

The Success of Swedish 19th-Century Women Writers on the French-speaking book market: Fredrika Bremer and Emilie Flygare-Carlén versus C. J. L. Almqvist and Viktor Rydberg



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ABSTRACT

In the mid-19th century, Swedish women writers such as Fredrika Bremer and Emilie Flygare-Carlén wrote some of the most popular and widely disseminated European novels, while novels by their contemporary male colleagues seldom reached readers outside the Nordic countries. For international success of Swedish fiction, the dissemination of novels in German was important, as translations into other European languages were often based on German translations. The most striking exception to this pattern was the reception of Swedish literature translated into French. This article examines the reception of Swedish 19th-century novels that were directly translated into French. After an introductory survey of the general transnational reception of Swedish novels in the mid- and late 19th century, the French reception is explored in order to examine its characteristics and how it differed from the reception in other languages. After the success of the bestselling novelists Bremer and Flygare-Carlén is examined, the arbitrary distribution of Carl Jonas Love Almqvist's and Viktor Rydberg's stories is presented. Differences in terms of the number of French publications, translators, publishers, and places of publication are investigated. The role of Swedish mediators in the introduction of certain writers in French is emphasised, along with the possible consequences of being launched in French from Sweden by Swedish publishers, compared with those of being introduced by French mediators. Based on the Swedish case, the national perspective and the focus on Paris as the capital of letters in former studies are contested.

RÉSUMÉ

Au milieu du XIX^e siècle, les écrivaines suédoises telles Fredrika Bremer et Emilie Flygare-Carlén ont écrit certains des romans européens les plus populaires et les plus largement diffusés, tandis que les romans de leurs collègues masculins contemporains atteignaient rarement les lecteurs en dehors des pays nordiques. En ce qui concerne le succès international de la littérature suédoise, le rôle de la diffusion des romans en allemand était central, car les traductions dans d'autres langues européennes étaient souvent basées sur les traductions allemandes. La réception de la littérature suédoise traduite en français constitue néanmoins l'exception la plus frappante à ce modèle. Cet article s'interroge sur la réception des romans suédois du XIX^e siècle traduits directement en français. Après une enquête introductive sur la réception transnationale générale des romans suédois au milieu et à la fin du XIX^e siècle, cette

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contribution explore la réception française de cette littérature afin d'examiner en quoi elle diffère de la réception dans d'autres langues. Après avoir examiné le succès des romancières à succès que sont Bremer et Flygare-Carlén, l'étude présente le caractère arbitraire de la diffusion des œuvres de Carl Jonas Love Almqvist et Viktor Rydberg. Les différences liées au nombre de publications françaises, aux traducteurs, éditeurs et aux lieux de publication sont étudiées. Le rôle des médiateurs suédois dans l'introduction de certains écrivains en français est souligné, ainsi que les conséquences possibles d'un lancement en français depuis la Suède par des éditeurs suédois, comparées à celles d'une introduction par des médiateurs français. À partir du cas suédois, les résultats de cette étude viennent contester la perspective nationale et le centre parisien comme capitale des lettres dans les études antérieures.

INTRODUCTION

Current French readers may be familiar with Swedish crime fiction and children's books, such as Camilla Läckberg's detective novels and Astrid Lindgren's stories about an exceptionally strong redheaded girl named Pippi Longstocking. Well-read audiences and scholars may also be acquainted with Swedish fiction from the Modern Breakthrough of Scandinavian literature and the *fin de siècle*, such as August Strindberg's dramas and Selma Lagerlöf's story of Nils Holgersson. Swedish novels by women writers – specifically, Fredrika Bremer and Emilie Flygare-Carlén – in the first surge from the 1840s onwards are less known. Not even scholars of Scandinavian literature are aware of the impact of these domestic and realist novels among French readers in the mid-19th century.

In most national handbooks and textbooks on Swedish 19th-century novels, male writers such as Carl Jonas Love Almqvist, Viktor Rydberg and August Strindberg dominate. In extended versions and recently updated descriptions, some of these books include female novelists from the mid-19th century. Some overviews mention Fredrika Bremer, Sophie von Knorring and Emilie Flygare-Carlén as early realist novelists before the Modern Breakthrough and refer to women writers such as Viktoria Benedictsson and Selma Lagerlöf as part of the *fin de siècle* (see e.g. Lönnroth & Delblanc, 1988)¹. However, if the history of Swedish 19th-century literature were to be re-told from an external and transnational perspective, it would reveal a different story about the remarkable international success of certain women writers – particularly Fredrika Bremer and Emilie Flygare-Carlén. As shown elsewhere, launching their novels in German was vital to the marketing of their stories and to the distribution of their novels in other languages (Leffler, 2020: 50, 60–61). But Bremer and Flygare-Carlén did not entirely depend on their triumph in German. In the most illuminating example of this, their novels were directly translated into French, without being triggered by previous German translations. From the start, these French translations came directly from the Swedish source texts.

The dissemination of Swedish novels in French is a unique example of the transnational reception of Swedish literature in the 19th century. Moreover, the direct launching of Bremer's and Flygare-Carlén's French-translated stories contests the idea of Paris as the literary centre of that time, even in francophone Europe. For example, many of Flygare-Carlén's novels were published in French by publishers in other places in francophone Europe. It also challenges the established view of the national history of Swedish literature, in which contemporary male novelists, such as Almqvist and Rydberg, hold a stronger position as significant Swedish 19th-century writers than the female novelists, such as Bremer and Flygare-Carlén. Before turning to and expanding on the French reception of Swedish 19th-century novels and various transnational aspects of it, a summarised overview is given of the launching of the four authors mentioned above and their novels in general, which is based on a former study (Leffler, 2020). Bibliographical data on Swedish novels in French is based on the SWED Database, constructed in connection to the former research project at the University of Gothenburg (Leffler & Leffler, 2021)².

Swedish 19th-century literature by many well-known writers was translated into Danish and, in some cases, into German. German-translated Swedish literature was circulated in the German-speaking regions on the continent. In the late 1830s, Fredrika Bremer's and Emilie Flygare-Carlén's novels were rapidly translated into both Danish and German. Unlike most fiction by other Swedish writers, such as their male colleagues C.J.L. Almqvist and Viktor Rydberg, the first translations of Bremer's and Flygare-Carlén's works into German initiated a striking distribution of their stories within German-speaking Europe. Different publishers competed to launch the same novel in different translations. For example, in 1840, the publishing house Brockhaus published Bremer's novel *Hemmet*, which was titled *Das Haus oder Familiensorgen und Familienfreuden*. The novel was then republished seven times by Brockhaus between 1841 and 1886 (Bremer, 1840, 1841, 1842, 1844, 1857, 1864, 1875, 1886). At the same time as Brockhaus first issued Bremer's novel, it was translated by A.E. Wolheim da Fonseca and published by Velhagen & Klasing as *Der häusliche Heerd* in 1841 and once again in 1844 (Bremer, 1841, 1844). Just 2 years after the first edition by Brockhaus, the same novel appeared in yet another translation produced by Gottlob Fink, which was published in 1843 in two different collections of stories – *Das belleristische Ausland* and *Sämtliche Werke* – by the publisher Franckh'sche Verlagshandlung in Stuttgart, who dominated the novel market at the time (Bremer, 1843).

This rapid and massive dissemination in German introduced Bremer's and Flygare-Carlén's stories to readers all over Europe. In the mid-19th century, German was the leading literary language on the European continent, due to the dominance of the Austrian Empire in Central-Eastern Europe. Because of the success of Bremer's and Flygare-Carlén's work in German, the stories were quickly translated into local languages within the Austrian Empire. Flygare-Carlén's novel *Rosen på Tistelön* (1842) was first distributed in German in 1842, and then distributed again with a new translation into German in 1843 (Flygare-Carlén, 1842; Flygare-Carlén, 1843a). A year later, it was published in Pest (Budapest) as the first Swedish literary work ever translated into Hungarian, according to Péter Mádl and Ildikó Annus (2019).

Popular Swedish novels in German were also translated into Dutch and English. A couple of years after the first German translation of Flygare-Carlén's novel *Rosen på Tistelön*, it was translated into Dutch and English, based on a German translation (Flygare-Carlén, 1843b; Flygare-Carlén, 1844a). However, after the first successful reception of Swedish novels in North America, most translations into English were made directly from the Swedish source texts. Those published in the United States were often translated by Swedish immigrants in cooperation with anglophone colleagues. For example, Gustaf Clemens Hebbe worked with Henry Champion Deming to translate Flygare-Carlén's *Rosen på Tistelön* (1842) as *The Rose of Thistle Isle*, which was published separately in London and New York in 1844 (Flygare-Carlén, 1844b; Flygare-Carlén, 1844c). In fact, these translations were published in the same year as Mary Howitt's London and New York translations of the same novel, which were based on a former German version (Flygare-Carlén, 1844a; Flygare-Carlén, 1844d; Flygare-Carlén, 1844e).

Altogether, Flygare-Carlén's novels were translated into about 20 European languages, and her novels were widely distributed in Europe and the United States from 1840 until the Second World War. Bremer's novels were translated into about 15 languages, and her novels were in high demand from 1840–1890, particularly in the three major European languages of German, English and French. As demonstrated elsewhere, both Flygare-Carlén's and Bremer's novels were widely advertised and reviewed in anglophone and German-language newspapers and journals (Leffler, 2020: 118–144). When a translated novel was published, several reviews of it would often come out in a variety of newspapers and literary journals. For example, German and American reviewers admired Bremer's novel *Grannarne* for its good morals (Anon., 1840; Anon., 1841; Anon., 1843), while Flygare-Carlén's novels were praised for their vibrant descriptions and trustworthy characters (Anon., 1848; Anon., 1854a; Anon., 1854b; Anon., 1860). Moreover, an anonymous critic, who claimed that women wrote the best novels, emphasised that Bremer and Flygare-Carlén 'share the crown of Swedish novelism' (Anon., 1853b).

Compared with Bremer and Flygare-Carlén, the contemporary male writers Almqvist and Rydberg were almost invisible in the international press. If they were mentioned, it was primarily in connection to other Swedish writers, while being listed in reviews or introductory

articles on Scandinavian culture. As explored elsewhere, Almqvist became a topic of scandal when he was suspected of murder in Stockholm; therefore, he had to flee the country in 1851 (Leffler, 2020: 118–122). Rydberg, on the other hand, became best known outside of Sweden in Denmark (Lund, 2020). He was also presented to German readers as the translator of Goethe's drama *Faust*, which he started to translate into Swedish in the 1860s and completed in 1876 (Anon., 1876).

BREMER'S AND FLYGARE-CARLÉN'S WORKS IN FRENCH

Despite the widespread and prosperous reception of Fredrika Bremer's and Emilie Flygare-Carlén's works, the two authors did not entirely depend on their German success. As mentioned earlier, the most striking example of this fact is the translation of their stories into French, which was done directly from the Swedish source texts. Bremer's stories were remarkably quickly distributed in French. Just 4 years after its first translation into Danish and 2 years after its German introduction, the first translation of Bremer's novel *Familjen H**** was published in French as *La famille H* (Bremer, 1840). A few years later, a Christmas story by Bremer was published as 'La fête de Noël en Suède et en Norvège' in 1844 (Bremer, 1844). In the next 10 years, French publishers printed about 10 more works by Bremer, including her novels *Les voisins*, *Les jumeaux*, *Les filles du président* and *Un journal*, as well as some works about Scandinavian life and culture, such as *Scène de la vie dalécarlienne* and *Scènes norwégiennes* (Bremer, 1845; Bremer, 1846, 1853, 1861, 1868, 1872, 1875, 1876, 1881; Bremer, 1846, 1847, 1854, 1856, 1870; Bremer, 1846–47; Bremer, 1846–47, 1879; Bremer, 1847, 1872; Bremer, 1847, 1854, 1860, 1876; Bremer, 1847, 1872; Bremer, 1849a; Bremer, 1849b; Bremer, 1849c; Bremer, 1849d; Bremer, 1853, 1862). Moreover, Bremer's travelogue *La vie de famille dans le Nouveau Monde* was issued in French in 1850 and *Le voyage de la Saint-Jean* in 1855 (Bremer, 1850, 1854, 1855; Bremer, 1855, 1871). Some of her novels were republished a couple of times, such as *La famille H* and *Les voisins*. In addition, a few new novels were published in French after 1855, such as her novels *Hertha*, *Guerre et paix* and *L'esclave* (Bremer, 1856; Bremer, 1860a; Bremer, 1868; Bremer, 1886). From 1860 onwards, only two more stories were published in French, Bremer's novel *Espérances* and her first epistolary novella *Axel et Anna* in 1860 and 1861, respectively (Bremer, 1860b; Bremer, 1861). However, many of her works were repeatedly republished until the end of the century.

The female translator Rosalie du Puget translated many of Bremer's works, and her translations were first published by Librairie française et étrangère in Paris. Different publishers also republished many of Puget's translations in the 19th century. For example, Puget's translation of Bremer's novel *Les voisins* were first published in 1846 and then again in 1853, 1861, 1888, 1875, 1876, 1881, 1882 and 1896. When some of Bremer's novels were republished after the millennium, three of Puget's translations were among them (Bremer, 2013, 2016; Bremer, 2013, 2017; Bremer, 2013, 2019)³. Thus, Puget not only dominated as Bremer's translator in the mid-19th century but also remains the main translator in recent publications reintroducing Bremer's novels to French readers, probably due to a growing interest in early women writers.

The distribution of Flygare-Carlén's novels in French differed from Bremer's circulation. Although the first novel by Flygare-Carlén, *Rosen på Tistelön*, which was titled *Les smogglers suédois* (Flygare-Carlén, 1845), was published the same year as Bremer's second novel, in 1845, it was not until in the 1850s that Flygare-Carlén achieved a breakthrough in francophone Europe. In the 1850s, more than 25 different translations and editions of more than 10 of Flygare-Carlén's novels were available in French (Flygare-Carlén, 1852, 1854, 1857; Flygare-Carlén, 1854, 1883; Flygare-Carlén, 1855a; Flygare-Carlén, 1855b; Flygare-Carlén, 1855c; Flygare-Carlén, 1855, 1856; Flygare-Carlén, 1855, 1858; Flygare-Carlén, 1855, 1893; Flygare-Carlén, 1856, 1859; Flygare-Carlén, 1857a; Flygare-Carlén, 1857b; Flygare-Carlén, 1857c; Flygare-Carlén, 1858a; Flygare-Carlén, 1858b; Flygare-Carlén, 1858c; Flygare-Carlén, 1858d; Flygare-Carlén, 1858e; Flygare-Carlén, 1858, 1861; Flygare-Carlén, 1859; Flygare-Carlén, 1859, 1861; Flygare-Carlén, 1859, 1874). About 12 new translations were published in the following three decades, some of which were reprinted several times. Among them, five stories were translated into French for the first time (Flygare-Carlén, 1860–61; Flygare-Carlén, 1861; Flygare-Carlén, 1862; Flygare-Carlén, 1866; Flygare-Carlén, 1866, 1876, 1884, 1893; Flygare-Carlén, 1869, 1876a; Flygare-Carlén, 1876b; Flygare-Carlén, 1877; Flygare-Carlén, 1882; Flygare-Carlén, 1884; Flygare-Carlén, 1885a; Flygare-Carlén, 1885b; Flygare-Carlén, 1888–89; Flygare-Carlén, 1893).

While the same translator, Rosalie du Puget, translated most of Bremer's stories, and a few publishers in Paris strove to publish Bremer's novels, Flygare-Carlén's novels appeared in several different translations and were published by publishers all over francophone Europe. In this way, the circulation of Flygare-Carlén's fiction can be seen as contesting the status of Paris at that time as the capital of 'the world republic of letters', as Pascale Casanova and other scholars have called it (Casanova, 2004: 23–24). That is, not even in francophone Europe did Paris dominate as the only significant place of publication when popular Swedish novels were circulated to French-reading audiences in Europe. Many of Flygare-Carlén's novels were distributed from publishers in Belgium (Brussels and Liège), Switzerland (Bern), Russia (Saint Petersburg), today's Germany (Leipzig) and Luxembourg. While a translated version of a novel by Bremer was often republished several times by the same publisher, a translation of a novel by Flygare-Carlén was only republished a couple of times by the same publisher. Instead, different publishers situated in different parts of francophone Europe circulated different translations of the same novel. For example, Flygare-Carlén's most popular novel in French, *Ett år*, was first published as *Un an de mariage* in a translation by O. Squarr in Brussels in 1852; it was later republished three times and distributed from both Brussels and Leipzig in 1854, 1855 and 1857. In 1857, it was retranslated and issued as *Un an de mariage* by Lebègue in Brussels and by Bureaux de la revue contemporaine in Paris. This edition was then republished in Paris in 1888–89. The same novel was also published as *Deux jeunes femmes* in a translation by Marie Souvestre, which was reprinted eight times in Paris between 1858 and 1893. As the latter example demonstrates, Flygare-Carlén's stories were recurrently republished until the end of the century. Since then, no more novels by Flygare-Carlén have been published or republished in French.

ALMQVIST AND RYDBERG IN FRENCH

Compared with the success of these two female novelists, hardly any novels by their male peers, C. J. L. Almqvist and Viktor Rydberg, were issued in French during the 19th century. Only one story by Almqvist was translated: *Kapellet*, which was titled *La femme du pêcheur*. The translator was Xavier Marmier, and Almqvist's story was published together with a story by Flygare-Carlén in an anthology in 1854, *Les perce-neige: nouvelles du Nord*, which was later republished in 1883 (Almqvist, 1854, 1883). In the early 20th century, Thekla Hammar's translation *La pauvreté suédoise* was published in 1913 (Almqvist, 1913). After that, it was not until the late 20th century that Almqvist's most famous novels today were distributed in French: *Det går an* and *Drottningens juvelsmycke*. While the first of these – titled *Sara* – was first published in French in 1981 and then republished twice, in 1995 and 2020, the second – titled *Le joyau de la reine* – was only printed once, in 1996 (Almqvist, 1981, 1995; Almqvist, 1988; Almqvist, 2020; Almqvist, 1996). In the 21st century, a few shorter stories were published in French, such as 'Palatset' (*Le palais*), 'Hinden' (*La Biche*) and 'Baron Julius' (*Le Baron Julius K*). The latter two are included in his collection *Jaktslottet (Chronique du château)* (Almqvist, 2001; Almqvist, 2011).

The introduction of Rydberg's works in French was just as tentative; in fact, some of the first French translations were not even published in francophone Europe but came out in Sweden. His Christmas tale for children, *Lille Viggs äventyr på julafton* – *La veille de Noël du petit Vigg* – was published as a French textbook by the bookseller C. F. Fritze in Stockholm in 1876 (Rydberg, 1876). It was issued in Paris 13 years later. The tale was then translated by Fernande Duperré de Lysle and titled *La veillée de Noël du petit Wigg* when it was published in 1889–1890 – an edition that was republished in 1892 (Rydberg, 1889–90, 1892).

However, in contrast to Almqvist, Rydberg's two most canonised novels were introduced to French readers fairly early on. *Singoalla* and *Den sista atenaren* were both translated into French around 1900. *Singoalla* was translated by Josef Fredbärj; it was published twice in Sweden and once in Paris in 1900 (Rydberg, 1900a; Rydberg, 1900b). A year later, Mademoiselle Calemard du Genestoux (a pseudonym for Jacques de Coussange) translated the second novel, *Le dernier des Athéniens*, which was distributed by two Swedes, Per Lamm and Karl Nilsson, from Paris in 1901 (Rydberg, 1901). At the same time, Lamm language edited Fredbärj's earlier translation of *Singoalla* and republished it in cooperation with Pierre Douville in Paris in 1907 (Rydberg, 1907).

In addition to these stories and a few poems by Rydberg, two more works were published in French: his historical works about Roman emperors and apostles, *Romerska kejsare in marmor*

and *Romerska sägner om apostlarna Paulus och Petrus*. The Swedish publisher Hjalmar Möller in Lund distributed the first of these from Sweden in 1889 (Rydberg, 1889). The second was translated by Josef Fredbärj and published in Genève in Switzerland (Rydberg, 1913). After that, no more novels by Rydberg were translated into French until after the millennium. In 2009, Sandrine de Solan retranslated his Christmas tale, and Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève published it in Paris as *Le merveilleux Noël de Vigg* (Rydberg, 2009).

In contrast to the novels by Bremer and Flygare-Carlén, most of Rydberg's stories in French were first translated and published in Sweden, or by Swedish publishers working in Paris. That is, Swedes in Sweden launched Rydberg's fiction in French. Therefore, his most recognised works in Sweden, *Singoalla*, *Den siste atenaren* and *Lille Viggs äventyr på julafton*, are also his most disseminated works in French. The latter story is the only work by Rydberg that has been retranslated in recent years, in 2009. As in other languages, Rydberg's most popular work over time in French seems to be his Christmas tale for children (Leffler, 2020: 89–93).

PROMOTED BY FRENCH PUBLISHERS OR LAUNCHED BY SWEDISH MEDIATORS IN SWEDEN

The rapid introduction of Fredrika Bremer's and Emilie Flygare-Carlén's novels in French was probably promoted by their triumph in German. As demonstrated elsewhere, an increasing number of translations and copies – in combination with flattering reviews in journals and papers – added to their fame from the early 1840s onwards in anglophone and German-speaking Europe (Leffler, 2020: 122–125). Therefore, it is probably no coincidence that Flygare-Carlén's most important publisher, Auguste Schnée, distributed most of her novels in French from both Brussels and Leipzig. However, although Bremer and Flygare-Carlén were introduced as Swedish novelists, they were frequently mentioned together with anglophone writers, and their novels were sometimes advertised under headings such as '*livres anglais*' (English books) (Anon., 1844b; Anon., 1853a). Due to the widespread circulations of Flygare-Carlén's novels in different francophone regions, her novels were even announced as '*livres belges*' (Belgian books) (Anon. 1859; Morgues, 1883).

As a search in the digitalised database *Gallica* at the National Library in France – Bibliothèque Nationale de France – demonstrates, Bremer's and Flygare-Carlén's novels were rapidly announced and reviewed in the francophone press. For example, Bremer was introduced to French readers as early as in 1842 in an article on Swedish literature (Anon., 1842). In 1844, *Revue de Paris* published another long and admiring introduction to her fiction, which concluded by mentioning her literary 'rival', Emilie Flygare-Carlén (Anon., 1844a). Bremer's novels were progressively reviewed; as Denis Ballu's bibliography *Lettres nordiques* clearly demonstrates, her novel *Les voisins* was diligently reviewed in 1844 (Ballu, 2016: 645–646). In the 1850s, when Flygare-Carlén's novels were widely distributed in French, they were also frequently reviewed and praised (Anon., 1855). As demonstrated in Ballu's bibliography, her novel *Deux jeunes femmes, ou, Un an de Mariage* appears to be her most frequently reviewed novel in the French press (Ballu, 2016: 649–650).

Unlike Flygare-Carlén, Bremer was repeatedly launched and celebrated together with her most diligent translator, Rosalie du Puget (1795–1875) (Anon., 1854c; Anon., 1858). Puget became a well-known mediator of Swedish literature; besides Bremer's works, she also translated works by Flygare-Carlén, Zacharias Topelius and Carl Anton Wetterbergh (pseud. Onkel Adam). Her expertise in Swedish literature was based on her upbringing in Sweden. During the French revolution, Puget's mother escaped to Sweden, and Rosalie was educated in southern Sweden. After the restoration in 1815, the family returned to France, and Rosalie du Puget became a translator of Swedish literature. Thus, Puget's special interest in Bremer's oeuvre probably added to Bremer's literary status in French as an important Swedish novelist. In addition, Puget's reputation as a proficient mediator of Swedish literature was gained by her translation of Bremer's novels.

As demonstrated above, in the 1850s and onwards, Bremer and Flygare-Carlén were recognised as famous novelists. Their novels were also repeatedly advertised and introduced to French audiences in extensive reviews (Anon., 1853c; Anon., 1857a; Anon., 1857b; Advertisement, 1846; Advertisement, 1847). As late as in 1897, the two novelists were claimed to be known

'all over Europe' ('de toute l'Europe') (Anon., 1897). Another proof of their fame lies in how their novels were repeatedly referred to in fictional descriptions of contemporary readers, such as in 'Dans leur chambre: Le Matin' in *La vie parisienne* in 1890 (Marion, 1890: 610). Another example of their impact is the scandal caused by Georges Ohnet's novel *Le Maître de forges* (1882), which was also turned into a play. The novel was so strongly based on Flygare-Carlén's most popular novel, *Ett år (Un an de mariage)*, that Ohnet was accused of plagiarism, which gave rise to a heated debate in the French press in 1884 (Josse, 1884; Xau, 1884; Ohnet, 1884a; Ohnet, 1884b).

While there are many testimonies of Bremer's and Flygare-Carlén's triumph in French, their male peers C. J. L. Almqvist and Viktor Rydberg are somewhat untraceable in the French press. Still, a couple of pro-Scandinavian mediators actively strove to introduce them to French audiences at the time. The only story of Almqvist that was translated into French in the 19th century – namely, *La femme du pêcheur* – was translated by Xavier Marmier (1808–1892), who visited Stockholm in 1838 and had a special interest in Scandinavian literature due to his extensive travels in the Nordic countries. However, Marmier's main interest was probably not Almqvist's story but Scandinavian literature in general, and Flygare-Carlén's novels in particular. In addition to Almqvist's story, he translated Flygare-Carlén's novella *Une simple histoire de village* and Wetterbergh's *Le pasteur adjoint* for his anthology *Les perce-neige: nouvelles du Nord* (Marmier, 1854). Nonetheless, in his later collection of literature from Northern Europe, *À la ville et à la campagne* (1885), he only included Flygare-Carlén's story, probably considering Flygare-Carlén to be the only writer worthy of representing Swedish literature. As a result of the sparse introduction of Almqvist in French, there are exceptionally few traces of Almqvist in the francophone press. Except for being mentioned a couple of times together with other Scandinavian writers, in particular Bremer and Flygare-Carlén around 1850, the first introduction of his work appears in *Annuaire encyclopédique* in 1867 (Beauvais, 1867).

In contrast to Almqvist's introduction, Rydberg's introduction was not carried out by a French promoter of Nordic culture but by Swedish scholars and publishers in Sweden. As demonstrated above, Rydberg's first story in French, *Lille Viggs äventyr på julaften (La veille de Noël du petit Vigg)*, was printed in Sweden as a textbook for use in Swedish schools in 1876. After that, and before it was published in Paris, the Swedish scholar Arvid Ahnfeldt introduced Rydberg's fiction to French readers. In his overview 'Suède et Norvège' (1882), he presents Rydberg's literary work, with a particular focus on *Le dernier des Athéniens* and his Christmas tale about little Vigg (Ahnfeldt, 1882: 221–224). Ahnfeldt's introduction may have promoted Fernande Duperré de Lysle's translation of Rydberg's Christmas tale, which was published in Paris in 1889. However, this did not encourage French publishers to print Rydberg's novels. The first translations of *Singoalla* and *Le dernier des Athéniens* had to be done by Swedish publishers from Sweden and Paris, respectively, which may explain the lack of reviews in the French press.

According to Ballu's listing, Almqvist's and Rydberg's works were hardly ever reviewed in the French press in the 19th century (Ballu, 2016: 618–619, 825). However, a search in Gallica reveals that some mentions of their works have escaped Ballu's attention. The names of Almqvist and Rydberg were sometimes brought up in introductions of Scandinavian literature from the mid-19th century until the Second World War (X.M., 1846; Ad.B., 1883; Brandés, 1899; Rémnat, 1902; Maury, 1935; Beauvois, 1861; Aberg, 1909; Roger, 1930). For example, as early as in 1861, both Rydberg and Flygare-Carlén were listed by Eugène Beauvois (Beauvois, 1861: 1547). Moreover, to some extent, Rydberg's Christmas tale was noted in the French press. At Christmas in 1889, Fernande Duperré de Lysle's translation *La veillée de Noël du petit Wigg* was advertised (Bibliothèque du Petit Français, 1892). At the same time, a free imitation of Rydberg's tale by 'Mme F. de L.' was published in *Le Petit français illustré* (Mme F. de L., 1889). In addition, the distribution of *Singoalla* was announced in the French press (OB, 1900: 6; Advertisement, 1906). However, Rydberg is not primarily mentioned as a writer; he is more frequently referred to as a Swedish scholar of history, in particular by Beauvois (Beauvois, 1877: 20; Beauvois, 1881: 77–79).

THE FRENCH CASE: CONCLUSION

The success of Fredrika Bremer and Emilie Flygare-Carlén in French, compared with the almost non-existent reception of C.J.L. Almqvist and Viktor Rydberg, reflects the general pattern of the

transnational circulation of Swedish 19th-century novels. While novels by women writers were widely circulated, those by male novelists were less successful. Just a few works by Almqvist and Rydberg were translated into non-Scandinavian languages. Furthermore, the few works that were translated into other languages, such as French, German, or English, were hardly ever retranslated or republished in the same language. Thus, the total number of published editions in French corresponds to the total number of translations in general (Figures 1 and 2). The reception in the francophone press was also similar to that in other languages, such as the German, English and American presses. While the novels by Bremer and Flygare-Carlén were frequently reviewed and included in literary introductions, the stories by Almqvist and Rydberg were hardly ever reviewed or mentioned. At most, their names were listed, together with other Swedish or Scandinavian writers, in historical overviews and introductions of Scandinavian culture.

Figure 1 Comparison of the relation of the total numbers of published editions in French by the Swedish authors Almqvist, Bremer, Flygare-Carlén and Rydberg, as of 2020.

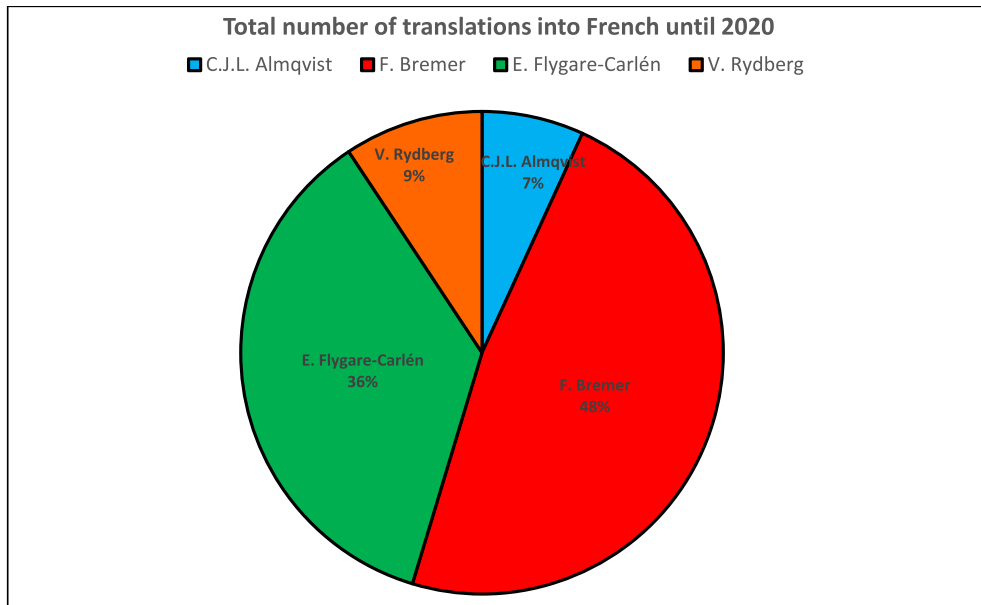
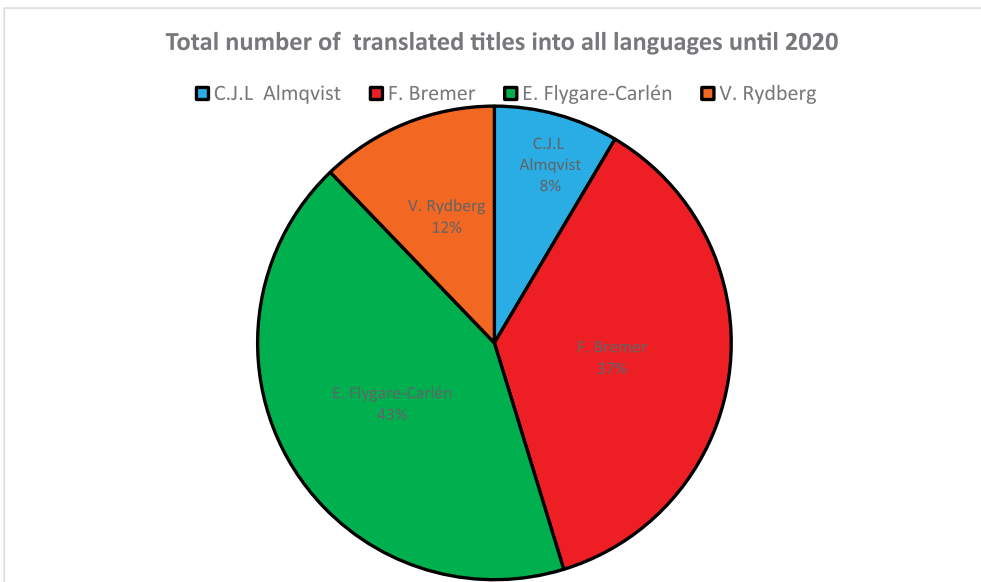


Figure 2 Comparison of the relation of the total numbers of published editions of all translated works of the Swedish authors Almqvist, Bremer, Flygare-Carlén and Rydberg as of 2020, in any language.



However, overall, the French reception of the Swedish novels differed in many aspects from their reception in most other languages, and thereby demonstrates the complexity of literary transmission and transnational reception. Firstly, the translations into French were made from Swedish source texts, not from German translations, even though the latter was often the case when Swedish novels were translated into other non-Scandinavian languages, such as Dutch and Polish. Since the 18th-century at least, bilateral intellectual relationships between Sweden and France had established a cultural exchange – in particular, a regular Swedish import of

French culture and artefacts. As a result, many cultural mediators knew Swedish and French well enough to be able to translate directly from the Swedish source texts (Håkansson, 2021: 152–154, 164–175).

Secondly, the customary cultural exchange between Sweden and France encouraged Swedish publishers to print a few nationally renowned Swedish authors in French. In the late 19th century, Rydberg was recognised as a significant, intellectual writer and scholar in Sweden and as early as in 1900, one of the most influential scholars in Sweden, Karl Warburg, published a biography on Rydberg in two volumes (Warburg, 1900). Due to Rydberg's status, Swedish mediators such as Arvid Ahnfelt and Per Lamm were keen to promote his reception in France. However, neither Ahnfelt's early introduction of Rydberg's work in 1882 nor Lamm's supervision of the French translations of Rydberg's most famous novels before publishing them in Paris seemed to have caught much attention from French intellectuals, readers and publishers. A foreign novel published in French by French publishers was probably more likely to be reviewed in the French press than a novel in French launched by Swedes. Almost certainly, the case of Rydberg confirms what Petra Broomans remarks on: namely, the importance of networks and institutions for a successful reception and contextualising of a foreign text (Broomans, 2021: 69).

Thirdly, the reception of Swedish literature in French demonstrates that Paris was not the only key cultural location where Swedish novels had to strive for recognition in order to be launched in French. Publishing houses in Brussels were almost equally important for the distribution of novels by one of the most popular European novelists at the time, Flygare-Carlén. In addition, her novels were circulated in French from several other places in francophone Europe, such as Bern, Luxemburg, Leipzig and even Saint Petersburg. Thus, the circulation of Swedish 19th-century novels in French by francophone publishing houses contests former scholars' focus on Paris as the primary cultural metropole in Europe. In some cases, certain publishing houses outside of Paris and France were just as vital to the distribution of foreign novels in French. This study demonstrates that, in order to investigate the reception of Swedish literature in a certain language, such as French, it is important to look beyond the one-to-one identification of nation and language. Constraining this kind of study to a simple nation-state context would yield a highly unreliable and misleading view of the dissemination and reception of Swedish 19th-century literature in French. Therefore, studies on the circulation and reception of literature will gain in accuracy when a bilateral transnational perspective is replaced by a more multilateral language-based transcultural viewpoint.

NOTES

- 1 In the review cited here, Almqvist, Rydberg and Strindberg are discussed in separate chapters, while the women writers are treated together in a chapter called 'Romanens väg till Röda rummet' – that is, 'the novel rise before Strindberg's novel *The Red Room*'.
- 2 Data on translations of Swedish novels, as well as spelling of titles, publishers, places of publication etc. is as found in reported library catalogues and other sources used to compile SWED Database.
- 3 In addition, three other works by Bremer have been republished after the millennium (Bremer, 2012; Bremer 2013a; Bremer 2013b; Bremer, 2016).

COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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