

THE BROTHERS GRIMM AND THE MAKING OF GERMAN NATIONALISM

In the first comprehensive English-language portrait of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm as political thinkers and actors, Jakob Norberg reveals how history's two most famous folklorists envisioned the role of literary and linguistic scholars in defining national identity. Convinced of the political relevance of their folktale collections and grammatical studies, the brothers Grimm argued that they could help disentangle language groups from one another, redraw the boundaries of states in Europe, and counsel kings and princes on the proper extent and character of their rule. They sought not only to recover and revive a neglected native culture for a contemporary audience but also to facilitate a more harmonious and enduring relationship between the traditional political elite and an emerging national collective. Through close historical analysis, Norberg reconstructs how the Grimms wished to mediate between sovereigns and peoples, politics and culture.

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781316513279

DOI: [10.1017/9781009063890](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009063890)

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When citing this work, please include a reference to the DOI [10.1017/9781009063890](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009063890)

First published 2022

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-316-51327-9 Hardback

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