *Sämtliche Romane, Erzählungen, Gedichte, Nachgelassenes Werke, Schriften und Briefe*, Vol.7, edited by Walter Keitel, Helmuth Nürnberger and Hans-Joachim Simm (Munich: 1984, 1990), 9-16.

¹¹⁰ Among the numerous French novels that were published, we can mention: Victor Hugo, *Han d'Islande* (1823); Honoré de Balzac, *Séraphita* (1846); Louis Énault, *Un amour en Laponie* (1861); Jules Verne, *Un billet de loterie* (1861); *Voyage au centre de la Terre* (1864); *Michel Strogoff* (1876); Pierre Loti,

and enriching ethnographic or historical knowledge, an increasing number of narratives had the sole purpose of recounting more or less original subjective impressions on countries or regions that had already been very well described.¹¹¹ Although we can sometimes find unusual or unique aspects to these works, it is either by chance when travellers ended up witnessing major events, or knowingly, when war tourists, without taking too much risk, paraded around as actors, even insignificant ones, as part of major historical events. The personal feelings of these war authors are often part of these works, which demonstrate either a deep empathy with nations they have been in close contact with, such as Armand de Flaux for Denmark, or indifference or self-importance when comparing Nordic reality with that of their native country, such as Robert Edgar Hughes.¹¹²

Readers will undoubtedly have observed that the travellers of the nineteenth century had a fragmentary vision of Northern Europe and that their interest focused mostly on a part of this large region, with a predilection for Denmark, the Scandinavian Peninsula and Lapland. Few authors, with the very comprehensible exception of Germans, dedicated a specific space for the Baltic provinces of the Russian Empire in their writings, following the example of Elizabeth Rigby Eastlake who dedicated fifteen of her twenty-five letters to Estonia and its inhabitants.¹¹³ Is it necessary to deduce from this fact that the idea of a belonging to a shared space, or even to a common culture, did not exist in the minds of contemporaries? It seems, in fact, that several authors, geographers notably, had the intuition, or deduced from their experience and knowledge, that the Baltic Sea was an essential unifying factor between nations that nevertheless had quite a lot of differences. Beyond their very distinctive ethno-linguistic inheritance (Germanic, Slavonic, Baltic and Finno-Ugric), the Baltic Sea indeed constituted a common space which encouraged them to unite in the same group, and perhaps artificially, in the same vision. Accordingly, John Murray included Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Russia all in the same guide, the *Handbook for Northern Europe*, published in 1839; in the same way, Élisée Reclus, the famous French geographer, dedicated a entire volume to Scandinavian and Russian Europe in his *Nouvelle Géographie Universelle* in 1880, which includes Denmark,

Pêcheurs d'Islande (1886); Jules Verne, *Un drame en Livonie* (1904). We also should add the French translations of the most famous Scandinavian and Russian authors, like Hans Christian Andersen, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, Selma Lagerlöf and Leo Tolstoy.

¹¹¹ Two examples among others: Alfred Kæchlin-Schwartz, *Un touriste en Laponie* (Paris: 1889); Paul Ginisty, *De Paris au Cap Nord. Notes pittoresques sur la Scandinavie* (Paris: 1897).

¹¹² Armand de Flaux, *Du Danemark: impressions de voyage, aperçus historiques et considérations sur le passé, le présent et l'avenir de ce pays* (Paris: 1862); Hughes, *op. cit.*

¹¹³ Eastlake, *op. cit.*

Norway, Sweden, Finland, the Baltic provinces of Russia, as well as Poland and Lithuania.¹¹⁴

This perception of the Baltic Sea was also shared by some travellers. This was the case notably of Reverend Thomas Milner from Britain and of Louis Léouzon Le Duc from France. The almost concomitant publication of their two works in 1854 and 1855 is not fortuitous; in the case of the first author at least, the publication resulted from his stated desire to enlighten the British public about this quite unknown region where important military operations took place.¹¹⁵ Thomas Milner is an example of an educated clergyman who had considerable leisure to devote to the writing of geographical works. He was already extremely popular at the time for his works as a cartographer and the publication of scientific and religious books.¹¹⁶ The author first devoted himself to *The Baltic, Its Gates, Shores, and Cities* in a historical overview of relations between Great Britain and the Baltic Sea, before launching into a detailed study of physical milieu and of the coastal regions, from the shores of Denmark to those of Russia, and ending, without explanation, by evoking the White Sea. It is a safe bet that Pastor Milner never set foot in the lands that he describes with so much sagacity, and that his work was a compilation that was particularly indebted to the travel narratives and to the monographs that the author used without even citing them.

Fortunately, this was not the case with the second work, which was the fruit of many journeys to the Baltic Sea. Although Louis Léouzon Le Duc is today almost unknown, in his time he was one of the most distinguished specialists of Northern Europe and a regular editor of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* along with Xavier Marmier, Auguste Geffroy and Jean-Jacques Ampère. Born in 1815 in Ardèche, he pursued literary studies in Belgium, which lead him incidentally to become tutor to a Russian prince from 1842 till 1844 and to live in Russia as well as in Finland. Once back in France, he was then given different missions by the French government to Russia and to Northern Europe, notably in 1848 when he was entrusted with bringing back

¹¹⁴ Murray, *op. cit.*; Élisée Reclus, *Nouvelle Géographie Universelle. La Terre et les hommes. Vol. V. L'Europe scandinave et russe* (Paris: 1880).

¹¹⁵ Thomas Milner, *The Baltic, Its Gates, Shores, and Cities: With a Notice of the White Sea* (London: 1854), V.

¹¹⁶ He published the first edition of *The Gallery of Nature, a Pictorial & Descriptive Tour Through Creation* in 1846, a work destined to make a synthesis of all the scientific knowledge of the time in accordance with the Christian faith and considered as 'probably the decade's best-selling scientific part work.' He published four years later *A Descriptive Atlas of Astronomy and of Physical and Political Geography*, a work that included astronomic, geographic and political woodblock and steel-engraved illustrations from all the continents, among them Northern Europe and Russia. James A. Secord, *Victorian sensation: the extraordinary publication, reception, and secret authorship of Vestiges of the natural history of creation* (Chicago: 2000), 463-464.

from Russia the red porphyry destined for the sarcophagus of Napoleon I.¹¹⁷ He also became famous as a historian and translator of Finnish; among other works, we owe to him the first translation into French of Kalevala in 1845, which he republished in 1867 in a more precise and complete version.¹¹⁸

Léouzon Le Duc's purpose is clearly explained in the preface; it was a question 'of introducing the countries of the Baltic Sea as a whole: Sweden and Norway, Finland, Estonia, Livonia, Courland, Denmark.' He draws lots of information from many previously published works, 'but without copying them, nor redoing them,' and especially from his travel diaries and the scenes of life that he observed by living among the peoples of the North.¹¹⁹ He involves the reader in his adventures, town after town, country after country, from Gothenburg (Göteborg) to Reval passing by Upsal (Uppsala), describing historical panoramas, urban descriptions and evocations of morals in an easy style. Nothing escapes his attention, neither Finnish demography, nor intellectual movements in the Baltic provinces. However, nothing in his writing reveals a general vision aiming at including the countries bordering the shores of the Baltic Sea within a common dynamic, and even less so within a shared future. This may be explained perhaps by the tangible absence of regional identity: at a time when nationalism was triumphing in Europe and when attempts at solidarity, like Scandinavism, were losing steam to military strength, the temptation to withdraw from reality remained the most powerful reaction. To build the Baltic region would not be easier to achieve in the twentieth century because of rivalry between the Great Powers and the Cold War, but it remains a key issue in our twenty-first century.

¹¹⁷ Jules Brisson and Félix Ribeyre, *Les grands journaux de France* (Paris: 1862), 133-135.

¹¹⁸ Louis Léouzon Le Duc, *La Finlande, son histoire primitive, sa mythologie, sa poésie épique, avec la traduction complète de sa grande épopée: le Kalevala, son génie national, sa condition politique et sociale depuis la conquête russe*, 2 Vol. (Paris: 1845); *Le Kalevala, Vol.1. L'épopée* (Paris: 1867).

¹¹⁹ Louis Léouzon Le Duc, *La Baltique* (Paris: 1855), II-III.