

The Reception of Old Norse Myth in Germany 1760-1820: Enthusiasm, Rejection and Recovery

Thomas Krömmelbein

During the second half of the 18th century, a phase of literary reception took place that had decisive consequences in its repercussions on Northern mythology and literature. The person substantially responsible for its initiation was Paul Henri Mallet (1730-1807) with his *L'Historie de Dannemarc* (Geneva 1763). To true German writers rediscovering the Northern world belonged above all Heinrich Wilhelm Gerstenberg (1737-1823), Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) and Friedrich David Gräter (1768-1830). Their achievements as poets and scholars will be portrayed in my presentation, as they were not only responsible for translating the transmitted texts, but also for the study of their cultural-historical background. Their work proved to be essential for the poetic adaptation of Northern mythology and literature in the 19th century by people such as Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué and Richard Wagner. They thus laid the foundation of a reception that ultimately leads to our present times.