In 1844 there appeared an English version of a work by the German classical scholar Karl Otfried Müller (1797-1840). It was entitled, *Introduction to a Scientific System of Mythology*. This translation of Müller's work, which had been published originally in Germany in 1825, was completed by a Scotsman called John Leitch (1808-1880), whose expertise in expressing Müller's complex arguments in English was highly praised at the time. With only a few reservations, in particular the lack of an index, Leitch's translation was well-received and the book took its place in that niche of scholarship which was responsible for introducing many German ideas into English intellectual circles during the earlier decades of the nineteenth century. Müller's work, most ably translated by John Leitch, was perceived in general terms by many critics essentially as a textbook. It was agreed that the volume would have the important function of instructing not only students but also more advanced scholars in the interpretation and understanding of the mythology of Greece and its place in relation to the history of that ancient civilization.

This paper will argue, however, that not only was the volume a scholarly guide through the baffling complexities of the mythological maze, but that it had an additional role as an important text which symbolized one crucial aspect of a fundamental shift in the philosophical perspectives of this period. However, the relationship of Leitch's translation of Müller to
gradual changes in the contemporary view on the subject of historical understanding is a complex one.

First of all, the paper will attempt to outline the nature of the particular contexts in which Müller's volume may be considered to be important. It will then look more closely at some aspects of the book, Leitch's translation of it, and the reception it was given by critics at the time. The discussion will then turn to John Kenrick (1788-1877), the eminent Unitarian historian, and will try to assess the nature of his own particular treatment of historical understanding and of the similarities between his intellectual development in this sense and that of K. O. Müller.

Kenrick's own opinion of the role and importance of the volume in translation is a fitting introduction to an account in the latter part of the paper of the mid nineteenth-century debate on the relationship between history and myth and its implications for the development of historical understanding in a general sense. There is little doubt that Müller's ideas and those of John Kenrick had a polarizing effect on some of the arguments which appeared on this topic in the columns of contemporary journals. It is hoped that the outcome of the discussion in the paper will be some understanding of two different perspectives on this particular volume. The first of these views the work as a standard methodology for the interpretation and understanding of ancient myth, and the second sees it rather as a signpost in the much wider area of intellectual change.

The context within which the outlines of such change are to be examined is that which was dominated by the intellectuals of Unitarianism in the early decades of the nineteenth century. These scholars were the heirs of Locke, Lardner, Price and Priestley, and had developed their ideas within a tradition which saw reason alone as the tool which unlocked the mysteries of existence. However, it was in this period that the ideas of the Romantic age began to influence these rational Unitarian intellects.

It is often the case that, in charting this tendency of certain influential Unitarians to detach themselves from the mechanistic ideas of Enlightenment rationalism and veer instead towards the more fluid, organic concepts of Romanticism, historians of ideas focus upon the 'spiritualisation' of the creed by the theologian James Martineau and his colleagues, John James Taylor and James Hamilton Thom.¹

However, the concepts of the Age of Romanticism began to loosen the grip of Enlightenment thought on Unitarians in many different ways at this time, and consequently it would be wrong to restrict an analysis to nothing more than the appearance of a more spiritual theology. Another important aspect of Romantic thought which began to encroach upon the Unitarian frame of mind in the period was a more historicist view of the past. This form of historical interpretation was (and is) a rejection of the essentially universal values of the Enlightenment in the understanding of man's past. It favours instead an interpretation of human history which emphasises the unique, the diverse and the typically organic development of cultures, societies and nations. These social forms have their own internal dynamic and each one flourishes on its own terms and at its own particular pace.² It is this perspective on history, one which allows for such ideas of cultural relativism, which makes its appearance in the work of John Kenrick. It also seems that in Kenrick this tendency operates in his thought alongside a rejection by him of the undiluted rationalism of his own creed.

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Although John Kenrick remains in some respects a transitional figure between these two very different concepts of the nature of human progress and/or development, there is little doubt that his work contains key aspects of historicist thought which represent a fundamental divergence from his own intellectual tradition.

It is true to say that in any transitional period in the history of ideas there are always a number of key texts which symbolise at least some elements of the changes taking place, and it appears that Müller's volume may be regarded as one of these.

The author himself, Karl Otfried Muller, was born in Brieg, in Silesia in 1797, the son of a Lutheran pastor. He died suddenly and tragically of a fever during a trip to Athens in 1840.

A student of August Boeckh the philologist (1785-1867), Müller was appointed adjunct Professor of Ancient Literature at the University of Göttingen in 1819. This, coincidentally, was the same year in which John Kenrick studied for several months at that university and later at

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A short but nevertheless comprehensive account of the life and work of K. O. Müller may be found in J. W. Donaldson, A History of the Literature of Ancient Greece (London, 1858). This translation of Müller's perspectives on Greek literature, a work which was commissioned from Müller himself by the London Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, was completed after the author's death in 1840 by Donaldson. The translator's introduction to the volume provides a wealth of information on the German scholar's brief life. Donaldson probably gleaned much of his information first hand, for Müller lived in England working on the German text for a few years previous to his death in Athens in 1840.
Berlin under Boeckh and F. A. Wolf (1759-1824), the irascible scholar who challenged the accepted wisdom that Homer was sole author of the great epic poems. In a general sense, Müller’s work followed the efforts of the enormously influential German classical philologist and Göttingen professor Christian Gottlob Heyne (1729-1812). It was Heyne who began to employ a combined historical and philological approach to the study of myth at Göttingen and who also anticipated Wolf’s deconstruction of Homer into Greek oral traditions.

Müller’s work also shows the influence of J. G. Herder (1744-1803), whose emphasis on the essentially national character of myth reversed the preference of Enlightenment studies for its universal significance. Like Herder also, Müller emphasised the emotional element of myth, believing that it was the earliest poetry of a culture and indeed the creation of a people’s very soul.

In his volume Introduction to a Scientific System of Mythology, Müller crystallised these and other significant ideas about myth, the most important in this context being its relationship with history. The nature of this relationship was one which had perplexed historians of antiquity for centuries. Should the mythology of the Greeks be separate from their recorded history, or should the mythology and history of that people be seen as interactive? To what extent and in what way should the mythology of Greece be considered relevant to the historical analysis of that ancient culture?

Within the Enlightenment frame of mind in the first half of the nineteenth century there were some scholars who believed that, as nothing more than the irrational product of human fancy, myth was unworthy of inclusion in any valuable and essentially rational analysis of ancient Greece. This was essentially the opinion of George Grote (1794-1871), the historian, politician and philosophical radical. In the wake of Grote’s History of Greece, the first part of which was published in 1846, discussion on the subject intensified. Should historical interpretation take account of an interplay between history (fact) and myth (imagination) or draw a strict boundary between the two, rejecting the latter as irrelevant because it is irrational? Müller favoured the former method. For him the imaginative, which he called the Ideal and the factual, which he called the Real, were inseparable and interlinked and consequently he argued that the imposition of a boundary between the two undermined the truth of historical analysis. He insisted that

... the mythic materials are not so distinctly separate from the other memorials of antiquity, but that they, as it were, pass into each other at the boundary, and stand in a relation of constant transition. Documents purely historical also frequently speak of the same circumstances which are mentioned in myth; and ideas expressed by mythology, are, in like manner, reproduced by the ancient philosophers.

4 John Kenrick writes in some detail of his year of study at Göttingen and Berlin in 1819-20, during which he attended the classes not only of Boeckh and Wolf, but also those of the great theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834). Kenrick, while praising the philologists, however admits that he found the terminology of German metaphysics in Schleiermacher’s lectures ’strange’ and the subtleties ’not always intelligible and therefore gave up attending after a few weeks. Kenrick’s account of his travels and studies in Germany may be found in ’Notes of the Early Part of the Life of the Rev. John Kenrick, written by him for his Wife in 1870-72’. (Sharpe Papers 191, University College, London). See pp. 53 ff.


Consequently, for Müller a nation’s early body of myth is not entirely separate from recorded history, but is interactive with human affairs. Also of crucial importance in the work of this scholar is the idea that myth has essentially local, unique and specific origins, and any attempt to analyse the content of mythology from an overarching theoretical perspective is fruitless. Thus from the work translated by Leitch in the early 1840’s emerge two important points: firstly, that in historical interpretation myth and recorded history are interactive, and secondly, that they are bound together in this form within the unique and essentially local sense of a concrete historical context. It is within this specific context that these elements develop together over time to influence the poetry, literature and characteristics of a culture, society or nation. All this tends to conform with the idea of the organic development of cultures on their own terms within formations which include the irrational in the imaginative and poetic creation of myth. There is little to be found here of Enlightenment notions about the uniform nature of the moral improvement of humanity.

Conversely, neither are such ideas about the diverse nature of cultural development to be discovered in Unitarian thinkers such as Joseph Priestley. He saw historical change to a great extent as an inexorable march of human progress brought about by Divine Providence, which underpinned a series of causal mechanisms such as associationism. Müller’s work is important in that it represents dearly the culmination of the efforts of German classical scholars to find a way of dealing with myth in relation to history and in doing so gives force to ideas about the diversity and uniqueness of human development. Müller wrote a number of volumes on the history of Greece, several of which appeared in English between 1828 and 1868. The first was Boeckh’s Public Economy of Athens, translated by Sir George Cornewall Lewis and published in London in 1828. Two years later, in 1830, his translation, along with Henry Tufnell, of Müller’s History and Antiquities of the Doric Race, which was first published in Germany in 1828, was available for English speaking classical scholars. The second edition of this volume, published in 1839, was revised, corrected and enlarged by Müller himself before it went to press. Apart from some essays on Aeschylus by Müller, which appeared in English in 1835 and 1850, the next major volume of his to find an English publisher was John William Donaldson’s translation of the History of the Literature of Ancient Greece (London, 1858).8 Subsequently, ten years were to pass before another English translation of Müller appeared, this time executed by Elizabeth Caroline Hamilton Gray. Her English version of Müller’s Account of the Manners and Customs, Arts and Literature of the Etruscans, which was probably first published in German around 1827, appeared in 1868. Her intention to produce an English version of Müller’s history was inspired by her own interest in the Etruscan civilisation, about which she herself wrote several historical accounts. Apart from his translation of Müller’s volume on myth, John Leitch also produced a two volume version in English of the same author’s book Ancient Art and Its Remains, or a Manual of the Archaeology of Art. First published in Germany in 1830, it appeared in English twenty years later, in 1850. John Leitch dedicated this translation to Sir Robert Peel and in his own preface recorded his thanks for the assistance and guidance of his fellow German language expert, J. W Donaldson. Interestingly, this work of Müller’s is also concerned to some extent with the formation of ideas about the importance of context in historical analysis rather than an emphasis on a form of interpretation derived from overarching themes, whether of religious or philosophical origins. In the introduction, the German scholar rejects outright the views of writers on archaeology who suppose that ancient sculptors sought designedly and consciously

7 See note 2 above.
8 Mrs. Hamilton Gray was a Scotswoman born in Alva, Clackmannanshire, and the wife of the Rev. John Hamilton Gray, a Glasgow lawyer and Episcopalian churchman who was educated at Glasgow, Oxford and Göttingen.
to express the fundamental ideas of heathendom in the form of – as he puts it – the ‘hieroglyphics of a physical theology.’

He does not accept, therefore, the notion that Greek artists were somehow driven by an overarching theoretical purpose. Rather, he emphasises the importance of interpreting the individual artistic production as an example of spontaneous creativity in relation to the characteristics of the age in which it was produced. In this, he says, ‘...my views ... differ widely from those which are held by the present generation of archaeological inquirers.’

Although this paper is principally concerned with Müller’s volume on the study and interpretation of myth, it must be said that all these translations contributed greatly to classical studies in this country in the nineteenth century. This scholar’s fresh ideas on the interpretation of Greek art, literature and myth were eagerly absorbed by English classical students. Some may even have been aware of the controversy which Müller’s ideas on the historical importance of myth had provoked in Germany itself.

There, the most powerful opponent of the ‘historical’ theory of mythology was Friedrich Creuzer (1771-1858), who presented it in his work as primarily a representation of the religious ideas of the ancient world. In contrast, of course, Müller believed in myth as an integral part of history itself, an idea which is sometimes perceived as a parallel in many respects to Niebuhr’s attitude towards early Roman civilisation, for in both cases, the influence of Romanticism may be clearly seen. Whether or not young classical scholars were aware of the deeper arguments surrounding Müller’s work, they were certainly to benefit from what is now generally regarded by historians of classical scholarship as the German’s most important book. As we shall see, it was to be applauded by contemporary critics as a standard textbook on the methodology of the interpretation of myth, but indeed one which might never have been available to the reader of English had it not been for the efforts of the translator, John Leitch.

Despite his obvious competence in translating scholarly German, John Leitch appears in none of the major biographical works. There is, however, one very brief entry to be found in S. A. Allibone’s *Critical Dictionary of English Literature* relating to this volume and also to Leitch’s later translation of Müller’s work of archaeology, which appeared in 1850. Otherwise, it seems that his scholarly talents were virtually ignored both during his lifetime and after his death. Sadly, the work of this excellent translator were not considered of sufficient importance for inclusion in the biographical annals of scholarly achievement.

Leitch, a Scotsman, was born in 1808, the son of a customs officer in Rothesay, a small town on Bute, an island which lies off the West Coast of Scotland. After various careers as clerk, banker and wine merchant, John Leitch took to travelling on the continent.

He had, it seems, mastered German as a youth and during this period he added French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese to his impressive linguistic repertoire. The death of this industrious gentleman scholar in 1880 was reported only in the small local newspapers, whose obituary correspondents mention his translations only briefly. The *Buteman* says of his English version of Müller’s work

The reviews of the period gave Mr. Leitch credit for having rendered the text in a masterly manner, but being on a rather dry and abtruse subject, the book had not a very large circulation, and did not add much to the wealth of the translator, however much it may have increased his reputation.

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9 K. O. Willer, *Ancient Art and Its Remains or a Manual of the Archaeology of Art* (London, 1850), p. vii. In his translator’s preface Leitch writes of his intention to publish in English Müller’s second volume on this topic, a work entitled *Monuments of Ancient Art*, and at the time of writing Leitch indicated that this book was in fact in the process of publication in Göttingen. Sadly however, a translation of this work, which Leitch intended as a companion volume, never appeared.

10 *Ibid*.


12 The *Buteman and Advertiser for the Western Isles*, 24 January, 1880.
At the time of publication thirty-six years earlier however, Leitch’s efforts at translation were rather more graciously received, as was Müller’s text as a body of scholarship which provided an invaluable insight into the interpretation of myth.

The biographical entry in Allibone’s *Critical Dictionary* quotes the *London Literary Gazette* as describing the volume translated by Leitch as

The best and safest manual for all readers and students whose taste or inclination prompts them to base their course of history on a well-grounded knowledge of the old Hellenistic, Egyptian and Roman mythologies.

The radical *Westminster Review* praised both Müller’s scholarship and Leitch’s translation of it, and told readers

This work will certainly increase his [Müller’s] reputation here; it is a model of philosophical critical investigation, and one of the greatest contributions to historical science yet made.... The present work is fortunate in having fallen into the hands of one of the few really competent translators, who has executed his task in a manner worth of high praise ... the translation is masterly.\(^{\text{13}}\)

In similar vein, the *Classical Museum*, a journal of philology, ancient history and literature, described the English version as ‘correct and very faithful,’ and went on to tell readers that the volume was

... one of the most valuable additions that could have been made to the literature of our country. Whoever has looked into the numerous modern works on mythology, must have been struck by the endless variety of opinions.... [however] Muller was one of the first who adopted a sensible method in investigating the origin and gradual development of myth. His present work ... has for this reason been adopted almost universally as the basis of all mythological studies; and Mr. Leitch deserves the gratitude of his countrymen for introducing the work to those to whom in was inaccessible in the original language.\(^{\text{14}}\)

It appears then that Leitch’s translation of Müller met all the criteria for use as a standard text for advice on the correct approach to myth, which in Müller’s view was an historical one. As the book was now available in English it was likely to be absorbed by a wide readership of scholars and students of antiquity. It was perceived as an expertly translated, authoritative guide to the interpretation of myth, and the ideas it contained on the inclusion of such accounts as integral parts of history in research into the ancient world entered contemporary scholarship. John Leitch, the unsung scholar from a remote Scottish island, had done a first-class job in translating a work which was simultaneously seen as reliable scholarship and a key textual guide to the methodology of myth. It had been reviewed in glowing terms and recommended as perhaps even the definitive text on the subject of ancient myth. Its status as an important textbook for students of antiquity was assured! The volume was a private publication with 238 subscribers listed between the preface and the table of contents. They comprised a varied collection of academics, aristocrats, gentry, churchmen, merchants and others, an astonishingly wide and comprehensive cross section of society in Glasgow and the West of Scotland at the time. In the list appears the name of Edmund Law Lushington, former tutor at Trinity College, Cambridge, husband of Celia Tennyson, sister of the poet, and Professor of Greek at Glasgow from 1838 until 1875. It was he, apparently, who inspired Leitch, the gentleman scholar from the little Scottish island, to tackle the translation in the first place, for in his dedication, Leitch writes

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I am indebted to you for my first acquaintance with the writings of Müller; and what chiefly
determined me to translate his Prolegomena was the circumstance that you entertained so
high an opinion of that work....

Lushington's interest in Müller's work follows a tradition at Glasgow of enthusiasm for the ideas
of German mythologists and philologists. Thirty years earlier German ideas on these topics were
being taught to students, among them John Kenrick, then aged twenty, by John Young, who was
Professor of Greek at the college from 1774 until 1821.

Kenrick, who was a member of the well-known Dissenting family, went to Glasgow with a
Dr Williams's Exhibition in 1807 and graduated with distinction in logic, classics and natural
science three years later, in 1810. In attending Glasgow the young Kenrick was following in the
family tradition, for his grandfather, Samuel Kenrick, had matriculated there in 1743.
Previously, John Kenrick had attended Exeter Academy, which was run by his own father and
the Rev. Joseph Bretland. Like John Leitch, John Kenrick learned German at a tender age, for it
was during this period that the youthful scholar was taught the language by Thomas Foster
Barham, a minor writer, musician and composer who had travelled widely on the continent.
After his graduation from Glasgow Kenrick became classics tutor at Manchester College in York
and went on to become the finest Unitarian scholar of his generation. His early interest in
German language and ideas persuaded him to undertake his study trip to Göttingen and Berlin
in 1819-1820.

In the years that followed he translated C. G. Zumpt's Latin Grammar and wrote two
language textbooks of his own. These philological books were produced in the period following
his trip to Germany, while his historical works were written later in his life at a time when he
was able to enjoy increased leisure.

In 1840 he became Professor of History at Manchester College and served as principal there
until he retired in 1850, the year in which his two volume history of Egypt was published. John
Kenrick died in 1877, aged 89, and in his obituary The Times described him as 'indisputably the
greatest Nonconformist scholar of our day.' There is no doubt that Kenrick left behind a
powerful scholarly legacy, part of which was the important volume, Essay on Primaeval
History, which was published in 1846. This book was concerned with the analysis of myths and
traditions and is, as will become evident, highly relevant to the discussion here.

The general thrust of the work of John Kenrick shows distinctive characteristics of the
historicism of the Romantic Age. His historicism is not, however, complete, for he tends to
cling to the Enlightenment notion of the constancy of human nature. While on the one hand he
likes to emphasise the variety of different national characteristics he appears to remain close to
the idea of man's natural uniformity. This tension in his thought marks him as a transitional
figure. His perspectives on history create a bridge between the universalism of the English
Enlightenment and the full-blown cultural relativism which manifests itself in Romantic thought.

16 C. G. Zumpt, A Grammar of the Latin Language, translated by John Kenrick, 1823. The
translation went to a fourth edition which was published in 1836. Kenrick's own two
language textbooks were 1. Exercises of Latin Syntax, a third edition of which appeared in
1835, and 2. An Introduction to Greek Prose Composition, part one of which was published in
a second edition in 1835, a year after part two of the work was made available to students.
17 The most important of his secular histories were, 1. The Egypt of Herodotus (1841), 2. An
Essay on Primaeval History (1846), 3. Ancient Egypt Under the Pharaohs (1850) and 4.
Phoenicia (1855).
18 See Kenrick's essay entitled 'New Year's Day in Ancient Rome, in John Kenrick, A Selection of
In the latter tradition, Kenrick does show a strong tendency to seek truth within a concrete historical situation, rather than by means of any systematic theorization or philosophical approach to the problem. He recognises the importance of the dynamics of development at the heart of individual cultures, which are shown to have their own internal impulse.

Kenrick is distinctly non-judgmental when he comes to the discussion of ancient customs or deeds, however much these go against the grain of his own religious beliefs and moral values. This approach could be, of course, a result of his powerful sympathy with the Dissenting tradition of toleration. Whatever its source, he respects the integrity of the context in which deeds and practices take place, and abhors the imposition of ‘modern’ values on the customs of a distant age.

One good example of this is his tolerance of the Phoenician pirates, ‘... [whose] morality in this respect was only on a level with that of their neighbours. It was no offence in this age to ask a stranger if he were a pirate’. Rather than criticise the morality of the ancients, he tends to appreciate the actual development of religious and moral values from the grass roots of the context in which they originate. In this, it must be said, may be detected the seeds of ethical relativism, which is a key characteristic of the historicist frame of mind.

The pattern of influence which produced such tendencies in the intellectual development of John Kenrick is very complex. He was certainly influenced by the change in the approach to biblical criticism in the late eighteenth century, one which emphasised the historical context as an important factor in the search for truth. German philology too is another important source from which ideas of uniqueness arose, for there were powerful arguments from here regarding the importance of language in the development of the specific characteristics of a culture. However, the one area of scholarship which more than any other may have moulded Kenrick’s historicism was the German method in relation to the understanding of history and myth.

Kenrick’s interest in the relationship between the two began at least a decade before his study tour of Germany in 1819-1820 and fifteen years before Müller’s volume was published in German in 1825. He was, it seems, introduced to German perspectives on ancient myth by Professor John Young at Glasgow, whose private classes Kenrick attended in the years 1807-1810.

As early as 1793, it appears that John Young was well acquainted with the work of Christian Gottlob Heyne, who, as we have seen, greatly influenced Müller. In a letter dated 27 January that year to a friend in London, Young requests a volume containing notes and a dissertation by Heyne on Pindar. In 1805, two years before John Kenrick came to Glasgow, Young writes to Dr Charles Burney, the classical critic, praising Heyne’s work with great enthusiasm. It seems that Young was deeply impressed by Heyne’s instigation of an historical and philological approach to the interpretation of myth, an interpretation which tended to emphasise the idea of growth and development within specific cultures.

Young’s enthusiasm for Heyne’s work he no doubt passed on to his students, among them John Kenrick, for in the years between his graduation in 1810 and his visit to Germany in 1819, Kenrick expanded his reading in German on the subject of myth.

20 See Kenrick’s essay ‘The Gospel of Mark the Protoevangelium’, in John Kenrick, Biblical Essays (London, 1865). His aim here is to prove his theory that Mattes gospel is not a ‘composite’ of Matthew and Luke, but an earlier and ‘purer’ account of the life of Jesus. In his analysis he makes it clear that the truth can only be discovered if the different approaches of Mark and Luke are understood by perceptions of these men as ‘...liable to failure of memory, exposed to all the influences of their age, their country and their personal connections. We must also report the traditions which they collected and preserved as subject to these variations and accretions which gather ... around the nucleus of fact.’ Biblical Essays, p. 12.
In lecture notes which he compiled during his tutorship at Manchester College and before he left for his year in Germany in 1819, much is made of the work of Heyne and Wolf and consequently it seems more than likely that the source of Kenrick's interest in the topic of history and myth was the classics room at Glasgow. There, it seems, the fascination with German ideas on the subject persisted throughout the following three decades, for, as we have seen, it was Lushington, the Professor of Greek at Glasgow who inspired Leitch to undertake his translation of K. O. Muller thirty years later!

It appears that Kenrick attempted some work based upon the subject of the German method in the interpretation of Greek myth, possibly as early as 1816. In a letter to G. W Wood, the Manchester College trustee, in December of that year, Kenrick mentions that he has compiled a paper on the interpretation of Greek mythology in which, he writes, ...some of the principles are, as I believe at least, new... This certainly appears true of material in an essay entitled 'A Specimen of the Application of Historical Principles to the Explanation of the Greek Mythology'. This piece of work is undated, but it appears to have come from an early period in his life. It is contained in a bundle of university essays written in the years 1808 and 1809 and the handwriting is not that of the mature Kenrick of later years. In this paper, Kenrick rejects any systematic analysis in favour of a concrete historical approach to myth and history which rather emphasises the local origins of mythic traditions. He also allows for an interaction of myth with historical fact.

Myth and history work together, Kenrick suggests, ...respecting the progress of civilization, literature and the arts, among the people by whom these fables were believed'. Thus for Kenrick there were no boundaries between the mythic products of the imagination and historical fact. Consequently, it seems clear that early in his intellectual development were forming ideas very akin to German scholars such as Heyne and Müller.

In the years after his trip to Germany in 1819-1820, and after the initial publication of Müller's book in 1825, these ideas were to coalesce into a distinctive pattern. It is one which offers glimpses of a perspective on human development very different from Enlightenment ideas on the universal progress of mankind and on an entirely rational view on human existence.

The ideas that there should be no systematic theoretical interpretation of myth in a culture because mythi are derived from specific, local origins and that there should be no boundaries imposed between the mythic past and that of recorded history are present in both thinkers. Moreover, in both Müller and Kenrick there appears to be a close relationship between myth and the expression of moral values.

On the subject of myth and ethics, Müller's view is that in relation to the Greeks, ...fundamental ideas of morality and justice ... are ... to be found expressed in their mythi'. Similarly, for John Kenrick

'Religious and moral feeling, knowledge, taste, the predominance of plastic or reflective power among the intellectual faculties in ages from which no literary works have descended to us may all be traced to the creations of mythology'.

21 References to Heyne and Wolf in relation to the Homer Question are found in notes taken by Richard Martineau of lectures delivered in 1819. These lectures were most probably compiled before Kenrick went to Germany. Harris Manchester College, Oxford, MS Misc. 7, fol. 107.
23 John Kenrick, 'A Specimen of the Application of Historical Principles to the Explanation of the Greek Mythology', in Dr. Williams's Library, Kenrick Papers, 24.107.50 (n).
24 Ibid.
As we have seen, myth, which is understood by both scholars to have uniquely local origins, is perceived as interactive with the historical development of a specific culture. Consequently, if myth contains the outlines of a people’s moral values, then we have here the faint but discernible outline of the ethical relativism which is so crucial to the historicist view.

In their shared notions about the specific origins of myth and its role in the development of a people, Müller and Kenrick have in their minds the fundamental factors, appropriately structured, for a relativistic perspective on historical change. In addition, the implication that there is within this configuration an intimate relationship between myth and the expression of moral values indicates that this embrace of relativism by both scholars may extend also to aspects of ethical development.

The idea of moral relativism of course, is a key element of historicist thought. It is also a distinctive departure on Kenrick’s part from the classic Enlightenment concept of an objective, universal ethical source on which all humanity draws for its moral values.

Kenrick’s thoughts on myth and ethical development were expressed in his Essay on Primaeval History, published in 1846, the year after the Prospective Review presented Kenrick’s own critique of Leitch's English translation of Müller’s volume. Unlike other critics of the Muller translation Kenrick did not consider the book suitable as a textbook in the traditional sense, for in his conclusion he writes

> Although this introduction is the very best view of what German research and speculation have done to illustrate the history and import of mythology we cannot recommend it as a royal road to the knowledge of the subject.

> The arrangement is not very dear, and it requires a good deal of previous knowledge and more patience in getting at the meaning of an abtruse term of expression, than Englishmen are generally willing to bestow. It will not therefore avail much to our industrious compilers of school books, but it will gradually infuse more correct opinions on a subject which has been hitherto given up to sciolism, fancy and theological prejudice.\(^{27}\)

Kenrick did not see the volume as suitable for use as a textbook for students, for in his view it was rather disorganised and probably too difficult and obscure for the young reader with little knowledge of the subject. However, as he says, it would take its rightful place as a work which clarified a subject which had become distorted and confused by too many shades of self-interested opinion. It was, however, in the ideas which pervaded Kenrick’s review of another contemporary work that some truly fundamental issues surrounding the controversy about the relationship between history and myth began to emerge and take on more distinctive outlines. The shared view of Muller and Kenrick, that the historian of antiquity should integrate the Ideal with the Real, was carried with some weight into a review of Kenrick’s less than a year later in the Christian Reformer of the work of the historian, George Grote. In this critique, Kenrick gave his opinion on the first volume of this author’s History of Greece,\(^ {28}\) in which Grote drew a definite boundary between history and myth. Grote, the rational Utilitarian, could hardly have made his position dearer, for he divided the work into two separate sections, the first dealing with legendary Greece in an account of Greek myth, the second concentrating on Greek history.

However, as Kenrick himself pointed out, Grote could not afford to ignore completely the mass of tales about gods and heroes presented by Greek tradition, for such a move would be unpopular amongst readers of the volume. Presumably with this in mind, Grote tells these

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marvellous tales, but relegates them to an entirely separate section of his work, and carefully abstains from drawing even the smallest inferences from myth to support one single historical fact. Grote rigidly and effectively separated the Ideal from the Real because the former did not meet his rational criteria.

With more than a touch of sarcasm, Kenrick writes of this method of separation of the two realms of myth and history, 'Few persons will be inclined to read some hundred pages of which they are impressively warned not to believe a word'.

Having thus curtly dismissed Grote's method, Kenrick goes on to discuss the question of the place of imagination, the Ideal, in the context of historical analysis.

How does the historian of antiquity deal with that which creates myth, that powerful, elusive and yet omnipresent force that is the human imagination? In response to Grote's complete rejection of myth as an integral part of human history and the implications of this for the role of imagination and the irrational in human historical development, Kenrick supplies, to great effect, a short appendix to the review, consisting of a brief passage from his own Essay on Primaeval History. The passage recounts examples of how the course of history was altered by the dreams of men such as Xerxes, whose visions in sleep decided the invasion of Greece. Kenrick reminds the reader that, 'it is because the dream springs up within the mind itself that it carries more authority than the deductions of reason'.

The role of the imagination is of unique importance, says Kenrick. Myth, of course, is the product of imagination, but imagination, just like reason itself, has its own laws, for, '...it requires a motive for its exertion, and the definite form which its productions assume, implies a cause which has given them this shape, rather than any other.' He reiterates his position on the power of imagination to influence and mould historical development, and to help the historian to interpret that development. In his history of Phoenicia, he writes:

Imagination has been at work in the construction of the myths to which these facts have given birth; but even imagination is not a wholly capricious and unaccountable faculty; when its productions assume a definite form, they presuppose a definite cause.

Mythic legends cannot indeed be converted into history by the simple process of divesting them of their supernatural element; but if we seize the true point of view from which they are to be considered, there is much historical knowledge to be gained from them.

Here are two statements which emphasise effectively the interaction between the power of the human imagination and historical understanding. Imagination, and by implication of course, that which it produces in the form of myth, is itself part of the causal process and not in any sense a factor to be isolated in a separate realm set apart from historical fact. It is assertions such as these by Kenrick which suggest that he has edged away from Enlightenment ideas about the absolute power of reason to determine the truth of all human existence. Within the context of the interpretation of myth and its relationship to history, John Kenrick tiptoes into the Romantic Age.

Kenrick's ideas on the subject of myth appear to have emerged at a very early stage in his intellectual development, very probably in Glasgow during the years 1807-1810. It was, as we have seen, during these years that he was influenced by the Professor of Greek, John Young, a fine teacher who inspired his students with his own enthusiasm for Heyne, Muller's predecessor. By the fourth decade of the nineteenth century, Kenrick's views of myth had matured along the same lines as K. 0. Müller's. In the short period surrounding the publication of Müller's work in English in 1844, a period during which both Kenrick's Essay on Primaeval History and the first volume of George Grote's History of Greece appeared in print, there was a polarisation of opinion on the place of myth in relation to history, and by implication a parting of the ways within this

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30 Ibid., p. 461. See also Kenrick, 'Primaeval History', pp. 157-8.
31 Kenrick, 'Primaeval History', p. 65.
context on the role of reason as the ultimate tool in the analysis of human affairs. One influence which helped to produce such a watershed may have been the clear definition of ideas in Müller's volume, so expertly translated by John Leitch. The German's work has always been regarded as the culmination of the myth theory which emerged from that nation's classical scholarship. Underlying the terms of engagement outlined in the journals of the time however, were even more fundamental questions involving the role of the imagination and the irrational in the interpretation and understanding of human development.

Thus, Müller's *Introduction to a Scientific Study of Mythology*, translated by the Scotsman John Leitch, does not function simply as a scholar's guide to the methodology of the interpretation of myth or a straightforward textbook for students of antiquity. It operates on a more fundamental dimension to etch within its own subject matter the contours of important changes in the shape of ideas about the understanding of history. For some critics it was a textbook, but on a much deeper level it may be regarded as a signpost of intellectual change.