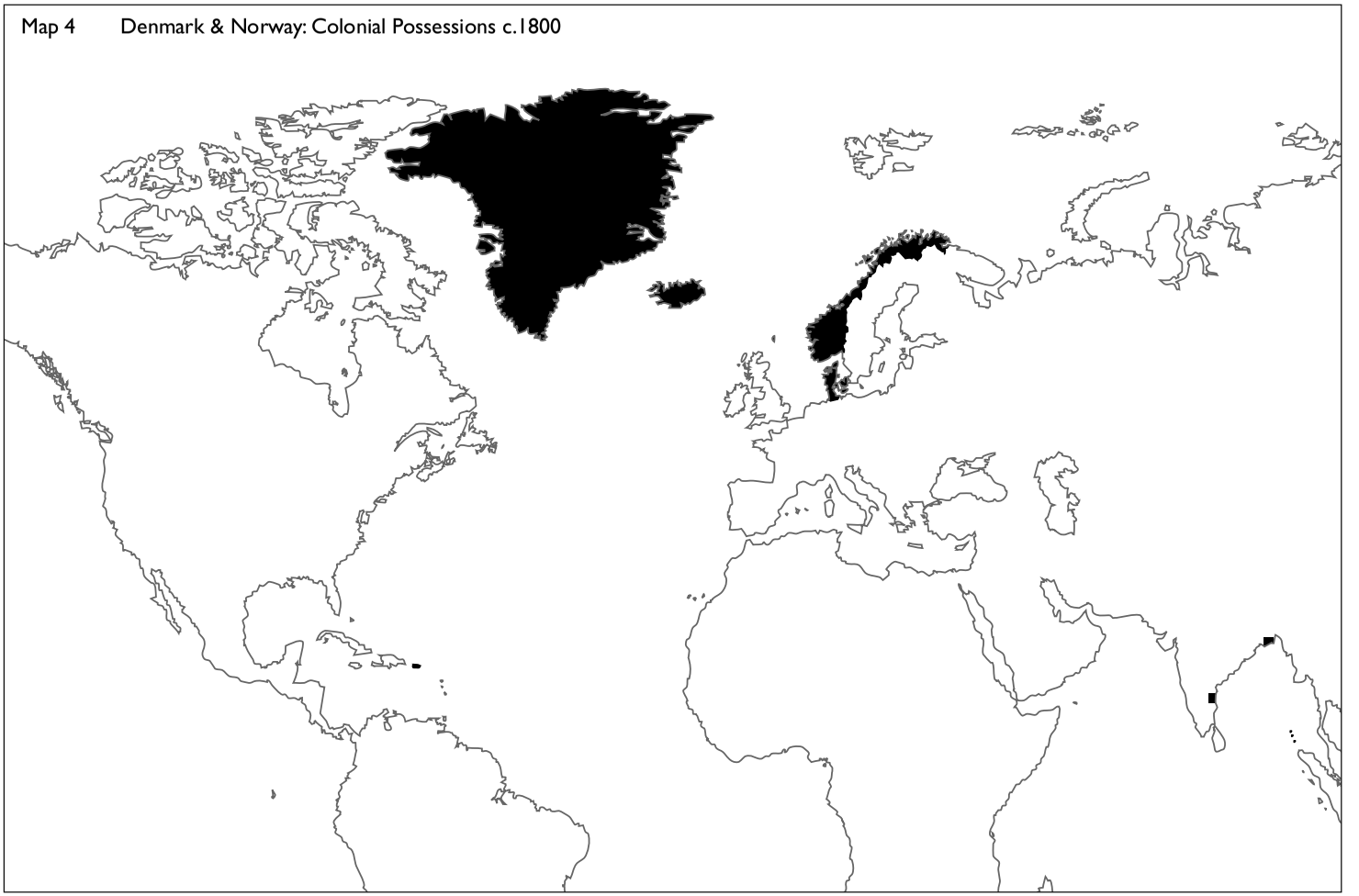
A Historical Companion to Postcolonial Literatures - Continental Europe and its Empires

Denmark and its Colonies

Map 4 Denmark & Norway: Colonial Possessions c.1800



Denmark and its Colonies: Introduction

In the general history of European imperialism and the creation of colonial administrations around the globe Denmark does not occupy a particularly prominent place. Its colonies were small in terms of population and, with the notable exception of Greenland, territory. But Denmark was an active partner in virtually all aspects of European imperialism, from exploration to trading posts, colonial administrations to slave possession; particularly in the second half of the 1700s it developed a lucrative trade in goods and slaves in the shadow of the larger European powers' engagement in major warfare over colonial possessions and monopolies on trade (see the entry on the Danish Charter Companies). So, the question is if anything other than relative size singles out Denmark for its particular brand of imperialism? Probably not, but what does distinguish each and every European imperial power from the others, is the particular culture around imperialism that grew out both of the imperial experiences with the colonised world, and that imperialism's relationship to nationalism.

What is characteristic of postcolonial Denmark then? To me it represents a historical engagement with Danish history, and its relative lack of attention to the importance of Danish colonies as a formative influence on Danish history and Danish national identity. This lack of attention from national historiographers towards the colonies and the idea of Denmark as part of an overseas imperial enterprise is matched by an equally underrated significance granted to the remnants of the Danish empire, Greenland and the Faeroe Islands, as a formative influence on contemporary Danish history. Yet the idea of the ungrateful and somehow lacking citizen (and therefore never quite ready for autonomy) from that bit on the North Atlantic, is an easily activated reaction from the average Dane interpellated through education, media representation and the Danish political establishment. The other side of the contemporary excavation of a post-imperial stress syndrome is the discourse on the migrant Other, as it takes place on all levels of Danish society. Arguably, the focus on the 'ill-adapting' or downright 'unsuited' migrant Other has contributed to the removal of the focus from the North Atlantic Other at least in its manifest political discourse. Nonetheless, the representations of both the 'semi-domestic' and migrant Other follow a remarkably similar pattern, where the unquestioned, rational, pragmatic and well-intended Dane is positioned against an Other who remains trapped by his or her own culture, tradition and/or religion. In particular in the current climate the national self is continuously constructed as being under siege from a haunting Other with nothing to offer the national self. The presence of others, 'semi-domestic' as well as migrants, is at the moment an extremely formative influence on definitions of a Danish identity. This cannot be seen only as a consequence of demographic change, as other periods in Danish history have had equally large migrant waves.

Simon Gikandi has lucidly described how British identity was in fact shaped decisively by events and developments in its colonies, in particular India. There was no Jewel in the Danish Crown, but there is a remarkable continuity in the way in which Denmark has looked differently at its tropical and Arctic possessions. This became absolutely clear when

it came to recruiting contributors for this volume. Hence it was extremely difficult to find anyone willing to write on aspects which are historically relevant to, say, both Greenland and the Danish West Indies (now the US Virgin Islands). This compartmentalisation of research, of course, partly reflects the specific interests of historians, anthropologists and so on, but it also reflects a reluctance to see how such historical situations were connected to an overall attitude, and policy, back in Copenhagen. To take but one example, Hinrich Rink was on the global, naval Galathea expedition in 1845–7, which had instructions to search for and record important natural resources en route, and to make one last-ditch attempt to establish a Danish colony on the Nicobar Islands. The same Hinrich became perhaps the most important colonial administrator of Greenland in the nineteenth century. No one to my knowledge has taken an interest in this connection, but the important point here is that this is a single instance of a much wider pattern; a pattern which feeds into a wider narrative about relative insignificance and therefore relative innocence about the Danish empire. In the preface to Leif Svalesen's book on the slave ship *Fredensborg*, Erik Gøbel writes that the Danish part of the slave transportation was only 1 per cent out of a total number between 12 million and 15 million from 1450 to 1870. It is important, however, to keep in mind that Denmark itself was small, and that the transportation of slaves on Danish ships took place in a shorter period; so the size and relative intensity differs from Gøbel's overall assessment. Considering the 85,000 slaves Gøbel estimates that Danish ships sailed across the Atlantic, it is hard to see this as a negligible activity.

There is, however, in postcolonial terms a different and equally important aspect to this question. That is the question of how the Danish participation in the general European imperialism is understood today, outside its more specific contexts. Here we can turn to the extremely important French language account of colonialism, *Le Livre noir du colonialisme*, where the Danish Foreign Minister and widely recognised intellectual, Per Stig Møller, has written the preface to the Danish translation of this book. Møller comments that 'colonialism is a black chapter in the history of human kind'. Why 'history of human kind' rather than European history, when this is what the book is about? Even more curious is the fact that although Møller mentions the Danish colonies in the tropics, Tranquebar, West Africa and the Caribbean, he says nothing about the North Atlantic colonies. This is in spite of the fact that Greenland ceased to be a Danish colony only in 1953, and as such it would seem far more relevant to talk of the relative late decolonisation phase of this part of the Danish empire. This process is still not over, since the Faeroe Islands and Greenland are still reluctant members of the Danish Commonwealth (*Rigsfællesskabet*). The argument that Møller does not bring out in this context, but which has to be implicitly there, is that Greenland was somehow not a colony that could be compared with its tropical 'sisters'. Here Møller's omission of Greenland can again be connected to the argument that the Danish empire was smaller, less violent, and made less money than the other empires did from their colonies. Yet, interestingly enough it is impossible to find a European imperial power that would not make exactly the same argument about *their* empire. Greenland occupies a central discursive space in this narrative, because it, or rather the Danish handling of it, is supposed to show that Greenland is the perfect illustration that Denmark always had the best interests of its colonised at heart. This imperial policy has come under increasing criticism, interestingly enough in a parallel move with the increased demands for Greenlandic and Faroese independence. The formal Danish colonial policy in Greenland finished with the inclusion of Greenland in the Danish Commonwealth, a move that has in recent years been proved not to be the result of a Danish wish to grant independence to its colonies, but, on the contrary, to be the result of increased UN intervention on behalf

of remaining colonies in the decolonisation phase of the 1940s and 1950s. The archives have furthermore revealed that the actions of the Danish government and its civil servants were dishonest. Greenlanders were deliberately kept in the dark, in violation of the rules laid down by the UN, and, in fact, the inclusion of Greenland in the Danish Commonwealth served mainly to protect the interests of a shrinking Danish realm and to improve Denmark's standing within NATO. The American desire for base facilities in Thule in North Greenland allowed the Danish government to punch above its weight and have influence disproportionate to its position, size and contribution to NATO. Despite the introduction of home rule for Greenland in 1979 (the Faeroese had been granted home rule in 1948) defence and foreign policy combined with the overall economic policy continue to put heavy restrictions on Greenlandic self-determination. The argument used by the Danish government (and largely uncontested by the Danish population at large, the Danish media or Danish intellectuals) is that Denmark has nothing to be ashamed of in its dealings with Greenland, as Denmark each year transfers large amounts of money to Greenland and its home rule government. This interpretation, of course, leaves out of the equation the fact that Denmark has had a de facto discount membership of NATO because it offered (or rather did not resist) American presence in Greenland's north, that Denmark has profited from the traffic in goods to Greenland, and that thousands of Danes have earned sizable amounts of money in Greenland (they were paid a higher salary than the locals) for example during the modernisation period after World War II.

The Faeroe Islands have fought through the political channels for independence for some years now, and the remarkable comments of a Danish Prime Minister, who said in 2000, 'If you slam the door I will slam the till', speaks volumes about the customary arrogance with which the Danish administration still chooses to deal with what it otherwise prefers to call 'equal partners' in the Danish Commonwealth. So, the postcolonial evidently comes in the Danish case both through the unequal relationship which is not only a product of a past imperial-colonial bind, but is actually also still being acted out today.

A last historiographical consideration, postcolonial Denmark deals with the questions of a national blindspot – a perception of Denmark as if its territorial borders were evidence of a largely unchanged holistic Danish identity, easily separated from its neighbouring countries. Here again there is a temporal and a spatial dimension. The temporal dimension challenges through the reading of Danish history, how Denmark not only has both grown and shrunk in size, but as a consequence of that fluctuation has also included areas where other languages were spoken. So, the self-assuring view that Denmark's borders are natural as well as territorial because they demarcate where Danish historically has been spoken, has only, and even then not completely, been the situation since the end of World War I. Apart from this contradictory representation, such a proposition also ignores that dialects from different parts of the country are as different, at times even more so, from each other as Danish is from Swedish or Norwegian. It comes as no surprise that the Danish state secured the relative linguistic homogeneity of its population through the teaching in schools of standard Danish, and left the dialects to die away slowly.

The idea about the one-to-one correspondence between the natural (through language) as well as territorial demarcation of Denmark has been used also to single out the migrant Other as 'naturally' different and therefore simply not proper material for Danishness. The common narrative here speaks of holistic Denmark being challenged by migrant Others, through the arrival of low-paid labour from southern Europe and the Middle East from the 1960s. The one option on offer was assimilation, the discursive term being used now is integration, but assimilation is still what is meant by the Danish majority led (on) by the

political and media establishment. This narrative of historical homogeneity is easily disturbed by the presence in Danish history of many other migrant groups, such as Jews, Romani, Huguenots, Poles, Swedes and so on (see entry Denmark: Migrancy). Here also the Faeroese and Greenlanders occupy a peculiar space: they are not recognised as minorities because that would grant them certain rights in relation to issues of self-determination and discrimination.

This volume enables scholars researching various European colonial and post-imperial histories to find out what happened in other parts of Europe. One of the crucial obstacles to more comparative work, which might help remove some of the national blindspots, is language. In the Danish case the problem is a combined one of too few non-Danish scholars being able to read Danish, and a general lack of available material in English. This constitutes a serious problem for scholars eager to familiarise themselves with postcolonial Denmark, and, as the reader will see from the list of Danish references, it has also been a problem for the contributors to this volume. It is quite often difficult to come up with any references in English at all, let alone any that follow a postcolonial trajectory. In Danish the problem is that even though there exists a wealth of archival material on the former colonies, the vast majority of the work that has been done with this material suffers from a lack of attention to the power paradigm which the Danish state spread over its possessions. This is accompanied by a general lack of knowledge about what postcolonial criticism has achieved in particular in relation to making a critique of the British Empire, and to a lesser extent of the other major European empires.

Translation into English by Lars Jensen

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Abolition of Slavery

In 1998, when the 150th anniversary of Governor Peter von Scholten's proclamation of the end of slavery in the Danish West Indies was celebrated in the Virgin Islands, it was marred by the protest and last minute withdrawal by prominent Danish politicians. In Denmark a group of Danish scholars attended a symposium on the Danish West Indian slave society, and papers from this symposium were later published. In the preface to the volume the editor regrets the absence of scholars from the Virgin Islands, and the resulting Danish bias to the volume, but says the Virgin Islands scholars were unable to attend

the Danish symposium because of their participation in the celebrations in the Virgin Islands. Why their contributions could not subsequently be included for publication since the volume was not published until 2001, is cause for speculation.

Official Denmark, helped by some historians, and history books for Danish school children, has long prided itself on the fact that it was the first Western country to abolish slave trade in 1792 (although this did not come into effect until 1803), and on the humanitarian attitude of Governor von Scholten, who set the slaves free in 1848. In fact, von Scholten's proclamation was the result of a slave rebellion and in the longer term inevitable in light of the abolition of slavery by the British. When the Danish slave trade and slavery during the era of the Middle Passage is discussed, attention is drawn to the relatively small number of slaves shipped by Danish companies. While it is obviously important to present accurate facts, it is also a curious feature of Danish historians to draw attention to the comparative insignificance of Danish participation in the slave trade, which presumably has little effect on the question of morality. The same acute attention is seldom applied to the equally relative small size of Denmark in European terms with relation to population, and the shorter Danish involvement in the trade which would also put natural limits on the Danish contribution.

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Anthropology, Greenland and Colonialism

Danish anthropology or ethnology as an exhibition and research activity at what later became the Danish National Museum originated and developed independently of Danish colonialism during the second half of the nineteenth century, a time when only Greenland remained as a real Danish colony. The function of anthropology was to support the construction of Danish national history as part of the construction of a Danish national identity. During the 1830s, archaeology was separated from historical studies, and during the same period national history changed from being the history of kings to the history of the people. In accordance with the spirit of the romantic period, the history of the people before written history – conceived at the time as 'heathen times' – was to be established by archaeology. Because they only had material remains as a basis for reconstructing early prehistory, scholars also had to rely on anthropological collections and descriptions of 'savages' or 'primitive peoples' in order to be able to reconstruct the social and cultural life of early Danes. An anthropological collection was thus established as a study collection for the archaeologists in the newly established National Museum. As the technology of primitive

peoples was comparable to prehistoric technology, archaeologists thought the same to be the case with social and cultural life in general. This belief was built into the evolutionary constructions of civilisation of the Enlightenment philosophers, and thus the archaeologists were able to reconstruct the social and cultural origins and developments during what was regarded as parallel to philosophical ideas about savagery and barbarism. In Denmark these periods were idealised, and Greenlandic social and cultural conditions served to illustrate the earliest human conditions and thus, as a hunting culture, to illustrate the earliest Stone Age culture in Denmark. The colonial system had no direct relevance in this connection (Høiris 1986).

Few people in Denmark involved in the colonial administration knew anything about the culture of Greenland. Most important among those who did was Heinrich Johannes Rink (1819–93), a physicist and chemist who took part in the Danish scientific global expedition on the ship *Galathea* from 1845 to 1847. Apart from scientific exploits, the expedition's instructions included the handing over of the colony of Tranquebar in India to the British and, as a proposed compensation, investigating the possibilities for establishing a new Danish colony on the Nicobar Islands – the expedition warmly recommended this to the King, but the proposal was never realised. During his stay on the Nicobar Islands, Rink contracted malaria or 'climate fever' and returned home. Shortly afterwords, he was sent to Greenland to do mineralogical research. Between 1858 and 1868 he was Inspector of South Greenland (the highest administrative official in the colonial administration in Greenland). Knowing the fate of indigenous peoples in different parts of the world and especially America, he was worried that the Greenlanders, like the American Indians, would become extinct, and he saw the anarchy created by the Danish colonial strategy as a direct threat to the Greenlanders' survival. He was specifically referring to the fact that in order to Christianise the Greenlanders, the Danish authorities had fought and removed or killed the *angakoks* (Greenlandic shamans), who, as the most central authorities, had played a key role in making people observe those customs and laws that centuries of experience had proved necessary for survival under such extreme natural conditions.

The authority of the *angakok* had secured the respect for customs and laws and he himself had been a person with exceptional knowledge about the laws of nature, weather conditions, conditions for hunting and human nature in general. Normally, the *angakok*, according to Rink, would be the best hunter among the men and he often passed on his knowledge through fairytales, myths and legends. Religion was his system of sanctions and the most rational customs and laws, and those most essential to survival were closely connected to religion. Dissidents were corrected in song duels where public opinion settled the dispute. But Danish mission activities disrupted this practice and both song duels and the *angakoks* were removed, after which society fell into disarray. Sons no longer showed respect for the hunting experience of their fathers and no longer learned to hunt; women lost their respect for their husbands and behaved very badly. The traditional sharing system ceased, and people sold individually to the traders and sometimes they even sold so much of their fur that they did not have enough left to make their own tools. Under such conditions there was no surplus for the poor and weak. The leadership of the *angakok* was replaced by the leadership of Europeans, but due to their lack of knowledge of Greenlandic language and culture and frequent replacements, they could not fulfil this leadership role. Their demands to the Greenlanders were inconsistent, and in reality the laws introduced were meant only to protect Danish interests. But there was still hope, according to Rink. His advice to the Danish government was that the colonial government should help those in most need and simultaneously re-establish the traditional system of production to stimulate

household independence. This was to be done by supporting the rich hunters and entrusting skilled natives with the leadership of local societies. Thus, order could be re-established. The natives should have both money and spiritual authority, and the Europeans should fall back and only function as overseers without the authority to intervene in ways that would weaken the authority of the native leaders. Rink gave as the reason why only native leaders should be used the physical hazards associated with the economic activities in Greenland, which demanded hard discipline, something that in turn necessitated the hunter's extreme independence. Finally, in order for this system to function smoothly, Greenland needed to be protected from the intrusion of private interests, so it was important to preserve the commercial monopoly in Greenland. Rink's analysis and advice were not in vain. In 1862 the so-called *forstanderskaber* (directorships) were introduced in Greenland, and in 1863 support was given to expand Greenlandic production (Rink 1966–7, 1865 and 1877).

In the early decades of the twentieth century, anthropology developed as an academic discipline within cultural geography, and Greenland, or more precisely Eskimo culture, came into focus again. Inspired by German anthropogeography and cultural history, the origins of Eskimo culture became the most important anthropological subject, and until the 1960s only very rarely did anthropological analyses refer to Greenland's status as a colony or, after 1953, as a Danish county. And when Greenland was mentioned as a colony it was merely to emphasise that the Danish colonial administration functioned only to make life as good as possible for the Greenlanders, or it was used to put pressure on the Danish government to grant financing for research and exploration in Greenland. And finally, in the 1930s, scientific expeditions to East Greenland were an important political activity to secure the area as part of the Danish colony in the Danish-Norwegian conflict concerning the ownership of East Greenland.

Two themes were important to Danish anthropological investigations in Greenland before the 1960s: the origins of Eskimo culture and whether the settlement routes in Greenland had gone north or south around the island. In order to solve these questions, artefacts, list of words and myths were collected on anthropological and archaeological expeditions; the widest ranging of these was Knud Rasmussen's (1879–1933) famous fifth Thule expedition. All the collections were analysed at the National Museum, which was regarded as a cultural laboratory, and with its collections from not only all of Greenland, but also nearly all Inuit groups along the northern coast of America and inland Canada, the National Museum in Denmark had the most complete anthropological and archaeological collection in the world. Consequently, the museum became the centre for international studies of the cultural history and material culture of the Eskimos between 1925 and 1960.

Eskimo research was also carried out at the University of Copenhagen, where a chair in 'Greenlandic (Eskimo) Language and Culture' was established in 1920. William Thalbitzer (1873–1958) became the first Professor after a bitter conflict between this famous linguist and the Ethnographic Collection scholars at the National Museum over the publication of Gustav Holm's (1849–1940) work from Ammassalik. Thalbitzer had visited Greenland to do fieldwork several times, and like Rink he was critical of the execution of Danish colonialism in Greenland, but not of colonialism itself. In 1907, Thalbitzer claimed that European clothes caused colds because they were not adapted to the Arctic climate. He added that the Greenlanders needed doctors more than priests and that the mission caused ruptures in the intellectual life of the Greenlanders. Finally, he could not see why it was so urgent to baptise the Greenlanders that the colonial officials had forced them together in

large communities, in spite of such serious consequences as hunger because of too much pressure on the local hunting and fishing resources (Thalbitzer 1907). After Thalbitzer's resignation, the institute continued doing ethnographic, linguistic and archaeological research similar to that conducted by the National Museum.

During the 1970s, the Institute of Eskimology grew and the new young assistant professors became deeply involved in the political processes that ended in Greenland home rule in 1979. Contemporary Greenland became the subject of research, and anthropologists among the staff were doing critical work on themes like modernisation and identity formation, based on extensive fieldwork. Robert Petersen, a native Greenlander and one of few Greenlanders with an academic degree, became a full professor with language as his main subject, and he was also deeply involved in structuring the new Greenland. He may be credited with the establishment of a Greenlandic university in the capital of Nuuk, Ilisimatusarfik. In 1968, the anthropologists Helge Kleivan (1924–83) and Jens Dahl took the initiative to establish what is now a worldwide organisation, the International Work Group of Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), to defend the general and human rights of indigenous people. Since then IWGIA has grown enormously and received international recognition. Also the two institutes of anthropology in Copenhagen and Aarhus conducted intensive fieldwork in the small local societies from the 1960s through to the 1980s, studying the modernisation which had spread all over Greenland, and critically analysing both the general policy towards Greenland and its effects on local societies in a more or less Marxist perspective focusing on imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism.

After the establishment of home rule in Greenland, the interest in anthropological research diminished in Denmark and the Institute of Eskimology was reduced in staff and students and its very existence threatened. Greenland gained its own national museum, Nunatta Katersugaasivia Allagaateqarfialu, and a great number of the Danish collections were transferred there. With its own national museum and university and with major reductions in the Danish allocations for doing cultural research in Greenland, the Danish Research Ministry regarded it as the duty of the Greenlanders themselves to conduct and especially finance cultural and historical research in Greenland.

Ole Høiris

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Charter Companies

In a book published in 1946 the Danish colonial historian, Sophie Petersen, makes the acute observation that Copenhagen has retained many traces of its highly prosperous period in the second half of the 1700s. Such remarks have since disappeared from books on Danish history, which inevitably focus on history being produced as a consequence of largely domestic factors.

However, Denmark did enjoy great prosperity in the 1700s and it was caused, not so much by the direct possession of colonies as by the wider trading activities brought on by European imperialism. The profits of the mercantilistic period reached Denmark through the hands of the Charter Companies. There were about twenty of these over a period of 200 years, and their lives were characterised by cycles of boom and bust. It was Dutch influence and rivalry which sparked off the first round of Danish Charter Companies in the early 1600s. Danish sailors went on Dutch expeditions to the East Indies, and Dutch speculators contacted the Danish king with a view to opening up a trading post in India. Some of the operations were initially small in scale, quite literally one-ship missions to establish a trading post. Eventually the operational ground of the Charter Companies would mirror Danish colonial possessions as they established themselves in Greenland (1619, 1636 and 1747), Iceland (1619, three subsequent companies 1733–74), West Africa (1625, 1636, 1671, 1765 and 1781), Morocco (1778), the Caribbean (1652, 1671 and 1778), and particularly India, where the most successful of the Danish Indian Charter Companies was established in 1732. With the loss of Denmark's international position after the Napoleonic Wars, the Danish Charter Companies slowly disappeared or were taken over by the British. In the North Atlantic Danish colonies a royal trading monopoly took over, which was abolished in Iceland and the Faeroe Islands in the 1850s, but not until 1950, in Greenland, and even then the company retained many of its privileges.

The Danish colonies were small in terms of population and (with the exception of Greenland) territory. The Charter Companies largely controlled the administration of the colonies during the companies' most influential periods. The contact between Denmark and its colonies was sporadic at best, which provided for long periods of relatively extensive autonomy for the local commander. The Charter Companies were a quasi-private enterprise, as investors were made up of a mixture of merchants, both Danish and other Europeans (in particular, Dutch merchants), while the King was often the main investor. The nature of the arrangement meant that the Danish state would intervene both to protect its colonial possessions from rival nations and to protect its investments. Even as late as 1845 there was a last attempt to locate a possible new colony in the Nicobar Islands, when it was clear that Britain would monopolise the trade with India itself.

Lars Jensen

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Colonial Exhibitions

Colonial exhibitions in Denmark can be traced to the seventeenth century. In 1605 several Inuit were kidnapped on the expedition ordered by Christian IV to 'rediscover' Greenland. They created widespread public excitement on arrival in Copenhagen, and were displayed to the royal court. More were kidnapped in 1606, and there were later attempts; three women arriving in 1654 were made to dance ballet for the court. During the 1600s the court collected other living subjects for its amusement and service; 'Blackamoors' (from the West Indies and Gold Coast) and Turks provided entertainment alongside 'freaks' and exotic animals. Ethnographic artefacts were also collected for the royal Kunstkammer.

In 1724, following the establishment of the first Danish mission in Greenland, two Inuit men, Pooq and Qiperoq, encouraged by the missionary Hans Egede, travelled to Denmark. They were presented to the court and, to promote interest in Greenland, a grand public spectacle was arranged in which they paddled kayaks and hunted ducks on the canals of central Copenhagen. When Pooq (baptised Christian) returned to Denmark in 1728 with his family and other companions, they became a major public attraction (their doorkeeper profiting by charging admission) (Bertelsen 1945). Several of the Inuit later taken to Denmark would also be displayed at court.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, exhibitions of 'exotic' people were extremely popular. Frequent large-scale exhibitions (for example, Nubians, Sioux Indians, Cannibals, Mahdi's warriors, Senegambians, Bedouins, Indians, Chinese) were held in the capital, many at Tivoli and at the Copenhagen Zoo. The German, Carl Hagenbeck, who began this tradition touring Europe with human and animal exhibits, arranged many of these. The exhibitions supposedly portrayed the authentic life of those on display, and were not without erotic interest (Andreassen 2003). These spectacles staged the Orientalist construction of the non-European as a primitive, exotic 'Other'. Victor Cornelins, a West Indian boy exhibited in the 1905 Colonial Exhibition at Tivoli, described how being displayed in a cage (to prevent him wandering around other exhibits) increased spectators' interest.

Exhibitions of living subjects and/or ethnographic objects did not merely serve as entertainment; they were strategic, promoting colonial interests. International colonial exhibitions exemplified this, for instance, Denmark's exhibition on Greenland at the 1931 Exposition Coloniale in Paris.

Ideas of race and evolution propagated at 'living exhibitions' were also structuring principles of ethnographic exhibitions in museums. Items from the Kunstkammer were rehoused in the world's oldest ethnographic museum in 1841 (later the National Museum's Ethnographic Collection), and classified according to stages of civilisational progress. The collection was greatly expanded in the twentieth century with expeditions to Greenland, Central Asia and North Africa. Ethnographic exhibitions continued to present other cultures in terms of temporal backwardness, thus legitimising colonialism's 'civilising mission'.

Cheralyn Mealor

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Creolisation

Within linguistics the term 'creolisation' has been used to describe encounters and interchanges between different languages. Creolisation has also been theorised by Caribbean intellectuals (Glissant, Benítez-Rojo, Brathwaite, Ortiz among others) as a concept that describes the dynamics of cultural signifying systems and practices in the Caribbean in a way that focuses on the complexity of social agency throughout the particular history of the region while revealing the shortcomings of colonialist conceptions of race, territory, history and their legacies, even if the term has also been applied in other contexts. Among the various etymological meanings attributed to the word 'creole', it is perhaps 'to grow' and 'to raise' that are particularly important when referring to creolisation within the three Caribbean islands that were colonised by the Danes: St Thomas (1666), St Jan (St John) (1718) and St Croix (1733). Until 1755 it was notably private trading companies which inscribed the Caribbean islands into the Danish imperial territory through the general 'growing' and 'raising' of profits in a trade that involved goods from Iceland and Greenland and, most importantly, slaves from the Gold Coast.

The history of creolisation in the former Danish islands presents several distinctive features. Only a few of the settlers in the Danish Caribbean were Danes. Most had a Dutch background and others had various European backgrounds. The Afro-Caribbean slaves exercised a particular kind of social power in the relationship with the Euro-Caribbeans because of the pronounced fear of slave riots and rebellions. More importantly, within a generation or two, the slaves formed their own internal communities and trading economies. As food shortages were was often a problem, Euro-Caribbeans became dependent on this economy. During the nineteenth century, slaves became increasingly aware of the possibility of using the court system as a forum for resistance against social injustice. Sexual relations between Euro- and Afro-Caribbeans and the economic and social success of the freemen and women (freed slaves and their descendants) were instrumental in the formation of a distinct creolisation within the official conceptualisation of a racial hierarchy. The best-known example may be the wealth and influence of Anna Heegaard, the companion of Governor Peter von Scholten. Even after the abolition of slavery, social creolisation continued as a struggle for social justice. Significant examples that caused changes

in social order and practices and ideas about race are the rebellion of the Afro-Caribbean workers in 1878, the strike in Charlotte Amalie on St Thomas in 1892, the political activism of David Hamilton Jackson of St Croix, in Denmark and on the islands, the founding of the Labour Union in 1915 by George Morehead, and the strike of the coal workers in 1916. After the islands were sold to the USA in 1916, Afro-Caribbean immigrants contributed to the Harlem Renaissance. However, within the islands, cultural and social order was now marked by the use of St Thomas as a military base. Although racial segregation had been legally abolished already in 1834 – *before* the abolition of slavery in 1848 – the Afro-Caribbean population was now facing a body of administrators and military personnel that were trained in working within segregationist ideologies.

Heidi Bojsen

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The Greenlandic Colonial Administration

The Danish government took over responsibility for trade in West Greenland in 1726, and in 1776 formed the Royal Greenlandic Trade Company (known as KGH: Det Kongelige Grønlandske Handelskompani). KGH maintained a trade monopoly until the end of World War II. During the late eighteenth century KGH established colonies along the West Greenlandic coast, which up to the 1950s were divided into two provinces each headed by a governor who reported directly to the KGH administration in Copenhagen.

Until 1908 both trade and administration were the responsibility of KGH. The Danish colonial attitude towards Greenland was isolationist and paternal, and aimed to protect the Inuit seal-hunting culture. KGH kept Greenland closed off from the rest of the world, and even Danish citizens were not allowed to enter Greenland without a permit. The Royal Ordinance's instructions of 1782 focused on European trade with the Greenlander and the regulation of other kinds of intercourse between Greenlanders and outsiders. This situation changed around 1860, when the Danish state introduced councils with Greenlandic

participation in every factory district. Up to 1950, three distinct periods can be identified: 1862–1910 was the time of the Boards of Guardians; 1911–25 was the period of the Municipal Councils and the Provincial Councils; and in 1925 District Councils were added. From 1925 to 1950, therefore, there were three levels: local, district (factory) and provincial. In 1950, municipalities were introduced to what was formerly the factory district level and the two Provincial Councils were made into one. Councils now existed on only two levels.

The establishment of the Boards of Guardians in the 1860s owed much to the Governor of South Greenland, H. Rink, who was amongst the first to criticise the policy of increased westernisation and commercialisation in Greenland. He argued that Greenlanders had to take responsibility for their own lives, like they had before the Danes colonised Greenland in 1721. Western 'luxury goods' had spoiled the Greenlanders, and they had forgotten the old ways of hunting and taking care of their kinsmen. The Boards of Guardians were seen by Rink as a platform for political reform from which Greenlandic representatives could restore their self-confidence and increase the pride of the seal hunters. The members were Greenlanders as well as Danes, while the Municipal Councils mostly had Greenlandic members. The participation of Greenlanders in politics still had a long way to go.

After World War II Denmark ended its isolationist policy towards Greenland. Emphasis was placed on social welfare as a part of 'modernisation'. On Danish Constitution Day, 5 June 1953, Greenland was incorporated into the Kingdom of Denmark, and was granted two seats in the Danish Parliament. This brought a formal end to Greenland's colonial status, and Greenland became a Danish province. East Greenland and Thule in northernmost West Greenland were not integrated into the general political and administrative system of Greenland until the beginning of the 1960s.

Mette Rønsager

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Greenlandic Writers

The Danish colonisation of Greenland was responsible for making Greenlandic (an Inuit language) a written language used as language of instruction in missions and schools. Both the Danish mission and the Moravian Brethren wrote hymn books in Greenlandic.

From the mid-nineteenth century the oral tradition was written down by the Greenlanders themselves. A newspaper was published from 1861 onwards (that is, 200 pages per year written by Greenlanders in Greenlandic). In the late nineteenth century Greenlandic hymns began to be set down in a literary fashion. After 1900, national songs and other European literary genres were consciously appropriated by the Greenlanders themselves to their own needs. The various forms of oral tradition, however, were not transferred to literature. Ethnic demarcation took place through themes and language. On a par with the newspapers, the literature became an important space for the internal Greenlandic debate on socio-political issues. Both media became important elements in the nation-building process of twentieth-century Greenland, first when it was a colony, then as part of Denmark and finally under home rule. Themes in the first half of the century included negotiations over how to define Greenlandic identity, how to imagine future developments, how to depict 'heathen' forefathers in light of the fact that most Greenlanders were now born within the Christian faith.

The Danification policy from 1953 triggered off a protest movement which peaked in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Protest lyrics attacking Danish rule were used (with Danish or English translation) to convey the political messages. Many of these lyrics appeared as songs issued in albums, thereby reaching many.

When home rule had been introduced in 1979, Danification was replaced with Greenlandification. After a decade Greenlandic officially was no longer considered a threatened language. An increasing number of literary works were published. However, from the late 1980s younger readers began to complain that Greenlandic literature did not address their lives. Some contemporary works do have a very conservative moral outlook, while older literature presupposes better knowledge of Christianity than the younger generation has. In an age of the internet, satellite TV and DVDs, the challenge for the authors is serious. Meanwhile politicians seem to think that literature should be self-financing. In any given population only a few per cent will buy and read literature. In Greenland this percentage has to be found amongst roughly 50,000 mother-tongue speakers of Greenlandic. It is important for any language (and its culture) that it is literary and creative, and that the world is represented through the local tongue. This is even more important in Greenland, where in film and video production local production is still almost non-existent. Greenlandic literature in the twentieth century is a postcolonial literature that deals with nation building. In general, it describes how things are among Greenlanders. The Danes are the significant Others, who are left unmentioned in most cases.

Asked as citizens Greenlanders will still think that Greenlandic literature should go on in this postcolonial way. But as readers they want thrillers, romance, in depth psychological plots and so on. This discrepancy (along with a deal with of young literary talents) has been a problem for some time now, but imminent change is in the air. There has been a recent emergence of a written Greenlandic thriller genre, which has grown out of an old oral genre (typically starting with disappointed people seeking evil supernatural power through a hermit existence in the wilderness). Further, increasing focus in the community on individuality and on social problems from a non-ethnic-national perspective is mirrored in a new, but steadily growing testimony literature and in literary works closely bound up with personal problems such as psychological and physical violence in relationships, incest and child abuse, alcoholism and homophobia. Most of these works are not sophisticated, but may pave the way for something better. This is also apparent in explicitly ethnic-national works, where humour is beginning to emerge as well.

Parallel to the literary production many song lyrics have been written since the 1970s. Less confined by ethno-national stereotypes although protest lyrics kicked off the movement, this form has attracted new young writers. Now young rappers are criticising their parents for many forms of neglect.

While published literary works in general are written in Greenlandic and very few in Danish, in recent years two young Greenlandic singers have written (or co-written) their lyrics in English. It is a growing tendency that many new literary works, together with some older ones, appear in Danish translation (one of the reasons being that some Greenlanders have Danish as their mother tongue as a result of the Danification period), but virtually nothing has been translated into English (for Danish translations, see Langgård 2003). Compared to European literatures the Greenlandic one is both of very recent date and small. Compared to the other Inuit areas it is exceptionally old and both substantial and impressive in breadth and size.

Karen Langgård

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N. F. S. Grundtvig

N. F. S. Grundtvig (1783–1872) represents a towering figure in Danish intellectual, religious and national history. He was primarily concerned with ideas of nation and people, although interestingly enough he never wrote a Danish history, but rather three world histories. He wrote and spoke passionately about the Danish nation, but the intellectual influences on his thinking came from abroad, particularly from John Locke. More than anything, however, Grundtvig was a religious thinker, who spent a great many of his early years in isolation from mainstream religious and political thought. It was nationalism that brought him into the limelight, partly though his ability to appeal to the masses, mostly peasants in mid-nineteenth century Denmark. It was Grundtvig's thoughts on peasant education which led to the establishment of the first Danish Folk High School. His interest in peasant education was coupled with his strong support for the absolute monarchy. When the pressure for democratic reform forced a new constitution to be written, Grundtvig became an active politician who sat in the Danish Parliament.

Central to Grundtvig's ideas on nationalism was a common language, culture, history and territory. This went against the contemporary structure of society in mid-nineteenth-century Denmark, which included a significant part of current northern Germany, that had an important influence in the political power structure of Danish society, and also meant that around 40 per cent of the Danish population was German-speaking. Grundtvig's four criteria play an important role in contemporary discussions about Danish national identity, particularly in populist right-wing politics, but also more broadly in the debates concerning the rights of immigrants to be taught their mother tongue, and to practise their own culture. Furthermore the emphasis on territoriality continues to smack of an organic Danish identity unproblematically rooted in the Danish soil, as opposed to that of immigrants, whose identity and loyalty are frequently questioned. The Faeroe Islands and Greenland, as well as Greenlanders and Faeroese people living in Denmark, constitute a particular problem for this kind of self-definition. Hence in the early 1950s UN questions concerning the colonial desire for greater autonomy or independence were rejected with the Danish government's representative's remark that the Greenlanders and Faeroese felt they were Danish.

Grundtvig devoted little time to the Danish colonies, albeit he was an active member of an anti-slavery committee in Copenhagen. This committee was formed after the establishment of an English committee, which sought to set up sister organisations in continental Europe, partly out of humanitarian concern, partly out of an anxiety over unequal conditions for plantation owners in the Caribbean in particular. Grundtvig was more outspoken on the issue of slavery than actively instrumental in its eventual abolition in 1848.

Lars Jensen

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Thorkild Hansen and the Critique of Empire

Prior to the 1960s and the emergence of documentary fiction and politically engaged literature, Denmark's colonial history and the Danish slave trade were distant and romanticised episodes in the historical consciousness. Modern Denmark is not generally regarded as a colonial power engaged in the subjugation of indigenous peoples in distant colonies – and certainly not when measured against the imperial legacies of neighbouring Europeans. However, in the 1960s, when the civil rights movement in the USA began to create a global awareness of racial injustices, and when massive popular movements in Western Europe began to expose the role of Western imperialism in the developing world, a critique

of imperialism emerged in Danish documentary literature; in the works of Danish writer Thorkild Hansen (1927–89), this critique is sharply focused on Denmark's colonialist legacy. In this regard, Thorkild Hansen's contribution is unique in Danish letters; it is also remarkable in terms of sheer volume: Hansen published several substantial documentary works dealing with controversial or forgotten chapters in Denmark's imperialist past.

Prior to the publication of a remarkable trilogy of works by Thorkild Hansen, *Slavernes kyst* (*The Slave Coast*, 1967), *Slavernes skibe* (*The Slave Ships*, 1968) and *Slavernes øer* (*The Slave Islands*, 1970), Denmark's involvement in slave trading and slavery on West Indian colonies was an obscure chapter in the national past. One sentence by popular Danish historian Palle Lauring in his *Danmarkshistorie* (1960, translated as *A History of the Kingdom of Denmark*) illustrates quite well the official and widely held view: 'Denmark had put a stop to the import of Negro slaves on its West Indian Islands in 1792 – the first country in the world to forbid slave-trading' (1960b). Thorkild Hansen's extensively researched and masterfully narrated 'Slave Trilogy' may be read as a corrective to the cursory treatment which Denmark's involvement in the slave trade has received in popular and textbook histories. In Hansen's words in the opening volume of the trilogy:

> Skole bøgernens lille oplysning om, at Danmark var det første land, som afskaffede slavehandelen. Tusinder af mænd, kvinder og børn. Og bagefter en enkelt sætning. Som er forkert. (1960a) [The textbook's little piece of information about the fact that Denmark was the first country to abolish the slave trade. Thousands of men, women and children. And in the end a single sentence. Which is incorrect.]

While it is tempting to read the Slave Trilogy solely as an attack on imperialism and Danish complicity with the atrocities of slave-trading and slavery, the trilogy also demonstrates the author's dedication to the process of investigating and recreating a historical reality. In a decade when the USA was in the spotlight for its racist treatment of African Americans, Thorkild Hansen shifted the focus to his own home-front and touched a sensitive nerve in the national conscience. Indeed, the award to Hansen of the Nordic Council's literary award in 1971 for *Slavernes øer* appeared politically motivated; the commission (part of the Nordi Council) called the work 'an example of the wealthy countries' exploitation of the impoverished countries . . . illustrated with historical expertise and powerful artistry' (quoted in Hansen 1982).

Slavernes kyst, the first volume of the trilogy, offers a history of 'Danish Guinea' (south-eastern Ghana), where the Danish state maintained five forts for the purpose of enslaving Africans as labourers for its West Indian colonies. The second volume, *Slavernes skibe*, describes the dreadful conditions aboard the slave ships which transported African prisoners from the forts to the colonies in the West Indies, where they were sold on the auction block to Danish plantation owners. Of the tens of thousands of Africans transported, Hansen estimates that one fifth perished in the packed holds of the ships which drifted across the windless 'Middle Passage'. *Slavernes øer*, the final volume, is a tour de force, that dramatises the entire history of the Danish West Indies, which included the islands of St Croix, St Jan and St Thomas (now the US Virgin Islands), from the arrival of the first colonists in 1671 to the sale of the islands to the USA in 1917 for $25 million.

Although Thorkild Hansen refused to subscribe to the narrowly defined leftist political ideology of the 1960s, his major documentary works dealing with little-known episodes in Denmark's history of exploration and colonialism share some of the common concerns of this period. To some degree, these documentary novels articulate the newly awakened

interest in Western ventures into 'exotic' parts of the world. Focusing on nearly forgotten explorers, scientific expeditions and commercial ventures in Denmark's imperial past, Hansen constructed very engaging historical narratives about the Danish expedition to Yemen in 1761–7 headed by Carsten Niebuhr, *Det lykkelige Arabien* (1962; *Arabia Felix*, 1964) and about the ill-fated seventeenth-century Danish voyage led by captain Jens Munk to discover a Northwest Passage through North America, *Jens Munk* (1965; *The Way to Hudson Bay*, 1970). Hansen was an early proponent and master of documentary fiction; his major works published in the 1960s became best-sellers in his native Denmark and were extremely popular throughout Scandinavia. The political climate of the period with its new awareness of Western neo-colonial influence in the developing world may have encouraged writers such as Hansen (as well as Per Olav Enquist and Per Olaf Sundman in Sweden) to seek answers to current problems through historical inquiries into earlier European colonialist ventures.

Similar to Johannes V. Jensen in some respects, Thorkild Hansen is one of the great travellers in modern Danish letters; his works reach back into history and out into the far corners of the globe. His method, which involves extensive research into authentic documents as well as first-hand expeditions to the historical sites, was highly innovative in his day. Hansen deliberately walked a tightrope between fact and fiction, demonstrating his great skill as a novelist as well as his impressive talent as an historian. More daring and provocative than other documentary writers of the period, he undertook ambitious and controversial topics while challenging the disciplinary boundaries between history and fiction with all the hazards involved. In Hansen's final documentary block-buster, which deals with Norwegian Nobel Laureate and Nazi-sympathiser Knut Hamsun, *Processen mod Hamsun* (*The Case against Hamsun*, 1978), this controversial mixture of fact and fiction provoked considerable public debate.

Nonetheless, Hansen's three major documentary projects of the 1960s contribute a significant 'revisionist' perspective on Denmark's colonialist past. At the same time, Hansen's documentary fiction articulates some of the philosophical concerns of modern historiography. Similar to other Scandinavian documentary works of this period which depict historical expeditions or ventures, an existentialist quest is embedded in Thorkild Hansen's narratives. This quest depicted by the author is historical as well as epistemological; the reader is invited to share in the difficulties involved in any historical inquiry into the past – and in this case, into questions regarding Denmark's imperialist past.

Marianne Stecher-Hansen

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Historiography

Generally speaking, the imperial past has been largely neglected, underestimated and ignored in modern Danish historiography. Modern Danish identity and self-image has traditionally been formed by the traumatic defeat in the war of 1864 against Prussia and Austria where the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein were lost; and furthermore, Denmark was left as a weak and small state soon to be threatened in its very existence by the overwhelmingly dominant, recently united and aggressive Germany. Consequently, in order to survive as an independent nation, Denmark had to rely on non-military means. A strategy to secure national coherence to help the Danish nation survive was developed during the last decades of the nineteenth and first decades of the twentieth centuries stressing allegedly typically Danish values such as democracy, popular culture and education, social equality and welfare. This was meant to secure internal peace, consensus and co-operation between different classes, and it stressed pacifism and co-operation with the other Scandinavian peoples. Denmark's past as a multinational conglomerate state, a dominant Northern European and Baltic power and her many wars against Sweden, not to mention her status as a North Atlantic and tropical colonial power, did not fit in very well with Denmark's post-1864 self-image. Thus, this history was more or less superseded and instead Denmark's position as a weak, peaceful and defenceless minor power after 1864 was projected back onto the past in Danish historiography. Before 1864 and especially in Danish historiography during the Middle Ages and early modern time the various territories belonging to the Danish crown had certainly been mentioned and often used to glorify king and nation. Furthermore, royal art and heraldry had traditionally reflected the King of Denmark's desire to see himself and to be seen by others as a ruler over a composite, multi-territorial and multinational state.

After 1864, however, Danish histories has focused overwhelmingly on the geographical territory which comprised the present state of Denmark, and the territories which had previously belonged to the Danish conglomerate state were underestimated and only mentioned when absolutely necessary to understand Danish political development, for example, the Kalmar Union or the cessation of Norway in 1814. In social and cultural

historiography, however, focus was exclusively on present-day Denmark with no references to the other territories. This national historiography was shared by historians of very varied political and ideological persuasion. Conservatives, liberals and Marxists, usually saw the world quite differently. However, practically all of them had the territory of the present day state named Denmark as their frame of reference, which excluded the territories of the comprehensive conglomerate state of former ages. Hence the liberally revisionist synthesis of the general history of Denmark by the Danish historian Erik Arup (1876–1951) in the 1920s and 1930s deliberately and provocatively placed the peasantry in the centre of historiography instead of kings and statesmen, while an attempt to write a Marxist history of Denmark in the early modern age was characteristically given the title *Class Struggle within the History of Denmark*.

The Viking age did not fit in so well with the post-1864 self-image either, at least not the conquering and settling elements (in present-day France and especially in present-day England) whereas a strong interest in that age as part of the Nordic (and thus non-Germanic) cultural heritage developed. In the historiography of the countries that were under Viking dominance, the tendency has been to describe the Vikings as looting and pillaging pirates, whereas Danish historiography has preferred to focus on them as traders and settlers. This picture is becoming more nuanced, but, as the Viking age is now more than 1,000 years ago; as power relationships between present-day Denmark and the present-day states of those former stamping grounds of the Vikings have now changed radically; and as Denmark has now become a minor power, that age can hardly be said to be top of today's political agenda.

Estonia was sold by the king of Denmark in 1347 and the isle of Ösel (in Estonian: Saarema) off the Estonian coast ceded by Denmark to Sweden in 1645 and not much about this is remembered in Denmark. In Estonia, however, the country's former belonging to the Danish crown is still relevant and was invoked during Estonia's struggle for independence from Russia in the 1980s and 1990s to underline Estonia's long historical connections with the Nordic countries and, more broadly, to the West.

The provinces of Scania, Halland and Blekinge were Danish provinces until they were conquered by Sweden in 1658. In spite of several later Danish attempts to reconquer those provinces they remain Swedish today. In Denmark, this has now long been accepted as a matter of fact; and in Scania, Halland and Blekinge, the same is true. However, as a result of growing regionalism and an acute feeling of being on the Swedish periphery in relation to Stockholm (whereas Denmark and her capital Copenhagen are much closer), these provinces are now rediscovering their Danish past. Here the brutal Swedification process which Scania, Halland and Blekinge were subjected to after 1658 has been used as an argument in constructing a regional identity and in gaining more regional self-autonomy.

As for the native historiography of the successor states of the Danish empire from the nineteenth century onwards, first and foremost Norway, Iceland and to some extent Schleswig and Holstein, the period of Danish rule has, of course, not been forgotten. However, emphasis has been placed on the internal development and relations of each particular territory that later became an independent successor state rather than on comparative studies integrating the other parts of the Danish kingdom. Furthermore, the government and foreign policy of the Danish state has only been described insofar as it had an impact on the territories of the later successor states, whereas the state as a whole and how it acted and appeared externally has been ignored. The historiography of the successor states often had a strong anti-Danish tendency with thinly veiled accusations against Denmark of political and cultural suppression and financial exploitation.

The many modern general histories of Denmark usually only describe the present-day state of Denmark. This is not to say that the history of other parts of the state especially Greenland and the tropical areas in Asia, Africa and the West Indies has been ignored. In fact, much has been written about these colonies by Danish historians, but in independent volumes supplementing the general histories of Denmark. They have tended to see the Danish presence in the tropics as exotic, fascinating and entertaining (this applies especially to the West Indies) without asking questions about, for example, the connection between the acquisition of these colonies and the general politics 'at home' in Denmark, the economic impact of these colonies on Denmark or the interaction between politics at home and in the colonies. By and large, however, the colonies have remained invisible. This must be seen as a result of the 1864 trauma but it also reflects the fact that the colonial past is not and has never been a big issue on the Danish political agenda. Firstly, the Danish colonies were only trade colonies, not emigration colonies, which meant only very small segments of the Danish population had any direct connections or relations with them. Secondly, the number of Danish speakers within the tropical colonies was small, the European population here was first and foremost English-speaking so that questions of Danish identity in the colonies were less pressing and no policies of Danification were ever implemented (apart from in Greenland). Thirdly, for these reasons, when Denmark gave up her colonies, Danish civil servants and military personnel went home and few other Danish speakers were left behind and thus the memory of Danish rule dwindled in the former colony where a new European colonial power was now ruling. Fourthly, during the period which in Western historiography is called the Age of Imperialism (1870–1914) Denmark had already begun to dismantle her tropical overseas empire: the colonies in India had been sold to Britain in 1845, the one in Africa in 1850. The Danish West Indies were incurring increasing losses and a genuine but futile attempt at selling them to the USA had been made in 1867. Fifthly, the populations of the Danish overseas colonies were small and so were the areas of the colonies (apart from that of Greenland). They were not colonies of mass emigration or immigration and they were given up and taken over by other Western powers at an early stage during the height of European imperialism. Danish tropical colonial rule has thus more or less been erased from public memory, the more so as the populations of the colonies were small and no immigration from them took place.

As in many other Western European states, immigration from Third-World countries has become a big issue on the political agenda. However, in the Danish context these immigrants do not come from areas which used to be Danish colonies. Consequently, the link between immigration and postcolonialism is not direct in Denmark in the way it is in Britain or Portugal. Problems originating from Denmark's former role as an imperial or colonial power appear only occasionally on the Danish political agenda today. Notable exceptions include the covert and equivocal nuclear policy of the Danish government in Greenland during the Cold War, the high-handed treatment of the Greenlandic population by the Danish authorities during the modernisation process of the 1950s and 1960s, and the Faeroese feeling of being politically and financially unfairly treated within the present 'Danish Commonwealth'. Occasionally, desires for additional autonomy and maybe even independence in due course are uttered by Greenlandic and Faeroese political representatives. And when the 150th anniversary of the abolition of black slavery in the Danish West Indies was celebrated in 1998, local black political leaders asked for an official apology, a demand that was not fulfilled and caused astonishment and lack of understanding in Denmark, where the colonial past was considered as nothing but past. A more lengthy political affair between Denmark and the (since 1944) fully independent Iceland took place

during the 1960s and early 1970s, when relationships between Denmark and Iceland were strained by the Icelandic request for the return of valuable Icelandic mediaeval manuscripts, collected in the eighteenth century and donated to the University of Copenhagen. They were considered of great cultural value for this newly independent nation. The University of Copenhagen as well as large segments of the Danish literati were against this, even if other parts of Danish society (such as a majority in the Danish parliament) and Danish public opinion were in favour. Only after prolonged public debate and two rulings by the Danish Supreme Court were the manuscripts returned to Iceland, from 1971 onwards. This affair stirred up much more political commotion than academic affairs usually do, but the matter was not simply academic. The return of the manuscripts was considered a necessary step to restore political relations between Denmark and Iceland.

In recent decades, a new trend in Danish historiography has emerged. This trend tends to describe the Danish state of former ages as a whole, to analyse how this conglomerate state acted and appeared externally and how the various territories of the state interacted internally, even if much still needs to be analysed. The reasons for this turn have probably to do with the fact that the Danish nation-state (a construction from the decades after 1864) is being challenged by globalisation, increasing European integration and growing multiculturalism as a consequence of Third-World immigration. Historians are looking at the past in new ways and asking new questions.

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Home Rule

Home rule refers to autonomy achieved by colonies, usually in the process of achieving independence from a former imperial power. Generally, it has operated as a means by which nationalist movements could pressure imperial powers into recognising that imperial rule is neither necessarily benevolent nor to the benefit of the colonials. However, it has also served as a policy of containment by which imperial powers have sought to stem the tide of resistance to imperial rule. This is the case in the Danish context, where home rule has a chequered and extended history that refers to quite different degrees of autonomy for the former colonies Greenland, Iceland, the Faeroe Islands and the Danish Virgin Islands.

In contemporary terms the highest profile case has been Greenland's achievement of a formalised control over its domestic affairs (albeit with specific limitations in the economic, foreign policy and defence areas) in 1979. The Greenlandic demand for autonomy has in its various shapes and forms a long history, but in its modern form it rose as a protest movement against the modernisation programme initiated by the Danish government after World War II, when Denmark moved quickly to re-establish its sovereignty over Greenland

after five years of isolation caused by the German occupation of the 'motherland'. While the modernisation process' stated purpose was to bring Greenland 'up' to the level of Danish 'civilisation', it brought also, through the deployment of Danish artisans and administrators, an acute awareness to the Greenlanders that they were second-class citizens in their own country. This recognition paved the way in the 1960s for a radical nationalist group of young Greenlanders. In the 1970s the Greenlandic protest against the Danish administration's paternalistic attitude culminated in the referendum for Danish membership of the EC, which Denmark voted in favour of, while Greenland and the Faeroe Islands voted against.

A commission was set up to explore ways of structuring a future Greenlandic autonomy, and in 1979, Greenlandic home rule was introduced. Certain elements in the Danish-Greenlandic agreement remained highly contentious issues, including the question concerning sovereignty over mineral resources. Since 1979, the home rule government has increased its area of jurisdiction. However, the sensitive areas of foreign policy and defence still rest with the Danish government, although it has committed itself to consultations with the Greenlandic government over such issues related to Greenland, such as the Thule Base.

The Faeroe Islands came under Danish sovereignty after Norway lost them in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars. The local parliament in the Faeroe Islands (the Lagting) and in Iceland (the Althing) were both abolished as the Danish king consolidated his power over the smaller realm. At the time of the national-liberal awakening in Denmark, the Lagting (1852) and the Althing (1843) were re-established albeit with fairly limited powers and under centralised control from Copenhagen. In Greenland, a paternalistic Danish council was set up in 1862, and in the Danish West Indies in 1865. A nationalist movement in both the Faeroe Islands and Iceland (but also by colonial nationalists resident in Copenhagen) in the last decades of the nineteenth century, pushed, particularly in Iceland, for greater autonomy. Iceland won important concessions from the Danish government in 1874, but it also had to surrender important concessions in return. The most thorny issue was the Danish demand that the minister for Iceland must submit laws and decisions to the Danish Council of State for royal approval.

The Icelandic nationalist movement took advantage of a radical régime change in Denmark (1901), to push for the Icelandic minister as a genuine representative of the Icelandic community. In Greenland political-administrative changes brought an increased, though still indirect, influence to Greenlanders in local matters. In 1908 a commission was established to look into Iceland's future status in the Danish realm. The resulting proposal was rejected by the Icelanders, but in 1918 a personal union between Denmark and Iceland was agreed upon, which made Iceland into a separate state, under the Danish crown. The treaty was to run for twenty years, after which it could be annulled by either party. The Icelanders took advantage of the German occupation to annul the treaty in 1940, and formally declared its independence in 1944. The Danish king had no alternative but to accept this, after a referendum overwhelmingly supported Icelandic independence.

The Faeroe Islands took a similar road after World War II when they won a referendum on independence from Denmark in 1946. However, this referendum was subsequently rejected by the Danish government. As compensation the Faeroese were granted home rule (1948), while Greenland's status as a Danish colony was abolished (1953) and the island became 'integrated' into the Danish realm. There were several reasons for this, one of the more important the Danish reluctance to have the UN scrutinise Danish submissions on the Greenlandic progress towards independence, which were demanded by the UN in the context of a general emphasis on decolonisation.

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Migrancy

In the public and political eye, the archetypal immigrant in present-day Denmark is a relatively newly arrived Muslim man – or his son. A growing section of the population, the press and a broad swathe of the political spectrum associate him as well as his son with unemployment, crime, religious fanaticism, oppression of women and a general hostility towards Danish society or 'Danish values'. Migration is, however, not exclusively a post-war phenomenon, and according to statistics the Muslim male meets competition from other genders, orientations and faiths (including other Islamic denominations). 'The immigrant' in the public eye, then, is not entirely synonymous with immigrants.

The modern migration régime is a feature of the nation-state as it developed in the nineteenth century. In the largely immobile and divided social environment of the diminishing Danish empire, movement in itself was an object of control. Workers migrating for casual labour opportunities were submitted to control measures regardless of their place of birth, and with reference to the possible disturbances they might cause. In 1875 workers born in Denmark were exempted from control, but border controls and residence permits did not appear until well into the twentieth century (1911 and 1926 respectively). Since then residence and working permits have been issued by the state. In the late eighteenth century most of the migrant workers originated in Germany and Sweden. From the beginning of the twentieth century Polish-speaking groups from the province of Galicia in Austria-Hungary began to arrive. In 1901, 3.3 per cent of the Danish population were non-nationals; in Copenhagen it was 6.9 per cent. Between World War I and the late 1960s immigration was negligible, especially since refugees – overwhelmingly Jewish – fleeing the totalitarian régimes of the 1930s were not admitted into the country.

Contrary to most of the other European empires, post-war migration to Denmark has not been dominated by migrants from the (former) colonies. Or more to the point, the (political) questions attached to migration are not associated with inhabitants of the former colonies, since Greenland was officially included in the state in 1953, and since the national imagining has long forgotten the imperial past. Due to their status as Danish citizens and hence non-immigrants, people originating in Greenland are not counted as a separate group for statistical purposes, and consequently, general knowledge of the living conditions of this group is scarce.

When 'guest workers' arrived in Denmark in the late 1960s, their presence was seen as a completely new and alien phenomenon. The workers were generally single men, who

took up jobs in the heavy industries, and were suspiciously watched by the trade unions in case their presence undermined the conditions of the Danish workers. They left home and families in the countryside of Turkey, Yugoslavia and Morocco, and the towns (mainly) of Pakistan. Excluding Pakistan, most of the workers grew up in minority communities in their home state: they were Kurds, Berbers and (Muslim) Macedonians. In the early 1970s economic recession set in, and the borders were closed to new migrating workers. The families of those who had already arrived, however, gradually joined their men in Denmark. In 1980 immigrants and their descendants comprised 3 per cent of the population.

During the 1980s another feature of the outside world arrived at the borders of the country, refugees. Denmark had since the 1960s received refugees from UN camps, but now refugees began to cross the world, and arrived individually. Tamils escaping from the Sri Lankan civil war, and Iranian and Iraqi young men fleeing the war between the two states were among the first so-called spontaneous refugees who came to Denmark. Others have followed in the wake of wars and conflicts around the world. Today the largest groups of immigrants (including refugees and EU citizens) originate in Turkey, Iraq, Germany, Lebanon and Bosnia. (Germany, of course, is not considered part of any immigration problem.) The total number is still low, however, compared to other European states: immigrants and their descendants made up 8.4 per cent of the population in January 2005, or half that of neighbouring Sweden.

State measures to prevent immigration of any form have, since the late 1980s, become ever more draconian. Denmark has on several occasions been a pioneer in the art of inventing new measures that deny or prevent refugees or other groups of immigrants access to the country. The practice of fining companies which transport persons without the required travel documents, was for instance originally 'made in Denmark', but quickly spread to the rest of the EU countries. Up until the mid-1990s these measures were generally directed towards admission controls, where the right of family reunification as well as the right of asylum have gradually and systematically been undermined. Since the late 1990s focus has been directed towards the rights of migrants already living in the country. Universal welfare rights to subsistence have been reduced for newcomers to the country, who now receive less in social benefits than the population at large – the politicians argue, that this will both force the minorities into the labour market *and* prevent further immigration to Denmark.

The 2006 'cartoon wars', sparked off by caricature drawings of the prophet Mohammed in the Danish newspaper *Jyllandsposten*, placed Denmark and her admission/integration policies temporarily at the top of the world's news agenda. The *Washington Post* reported on 8 February 2006:

> This country of 5.4 million people, including about 200,000 Muslims, has long viewed itself as a haven for all views and faiths. But skyrocketing immigration in the 1990s spurred a backlash that culminated in the November 2001 election of Prime Minister Anders Fogh Ramussen.

For most observers, the Danish 'tough on immigration and tough on immigrant policies' are identified with the year 2001. This is, however, only true in a limited sense. Immigration and partly also integration policies in Denmark have since the 1980s followed an increasingly tight and tough scheme. While this has increased quantitatively, it hardly constitutes a qualitative change. What has changed, however, is the political and public

rhetoric. From the late 1990s the former 'soft humanitarian rhetoric' has been replaced by open othering of the immigrant population, and immigration-talk has become a focal bone of contention.

Kirsten Hvenegård-Lassen

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No overall migrant histories have been produced in English or in Danish, although smaller episodic accounts of specific migrant groups have been written.

Missions in the Danish-Norwegian Colonies

Colonialism in the Danish-Norwegian double monarchy was not formally connected with ideas about Lutheran mission. Trade was the predominant and accepted reason for expansionism. However, several of the colonial projects were from the beginning or became after a while closely connected to missionary activities. The approach to mission varied much depending on the type of colony and internal conditions in regard to the relationship between colonial authorities, local authorities and/or colonial subjects. None of the colonial mission fields was alike, but generally, mission was a consequence of and not a reason for colonialism, and private initiatives preceded state mission. The Protestant state Church held a religious monopoly, and was in the seventeenth century dominated by an orthodox Lutheran approach to Christianity that focused strongly on internal religious control. God had chosen the king, and the king needed good Christian subjects. As a consequence the only initiative concerning mission in the seventeenth century was connected to internal colonialism: the attempt to convert Sami in the Finnmark, an area claimed for Norway but having a frontier status. By including the Sami in Christianity their subjection to the king would be underlined. The attempt to convert the Sami was furthermore connected with a general fight against witchcraft in northern Europe in the seventeenth century. The Sami were 'natural' suspects. From 1715 the mission to the Sami was systematised and administered by the Mission Board, an official office founded in 1714.

Greenland was formally seen as part of the Norwegian realm, and as such, belonging to the Danish-Norwegian king. Since the dying out of the mediaeval Norse settlement around 1500 there had been no contact, but in 1721 the pastor Hans Egede was allowed by the King to go to Greenland to trade with and convert the Inuit population. He settled in the most populous part, western Greenland, where all mission took place until 1900. Eastern and northern Greenland were left alone until this time. Shortly after its beginning Egede's mission was challenged by the emergence of the pietistic movement, which influenced a substantial number of the Danish clergy from around 1670 as well as the Kings Frederik IV (1699–1730), and Christian VI (1730–46). Among pietists ideas about mission were important. This paved the way for more mission initiatives in the Danish colonies. The Moravian Church, sprung from the pietistic movement in Europe, began a mission in Greenland in 1733, and it existed side by side with Egede's mission, but with many conflicts between the two. The Moravian Church based its missions around the world on close contacts between converts and missionaries and strict supervision of the converts. By the middle of the nineteenth century western Greenlanders were Christian and members of either the Danish-Lutheran or the Moravian Churches. The Moravian mission left Greenland in 1900 and members went over to the Lutheran Church.

A true pietistic mission began in 1705 at the trading post Tranquebar on the Coromandel Coast of India with two missionaries from the pietistic seminar in Halle. The mission was supported by the state, but run from Halle. It expanded in southern India through the eighteenth century. The average of converts was a few hundreds a year. From the end of the century it declined, and was in 1847 replaced by the Leipzig mission. The pietistic mission focused, like the Moravian missions, on personal instruction, and the education of local teachers and missionaries was an important part of the strategy. Reading the Bible was central in religious instruction. In principle all layers of society were targeted but in practice it was mostly poorer people who were attracted to the mission. From the beginning, the mission was strongly supported by the King and administration in Copenhagen, an interest not seen in regard to other mission fields. A reason might be different attitudes towards different non-Europeans. Indians were seen as relatively civilised, and therefore, perhaps, more ready for conversion. Moravian missionaries took part in attempts to colonise the Nicobar Islands in 1768. They also had a few missionaries in Tranquebar. However, the pietistic mission was always the most important.

The first mission in the Danish West Indies was established on private initiative by the Moravian Church in 1732, even though a limited number of conversions had taken place during the early years of the colony. The Moravian mission focused on personal religiosity and made place for African-Caribbean agency within the Church hierarchy. Even though the Moravian system recognised cultural differences among African Caribbeans according to ethnic origin, the Church played a major part in the cultural creolisation in the colony because of its emphasis on de-Africanisation as part of the mission, its strict attitude towards non-Christian acts and beliefs, and its frequent use of excommunications to promote a true Christian lifestyle. The Danish Lutheran state Church made an attempt to found a mission focusing on children from 1755, but its lack of success is reflected in the fact that Moravian teachers were chosen for the slave school system founded in 1839. In 1835 97 per cent of the African Caribbean population were members of a Christian congregation. Church affiliation mirrored the diverse Euro-Caribbean population, created by the open settlement policy practised in the Danish West Indies. The most popular churches among African Caribbeans were the Moravian (35 per cent) and the Catholic (32 per cent) Churches, followed by the Anglican (20 per cent) and the Lutheran (9 per cent) Churches. A handful belonged to the Methodist and Dutch Reformed Churches. Catholic and Anglican missionary activity is so far unresearched. Mission in the Danish West Indies was, together with Greenland, the most successful numerically.

The Danish-Norwegian settlements on the West African coast were small trading posts, not colonies. Mission was never part of the plan for coexistence with the local population, but from 1722 there existed a school for the children of Danish-Norwegian men living at the fort and African women, where the teaching of Christianity was central. In the 1760s a few Moravian missionaries arrived as part of a larger plan of colonisation and development of plantations. The whole project was very unsuccessful and the mission quickly died out. A similar project was initiated in the 1830s, where a few missionaries from the Basle Evangelical Missionary Society settled at the Danish fort as well as in the countryside.

A general description of from the Denmark-Norway mission is that it had a qualitative rather than a quantitative focus. Furthermore, a general tendency was that the numerically successful missions were not tied to the colonial administration but were based on private initiative, even if the king and authorities in Copenhagen supported it. The pietistic focus on personal religiousness led to a predominantly, but not uniformly, personal approach to mission, in the sense that most missions in the Danish-Norwegian realm were based on

close personal contact between missionaries and converts, and focused on wholehearted conversions and strict control of converts and their life styles.

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Modernisation of Greenland

During the German occupation of Denmark (1940–5), the local Danish administration in Greenland was cut off from Denmark. As a consequence, Greenland was administered by Danish civil servants in Greenland, and all goods were imported from the USA. The presence of American goods exposed the Greenlanders to an outside world from which the Danish administration had sought to 'protect' the Greenlanders.

After the war it was apparent that a return to the previous policy of isolation was impossible and fears that the American presence in Greenland could actually put an end to the Danish colonial administration, together with Denmark's wish to be struck off the UN's list of countries with colonies, prompted the Danish government to embark on a modernisation of Greenland. This made the Danish presence more overt and gave the Greenlanders the idea that they were on the way to being treated on an equal footing.

The start of this first major modernisation of Greenland since the arrival of Hans Egede in 1721 and the changes in the 1830s marked the end of the formal Danish colonisation of Greenland. A change of the Danish constitution in 1953 gave Greenland the status of an integrated part of the kingdom of Denmark, and opened up the island to new investments, through the two ten-year development plans called G50 (for the 1950s) and G60 (for the 1960s).

To the Danish government it was obvious something had to be changed in Greenland after World War II, but not so obvious what the changes should be. The discussions ended

with the idea of intensifying the process of equalisation and of putting an end to formal colonisation through a massive Danish economic investment in the infrastructure of Greenland. Never in history had so much been brought from Denmark to Greenland.

In a long-term perspective the process of modernising Greenland after World War II was another step in a modernisation process started by Hans Egede's arrival in 1721, but the process has over the years been marked by two conflicting views of Greenland and its people.

The early imagined equality

The first imagined relationship between Greenland and Denmark, with the former as an equal and integrated part of the Nordic people's lands, dates back to the Norse settlements in Greenland from 985 and this was kept alive right up to 1832. Even when Hans Egede started his modernisation in the shape of the formal colonisation of Greenland in 1721, it was with clear reference to the old brotherhood of the Norse, who were at that time still believed to be living in Greenland.

From 1721 it had been an object in itself to find the Norse in order to convert them from Catholicism to the Lutheran belief and that remained the main goal during the first 111 years of the Danish colonisation of Greenland. This period can be characterised as a parasitic colonialism in respect of the Inuit people. They were exploited and christened but they were not the primary goal for the colonisation.

The perceptual shift in 1832

The end of the Napoleonic Wars (1807–14) signalled intensified efforts to find the Northwest Passage. Under this banner, the Danish King, Frederik VI, in 1828 equipped an expedition that had as its goal to go as high up along the east coast of Greenland as possible. The aim was to secure Danish sovereignty, to map the coastline, and to look for evidence of an earlier Norse settlement, in the last place left to look for them.

W. A. Graah (1793–1863) was appointed as the expedition leader, and on his return to Denmark his conclusion was clear: there had never been any Norse settlements on the east coast. The only existing remains of Norse colonies had already been found on the west coast. It was now clear there were no surviving descendants of the Norse people.

In 1832, after Graah's conclusion had been made public in the book he wrote about the expedition, the Danish colonisers suddenly found themselves without a primary goal for the colonisation of Greenland. This forced the administrators over the following years to rethink the Danish colonisation of Greenland. A totally new imagined relationship between Denmark and Greenland had to be invented.

The Danish burden

The result of the perceptual shift that Graah's conclusion gave birth to, was that the character of Danish colonialism in Greenland changed through the 1830s from parasitic to intensive colonisation with the 'upbringing' of the Greenlanders as its new primary goal.

The inspiration for this new imagined relationship between Denmark and Greenland – ever since that time described 'as the Danish burden' – was found in a new theory, 'social evolutionism', that spread across Europe in the first part of the nineteenth century, where the colonial subject was thought of as a child to be brought up by the enlightened European. This new approach was in clear contrast to the eighteenth century's Enlightenment theories.

Today, there are no obvious changes in the Danish imagined relationship between Denmark and Greenland. It is still imagined to be the burden of Denmark to help Greenland. Today the help is mostly in the shape of funds transferred (400 million Euros each year).

In its stereotypical depiction Denmark sees this more or less as a philanthropic donation because of the Danish obligation to help Greenland. This polished self image has become dented in recent years, as it has become more and more clear that Denmark also gains considerably from its engagements in Greenland. Many jobs occupied by Danes both in Greenland and in Denmark directly depend on the Danish engagement in Greenland, and it has been established through an officially commissioned report that Denmark has had a discounted membership of NATO, due to its sovereignty over the strategically important Greenland.

Greenland takes over

The change after 1832 of the imagined relationship created new power relations between Denmark and Greenland. Up until the constitutional change in 1953 Denmark had principal sovereignty over political decisions concerning Greenland. After 1953 the political power was to a greater extent than before transferred from Denmark to Greenland, a political process that culminated with the introduction of the home rule government in 1979. The political process was accompanied by a Greenlandic perceptual shift away from the imagined Danish-Greenlandic common project of modernisation, produced among other things by the realisation that Greenlanders did not receive equal treatment in spite of what they had been told during almost 130 years – since the 1830s.

In 1979 the home rule system was conceived of by many as the final destination. However, at the turn of the millennium Greenland experienced a revival of nationalism, which was accompanied by calls for independence. An internal Greenlandic commission – 'Selvstyrekommissionen' (The Commission for Own Government) – worked from 1999 until 2003 when it handed over its report. One of the results of that commission's work was the establishment of a Danish-Greenlandic 'Selvstyrekommission'.

It is becoming more and more obvious that the Danish preferred narrative of its obligations towards 'the poor, helpless, primitive' people struggling for survival high up in the cold North – an image created in the 1830s and still very much alive in Denmark – is proving a difficult hurdle to get over, in the fight by Greenlanders to determine their own condition for modernisation.

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Narratives and Fictions of Empire

In *Out of Africa* (1937), Denmark's most famous colonialist, Karen Blixen (1885–1962), recounts the conviction of her houseboy, Kamante, that the book she was writing had no

cover to hold it together, and so would not be 'a good book'. Blixen's farm was in British East Africa, but her book's scattered papers are reminiscent of the odds and ends of territories from the North Atlantic to the Indian Ocean that constituted the Danish Empire. Blixen's unbound pages also suggest that the colonising process and aftermath are as much about imaginings and narratives as they are about territory. And they remind us that the book as material object is the apparatus that invests certain stories with authority, and makes possible their dissemination over the disparate spaces of empire.

The absence of a coherent narrative of the Danish Empire is not simply a result of geographical space between its territories, or of the temporal disjunction between the transience of the so-called 'tropical colonies', and the enduring historical entanglements between Denmark and its North Atlantic protectorates. It is also a function of the linguistic, formal and material criteria by which a narrative is adjudged to constitute literature worthy of translation, dissemination and canonisation. Denmark's successive losses of contiguous territory in 1814 and 1864 loomed larger in the popular imagination than the surrender of its far-flung colonies. The task of the nineteenth-century Danish novelist and historian was therefore to re-imagine the Danish nation as small and homogeneous. The linear historical time of the classic novel, which Benedict Anderson sees as essential to popular conceptions of the modern nation-state, was harnessed in Denmark to suture the rump Danish territory to a Nordic past, not to the geographically-disparate colonial lands that remained. As Hans Hauge (2003) has commented, writing a postcolonialist literary history of Denmark therefore entails looking hard, and reading for absences.

Arguably the most direct engagement with Denmark's colonial history was undertaken by Thorkild Hansen (1927–89) in his documentary and historiographical works. Hansen's trilogy on the Danish slave trade (1967–70) employs literary strategies to produce a 'revisionist historiography' of Denmark's involvement in slavery and its claim to have been the first European power to abolish it in 1792 (Stecher-Hansen 1997). Hansen juxtaposes first-hand accounts by Danish colonialists with established historical authorities, exposing the latter as complicit in creating the national myth of benevolent colonialism. His fragmented narratives gesture to the silence imposed on the slaves by coolly recounting the conditions of their existence, not by fabricating a voice for them. Hansen's polyphonic approach anticipates the recent turn in Denmark to 'postnational' historiography and meta-history. For example, Søren Mørch's *Den sidste Danmarkshistorie* (*The Last History of Denmark*, 1996) uses autobiography and micro-history to expand 'Danish' history tentacularly around the globe. In launching his narrative with his own schoolboy memory of meeting Victor Cornelins, a black Danish-trained teacher from St Croix, Mørch subverts the title of the 1952 standard work on the colonies, *Vore gamle tropekolonier* (*Our Old Tropical Colonies*). Cornelins' narrative presence renders the colonies neither unproblematically 'ours', nor 'old'.

While the trajectories of Denmark's slave ships have been excised from popular history, the movement across the North Atlantic of the foundational texts of Nordic culture is fundamental to the imaginative construction of historical links with the lost colony of Iceland. The manuscripts of Old Icelandic sagas had been preserved in the museums and libraries of Copenhagen during the period of Danish sovereignty, but in the nineteenth century came to function as fetishised artefacts in narratives of Icelandic nationhood and of common Norse heritage, not least in Danish school history books. They were returned to Iceland from 1971. The drawn-out negotiations over the return of the manuscripts crystallised a historical teleology of the Icelandic nation-state: a golden age of civilisation and literary production from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries, followed by a dark age of colonisation by Denmark, and eventual restoration of national independence. The

counter-argument shifted the focus from a paternalistic need to protect the precious artefacts from the vicissitudes of Icelandic neglect, to an emphasis on their transnational status as literary-historical creations of Norse emigrants.

The Faeroe Islands offer the most obvious examples of Denmark's empire 'writing back' in the twentieth century. Central to the development of Faeroese literature has been the political and creative interplay of Danish and Faeroese as languages of state and culture. The centripetal pull of Copenhagen University for Faeroese students spawned Dano-Faeroese collaboration on Faeroese philology and folk culture in the nineteenth century; the consequent renaissance of the Faeroese language informed the ambivalence of William Heinesen towards the canonisation of his own Danish-language novels. He anticipated his rumoured nomination as Nobel Laureate in 1981 by arguing that the advancement of Faeroese culture would best be served by honouring Faeroese-language literature. Nevertheless, Faeroese literature opens up an interlingual, liminal space within the Danish canon, as suggested by the translational, transnational afterlife of Jørgen-Frantz Jacobsen's historical novel *Barbara* (1939; trans. 1948 and 1992). Though the bilingual Jacobsen wrote *Barbara* in Danish, its translation into Faeroese by the islands' national poet, Christian Matras, gained such canonical status that the most recent English translation – a bestseller amongst international visitors to Tórhavn's tourist office – used both texts as its composite source.

Greenlandic narrative production has been dominated by the material and existential divide between 'traditional' colony and 'modern' coloniser. Kirsten Thisted has shown how the early, nationalist Greenlandic novel harnesses postcolonial mimicry to blend local experience with the coloniser's literary form. The Danish colonial discourse of tutelage and historical progress towards modernity is espoused in literary conceits such as the dream of a 'civilised' Greenland of 2105 in the novel *singnagtugaK* (*A Greenlander's Dream*, 1914) by Mathias Storch (1883–1957), and Pâvia Petersen's (1904–43) motif of the struggle to integrate a mixed genealogical heritage in *Niuvertorutsip pania* (*The Trading Station Manager's Daughter*, 1944).

The theme of cultural hybridity is reworked in the Dane Peter Høeg's international bestseller *Miss Smilla's Feeling for Snow* (1994). This novel's self-consciously hybrid narrator morphs the imagined limits of the nation to encompass a fictionalised Greenlandic tundra, and maps out an intercultural cityscape where the people of the Danish *pagus* still gather, though now as a vulnerable Greenlandic underclass. *Smilla* remains a lodestone for contemporary scholars attempting to remap Danish literature and history in the context of the postcolonial condition writ large, not least because it situates the experience of cultural hybridity and the intercultural encounter within a 'glocalised' national space.

Høeg's material is often said to rework Blixen's colonial sensibilities for a postcolonial age. In *Out of Africa*, Blixen explains to Kamante that her stories will become a book in Europe, where people will 'fix it all up together'; it is in refusing to fix together a stable, comprehensive, Eurocentric narrative that certain contemporary Danish writers and historians most obviously engage with the postcolonial. It falls to the coming generation of Danish writers of diverse ethnic origins to 'stitch together' the narrative genres that will relate a heterogeneous national history of Denmark.

Claire Thomson

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Orientalism and Exoticism

The Danish Empire, which started to collapse around 1800, was centred in the Baltic and North Atlantic regions with a limited network of trading posts and smaller settlements in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. Direct contacts with the Oriental world were therefore limited and thus more immediately comparable to those of Germany with individual scholars, writers, artists, adventurers and traders following in the well-trodden paths of British and French armies of soldiers and academicians.

In 1761 the Danish King, Frederik V, sent an ill-fated but scientifically successful expedition to Arabia, led by the German scholar Carsten Niebuhr, who returned with the first detailed account of the peoples of the Arabian peninsula and especially about the many local forms of Islam, including the emergence of Wahhabism. Before Niebuhr, the only introduction to Islam and Muhammad in Danish was *Hero-Tales* by Ludvig Holberg (1684–1754), the leading Scandinavian exponent of the Enlightenment, in which Muhammad, based partly on contemporary European writers, partly on travellers' accounts of the Muslim world, was still seen with the eyes of mediaeval Christianity as a false prophet. Unlike earlier biographers, however, Holberg recognised how Muhammad's life and work had contributed in a significant and positive way to the unfolding of the human spirit through history.

The new era of philology began in Denmark with Rasmus Rask, the discoverer of the Indo-European family of languages, who took his obsessive quest for linguistic unity as far as India. He wrote dissertations about ancient Oriental languages and helped decipher Old Persian, but unlike the father of Semitics, Ernst Renan, he avoided Eurocentric prejudices about the languages he studied. He was followed by a number of internationally acclaimed Orientalists in the nineteenth century, including Frantz Buhl, whose historical biography of Muhammad from 1903 is still considered reliable, while Johannes Østrup was preoccupied with the contemporary Islamic world, realising its growing importance to the West.

Earlier writers and painters like Hans Christian Andersen travelled only as far as Constantinople. While other European powers expanded outwards, Denmark's size and importance shrank with the loss of Norway (1814) and Schleswig-Holstein (1864), making the country reinvent itself as an ancient nation-state vulnerable to attacks from abroad, an Israel of the North according to the nationalist theologian N. F. S. Grundtvig, whose Christian world histories condemned the Oriental peoples to irrelevance at best.

In this atmosphere the international movement of Orientalism failed to ignite the Danish popular imagination in the same way as Egyptomania or Japanism did in metropolitan Paris or London, the only exception being Tivoli, the amusement park in Copenhagen, founded in 1843 by the Algerian-born writer-architect Georg Carstensen, where Arab-inspired ballets by August Bournonville were performed in the shade of Oriental food palaces. In literature the mystical allure of the Orient itself first appears in Adam Oehlenschläger's 1805 version of *Allddin* about the power of poetic intuition, symbolised by the magical oil lamp. While English and French writers went to the Orient, Danish writers like B. S. Ingemann, St. St. Blicher and Christian Winther rather chose to integrate the Orient with mediaeval Danish history, the period where modern Danish identity supposedly had its roots, in the shape of exotic strangers such as Gypsies and Jews, usually endowed with magical and sexual powers, who, like the main character's Jewish object of desire in Nobel Laureate Johannes V. Jensen's novel *The Fall of the King* (1900–1), always function as destructive forces.

Because of Denmark's close cultural and political connections to Germany and Russia, a strong interest in Buddhist Central Asia developed at the end of the nineteenth century, resulting in live exhibits of Central Asian village life in Copenhagen Zoo, and Ole Olufsen's dramatic expeditions to the Pamir region in the 1890s, which became the last European incursion into Russian Central Asia until the collapse of the Soviet Union, and made Copenhagen University a stronghold for Buddhist studies. Buddhism also made its mark in Danish literature with another Nobel Laureate, Karl Gjellerup, whose novels explored Indian philosophy and especially reincarnation. Orientalism as an academic discipline is today, according to Edward Said's definition, divided between traditional Orientalist philology and theology at Copenhagen and Aarhus universities and American-inspired Middle East Studies at the University of Southern Denmark with the focus on the Middle East as a source of crises, terrorism and immigration.

John Botofte

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Race and Ethnicity, Greenland

To the Norse population in Greenland Inuit were *skraellings* (small weaklings); and in the later European tradition they were trolls, pygmies or savage men. After 1721 Greenlanders appeared to the Europeans as individual human beings, converting to Christianity. An increasing number of mixed marriages were seen in the colonised West Greenland. Inuit

culture had always been open to out-group sexual intercourse. However, some of the children from mixed marriages did not socialise into the hunting culture and became a burden on the colonisers. The rules in 1782 constraining European personnel included rules for marriages too, on one hand to avoid expense but on the other to maintain Christian morality by allowing marriage rather than cohabitation.

A high death-rate among kayakers created a surplus of women. Mixed relationships solved part of this problem in the northern part of West Greenland. In the southern part of West Greenland the Moravian Brethren had their missionary stations. They did not permit mixed marriages in their communities, a circumstance that led to a demographic crisis.

In general, native Greenlanders received less salary for equal work, but had easier access to the subsistence economy. However, the money earned by Greenlanders working for the mission or the trade had a widespread impact on most families in Greenland.

The colonial authorities classified the native population from the 1820s till 1901 as 'crossbreeds' (with more or less European blood in their veins) or Greenlanders, but the decisive criteria were culture and way of life. In general crossbreeds with fathers who were factors or missionaries were raised as Danes, the rest as Greenlanders. The latter would either get a job in the trade or the mission or they would add to the number of low-skilled hunters who regardless of their descent were considered a problem by all.

From the Inuit oral tradition we can tell that Inuit had ethnic awareness. European contact added the concepts of king and kingdom and later of national awareness, and paved the way for an evolving Greenlandic national consciousness in the late nineteenth century (dominated by Danish ideas about a linguistically homogeneous country). An ideal Greenlander – at least from 1861 onwards, where we have the Greenlandic newspaper as a source – was a good seal hunter and a good Christian, while the linguistic criterion was non-explicit. After 1900 the development of new trades created an intense debate about ethnic-national identity in newspapers and fiction. The progressive proposal was to use the mother tongue, history and love for the country as ethnic-national identity criteria. However, the Greenlanders wanted at the same time more foreign language competence (Danish). Mere thoughtless imitation was distinguished from deliberate appropriation of European culture. Greenlanders found inspiration for socio-political and cultural development in Knud Rasmussen's Greenlandic translation of a book about evolution, while his works about Inuit still influence Danish thinking about Greenlanders as noble natives whom civilisation unfortunately ruined.

In the nineteenth century parts of the Danish administration considered further breeding of a mixed race a desirable physical as well as intellectual development in Greenland. Anthropological studies were carried out – and in the 1920s civil servants in the Danish governmental departments were influenced by eugenics. Such cultural theories were not unfamiliar among Greenlanders. Augo Lynge, a leading Greenlandic intellectual and politician stressed in newspapers that Greenlanders were already of mixed descent. He made the hero of his 1931 novel a fair man of mixed descent, with a more impulsive dark-haired helper. In a novel from 1944, Pavia Petersen lets the daughter of a mixed marriage live out the message. The Danish father pleads for more secular education, while the mother wishes for a more intimate Christianity. The daughter's answer is that she cannot do without any of these. The same author wrote in 1934 that this literary genre had spread from Antiquity to all races. Greenlandic literature in this period focused on nation building as a domestic issue, with few references to the significant Danish Other.

Greenland's altered state, from colony to Danish province in 1953, was followed by modernisation and Danification. The successful fight against tuberculosis meant an increasing

number of schoolchildren. This in turn led to the import of more Danish teachers to Greenland. Construction works brought a huge number of Danish workers to Greenland. The increase of Danes in Greenland also resulted in a dramatic rise in mixed relationships. One of the consequences of this development was a Danish-speaking minority of Greenlanders whose presence threatened the traditional ethnic-national demarcation symbol, the language. Furthermore, wage differentials defined by birthplace, but very much correlating with ethnicity, created great discontent**,** and were highly instrumental in the process that ended with the establishment of home rule (1979). The process was mirrored in Greenlandic literature too, most overtly in protest lyrics, some of which were composed in Danish, while most of the rest were translated into Danish in order to get the message through to the Danes. For some years during the transition to home rule, the need for a decolonisation of the mind meant a need for a sharp demarcation from the former coloniser, leaving little or no space for the Danish-speaking offspring from mixed marriages. In general the common Greenlandic way of thinking at that time continued to operate with a binary division of the population. The theme for discussion (including literary works) was how to expel non-Inuit cultural parts of contemporary culture in Greenland and find a way back to a more Inuit rooted culture.

The years after home rule was established have witnessed a slow decolonisation characterised by a balancing between an ethnic-national desire for a homogeneous Greenlandic-speaking permanent population and a more or less pragmatic and democratic acceptance of the fact that the population is not homogeneous, but on the contrary – especially in Nuuk – includes a minority of Danish-speaking Greenlanders and a Danish minority group with a long presence in Greenland (not to mention the many Danes coming to Greenland for short-term stays). In everyday communication there is still a dichotomy between Greenlanders and Danes, where language operates as the basic ethnic-national symbol and definition. At the same time everyone knows that reality is much more complex. In general the tone of public debates is sober, thanks to the fact that it has become part of the Greenlandic culture to adhere to human rights and minority rights while simultaneously nourishing the postcolonial wish for Greenlandification (that is, less dependency on a foreign labour force and increasing linguistic Greenlandification). Furthermore, recent years have brought back an acknowledgement of the need for competence in foreign languages and brought an increasing awareness of being part of a global society.

Karen Langgård

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Knud Rasmussen

The writer and arctic explorer, Knud Johan Victor Rasmussen, born in Ilulissat (Jakobshavn) Greenland in 1879, was the son of Danish priest Christian Rasmussen and wife Sophie L. S. Fleischer, of partly Greenlandic descent. In Ilulissat he received a mixed Greenlandic and Danish upbringing, and spoke both languages fluently. Upon finishing his education in Denmark, Knud Rasmussen returned to Greenland in 1902–4 with the Danish literary Greenland expedition to north-western Greenland, whose goal was to contact the Polar Eskimos in the Thule area. The Thule expedition resulted in Rasmussen starting a local trading station, and contributed to securing north-western Greenland for Denmark; and both financed and lent its name to Knud Rasmussen's seven Thule expeditions undertaken in the period between 1912 and 1933.

The best known expedition is the fifth Thule expedition from Greenland to the Pacific Ocean, with the purpose of visiting all of the Eskimo peoples and examining their travel paths. The expedition met with great national interest and acclaim, and contributed to Denmark becoming a centre for ethnographic Eskimo and polar research. It also established Rasmussen as a polar researcher and a national hero. Rasmussen's scientific work covered geography, ethnography, folklore, literature and religion. On his travels he collected ethnographica and archaeological artefacts, as well as languages, songs, myths and tales from the entire Eskimo area.

The results were presented in both scientific works and in more popular form, where the genres would blend into personal, saga-like stories with more focus on the journey than on scientific results. While these popular writings helped to make Rasmussen a household name, they also helped shape the public image of Eskimo peoples.

It is remarkable that Rasmussen presented his scientific results in both Greenlandic and Danish. He had a romantic notion of Eskimos as enviably free and 'noble savages', and his expeditions took place at a time of colonial expansion and national quests. Hence, the goal of his expeditions was to secure as well as colonise certain land areas for Denmark. The march of civilisation was inevitable, Rasmussen felt, and Denmark's role in this was to ease the transition of primitive people into civilisation. It was a role that the nationally disposed polar researcher regarded as important. Due to this and to the aforementioned circumstances such as his mixed Danish/Greenlandic descent and upbringing, and his ability to speak fluently in both languages, Knud Rasmussen was a natural born translator between Eskimo/Greenlandic and Danish/European cultures, and he represented Denmark at the court in The Hague in the dispute between Denmark and Norway about territorial rights to north-east Greenland.

During the seventh Thule expedition to Ammassalik in 1933 Rasmussen fell ill; he was brought to Denmark where he died shortly afterwards. Today his work still holds great significance. His focus on the kinship between Eskimo people has played an important role for the Inuit communities, and his collection and dissemination of Greenlandic myths and tales has been instrumental in gaining recognition of oral storytelling as a part of Greenlandic cultural history, and consequently for the formation of Greenlandic identity.

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Thule

Thule is the European name given to a hill on the remote coast of north-western Greenland, and to the surrounding district. The Greenlandic/Inughuit name of the hill is Uummannaq, which was also the name of the historical settlement inhabited by the Inughuit hunter community until their forced relocation by the Danish government in 1953. The area has been inhabited by human hunters for approximately 4,000 years and contemporary Inughuit, one of the smallest and northernmost human societies today are acknowledged as descendants of these early inhabitants. The first recorded encounter between Inughuit and European visitors in recent history is John Ross' short-term visit in 1818 during his expedition to search for the Northwest Passage. In 1902–4, Knud Rasmussen conducted an ethnographic expedition to Thule and in 1909–10, a missionary station and trading station were established, commencing a Danish colonial presence in Thule. In 1927, Knud Rasmussen established the Thule Hunters' Council with the purpose of protecting the Inughuit from Danish and European influences on their indigenous cultural, social and economic practices.

In 1941, during the German occupation of Denmark, the first American-Danish Defence Agreement authorised the establishment of a American-Danish weather station in Thule, enabling US military presence in northern Greenland. After World War II the Defence Agreement of 1951 affirmed the Danish acceptance of American troops in Greenland and Thule Air Base was established. The presence of the air base led to Inughuit concerns over their long-term ability to remain relatively self-supporting. The proximity of the base to the Inughuit was also a concern to the Americans and the Danish authorities and in the spring of 1953, the Danish authorities chose to relocate the Inughuit from Uummannaq to Qaanaq, an old settlement approximately 150 kilometres further north, an area where game was less prolific. In 1985, Danish scholars Jens Brøsted and Mads Fægteborg published 'Fangerfolk og militæranlæg', documenting that the relocation in 1953 was done without proper consultation with the Inughuit. Two government commissions failed to place final responsibility for the relocation. In 1996, Hingitaq 53 ('the Discarded 53') was formed, an Inughuit organisation, which launched legal proceedings against the Danish state. They claimed land rights and permission to hunt in the Thule district along with compensation for the relocation. In 1999, the Danish Eastern High Court recognised the relocation had been forced upon the locals and that the Inughuit was an indigenous people in 1953. However, the compensation was markedly lower than the amount claimed by Hingitaq 53 and land rights to Thule district were denied. Hingitaq 53 appealed to the Danish Supreme Court which in 2003 upheld the verdict of the lower court, but withdrew the recognition of Inughuitas an indigenous people. In 2004 Hingitaq 53 took the case to the European Court of Human Rights. Other important events connected to Thule are the American military's storage of nuclear bombs in Thule in 1950s and 1960s, contrary to Danish official policy of no nuclear weapons on Danish soil, and the exposure of Inughuit and Danish workers to radioactive radiation.

Pia Krüger Johansen

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Tropical Colonies

In the seventeenth century, following the examples of especially the Dutch and English merchants, the united kingdom of Denmark-Norway established colonies in India, the West Indies, and on the Gold Coast of Africa. In comparison to the size of the other European colonial empires, the Danish-Norwegian one remained, however (with the

territorial exception of Greenland), rather small. Nevertheless the tropical colonies came to play an important role in the building of Danish merchant capitalism in the eighteenth century, the Ostindisk Kompagni in 1616 also forming the first Danish private company, where King Christian IV virtually forced the larger merchants to subscribe for shares. Of tropical colonies, the Indian ones in Tranquebar and Serampore and the African ones in Ghana were sold to England in the 1840s, while the West Indian Virgin Islands were sold to the USA in 1917.

From the time of the Viking age, the Danish-Norwegian kings claimed sovereignty over the North Atlantic, including Greenland. Five hundred years after the Viking chief Eric the Red during his exile from Norway founded the Vineland settlement in Canada, an expedition under the leadership of Pinning and Pothorst was sent out by King Christian I to search for a Northwest Passage to India. In 1472, twenty years before Columbus discovered America, this expedition reached the St Lawrence River and New Foundland, but failed in its mission to discover any Northwest Passage. In 1619, a fresh attempt was made when King Christian IV dispatched Jens Munk with two ships in a renewed attempt to find this fabled route which could deliver to the Danish-Norwegian throne a tax income from European shipping to and from the Indies – in similar fashion to the lucrative tax on international ship cargoes to and from the Baltic countries. However, this expedition also failed. After visiting the Hudson Bay, the crew contracted scurvy and met with serious trouble in the pack ice. Jens Munk, with only two other surviving sailors, barely managed to reach Bergen on one of his ships. This marked the end of Danish-Norwegian attempts to discover a Northwest Passage to India.

From then, economic resources were directed at equipping ships bound for the Indian colony Tranquebar, which had been established in 1620 on the southern Coromandel Coast by Admiral Ove Giedde, with the assistance of the Dutch merchant Roland Crappe. From the local prince or *naik* of Tanjore, the Danes along with the already present Portuguese shared a monopoly on all trade with Europe. For many years Tranquebar functioned as a military stronghold and the fort, Dansborg, became a storage place for coveted tropical products, acquired locally, at other Indian localities, and in South-East Asia. In 1706, Tranquebar housed the first Protestant mission in India which soon clashed with the local colonial administration, when during conflicts the missionaries sided with the local population. In Tranquebar as well as in Serampore in Bengal, the Danes established a town after the European model, and in Serampore missionaries opened what was to become the first modern university in Asia.

In the West Indies, St Thomas was claimed in 1625, but it took time to establish regular contacts and consolidate the trading company. In 1648, St Jan and in 1733 also St Croix were annexed. On all three islands, the indigenous Caribbean population was already extinct when occupied by the Danes. Danish and Norwegian debt slaves and criminals were, with very limited success, converted into workers or given plantation land along with planters from foreign nations, in order to grow the coveted sugar and tobacco to sell in Copenhagen. In 1697, the first Danish-Norwegian slave ship arrived from the Gold Coast and for roughly 100 years, the triangular trade between Copenhagen, Africa and the West Indies continued. In 1792, the Danish government abolished all slave trade, and slave transports on Danish-Norwegian ships after 1803. Slavery as such was, however, not abolished until 1848 when a slave demonstration caused the Governor-General, Peter von Scholten, simply to proclaim all slaves to be free.

In 1658, the first attempt to gain a foothold in the Gold Coast of West Africa to obtain ivory and gold was made, but here, too, it was difficult to maintain regular contact, not least

because Denmark-Norway was involved in wars in Europe. Fort Christiansborg was constructed on land obtained from the local king in Accra and it became the main Danish-Norwegian military stronghold on the coast as well as a reception camp for slaves awaiting shipment to the West Indies. From 1790 to 1808, as a consequence of the abolition of the Danish slave trade, private investors tried to establish plantations inland to grow coffee, cotton, sugar and oil palms, but because of wars between the local tribes, the ten plantations were finally abandoned.

One characteristic of Danish-Norwegian overseas activities was the relatively strong involvement of the King in the promotion of colonialism. Merchant capital seems to have been too small and underdeveloped, and the investment required needed a big player like the crown to put capital into the enterprise which at times even took over the trade company and the administration of the colonies. Only in the eighteenth century does Danish colonial trade seem to have functioned more normally. In Tranquebar and Serampore, the items in demand were rather few: silver, lead and guns in exchange for Indian textiles and pepper; on the African Gold Coast mirrors, spirits, watches, iron bars and Indian textiles were traded for slaves. In the West Indies, the income generated by the importing of African slaves was used to buy sugar and tobacco for the home markets. Equally characteristic of the Danish-Norwegian Empire was its ability to take advantage of wars between the larger imperial countries in the second half of the eighteenth century, offering foreign trade under the neutral Danish flag.

During colonialism, cultural impact from the colonies and other overseas connections were to be observed in stately homes, where Indian and Chinese styles were fashionable. Modern migration from the tropical colonies to Denmark-Norway has been negligible, making these two countries comparatively ethnically homogeneous. Relations with former tropical colonies are few, these days, outside historical and anthropological research into cultural encounters during colonialism and the practical work of NGOs and museums to preserve Ghana-Danish, Indo-Danish, or West Indian-Danish cultural heritage in relation to buildings and plantations.

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Viking Settlements in Iceland, Faeroe Islands, and Greenland, and Danish Arctic Exploration

The Faeroe Islands and Greenland are the only remaining parts of a once vast Danish empire. But, actually, the islands became a part of the Danish Empire by chance. They were not conquered or discovered by order of the Danish king. They were not cultivated on behalf of the king. Instead the islands were populated by chieftains and their voluntary followers, who moved from primarily Norway in pursuit of better farmland and as a result of power struggles in Norway. In the thirteenth century all the islands became a part of the Norwegian kingdom. In 1380 a personal union of Norway and Denmark was established, but in 1536 Norway was officially incorporated into the Danish kingdom (the kingdom Denmark-Norway) and thus also were the islands in the North Atlantic. In Greenland the Norse disappeared in the fifteenth century. Norway and Denmark never de facto became one kingdom but Iceland, the Faeroe Islands and Greenland remained a part of the dominion of the Danish king while the rest of the Norwegian kingdom was lost to Sweden in 1814 as a result of the Napoleonic Wars.

The Vikings from Denmark, Norway and Sweden pillaged all across Europe and even found opportunity to settle. They possessed the technology and sufficient navigational know-how to enable them to travel across the Atlantic Ocean. Thus, in the ninth century Norwegian farmers and chieftains set out to take new land in the North Atlantic. Why they were so adventurous still remains to be explained but trade and commodities were among the important factors. Conventional wisdom and a look at a map tell us that the Faeroe Islands were populated first, then Iceland – both in the second half of the ninth century – and finally Greenland around the turn of the millennium. From Greenland and Iceland the Norse then went on to the American continent (Newfoundland), although without realising they had discovered a new continent. The Norse probably considered Newfoundland an extension of habitable lands and fjords stretching from Norway over the Shetlands, Orkneys, Faeroes, Iceland and Greenland.

The wealthier of the first settlers had their own ships and were able to maintain contact and trade with the homeland on their own. Since none of the islands had any trees, after a short period of settlement it proved nearly impossible to maintain the ships. Due to their isolation the settlements had to be self-reliant in most ways, but the islands' limited resource base forced the settlers to depend on import of many items and goods, such as iron. In the long run it was necessary for the settlers to find ways to meet the heavy cost of these imported materials. It also meant the islanders became more and more dependent on foreign merchants.

The Norse settlements on the Faeroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland were much alike – even though they adapted to the different conditions of the local environments. The Norse were the first to cultivate the islands. The end of the tenth century marked the culmination of several hundred years of high temperatures in Northern Europe, and the Greenlandic soil had never been cultivated by previous Eskimo cultures. The Norse farmer who arrived at the south-western part of Greenland would have seen an uninhabited land with lush fields suitable for the same kind of farming he knew from Norway. In the extreme north-western and eastern parts of Greenland an Eskimo culture known as Dorset remained until the late thirteenth century. However, it was not until the early thirteenth century that the Eskimo culture known as Thule, which now inhabits Greenland, made its way from the North American continent to the northernmost parts of the island.

The Norse established a farming society based upon the raising of domestic animals: cows, goats and especially sheep, supplemented with whatever could be caught from the sea or along the shores. Fish, birds and, especially in the Greenlandic case, seals provided part of the diet. The Norse farms generally consisted of a core, where the buildings, farmhouses, outhouses, kitchen gardens and refuse piles were located. There were enclosed cultivated infields close to the farms which were used for growing hay needed for winter fodder and, if possible, grain. There were also uncultivated outfields used for pasture, and for turf and peat cutting. Turf was an important building material. Neither the Faeroese nor the Icelandic way of life changed much before the nineteenth century. Establishing a Norwegian-style farming society in Greenland bordered on the impossible and the settlement was small: perhaps only 2,000–5,000 inhabitants in all compared to the Icelandic population which has been estimated at up to 70,000 at one point. All archaeological excavations show that the Norse maintained their original lifestyle in Greenland, even though they had to eat more marine food. Analyses of the surviving bones of the Norse in Greenland even show that marine food constituted up to 80 per cent of their diet towards the end of the Norse settlement period. The Norse disappeared from Greenland in the fifteenth century. Many have attempted to explain why, but no one explanation has been found. In the eighteenth century the Danish king recolonised the island with the help of the missionary, Hans Egede. The main export goods from the Faeroe Islands were woollen products and fish. Iceland's primary export article was *wadmal*, homespun cloth, and fish. The voyage to Greenland was more perilous but the potential profits for merchants were also greater. Greenland mainly exported items of high value: walrus tusks, along with other products from the walrus**,** and luxury items like white falcons. While the settlers on the Faeroe Islands and Iceland could produce the export goods at home the Greenlandic Vikings had to acquire their trading goods on dangerous hunting trips to the North (Nordsetur, in Disko Bay and further north).

The societies were highly differentiated, one symbol of power and wealth being the amount of cattle one possessed. The wealthiest and most powerful chieftains were those who arrived at the islands first and therefore had been able to take possession of large pieces of the best land (*landnám*). The initial consolidation period was, in Iceland, followed by stiff competition for power among the wealthy chieftains during the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries. There is no reason to believe that the situation was different in Greenland or the Faeroe Islands. The influence of the Catholic Church and the Norwegian king changed the dynamics.

When the Norse first came to the islands most were still pagan but around 1000 Christianity became the official religion. In the early twelfth century the islands each gained their own bishopric – at first subject to Lund (in Denmark) but in the middle of the twelfth century they became subject to Trondheim. Through the Church (and the crown) the islands were economically and culturally linked to each other and Northern Europe – not least because the islanders now had to pay tithe. As was the case elsewhere the clerics quickly came to play a substantial role in the society and we have much for which to thank their ledgers and scholarship, not least the sagas. The sees became the centres of the islands, cultural and otherwise. It is noteworthy that no Norse Greenlander was ever elected bishop of Gardar. This indicates that the establishment of the Episcopal see did not happen at the request of the Greenlandic settlers, but rather as a result of the Roman Church's desire to strengthen the Church's organisation.

In the twelfth century the Faeroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland were persuaded to pay tribute to the Norwegian king, that is they became part of the Norwegian kingdom. The

political influence was concentrated in fewer hands. The King wanted to make sure that all goods were landed in Norway so he could tax them. Changes in the economic conditions in Europe from 1300 made the Greenlanders increasingly dependent on direct trade with the king. The Scandinavian markets could now provide enough skins and hides and Europe no longer demanded the Greenlandic walrus tusk. As a result, the official Norwegian trade ceased completely at the beginning of the fifteenth century. That might have been the final blow to the Norse settlement in Greenland.

Arctic exploration

The Northwest Passage was the name of a fabled sea route north and west around the American continents. If found it would be a far shorter route to the Far East. The potential economic gains were then as now huge. Between the end of the fifteenth century and the twentieth century, many attempts were made to find the passage. Many died trying. The Danish King, Christian IV, also backed an attempt. In 1619 the nobleman Jens Munk set sail with three ships. The ships got caught in the ice in Hudson Bay and one by one the crew died. The captivating story of the dreadful voyage is known because Jens Munk miraculously managed to return in 1620 along with two of his shipmates in the smallest of the ships and brought his diary home. In the end it was the Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen who first managed to sail through the passage in 1906.

Greenland was never forgotten and as late as the eighteenth century it was still believed that the Norse had survived. Ships did continually reach Greenland without the required permission. From time to time there was talk of sending expeditions to Greenland. In 1605, 1606 and 1607 Christian IV did actually send out expeditions to find the lost Norse of yore and in 1654 King Frederik III issued a special thirty-year grant to sail to Greenland which resulted in trading expeditions in 1652–4.

Another attempt to find the Norse was made the early eighteenth century. Sanctioned by the King of Denmark and Norway, and sponsored by a company in Bergen for trade with Greenland which Norwegian priest, Hans Egede himself had founded (the trade later passed to the Royal Greenland Trading Company of Copenhagen), Egede sailed to Greenland in 1721, accompanied by his wife and children. Smallpox and political misfortunes almost killed off the colony in Greenland in its infancy. Egede converted many Eskimos to Christianity, established commerce with Denmark, and not least caused the establishment of a permanent Danish presence in Greenland.

Danish expeditions explored Greenland and the polar region in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. These expeditions were dangerous and conducted under the most primitive conditions. Among the notable were the expeditions led by Fridthjof Nansen, Ludvig Mylius-Erichsen, and Knud Rasmussen. Initially the primary goal was to chart Greenland. One example is the expedition of 1906–7 led by Ludvig Mylius-Erichsen, to chart the north-eastern regions of Greenland. However, Mylius-Erichsen and his two companions did not return to their ship before winter set in and they all died in November 1907. One of the bodies was found along with the diary that told of their fate. The expedition had secured valuable results which were later published.

In 1878 the Commission for Scientific Exploration in Greenland was established, which still exists. In 1854 the first cryolite had been shipped from Greenland and later the quarry provided the state with substantial revenue. It is no wonder, then, that the first order of business was systematic geological and mineralogical exploration. The expeditions were often interdisciplinary, with biology, geology, archaeology, anthropology and astronomy among the fields of research. World War II more or less brought an end to these and in

recent years government backing has diminished. The focus today is on possible sources of income: gold, diamonds, oil and so on. Valuable minerals can be extracted from the Greenlandic rocks but the costs of retrieving them are so high that it until now has not been profitable.

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