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Viral nationalism: romantic intellectuals on the move in nineteenth-century Europe

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ABSTRACT. Intellectuals were important to the spread of nationalist ideology in nineteenth-century Europe for a variety of reasons. Firstly, their works facilitated the international spread of the discourse of nationalism; secondly, they mediated between the fields of political institutions and cultural reflection. This article looks at the international mobility and networks of romantic-nationalist intellectuals, and uses the case of August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben (1798–1874) as an example.

KEYWORDS: cultural nationalism; cultural transfer; networks; philologists; romanticism

The starting point

Nationalism and national movements in nineteenth-century Europe were not generated wholly from within the bosom of a pre-existing ethnic group or from within the infrastructures of their states or societies of origin. The rise of nationalism and of national consciousness-raising was, to an important extent, a transnational process (Leerssen 2008; Thiesse 1999). The communication of ideas, inspirations and ideals that constituted the spread and propagation of national ideologies crossed borders and frontiers. Nationalism spread and propagated itself by way of the communication of ideas, not only within the ethnic group, state or society of origin but between and across them as well – much like the dissemination of any intellectual trend or ideology, from Calvinism to romanticism to communism to feminism.

The issue

While traditionally the social and political analysis of national movements has concentrated on internal factors (and who would want to deny the importance of the institutional, social and political settings within which nationalism takes hold?), a counterbalance to internalism is necessary. The external factors of developing nationalism involve at least three types of processes.

Firstly, national movements in one area may provoke counter-movements in directly adjacent or overlapping areas. Thus, the Walloon movement in Belgium took shape largely as a reaction to the rise of the Flemish movement in the north of the country; pan-Germanism in Austria was, similarly, a reaction to the national movements of the various non-German ethnicities of the Habsburg empire; the rise of nationalism in Ireland intensified Unionism in parts of the Ulster counties.

Secondly, written and printed communication is a powerful medium for the broadcast of ideas beyond their place and moment of origin. Written and especially printed texts are more permanent than the spoken word; they can be produced in such bulk that they reach a greater audience than the human voice; and they can be transported over immense distances. This not only means that print media can mobilise and weld large, translocal portions of a society into an 'imagined community', as per Benedict Anderson's classic model; it also applies to the way in which textual mediation can disseminate national ideals beyond the confines of a given society. The widespread influence of Herder's notions concerning the categorical equivalence of all human cultures is an example that is cited frequently, although often merely by way of a background fact. A more salient case, again involving Herder, is the inspiring effect of his 'Slavic chapter' in the *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (book 16, part 4; 1791) in triggering (pan-)Slavic consciousness-raising, affecting all Slavic movements of the nineteenth century. Pan-Slavism as a whole testifies to the migration of ideas and texts from Odessa to Prague and from Zagreb to Kiev (Kohn 1960; Luciani 1963; Milojković-Djurić 1994). Cases in point, dating mainly from the 1820s and 1830s, are the writings of Jan Kollár and Pavel Josef Šafárik, and the philological work of Josef Dobrovský and Jernej Kopitar. These writers were influential across the various Slavic-speaking parts of Europe. And beyond the confines even of 'pan-' movements (pan-Germanism, pan-Slavism, pan-Celtism), there are examples of texts triggering nationalist shockwaves over long distances and crossing many cultural and political borders in the process: the Europe-wide spread and influence of oral epics like *Ossian* and *Hasanaginica* (Isaković 1975; Juez Gálvez 1999; Leerssen 2004; Wolff 2001); the Greek kleptic songs printed by the philhellene Claude Fauriel as the *Chants populaires de la Grèce moderne* in the year of Byron's death in Missolonghi, 1824 (Ibrovac 1966); and the translation into English of the Polish nationalist historical novels by Henryk Sienkiewicz, which were inspired by Walter Scott, by the American-born Irish nationalist Jeremiah Curtin in the mid-to-late nineteenth century.¹

Thirdly, the mobility of persons was equally important. This is something that I will concentrate on in the following sections. The prototype among them is perhaps Madame de Staël, whose experience of German culture at the time of Napoleon-dominated French classicism, and its reflection in her *De l'Allemagne* (1813), made her a cardinally important ambassador in Britain and Europe for German romanticism and for a particular image of Germany

as the ‘land of poets and philosophers’. In the century following Madame de Staël, a number of key mediators established conduits for cultural exchange and what is now known as ‘cultural transfer’² by personally travelling back and forth between different places and countries. People like Adam Mickiewicz and Giuseppe Mazzini come to mind as ambassadors of their national cause in exile. Frequently they advocated not just the cause of their own nationality, but a solidarity between different national identities and movements. A remarkable case in point is John Bowring (1792–1872), writer, traveller and radical MP, who on his many travels across Europe familiarised himself with many languages, cultures and patriotisms, all of which he presented to the liberal English readership in (largely plagiarised) anthologies: *Specimens of the Russian Poets* (1820), *Batavian Anthology*, *Ancient Poetry and Romances of Spain* (both 1827), *Specimens of the Polish Poets* and *Servian Popular Poetry* (both 1830), *Poetry of the Magyars* and *Cheskian Anthology* [sic] (1832). He saw all of these as building blocks in what should become an anthology of the ‘national literatures’ of Europe. On his travels, he ‘networked’ to ensure the collaboration of leading scholars and literati in all the countries he visited: Rasmus Rask and Finnur Magnússon for Icelandic, Adam Oehlenschläger for Danish, Ferenc Toldy for Hungarian, Nikolai Karamzin for Russian, Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz and Adam Mickiewicz for Polish, Vuk Karadžić for Serbian, Václav Hanka and František Čelakovský for Czech; also among his contacts were important comparative philologists and translators such as Talvj (Therese von Jakob) and Claude Fauriel.³ Such networking throws an interesting light on the interpatiotic solidarity that we encounter in philhellenism, in the support of the Lord Holland circle for liberal movements in Spain, Italy and Belgium, and ultimately in the clustering of the various ‘Young National’ movements that took place around Mazzini in the 1840s.

The case⁴

The case on which I want to concentrate is that of August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben (1798–1874).

1841 (Germany as seen from Helgoland)

Hoffmann is best known as the poet of the German *Vormärz*, and among his best-known poetic productions is the *Lied der Deutschen* or *Deutschlandlied*, written in exile on Helgoland in 1841. Later, it furnished the German national anthem. The notorious first stanza (‘Deutschland, Deutschland über alles’) runs as follows:

Germany, Germany above all, above everything in the world
If for shelter and support it will fraternally stand together

From the Meuse to the Niemen, from the Adige to the Belt
Germany, Germany above all, above everything in the world.

The poem was generally seen, including by Germans themselves, as a proclamation of triumphalism and expansionism: Germany was to be 'top dog' among the nations, and could claim territory from Liège and Rotterdam to Königsberg, and from Schleswig-Holstein to the Southern Tyrol. This text became so repugnant in the century following its composition that its public performance is now outlawed in Germany, and Germany's national anthem instead uses the more edifying third stanza:

Unity, justice and liberty for the German fatherland
Let us all work fraternally to that goal with hands and hearts
Unity, justice and liberty are the guarantors of bliss
Flourish in the glow of such bliss, flourish German fatherland.⁵

The bad-cop/good-cop ambivalence between the two stanzas (the first breathing a sense of ethno-national triumphalism and geocultural expansionism, the second one of democratic civic-mindedness) is exemplary of Hoffmann's outlook in general, and indeed for much of the ideology of German romantic nationalism of the *Vormärz* period. It combines two ideological profiles that have since then drifted towards opposite ends of the ideological spectrum: one towards ethnic chauvinism, national triumphalism and territorial expansionism; the other towards democracy or social democracy, defending the civil rights of the individual against the reactionary politics of the Restoration *Fürstenstaat*. Both tendencies were as yet part of a single ideology of national/popular empowerment, where the 'nation' could be seen without distinction as both *demos* and *ethnos*, and with its main counterpart located (as the case might be) either in aristocratic government or in foreign rivals/threats. Thus, while Hoffmann in some of his nationalist verse foreshadows the more unpleasant forms of German ethnic nationalism of the following century, he also continued the Enlightenment patriotism of Schiller. Hoffmann's popularising of the song 'Die Gedanken sind frei' (1842) extols freedom of conscience in the tradition of Schiller's call for *Gedankenfreiheit* in *Don Carlos* (1787); and the third stanza of his *Deutschlandlied* contains more than a hint of the democratic triad of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, with its evocation of *Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit*. For Hoffmann, one of the main reasons for the national unification of Germany is that it will unite all Germans into an emancipated citizenry, no longer the divided subjects of many different petty princes but the consolidated body politic of a *Rechtsstaat*.

With this blend of civic and ethnic nationalism (and who could deny the coexistence and heuristic usefulness of that polarity in such a profile?), Hoffmann is representative of his generation. We encounter similar attitudes in contemporary intellectuals like Hans Ferdinand Massmann (Richter 1992), or in, Uhland, Ernst Moritz Arndt and Jacob Grimm (Brandt 1999). We also encounter similar ideological tensions in the public and political gatherings such as the Frankfurt parliament of 1848 and in its intellectual warming-up

exercise, Grimm's *Germanisten* conferences of 1846 and 1847 (Netzer 2006). But what made Hoffmann special was his inveterate *Wanderlust*. This mobility created important conduits and links between national movements in various parts of Europe. What I want to trace in particular is Hoffmann's movement between Germany, the Danube monarchy and the Low Countries.

1817–24 (Wartburg to Leiden by way of Bonn)

One early flashpoint for *Vormärz* romantic nationalism was without doubt the notorious Wartburg Feast of 1817 (Düding 1988; Richter 1992). Students from various German universities gathered there to celebrate the anniversary of the Battle of Leipzig, which in that year coincided with the tercentenary of Luther's Reformation. The meeting was a reunion for those with an activist background: former members of the free corps militias that had fought against Napoleon; members of the gymnastics clubs, whose physical exercises had been a thinly veiled effort at military drills for the population at large (and therefore were viewed with suspicion by the authorities); and members of the new students' associations (*Burschenschaften*) that were forming in these years on a pan-German basis (rather than the narrow regionalism that had characterised the earlier *Landsmannschaften*). All these associations (with overlapping memberships) of excitable young men celebrated freedom from foreign bondage (be it Papal or Napoleonic), re-enacted the populist enthusiasm of the Wars of Liberation, and voiced a nationalism that was difficult to reconcile with the reactionary, Metternich-style doctrines of the Restoration. The students and gymnasts sported an 'old German' style of dress and hairstyle, reminiscent of Dürer portraits (Schneider 2002), and in commemoration of Luther's burning of the papal bull of excommunication they burned, in a nocturnal bonfire, aristocratic and 'anti-German' books. (In turn, that gesture would be invoked later as an example for the Nazi book burnings of 1933.)

The Wartburg spirit moved many students. Among them was Jan Kollár, future pan-Slavic poet and scholar, who at the time was a student in Jena and attended the 1817 feast. Hoffmann himself was not there; he was chafing at the conservatism of Tübingen, where he had just enrolled; but the next year he would switch to Bonn, where Ernst Moritz Arndt (the leading light of romantic nationalists at the time) had been appointed. There, he immediately adopted the pose and outlook of the romantic student: 'old German' dress, long flowing Dürer-style hair parted in the middle, a penchant for the German Middle Ages and for folk culture. A portrait of 1819⁶ shows him in this garb and pose, armed with the accoutrements of the wandering student (stick and drinking gourd); indeed, he did make a journey on foot from Bonn to explore the Rhineland, newly won back from France. This took him to the borders of, and into, the newly established Kingdom of the Netherlands: from Aachen to Liège, downstream along the Meuse to Maastricht, and thence back towards Bonn (Berns 1999). His reflections on this journey echoed the geopolitical

thought of his *maître à penser* Arndt, who had argued vociferously (and would continue to do so) that the entire Rhineland as far as the Meuse should become German; his western frontier of an ideal Germany would follow the Germanic-Romance linguistic divide from Dunkirk to Luxembourg and Basel (Leerssen 2006). Hoffmann, too, expressed regret that the fertile fields along the Meuse valley had remained outside the Rhineland territory given to Prussia at the Congress of Vienna. He saw the Low Countries as part of a greater 'Germany' (as yet a purely aspirational concept, of course), much as he (again echoing Arndt) saw Dutch and Flemish as subsidiary variants of a greater German language (van Ackeren 1992; Kloos 1992). Similar territorialisations of cultural inclusivism were echoed by Grimm and underpin that line in Hoffmann's *Deutschlandlied* (written more than twenty years later) that has Germany stretch 'from the Meuse to the Niemen'.⁷

But more important than Hoffmann's poetry was the fact that he was, precisely, a student – and a student in the newly burgeoning field of German philology. I have addressed the importance of philology for the development of national thought in early nineteenth-century Europe elsewhere (Van Hulle and Leerssen 2008; Leerssen 2004). I need only mention briefly that the pursuit of philology, burgeoning from 1800 onwards, with its habit of 'literary historicism' and its retrieval of medieval vernacular literature, provided all European nationalities with the historical myths and the sense of cultural continuity that were such indispensable ingredients for developing nationalism. What concerns me more closely here is not the influence of philology, but the position and mobility of individual philologists and their networks.

In Bonn, Hoffmann developed philological skills and an interest in medieval German literature, and he extended that interest to the Low Countries. German philologists were beginning to scour libraries all over Europe for medieval manuscripts, and Hoffman (like Jacob Grimm before him) hoped to find lost treasures (such as the Dutch/Flemish variant of the *Reynard the Fox* tale) in the Dutch libraries. In 1824 he undertook a trip to Leiden, where he searched the university library, having by then already established some fame as a good archival researcher. The stolid burghers of that stolid town were astounded to see his romantic 'old German' appearance, and although the university gave him a doctoral degree for his pains, street urchins mocked him noisily and the young ladies at family soirees were alarmed by his enthusiastically sentimental performance of quaint Dutch songs (forgotten by the Dutch themselves, but retrieved by him) in a German accent.

1837–39 (Breslau to Ghent by way of Vienna)

Grimm and Hoffmann both failed to get much medieval material out of the Dutch literati and their libraries. By the late 1820s, Grimm despaired of the country and its lack of interest in pre-1550 cultural history. When the 1830 Belgian revolution split the Low Countries in two (or, counting Luxembourg, three), he was ready to consider the entire Netherlands a failed state without

proper patriotism either in the north (Holland) or in the south. Hoffmann, for his part, had just begun editing medieval Dutch literature in his series *Horae Belgicae*. The first five volumes appeared in Breslau (where Hoffmann had obtained an appointment as librarian and lecturer) between 1830 and 1837; they contain many medieval classics of Netherlandic (Dutch/Flemish) literature, and it is to be noted with interest that these beginnings of a Dutch canon of its vernacular literature were undertaken extraterritorially by a German and published in what is now Wrocław, in Poland – much as the first edition of the English national epic, *Beowulf*, was published in Copenhagen (1815). In his review of *Horae Belgicae*'s first volume, in the revolution year 1830, Grimm remarked sourly of the Belgians:

Any nation that abandons the language of its ancestors is degenerate and anchorless. The present revolution in the Low Countries can only be ascribed to the long-standing influence of French mores and the plotting of priests, not to a properly national spirit. From Antwerp to Brussels and Ghent the common man still speaks Netherlandic. The Belgians' languishing nationality might have been reinvigorated by a closer union with Holland, but will now, it must be feared, be wholly ripped away by the violent torrent of current events.⁸

Paradoxically, it turned out that it was in Flanders, part of that upstart state of Belgium, that truly interesting medieval material was being collected and made available. Hoffmann, for one, turned his eager attentions to the city of Ghent, where antiquarians and philologists like Jan Frans Willems were active. But he went from Breslau to Ghent by way of Vienna.

Hoffmann remained the wandering scholar that he had always been, and in the later 1830s he travelled to the Habsburg lands to search the libraries there for ancient German texts. The results of this inventorising journey is laid down in the second volume of his *Fundgruben für Geschichte deutscher Sprache und Litteratur* (1837), but more interesting is the social networking that happened along the way. One of Hoffmann's contacts in Vienna was the deputy librarian of the Imperial Court Library, Jernej Kopitar (1780–1844).⁹ This irascible, colourful Slovene, correspondent of Grimm, mentor of the Serb polymath Vuk Karadžić and one of the founders of Slavic philology, was also the censor for all non-German publications in the Habsburg empire. This made him the centre for a coterie of intellectuals from all the minority nationalities between Prague and Bucharest, and Kopitar's *Stammtisch* ('regulars' table) at the hotel Der Weisse Wolf was an informal gathering point for such men as Palacký, Josef Jungmann, Vuk Karadžić, Šafárik and Čelakovský (we have encountered some of these names as contacts of Bowring) whenever they were in Vienna. A delighted Hoffmann was introduced to this company, too, and found there something like the 1817 Wartburg feast, but one of book lovers rather than book burners. In his poems he celebrated the convivial, multiethnic *Stammtisch* in Der Weisse Wolf as a philological Parnassus for the awakening nations of Europe.

Upon his return from Vienna, Hoffmann decided to travel straight to Ghent, in Flanders. The immediate cause for this was that in Austria he had

picked up the scent of one of the oldest German poems, the *Ludwigslied*, which had disappeared in the course of the eighteenth century but, with the help of the Ghent philologist Jan Frans Willems, he hoped to retrieve. Willems (1793–1846) had come to the attention of the German philologists by his edition of another medieval text retrieved from oblivion, the Flemish tale of *Reynard the Fox*.

Using the very latest in modern technology, the railway, Hoffmann travelled across Belgium to Ghent where he met Willems and a few other men of letters, and thence to nearby Valenciennes where indeed he located the lost *Ludwigslied* in the municipal library. The find was published immediately under the joint names of Hoffmann and Willems as *Elnonensia* (Hoffmann von Fallersleben and Willems 1837; generally on the Elnon manuscript: Lefranq 1945).

This may be no more than a bibliophile version of an Indiana-Jones-style quest of discovery – if it were not for the fact that Hoffmann encountered in Flanders a very particular sociocultural situation. The literati of Ghent, Willems foremost among them, were in these years just beginning to chafe at the hegemony of French in the newly independent Belgian state. Although as yet they were loyal participants in something that can best be termed ‘Belgian nationalism’ – drawing on Flemish and Brabant historical roots for the symbolical prestige of a state that articulated its identity through the medium of French – disaffection was in the air. In Antwerp, Hendrik Conscience was at work on his Walter-Scott-inspired historical novel *The Lion of Flanders* (1838), which would celebrate the glories of medieval Flanders as the stalwart opponent of all French hegemony; and in Ghent, too, the medieval glory of Flanders was felt to square oddly with its present linguistic subordination to a French-speaking government and France-oriented state. In short, the Flemish movement, one of the better-documented national movements of north-western Europe (NEVB 1998), was about to emerge in the fateful year 1837, and one of its intellectual godfathers was none other than Hoffmann’s host: Jan Frans Willems. In the preface to his *Reynard the Fox* edition, two years previously, Willems had echoed yet another anti-French and anti-Belgian diatribe from Jacob Grimm, and paraphrased it to plead for a greater recognition of the Flemish language in Belgium, and its emancipation from French predominance:

In a word, with the exception of the *Divina Commedia*, Reynard is by far the best poem which the Middle Ages have bequeathed to Europe. And this is a Belgian poem! And the Belgians do not know it! [...] Grimm says that ‘it is the Belgians to whom *Reynard* is of greatest consequence, but who (so he continues) has noticed any fidelity and engagement for their native language in the last centuries? Profound self-denial will always bring about its own punishment: from this fair Belgian land, which was home to the poetic art during the Middle Ages, all literature has long vanished.’ That reproach, my countrymen, we only deserve all too well because of our aping of all that is French [...] May this my rendition of the ancient *Reynard the Fox* contribute to the revival of a language so dear to us, at a time when our country is inundated by so much French refuse!¹⁰

Hoffmann had met an influential Ghent intellectual who had shown himself eager to invoke the prestige of German medievalists in order to defend his native Flemish culture against French predominance. And this chimed with Hoffmann's own experiences on the rail journey through Belgium. He was aghast that along the various stops of the journey, the language of the public spaces was French in a part of Belgium where the common people still spoke Netherlandic (as Grimm had pointed out). This diglossia struck Hoffmann, as it had struck Grimm, as a sign of degeneracy and an unnatural self-estrangement. In the firebrand introduction ('Vlaensch und Französisch in Belgien') to the 1838 (8th) volume of his *Horae Belgicae*, Hoffmann pointed out as much in no uncertain terms. And, to ram the point home, he offered as a thought experiment that if any high-status language was to sit atop of demotic Flemish in the Belgian public sphere, that language ought surely to be its cognate German. Unlike the alien French, German was philologically related and therefore easily learned and amicably embraced by the Flemings. The statement echoes Arndt's (and Grimm's) notion of Netherlandic as a wayward dialect of the greater German whole, gives (again) an interesting gloss to that fateful line in the *Deutschlandlied* and foreshadows later adoptions of the self-same notion at the hands of German military occupiers in the twentieth century, who felt that the Netherlandic-speaking occupied territories were to be approached as estranged familiars rather than as enemy country.¹¹ Although many Belgian readers were pained rather than edified by this cack-handed intervention, Hoffmann's relations with Flanders were to remain cordial. The meetings in Ghent with Willems, Prudens van Duyse and other intellectual leaders of the Flemish literati inspired him to address no less than four solidarity poems to the nascent Flemish movement: 'Aen Vlaensch-Belgien', 'Tricolor', 'Gegen die Fransquillons' and 'Vlaensch-Belgien 1839'.¹² Later, Hoffmann went so far as to try his hand at writing verse in an imitation-medieval Flemish, which in turn sparked a highly popular forsooth-and-by-my-troth medievalism among Flemish poets.

Hoffmann's journey to Ghent, his *Stammtisch*-style association with the literati there and his Flemish writings of 1838 and 1839 coincided with the rupture of the Flemish movement away from an earlier pan-Belgian patriotism. Furthermore, it established an important tendency among Flemish cultural activists of the 1840s to link their anti-French feelings with a nascent, romantic Germanophilia. Hoffmann extended, and received, a joyful recognition of the rights of downtrodden nationalities such as those he had also celebrated in Vienna at Kopitar's *Stammtisch*. For their part, Flemish literati like Prudens van Duyse accepted the German gesture of solidarity eagerly. Caught between the overweening attitude of the French-speaking state and the still-raw relations with Holland, from which Belgium had only recently seceded, the recourse of a German big brother was more than welcome (von der Dunk 1966; Leerssen 2006).

Conclusion

Hoffmann's sojourn in Ghent was one of the triggering factors in launching an intense episode of Flemish-German nationalist solidarity in the mid-to-late nineteenth century – the echoes of which were, once again, picked up under the German occupations of the two world wars. These later echoes and reverberations need not concern us here, and it would be misleading to see in the ethnic essentialism of romantic philologists like Grimm and Hoffmann the hatching ground of all later evil; yet, conversely, in tracing the source traditions of twentieth-century ethnic nationalism it would be wrong to disregard the collector of the Fairy Tales and the author of *Die Gedanken sind frei*.

What I want to highlight by way of conclusions can be grouped under three headings.

One is the importance of intellectuals and academics, and philologists in particular, in the mutual relations between political and cultural nationalism. They form a middle ground between political thought and public institutions on the one hand and the rarefied realms of art and poetical literature on the other, and for that reason any intellectual or cultural history of national movements will have to take their position into account. Politics and culture are not two separate spheres of human activity locked into a chicken-and-egg relationship; it would be more appropriate to see official institutions, public-sphere cultural reflection and social mobilisation as interlocking parts of a historical development in which academics played an important and, above all, active part. The Wartburg students of 1817, the Hoffmann of the 1841 *Deutschlandlied*, the circle of Austro-Slavic consciousness-raisers around Kopitar and the Flemish intellectuals of 1837–8 were not passive cultural by-products or 'reflections' of historical developments that took place elsewhere, in the field of social power negotiations or political statecraft; on the contrary, they were ahead of social and political developments, early harbingers and intellectual architects of trends, whose impact in society at large or in the political arena would mature only later.

The other conclusion concerns the international, transnational outreach and mobility of such intellectuals. Their sphere of action was not restricted to their country or language of origin; they formed an international network whose tight interconnections may explain the remarkable synchronicity of national movements in all parts of Europe. Palacký, Čelakovský, Kopitar, Vuk Karadžić, Pavel Šafárik, Hoffmann von Fallersleben, Jan Frans Willems, Prudens van Duyse and indeed John Bowring are only one degree of separation removed from each other, between Valenciennes and Novi Sad.

Finally, the position of such philologists illustrates the remarkable Janus-faced nature of nationalism between nostalgia and modernity. There is iconic value in Hoffmann von Fallersleben boarding one of the very earliest railway lines in Europe in order to hunt down one of the very oldest German manuscripts.

Postscript

The Elnon manuscript that Hoffmann and Willems discovered in Valenciennes in 1837 was not a Flemish/Netherlandic one and was not published as part of the *Horae Belgicae*. For that reason, it is not often remembered when Hoffmann's philological exploits in the Low Countries are discussed. But of all his archival discoveries it is perhaps the most important one. It contains not only the German *Ludwigslied* in a datable version from the late ninth century (which makes it one of the very earliest holographs of German literature); on the same page and in the same scribal hand, the manuscript also contains the Sequence to Saint Eulalie – the very earliest holograph of a literary text in vernacular French. The oldest texts of German and of French literature were written down side by side by a single pen in a single hand in a West-Flemish monastery in the ninth century. The Elnon manuscript thus testifies to the diglossic coexistence, at that post-Carolingian time, of east- and west-Frankish linguistic practice, like the Strasbourg Oaths of 842.¹³ And like the Strasbourg Oaths, this testimony to the intimate coexistence of two cultural traditions that were later to grow apart and become such inimical opposites hails from the transitional middle zone in Europe between Lorraine and the North Sea – a zone that would in the following millennium be contested so bitterly between the French and the German spheres of influence. In that contest, Hoffmann and Willems played their own part; a part not without interest or importance. But in the twenty-first century, it is the nameless monk who wrote down the two texts side by side as part of a common literary repertoire who offers, more than a millennium after his unrecorded death, the most inspiring example.

Notes

1 On the Europe-wide influence of Scott's historical novels, particularly in inspiring national-heroic tales in subaltern cultural communities, see Pittock (2006).

2 I adopt the idea of 'cultural transfers' from the influential work of Michel Espagne and Michael Werner (Espagne 1999; Espagne and Werner 1990). This approach, which originated in comparative literature as the study of cross-national influences and contacts, was applied by Espagne and Werner to the fields of cultural sociology and later also to comparative political history. There it was successful as, again, a corrective to earlier 'internalist' tendencies, showing that the work of intellectuals and the emergence of political institutions were frequently a response to influences from abroad rather than an emanation from domestic infrastructures.

3 These names are mentioned in George Barnett Smith's article in the 'old' *Dictionary of National Biography*, which is more informative on this aspect than Gerald Stone's in the 'new' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Although Bowring's British career as a radical politician has been well studied, a full survey of his European literary contacts and activities is as yet outstanding; this would have to be collated from archival sources and from existing single-language studies such as Kalma (1960), Kowalska (1965), Sova (1943) also Varannai (1996).

4 If not separately source-referenced, the facts, incidents, events and episodes recounted in the following sections have been garnered from Hoffmann's own writings such as his autobiography *Mein Leben* (in Hoffmann von Fallersleben 1892: vols 7 and 8) and the introduction to Hoffmann

von Fallersleben (1838); correspondence as edited by Deprez (1963); also secondary literature such as Nelde (1967, 1979) (who tends towards the mode of apologia) and the various articles in Behr et al. (1999). For the historical background of Netherlandic–German relations, including the role of poets, philologists and other intellectuals, see Leerssen (2006).

5 Available online in the *SPIN Anthology of Patriotic and Nationalist Verse*, www.spinnet.eu/spiki, under *Deutschlandlied*. The originals of the first and third stanzas read:

Deutschland, Deutschland über alles, über alles in der Welt
Wenn es stets zu Schutz und Trutze brüderlich zusammenhält
Von der Maas bis an die Memel, von der Etsch bis an den Belt
Deutschland, Deutschland über alles, über alles in der Welt!

Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit für das deutsche Vaterland!
Danach lasst uns alle streben, brüderlich mit Herz und Hand!
Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit sind des Glückes Unterpfand
Blüh im Glanze dieses Glückes, blühe, deutsches Vaterland!

6 Carl Georg Christian Schumacher: *August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben*, 1819; oil on canvas, 114 × 88 cm; Nationalgalerie Berlin, Bild, A III 358. Online at Wikimedia Commons, <http://commons.wikimedia.org>.

7 There was some factual justification for that phrase: in 1839, following Dutch recognition of Belgian independence, the Dutch province of Limburg east of the Meuse was turned into a duchy under the Dutch crown and as such was made part of the German Confederation (in a gesture meant to indemnify the Confederation for the Belgian diminution of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, and the eastward expansion of the French sphere of influence as a result of Belgian independence). In a sense, then, the Meuse did form, for part of its course, the western frontier of the German Confederation – much as the Belt was its northern frontier owing to the membership of the Danish duchy of Holstein in the Confederation (cf. Boogman 1955).

8 Originally in the *Göttische Gelehrte Anzeigen*, quoted after Grimm (1864: 5, 111–4, author's translation). In the original (with capitalisation *sic*):

Jedes volk das die sprache seiner vorfahren aufgibt ist entartet und ohne festen halt. die heutige umwälzung in den Niederlanden darf lediglich dem seit lange befestigten einflusse französischer sitte und den umtrieben der priester, keineswegs einer echt vaterländischen bewegung zugeschrieben werden. von Antwerpen aus bis nach Brüssel und Ghent redet der gemeine mann noch niederländisch; durch die engere verbindung mit Holland hätte auf diese grundlage hin die fast erloschene nationalität der Belgier langsam wieder angefacht werden mögen, aber der gewaltige strom der zeit droht jetzt alles davon noch übrige mit sich fortzureisen.

9 Kopitar himself is a nodal point in a philological and literary network spanning much of central and south-eastern Europe, and has in recent decades attracted increasing attention. I mention only Bernard (1994), Lukan (1995), Pogačnik (1978) and Merchiers (2005). Specifically on his encounter with Hoffmann: Hafner (1957).

10 Willems (1834: preface, author's translation). In the original:

Met een woord, Reinaert is verre uit het beste gedicht, dat de middeleeuwen (Dante's *Divina Commedia* uitgezonderd) aan Europa hebben opgeleverd. En dit gedicht is een Belgisch gedicht! En de Belgen kennen het niet! En het moeten Duytschers zyn, die het aen het licht geven! 'De Belgen (zegt Grimm, in zyne opdracht,) hebben het meeste belang in den Reinaert: doch wie heeft (vervolgt hij) wie heeft sedert eeuwen by hen nog verknochtheid en belangstelling voor de moedertael aangetroffen? Diepe zelfvergetenheid brengt allerwege hare eigen straf mede: uit dit schoone Belgenland, alwaer in de middeleeuwen ook de dichtkunst woonde, is sedert lang alle poësie verdwenen.' – Een verwyf, myne lieve landgenoten! dat wy door het verwaerlozen onzer tael, en door onze naäperyen van al wat fransch is, maar al te zeer verdienen. [. . .] Moge deze myne bearbeiding van het oudere gedeelte van *Reinaert den Vos* iets bydragen, tot het doen herleven van eene zoo dierbare tael, in een' tyd waerop ons land van zooveel franschen uitschot wordt overstroomd!

The reference to Grimm quotes comments made in the dedicatory preface to Grimm's edition of the German *Reinhart Fuchs* (Grimm 1834).

11 The writings of Arndt and Hoffmann concerning Flanders and the Low Countries were reprinted in the years 1914–8; cf. also Berneisen (1914). On the German *Flamenpolitik*, see Wils (1974). The cultural/academic wing of German expansionist thought vis-à-vis the Low Countries emerged in the twentieth century as the so-called *Westforschung*. It has been studied critically in recent years (Derks 2001; Henkes and Knotter 2005), but its intellectual/ideological antecedents tend to be traced back no further than the late nineteenth century; its true origins are in the generation of Arndt, Grimm and Hoffmann.

12 These were included in his wickedly subversive verse collection *Unpolitische Lieder* (1839), which notoriously led to Hoffmann's dismissal from Breslau and his exile from Prussia (hence the homesickness that inspired him to write the *Lied der Deutschen* on Helgoland in 1841).

13 Available online (alongside the Saint Eulalie Sequence) at www.orbilat.com/Languages/French/Texts/Period_02/.

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