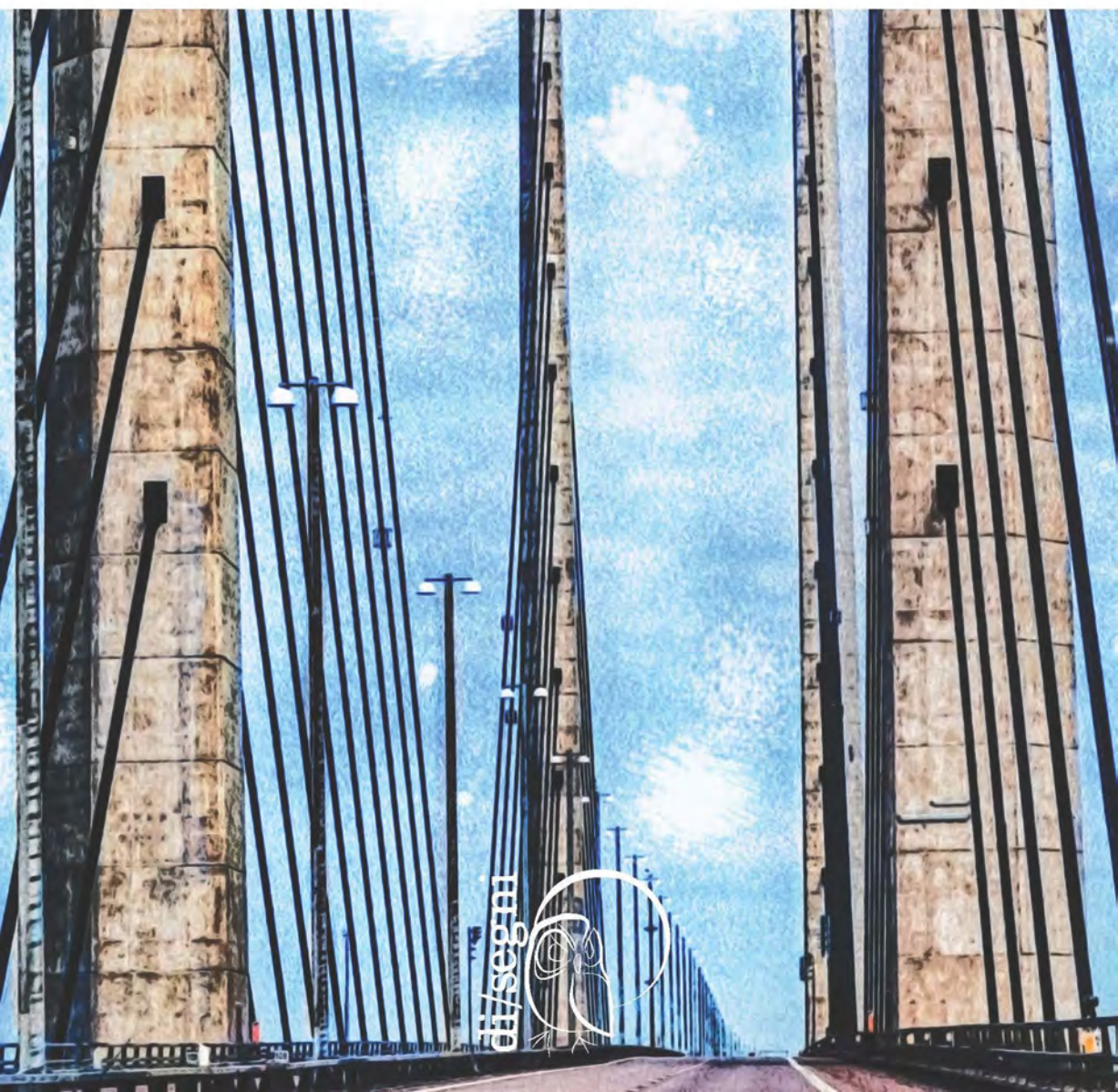


BRIDGES TO SCANDINAVIA

Edited by Andrea Meregalli and Camilla Storskog





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Edited by *Andrea Meregalli and Camilla Storskog*

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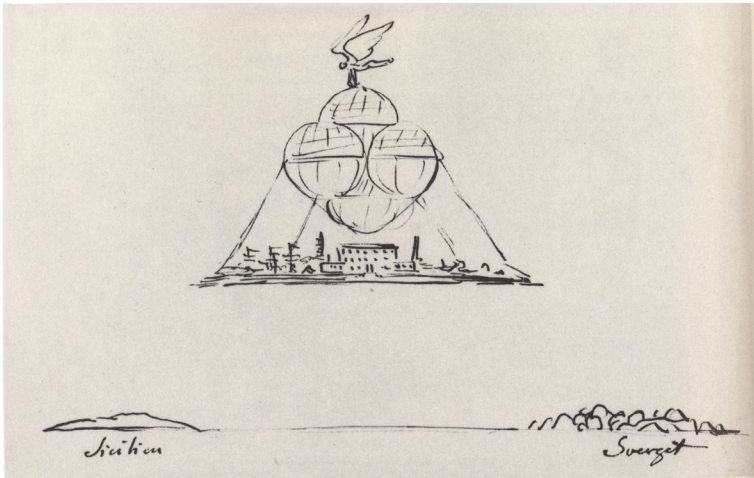
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PREFACE

Andrea Meregalli – Camilla Storskog
UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO



C.A. Ehrensvärd, *Underdånigste Project att flytta Stockholm till Sicilien (A Most Humble Project to Move Stockholm to Sicily)*, pen and Indian ink
(Photograph ©Nationalmuseum, Stockholm).

Carl August Ehrensvärd (1745-1800) was a Swedish naval officer, architect, writer and painter – though he is perhaps best remembered as a sharp-witted lampoonist. Among the countless drawings he left behind is a roughly outlined sketch illustrating a project elaborated for the Swedish king Gustav

III pondering the possibility of transferring the city of Stockholm to Sicily, climatically (and culturally, in Ehrensward's view) better off, with the help of the Montgolfier brothers' recent invention. Although not much more than a doodle, the picture exudes Ehrensward's remarkable fascination with southern Italy, while raising a number of questions on the proportions that the attraction to distant cultures can take on. Used as a springboard for an introductory discourse to the present volume, this image may be read as an emblem of the cross-cultural relationships that provide the premises for the following essays.

Unsurprisingly, literary and cultural relations between the Nordic countries and Italy have traditionally been at the core of the range of research interests shared and cultivated by Italian scholars in the field of Scandinavian Studies. This was also the case with Margherita Giordano Lokrantz (1935-2004), who, in 1973, founded the section of Scandinavian Studies at the University of Milan, where she taught Swedish and Scandinavian literature for over thirty years. Margherita Giordano Lokrantz devoted some of her studies to those connections with Italy and the Italian culture which can be traced in works by various Scandinavian authors, such as Bridget of Sweden, Anne Charlotte Leffler, Henrik Ibsen, Knut Hamsun, Selma Lagerlöf, as well as to some more general forms of relations and mutual influence between these two geocultural areas.

This explains the theme chosen for the scientific project started in 2013 to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the Scandinavian Section of the University of Milan. On this occasion, the decision was made to enter the field by expanding its horizons in all directions through the collaboration of scholars of Scandinavian Studies from other Italian universities in addition to experts of other foreign cultures from the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at the University of Milan. Thus, engaged in a variety of ways in the intercultural discussion at hand were aspects of all the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden) dealing not only with the Italian context but also with a number of other European and non-European cultural and literary scenes, from Poland in the east to the United States in the west by way of Germany, France, Great Britain, Spain, and Portugal.

The first output of this project was the conference *Ponti con la Scandinavia / Bridges to Scandinavia*, held at the University of Milan on 13-15 November 2013, featuring twenty-seven speakers from the above-mentioned fields. For some of these scholars the conference marked the starting point for further investigation, the results of which are the essays collected in this volume.

The texts appear in approximate chronological order with regard to the subject of each study. The wide range of investigated themes includes: the perception of the Nordic countries, of their culture and people abroad, either through personal experience or indirect knowledge (Bernardini,

Manera, Paleari, Spazzali), and, conversely, the impressions of foreign countries and cultures encountered in works written by Scandinavian authors (Bampi, Lombardi); the influence of foreign literatures and models on Nordic authors (Berardini, Storskog), as well as the reception of Nordic works in other cultural systems through literary inspiration and rewrites, the theatre, or even the development of scientific discourse (Finco, Lonati, Meregalli, Perrelli, Putignano); the translation of literature from or into the Scandinavian languages (Ferrari, Marelli and Silander); diverse forms of historical contacts in specific moments and fields (Di Venosa, Zuliani).

The scientific project, the 2013 conference and the publication of this volume would not have been possible without the encouragement offered by a number of institutions and individuals. We wish to thank the following institutions for their patronage and financial support: the Embassies of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden in Italy; the Danish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education; SIU Norway; the Swedish Institute; SWEA Milano. We are also grateful to the Rector of the University of Milan and to the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures for their support, as well as to the scientific committee of the *Di/segni* series for accepting this volume and making this publication possible. Our thanks also to our students for their help and assistance during the conference; to Thomas Malvica for revising the essays written in English; to Flora Cusi for the original photograph on the book cover; to Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, for the reproduction of Ehrensvärd's drawing. Finally, our special thanks to the Lokrantz family, in particular to Annika Lokrantz Bernitz, who in the years 2004-13 established a legacy fund to provide travel grants for University of Milan students of Scandinavian languages and literatures, and to Henrik Bernitz, for honouring us with his presence during the 2013 conference.

None of this would have been possible if it had not been for Margherita Giordano Lokrantz. Our gratitude to her transcends the written word. This book is dedicated to her memory.