

In English: <http://per-olof.dk/cdt/guide.htm>

Invitation to the Danish in English

Ps in advance: I translate this with Google and want to make a number of corrections - corrections you who do not understand Danish, could not take into account. Google shortcomings notwithstanding, I still think it gives a good outline of what the topic is here. How correct my English and joined Google's effort then is - must be judged by others! ☺

Per-Olof Johansson

When I in 1995 started my career as a web publisher of my own texts, I had no doubt that if I only was going to write in Danish I should approach a very limited circle of people. Therefore my articles about Chief Seattle and splint baskets had to be in English. Since I am by no means 'good at English,' I got help from others to the translations. It does not mean that I said goodbye to my own language, or look down on it. It is simply a realization of the state of the world under the new means of communication and conditions and options!

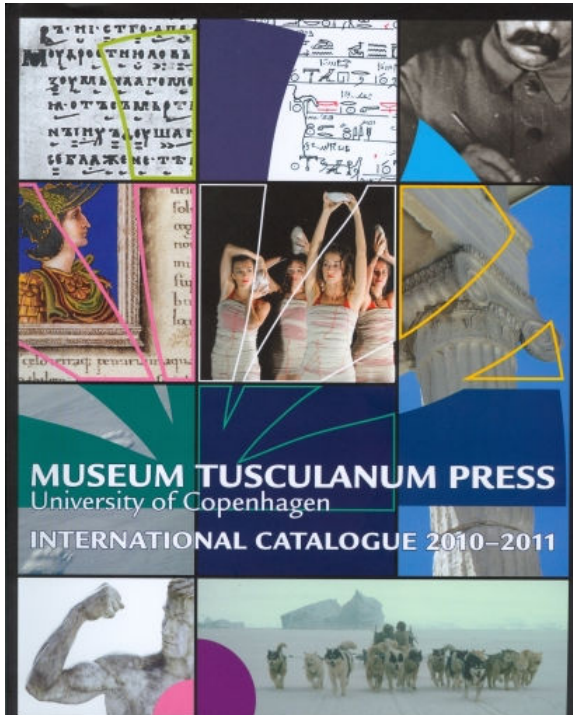
In the 1700s fought the Danish, Norwegian-born author Ludvig Holberg (1684 to 1754) against the widespread use of German in the higher classes, for which he said: "I say that the language [Danish] involuntarily come to use on large sites, because in itself have all the comforts that any language can have. For it is free-flowing, naturally and without any difficulty and abuse can be pronounced ... "

We have suffered from the same debate in Denmark today. Now it's just not German, but English as is threatening the Danish language. It is obviously a debate coming again and again. Before the Reformation in the 1500s Latin was the preferred language among the learned and therefore upper class. Apart from the religious rebellion, reformation was also a linguistic rebellion that put Danish language in focus.

Now we are there again. Although we cultivate the language of our own country we are fully aware that the poetry of language is a need that can not be replaced by a very large world language. Any translation of the poems to the world language will be only an approximation because it is the poem's natural to have the associations, suggestions, reflections, which have no parallels in the second language. Therefore, no Google translation could live up to the role, where the poem translations requires active co-write, retel-

lings!

With non-fiction texts we believe that it pretty much another matter. Here the authors' task is to walk on two legs. We are on the Internet and can not let us be restricted to the mother tongue. After



poor ability we have with gestures, dictionaries and Google's help not to refrain from contacting a larger world than the home-straight parish pump! So let it be that we now and then go into the water at the depths!

Why this torrent of words? Because I got a book catalog from the University of Copenhagen publisher 'Museum Tusculanum Press', <http://www.mtp.dk> It contains very few books in Danish, a few in German and French, but most books in the 70-page catalog are in English. The authors are in large

numbers Danish, but the issues are such that they should call on the international attention. They may well be Danish, Nordic and international, Roman antiquities - you name it. I do not have the impression that they at any large extent are translations from Danish, so the Danes will have to inform themselves through English. There are exceptions to this - here are also poems. Not just a book about poetry, but a book of translations of 100 poems in English with Danish parallel texts. I wonder what the English readers will do with the Danish text. Perhaps get the inspiration to learn Danish in one form or another and thereby be able to say: "The poem is certainly better in the Danish original," It is not so sure that you have to be an expert in Danish for to have this experience.

I recall that my youngest son, Hjalmar, when he began to learn Spanish, discovered the poet Lorca and found that his father had more Lorca on his book-shelves than he could find in the Copenhagen antiquarian bookshops. One of the books had just Spanish and Danish parallel texts, and he read one of the Spanish texts aloud to myself and swam right up! For how much better it was in Spanish! I believe him, but also know that the translator after all expert rating is excellent.

So let this be an invitation for you English speaking about to board the Danish and to ourselves to see what it is presented of the Danish erudition and poetry - in English.



