Abstract

This PhD thesis is concerned with the translation history of Holberg’s novel Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum (NK) in Europe from the publication in 1741 until the latest Danish translation published in 2012. The translation history is examined through the translations into English, French, Dutch, German, and the Scandinavian languages and their publication history.

The thesis consists of two parts. Part I is concerned with the analyses of the translations from the five language areas. This part focuses on three main themes: state, religious tolerance and women’s position in society. In order to explore these themes, ten passages have been chosen from the first part of NK, which contains the protagonist’s stay with the sensible trees. The analyses of the ten passages focus on the translator’s role in transmitting literary work and the problems connected with the translation of literary work. In the analysis the emphasis is on discrepancies in content and significant choices of words in the translation. The discrepancies are prominent in translations from the 19th century with the exception of the Scandinavian translations, which are generally faithful.

Part II begins with an introduction to Book history and the novel’s publication tradition in the 18th century. In part II, it is shown how the earliest editions are similar to the original while the editions from the 19th century usually are closely connected with the publisher’s or translator’s own intentions with the translation of NK. The most recent editions are concerned with NK and Holberg as the author and NK is thus placed in a historical context.