14. Subaltern Travelers in a Conglomerate World.

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In recent years travel accounts have attracted a great deal of attention from all sorts of historians engaged in structuralist and subsequently post-structuralist, post-colonial and other postmodern projects of deconstruction. Their focus has been the naive assumptions underlying traditional approaches to travel writing as transparent sources for a better understanding of the people and places described or the life, development and *Bildung* of the – usually white, male, adult – traveler describing them. However, as Tabish Khair has pointed out, earlier enthusiasm about unmasking colonial discourse, *Orientalism* and *Imperial Eyes* seems by now to be giving way to a more nuanced understanding of the reciprocity and negotiation, appropriation and resistance at play in travel writing that does not fit the image of European travelers writing about and trying to dominate the rest of the world.[639] In what follows I will be dealing with a case in point: a series of accounts written by (northern, protestant, male) European, but nevertheless in important respects subaltern travelers.

At first glance, Danish travel writing from the eighteenth century seems to have quite a lot in common with contemporary European trends. While seventeenth-century travel accounts predominantly dealt with more exotic destinations in the East and West Indies, those of the eighteenth century increasingly covered also European itineraries. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth century the main focus was on the extraordinary and exceptional "curiosities" of the real world as well as the *Kunst- und Wunderkammern* closer to home, but later in the century travelers tended to pay much more attention to ordinary things, to the rules of daily life and the regularities of nature characteristic of the places they visited. Parallel to this metamorphosis of the travelers' attention we see also, both in Denmark and elsewhere in Europe, the emergence of travel writing arising from larger scientific expeditions. Finally we have a number of Danish examples of the general European Enlightenment trend to let fictitious visitors from other parts of the

world or even from different worlds portray and criticise people and conditions at home. In Denmark, the best known example was probably the imitation of Monesquieu's *Lettres Persanes* in Erik Pontoppidan's "Asitatic prince" *Menoza* (1742-3) who reportedly had been born not far from Tranquebar in India. Much more numerous, however, were the reports about what native Greenlanders had to say about Denmark and the Danes.

Superficially eighteenth-century Danish travelers or, more precisely, authors of travel accounts may thus seem to have done much the same kind of thing as contemporary travelers and travel authors from other parts of Europe. On closer inspection, however, and here we come to the main argument in this paper, one can identity a number of circumstances and tendencies clearly differentiating the travel accounts originating from the Danish conglomerate kingdom from those originating from other parts of the continent. A fully convincing analysis would presuppose a comparative account of the differences and similarities between the various traditions of eighteenth century European travel writing. For present purposes, however, I will content myself with a sketch of some of the features which I believe to be crucial for a better understanding of the peculiarities of Danish travel experiences. A summary of these features will introduce the subsequent presentation and analysis.

As Niels Brimnes has pointed out, early modern Danish colonial rule seems to have been based on a comparatively weak und unstable control over the native subjects, whether in Tranquebar in India, trade stations in coastal Africa, the slave colonies in the West Indies or the Eskimos in Greenland. [640] The importance of native agency has of course been stressed in recent more or less revisionist colonial and postcolonial studies in general, but it seems fair to assume that Danish authorities found themselves in even more precarious situations than their Portuguese, Dutch, French or British, not to speak of their Spanish counterparts, if for no other reasons than demographic ones.

One of the symptoms of this comparative administrative weakness can be seen in the conspicuous presence of missionaries in almost all the Danish colonies in the eighteenth century, and this is reflected in the fact that theology and clergymen dominate in Danish travel writing – another general characteristic of the Danish version of that genre. In Greenland, it was the Lutheran priest Hans Egede who in 1721 initiated modern Danish settlement, with the Moravian Brethren begin-

ning their work less than a decade later. In Tranquebar, it was the Danish king who was responsible for sending the pietist missionaries from Halle who worked there from 1706 onwards. Missionary work among the slaves in the West Indies only began during the second half of the eighteenth century, but here as well as in the other colonies clergymen (such as Wilhelm Johann Müller at Frederiksborg in Ghana[641]) and missionaries definitely were the authors of the most widespread, influential and informative accounts and descriptions published at the time. As we shall see, theology, pietism and clergymen also were to play a disproportionately prominent role in travels to other destinations than the colonies. Going to Arabia Felix or to Göttingen, Vienna and Rome was often motivated more by scholarly theological rather than secularly enlightened concerns and ambitions.

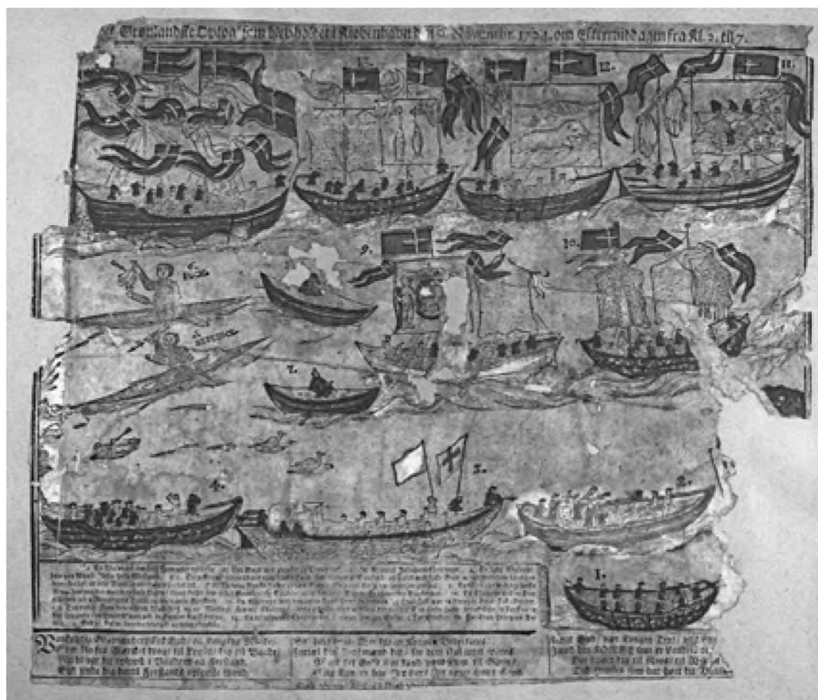
Looking at the biographies of the authors of the travel accounts and the way in which they financed their travels can lead us to a third and more general peculiarity of the Danish variety of enlightened traveling. Even though this point certainly needs to be investigated more thoroughly, it seems fair to apply a kind of Weberian ideal type, namely that by far the most of the travelers who wrote and published about their experiences did so as part of some official duty and thus from a subordinate position. Among the travelers undertaking their own voyages in the style of a conventional Grand Tour, strikingly few left any written, let alone published, account of their travels, whereas those who had to apply for funds and grants or those who where ordered by their superiors to go have left many more and much larger written and published records of their activities. Or to put it more crudely, Danish absolutism certainly did not prevent people from traveling of their own initiative, but writing accounts of voyages appears to have been the activity of people who in one or another kind of subordinate position had been paid or ordered to go where they did.

Finally, and most importantly, there is a fourth particular feature of eighteenth-century Danish travel accounts which I think deserves even more attention and on which I will concentrate in what follows. Turning over the pages of the traders and especially missionaries writing about people and places in the colonies, the diaries and travelogues of students and scholars reporting about their experiences in various European towns and universities, or the accounts and reports of clergymen and others engaged in all sorts of natural history and what then

was called statistics inside as well as beyond the boundaries of the conglomerate parts of the kingdom of Denmark, one finds surprisingly many statements by different kinds of native informants. From the missionaries and traders reporting from overseas we learn a lot about the opinions of more or less recently converted fishermen, peasants and slaves in and around the colonies, the students and scholars happily tell their readers about the knowledge, wisdom and opinions of the learned of all confessions whom they had met in conversation, and among the travelers writing about such parts of the Danish conglomerate state as the Faroe Isles, Iceland and Norway almost the majority are in fact writing about their own province of origin. In other words, travelers from the Danish conglomerate state not only tend come from subordinate positions to their travels and writings, they also share a weakness for lending their pen to the views of others, sometimes the nobler and more famous, but more often to even more subordinate and remote subjects. If travel writing in general is characterised by a propensity towards the poly-vocal and multi-centered, travel writing originating from the conglomerate Danish state of the eighteenth century seems to have been open for a strikingly rich multitude of subaltern perspectives and voices.

Greenland, Arabia Felix, Tranquebar

It would require a substantial monograph to substantiate these four claims about the peculiar characteristics of the travel accounts produced under Danish kings in the 18th century. Parts of the ground, however, have already been covered by recent work on the subject. Thus in his brilliant thesis from 2006, Allan Sortkær has analysed in considerable depth what the texts of the Greenland missionary Hans Egede, the oriental explorer Carsten Niebuhr and the student and scholar Andreas Christian Hviid reveal about mental continuity and change during the Danish Enlightenment.[642] Although apparently more concerned with how the Danish examples reflect more general European trends, Sortkær often arrives at conclusions not very different from the results of my own investigations of the material from Greenland[643] and the case of Carsten Niebuhr and his expedition to Arabia Felix in 1761-67.[644] In what follows more attention will therefore be paid to some of the so far less studied examples in the hope of being able at least to point out what they could turn out to have in common also on closer inspection.



Det Grønlandske Optog 1724 (The Greenlandic procession). Broadsheet with woodcut from the 1720s.

As a consequence of the colonization of Greenland by Hans Egede from 1721 the Greenlanders Pooq and Qiperoq came to Copenhagen. On November 9, 1724 they demonstrated their hunting skills for the citizens. The Greenlandic Procession took place in the port of Copenhagen for the benefit of Grønlandske Kompagni (The Greenland Company) in Bergen.

In 1731, at the very beginning of his reign, Christian VI decided not to continue the colony in Greenland which Hans Egede had established less then ten years earlier. It was this deep crisis that made the subaltern voices of the Greenlanders appear in print. Quoting the comments and complaints of "his" Greenlanders, Egede came close indeed to identifying himself with what he claimed to be their point of view and with the cause of their salvation in his desperate critique of the King's decision, which in fact never was carried out.[645] If we add the numerous versions of what Pooq and other Greenlanders told their fellow countrymen about their experiences in Copenhagen and what they called "the Land of the Lord", which in particular Hans Egede's

son Paul made public,[646] we have a whole series of subaltern accounts which themselves contain the accounts of other subaltern subjects.

Apart from the name of the ship on which it departed from Copenhagen in January 1761, the expedition to Arabia Felix initiated by the Göttingen professor of the Old Testament and Oriental languages Johann David Michaelis and funded by king Frederik V appears to have very little in common with the colonial and missionary efforts in Greenland. On closer inspection, however, it turns out that another crisis, the death of the other members of the *Gesellschaft gelehrter Männer*, actually forced the only survivor, the surveyor Carsten Niebuhr, to invent his own peculiar method of travel. When exploring Yemen together with Peter Forskål, Niebuhr had already enjoyed the advantages of moving around in disguise as a native stranger. Systematically cultivating and refining his adaptation to the local circumstances when on his own, Niebuhr managed to familiarize and identify himself to such an extent with the various local groups, that he easily managed again and again to surprise his readers by making them look at things from different local and native points of view.[647] Thus not only was Niebuhr a subaltern traveler because he found himself under pressure of the official instructions and several hundred pages of questions[648] meant for a whole crew of scholarly observers, but also in the sense of lending his pen to lots of other remote and subordinate voices.

Our next example is pure fiction, namely the story of the 'Asian prince' Menoza who went all the way from Tranquebar in India through Europe to Denmark where he settled on the island of Funen to write three volumes of letters about his voyage. The real author of these letters, the later Bishop of Norway and Rector of the University of Copenhagen Erik Pontoppidan, was a key figure in the development of pietism in Denmark. His adaptation of the *Lettres Persanes* (1721), which appeared in 1742-3,[649] mainly served as a pretext for extended discussions of a wide range of theological questions. Born among heathen polytheists in a landscape called Nagracub not far from Tranquebar in India, Menoza moves on to a kind of monotheism completely by his own reasoning. Leaving his home village together with his friend Ninaruk, a former slave, Menoza first converts to Islam, then to Judaism and, in turn, to Catholicism as it was practiced by the Portuguese missionaries who were his hosts, until he finally finds himself among the protestant Lutheran missionaries from Halle at the Danish colony in Tranquebar.

It is from this starting point that Menoza embarks on his Grand Tour through Europe by way of Portugal, Spain, Avignon and Montpellier in France, Geneva, Rome, Venice, Vienna, Munich, London, Amsterdam through to Copenhagen and the island Funen, where he finally settles to put into writing the 56 letters containing his descriptions of and comments on all sorts of religious and confessional matters loosely kept together by this itinerary.

As pastor for King Christian VI from 1735 and professor of theology at the University of Copenhagen from 1738, the author of *Menoza* certainly was no subaltern traveler himself. The fact, however, that Pontoppidan, already author of the new and enormously widespread catechism that founded the Danish "second reformation",[650] made so extensive use of a prince from Asia as spokesman for his views on so many both worldly and religious matters testifies to the receptiveness of the Danish reading public to yet another rather remote and faraway voice and point of view. Hans and Paul Egede, Michaelis and Niebuhr, Pontoppidan and Menoza can be comprehended as variations on one and the same theme, and they were not the only ones.

Actually one of the most striking examples of remote voices being made systematically accessible for a Danish audience also originated from Tranquebar. Having tried in vain to find Danish candidates willing to work as missionaries in the Danish colony in South India that was founded already at the beginning of the seventeenth century, King Frederik IV finally agreed to hand over the task to a group of missionaries from Halle, at the time the center of pietist Protestantism in Europe. Two of these missionaries, Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg and Johann Ernst Gründler, were particularly eager to publish the progress of their work in the series of *Hallesche Berichte*, which were to appear in 108 "continuations" from 1710 to 1772[651], as well as in other publications. Two of these continuations contain no less than 99 letters written by native Tamils in response to questions put to them by the missionaries. Originally written on palm-leaves in the Tamil language, they were printed in German translation in the *Hallesche Berichte* from 1714 and 1717. One can of course find countless further examples of the Danish Halle missionaries' exceptionally deep interest in the language, religion and mentality of the Tamils whom they tried hard to convert to their version of protestant Christianity, but the 99 letters, which became known as the Malabar correspondence,[652] may suffice

to show that perceptiveness to the voices of remote others was indeed a strikingly dominant aspect of the accounts of the pietist missionaries.[653]

North Africa to Russia

Among the numerous travelers to non-European destinations beyond the Danish conglomerate realm three further examples provide particularly illuminating confirmation of the pattern we are describing.

Hark Oluf, a seaman who was captured in the Mediterranean and sold as a slave in Algeria in 1724, apparently had a splendid career as treasurer for his master before he returned to his native North-Sea island of Amrum in Schleswig-Holstein twelve years later. However, in the account of his captivity, a booklet published in Danish in 1747 and in German translation in 1751, he nevertheless presented himself as a victim and as a slave with almost no influence whatsoever on his fate under his Muslim masters.[654] Subordination to the will of others was part of the very genre of captivity accounts that flourished during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

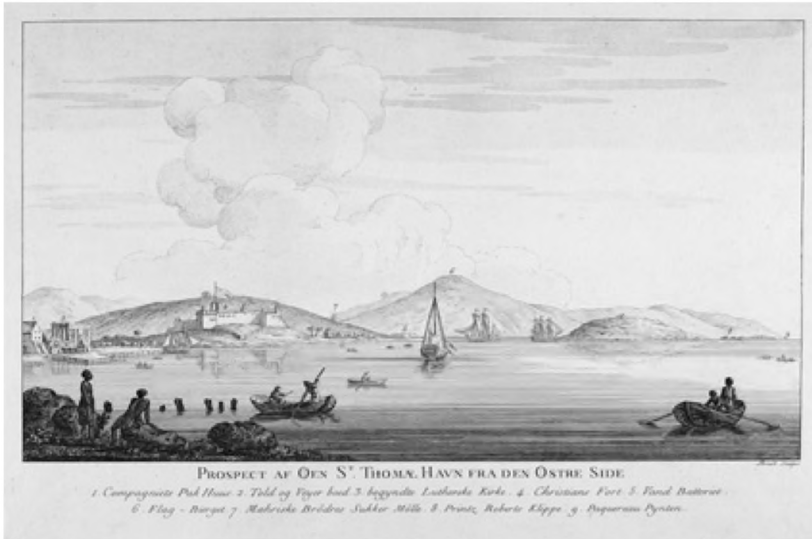
An apparently quite different case was Georg Høst who, after studying theology, went to Morocco in the service of the Dansk-Afrikanske Compagnie from 1760 to 1768. Quickly improving his command of Arabic, which he had studied already at home, Høst made himself indispensable in the ongoing negotiations between the Danish company and the Moroccan ruler. In the two books he published after assuming office as secretary and member of the Royal Board in the Danish West Indies, Høst provided ample evidence of his deep involvement not only in diplomacy, but also in the internal workings of the government and administration of Sultan Muhammad III. By means of the impressive number of names, concepts and phrases reproduced in Arabic throughout his text and most conspicuously in the chapters devoted to the sciences of "the Moors", Høst literally lends his pen to whole series of statements originating from the more remote parts of the conglomerate world.[655] In short, both Georg Høst and Hark Oluf wrote from subordinate positions, but the former as a voluntary scribe for foreign a power, the latter as a thoroughly involuntary victim of such a power.

Peder von Haven, who in 1743 published an account of his stay in Russia from 1736 to 1739, was neither enslaved nor, as the other Danish authors of reports about Russia from the eighteenth century,[656] part of a diplomatic mission. Von Haven originally went on a travel grant to pursue his theological studies in the protestant University of Helmstedt, but when one of his teachers was offered a position as director of the Botanical Garden in St. Petersburg he decided to follow him and try his luck in the new Russian capital. Working first for his former teacher and then as secretary and curate for a Norwegian-born vice-admiral of the Russian navy, von Haven ended his stay in Russia as private tutor for the son of a general of the Russian army in Moscow. In his travelogue, von Haven devotes much attention to the religious and ethnic minorities and their situation in the expanding Empire, but perhaps his most original contribution is a consistently comparative understanding of details in the dogma and practices of the Orthodox church.[657]

During his stay in Russia, von Haven went through a whole series of subordinate positions. How much he himself was aware of his subaltern situation becomes strikingly clear when he tells us about the Danish dog of the Russian general in Moscow. This dog, which was brought from Copenhagen to Moscow by a French officer, was held in very high esteem by the general, who claimed that the dog both could read his thoughts and distinguish clearly between his friends and enemies by wagging his tail at the former and barking at the latter. Perhaps, von Haven continues, it was because the dog sensed that both of them, dog and tutor, were Danes that he was held in so high esteem and treated so well by dog as well as master.[658]

West Africa to the West Indies

All the travelers quoted so far had their own particular reasons for trying to enter into dialogue and negotiations with the various counterparts and hosts whom they were eager to quote, represent or identify with in various ways. To this rule there was, however, at least one important exception: the slaves which were brought on Danish ships from trading posts on the West African coast to the Danish West Indies. In the accounts of Eric Tillemann from 1697,[659] Johannes Rask, a pastor at Christiansborg castle near Accra from 1708 to 1712[660], Ludevig Ferdinand Römer, a merchant and slave trader for the West India and Guinea company in the same area from 1739 to 1749,[661] one looks in



Prospect af Øen St Thomas Havn (Prospectus of the port at the island of St. Thomas in the West Indies) Engraving by F.L. Bradt (1747-1829).

vain for any trace of empathy in their descriptions of the situation of the slaves, let alone explicit criticism of the trade. And in the preface to Römer's book by the pietist bishop and professor Erik Pontoppidan, whom we have encountered as the true author of *Menoza*, there is an explicit defence of the slave trade as a means of improving the conditions of the Africans by moving them across the Atlantic to a healthier and more stable environment.[662] But by the 1780s, the slave trade has become a major problem, as we see in letters describing the middle passage by the physician and botanist Paul Erdmann Isert who was appointed chief surgeon to Christiansborg in 1783 but made the voyage to the Danish West Indies on a slave ship a couple of years later. Witnessing a slave rebellion on the open sea, which almost cost him his life, Isert later tried to find support for establishing plantations in West Africa in order to end the traffic which he found abhorrently inhuman.[663]

However, we should not conclude that the travel accounts relating in various ways to the slave trade fall outside the model offered in this paper without considering another major voyage of exploration and investigation to the Danish West Indies, namely that undertaken by the

Moravian brother Christian Georg Andreas Oldendorp in the years 1767-1768, a decade after Pontoppidan's defensive preface, but two decades before the critical account of Isert. Oldendorp's primary assignment was to report about the work of his fellow Moravian missionaries among the slave population of the plantations. Even the limited parts of his 6000-page handwritten history of the mission that were printed in two volumes, heavily edited by Johann Jakob Bossart, in 1777[664], are to a large extent based on Oldendorp's extensive interviews and conversations with some of the slaves. However, the complete version of his report, which is now available in four scholarly volumes[665], gives overwhelming evidence of Oldendorp's almost obsessive interest in the life-histories, religious convictions and social conditions of the slave informants whom he often quotes verbatim, stating their individual names.

Both the Halle missionaries in Tranquebar and Oldendorp in the West Indies devoted considerable systematic energy to learning the language and familiarizing themselves with the living conditions of the targets of their proselytizing ambitions. This great attention to what the heathen or recently converted actually said or intended was equally important for Hans and Paul Egede in Greenland. However, only the Moravians – Oldendorp in the West Indies as much as David Cranz in Greenland – developed a kind of cult of the "*Erstlinge*", the first baptized of a given heathen tribe or nation. Such Orthodox Lutheran missionaries may not have adored the images and paintings of their *Erstling*, but they certainly all had a fascination with listening to the voices of the individuals they hoped to Christianize.

Dependencies

Having been to Greenland and the West Indies, to Tranquebar and Arabia Felix, to Russia and North Africa in our attempt to uncover a common pattern of travel writing we will now enter more familiar territory, or at least destinations closer to the centre of the conglomerate Empire. Already the earliest Danish expedition to Iceland in the eighteenth century, the *Landkommission* from 1702 to 1712 headed by Árni Magnússon and Páll Jónnsson Vídalín to map the land and put an end to conflicting land claims, lives up to our expectations in more than one respect: the two protagonists were natives not of that part of the kingdom from which they departed, Denmark, but of the island they were to investigate more closely. Furthermore, the whole project

ran into so much local trouble and so many local conflicts that at the end there was no report or account to be published. Local and natives voices were strong enough, so to speak, simply to drown that of the travelers. What is more, the outcome of the project that is best remembered by posterity was Árni Magnússon's efforts to bring all the manuscripts he could find back to his collection in Copenhagen, an activity that seems to have his main preoccupation. In this case the travelers did not write down the words of Icelanders but rather took the natives' own written words, at least those of their ancestors, and brought them home en masse.

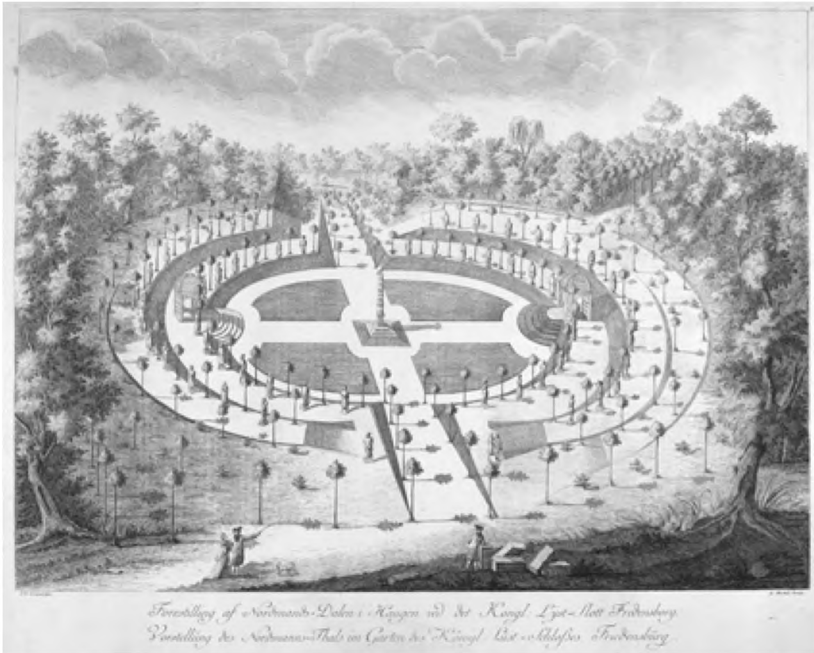
The next expedition was a visitation, ordered by Christian VI, that brought Ludvig Harboe to Iceland from 1741 to 1745 to tidy up religious practices. It seems to have had similarly disappointing results, and Niels Horrebow, who went to Iceland in 1749, was the first to write a report on his findings. Horrebow went on his own initiative though with official permission of the Royal Academy of Sciences and Letters to undertake mathematical and physical observations. He managed to publish a book about his voyage which in great detail defended the Icelanders against the harsh and arrogant judgements of a German travel writer[666], but he was called home prematurely already after two years by the Academy which wanted to replace him with two young native Icelanders, Eggert Ólafsson og Bjarni Pálsson who as students at the University of Copenhagen had demonstrated better qualifications for the task at hand. Generally seen as one of the earliest and most comprehensive expressions of a new romantic and nationalist image of Iceland, the book by these two travelers certainly deserves a closer analysis. [667] For our present purposes, however, it is enough to point out, that as native Icelanders these two authors lent their pen to their contemporary fellow natives, thus illustrating how subaltern travelers sometimes differed very little from their hosts. This point is confirmed by the last two Danish-Icelandic expeditions of the eighteenth century. The second and much larger *Landkommission* from 1770 to 1771 was once again a major collective enterprise which instead of a final report has left a polyphony, if not cacophony, of Danish and Icelandic voices and echoes in the archives.[668] Finally, Olaus Olavius was another native Icelander and author of a two-volume economic description of the northern parts of Iceland[669], though he is better remembered for his often reprinted topography of northern Jutland, written during his years as a customs officer there.[670]

Turning to the Faroe Isles, the pattern remains much the same, though less dramatically so. Two of the three book-length accounts of the Faroe Isles from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are the products of foreign Danish residents or visitors. Lucas Jacobsen Debes took office as pastor in Thorshavn in 1652. When he published his description of the islands during his second visit to Copenhagen in 1673, Debes was deeply involved in conflicts between some newly appointed Danish officials, on one side, and himself and a number of his colleagues and their parishioners on the other. Trying to appeal for support from the King, Debes actually published two books, one containing the account of the Faroe Isles and one devoted to winning royal support by bringing together enormous amounts of biblical quotations confirming the love, respect and obedience all subjects owe to their King.[671]

Jørgen Landt, whose description of the Faroe Isles appeared in 1800, fits even less into our model. Having prepared himself thoroughly in botany and natural history before taking office as pastor on the island of Nordstrømø at the age of 41, Landt seems to have spent most of his seven years there collecting botanical and statistical information rather than engaging in conversation with his parishioners or other inhabitants of the islands.[672]

The third early modern topographer of the Faroe Islands fortunately brings us back on the right track. Jens Christian Svabo was born on the island of Vaag in 1746 and went to Copenhagen to study, having finished the "learned", or "Latin" (i.e., grammar) school in Thorshavn in 1756. Engaging in studies of economics and natural history while working on a dictionary of the still unwritten Faroese language, Svabo managed to get by with odd jobs and minor publications until 1781 when a royal order sent him to his native islands for two years in order to collect material for a systematic physical and economic description of the country. Although only published two centuries later, Svabo's comprehensive notes are yet another example of a traveler lending his pen to other, remote voices, for they included a large collection of texts of Faroese folk songs. Sadly Svabo spent the rest of his life in utter poverty and finally had to leave Copenhagen in order to live on the support of his kinsmen at home.[673]

Norway was a part of the conglomerate empire that for a long time had attracted royal visits on a regular basis. Christian IV reportedly visited



Nordmandsdalen. Engraving by A. Heckel based on a drawing by J.G. Grund 1773.

"The Norwegean Valley" in the Royal Park at Fredensborg Castle in northern Zealand. Construction of the monument began in 1764 on the order of Frederik 5. On the terraces of the garden 60 statues represent common Norwegian peasants, fishermen and their wives, supplemented by ten figures from the Faroe Isles.

Norway on no less than twenty-six occasions;[674] Christian V went at least once, in 1685; and during the course of the eighteenth century both Frederik IV (in 1704), Christian VI (in 1733) and Frederik V (in 1749) went northwards in the footsteps of their predecessors. However, during the eighteenth century printed accounts of these royal excursions declined in both frequency and size. Christian VI's voyage was still portrayed in two formidable hand-made volumes, available exclusively at the royal reference library, but the richly illustrated account of the expedition by Frederik V only covered the earliest stages of the tour, ending before the king and his retinue had even left Jutland![675]

Even a superficial look at the long list of descriptions of Norway from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries [676] makes it clear that there has been a continuous exchange, both written and oral, between trav-

elers from other parts of the double monarchy and local enthusiasts in studying natural history and antiquities. Thus pastor Peder Claussøn's posthumously published *Norriges oc omliggende Øers sandfærdige Bescriffuelse* (True Description of Norway and Surrounding Islands)[677], the outcome of visitations to a long series of parishes, served as a model for both Norwegian and Danish topographers, antiquaries and natural historians who likewise were engaged in exchanges between written and oral, local and imperial pieces of information and text. Claussøn himself reportedly began his career as a writer with a series of manuscripts about Iceland (1580), the Faroe Islands (1592) and Greenland (1596) before embarking on the natural history of Norway itself. (Almost two hundred years later, the North Atlantic dependencies were still included with the Norwegian half of the kingdom.)[678]

Of the flood of travelogues about Norway from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards, three works stand out as particularly interesting from our perspective. When the Holstein-born secretary to the Danish Chancellery, Erik Johan Jessen, in 1743 was commissioned to work out a description of the countries belonging to the king, he collected large amounts of material by sending out questionnaires to local authorities in both Denmark and Norway. When Jessen finally published a volume covering the "natural and civil conditions in the kingdom of Norway" twenty years later, he did so in his own name, but the real author seems to have been the Norwegian student Hans Steenbuch, and once again one hardly can distinguish the traveler from the hosts. [679]

Our next traveler, Norwegian-born Gerhard Schøning was a historian educated in Copenhagen who already at the age of 29, 1751, published an "essay on the ancient geography of the Northern countries, particularly Norway"[680], which earned him appointment as rector of the grammar school [katedralskolen] in Trondheim. He returned to Norway together with the Danish historian Peter Frederik Suhm and they collaborated on a volume about Danish and Norwegian history.[681] Together with the Bishop of Trondheim, J. E. Gunnerus, they also laid the foundations for new Norwegian academy of sciences. 15 years later, Schøning was called back to Denmark to teach at Sorø Academy. Continuing his life project, a new history of his home country, Schøning obtained a royal grant to go to Norway again in 1773, this time in order to collect antiquarian evidence in various provinces. Although broken off earlier than planned due to the offer of yet another high office in Denmark, this expedition

led to the first modern historical and antiquarian survey of Norwegian provinces published in two volumes in 1779.[682]

Our next example is the Norwegian pastor and missionary Knud Leem who worked among the Sami of the Finnmark from 1725 to 1728 and published an authoritative account of "his" Sami in Copenhagen in 1767.[683] This reminds us of the close connections between concerns that may appear contradictory and incompatible to us today, namely the purely secular and rational interests in history, natural history and economy, on one hand, and the religious and missionary efforts on the other. A most important bridge between the two was a common interest, if not obsession, with language and names, that is with different kinds of local knowledge. Absolutism, so it seems, lets travelers go to more or less remote destinations in order to collect and bring home such local knowledge. Danish books about Norway thus tended to be by Norwegian authors, and Norwegian missionaries, such as Hans Egede or Knud Leem strongly emphasized their linguistic interests and qualifications. Twenty years before his ethnographic monograph, Leem had already published the first grammar of the Sami language.[684]

Also Erik Pontoppidan, the creator of the Asian prince Menoza, started his Norwegian literary career with matters of language. Pontoppidan was appointed bishop of Bergen at the time of the last royal visit to Norway in 1749. His *Glossarium Norvagicum*,[685] published the same year, in more ways than one prepared the way for his later more comprehensive monograph on the natural history, ethnography, ethno-botany and ethno-zoology of the parts of the country he was able to visit or to learn about from other sources.[686] In view of Pontoppidan's earlier severe critique of popular "heathen" and "papist" superstitions,[687] this work passes on surprising amounts of local Norwegian beliefs and traditions without criticism.[688] Like the other travelers we have been describing, Pontoppidan channels local knowledge and remote voices from one end of the conglomerate empire to the other, more often than not from the periphery to the center, to Copenhagen.

Europe

Coming to the end of our circumnavigation of the outer parts of the conglomerate Danish kingdom we are left with a series of travelers who did not go to any remote or peripheral destination within or beyond

the boundaries of the kingdom, but to towns and universities commonly considered closer to the centre of European civilisation. A very considerable number of people went to such European destinations for educational, scholarly, recreational, economic, personal and other purposes. However, by narrowing down our focus to those travelers who published book-length accounts of their tours to Germany, Holland, France, Italy, England and Spain during the course of the eighteenth century,[689] we end up with a relatively restricted list of candidates, who turn out to have quite a lot in common. They were relatively young when they left; they did not go at their own expense but relied on grants to pay for their costs while away; most of them had studied theology or related disciplines, and among these, surprisingly many went with the specific purpose of studying at the libraries in Catholic Europe where "oriental manuscripts", as they were called, were assumed to contain important information for a better understanding of the Old and the New Testament. Even though an disproportionately large number of these students moved on to high and influential positions in later life, they went abroad as students without the entourage characteristic of contemporary travelers who already belonging to an established elite.[690] For these reasons, the following should be enlisted as further examples of subaltern individuals eager to listen and lend their pen to the voices of both the authors of the ancient oriental manuscripts and the many interlocutors of all sorts whom they met on their way. Officially many of them went to study or to prepare themselves for studying the former, in the end, however, many of them turned out to have learnt much more from the latter. They include the following:

Andreas Christian Hviid, born 1749, went to Kiel, Göttingen, Vienna, Venice, France and Holland 1777 to 1780;[691] Jacob Georg Christian Adler, born 1756, studied in Kiel and Copenhagen, went to Rome 1780-82;[692] Frederik Sneedorff, born 1760, went to Göttingen, Leipzig, Switzerland, France and England 1783 to 1786[693]; Frederik Münter, born 1761, visited the Two Sicilies 1788 to 1790[694]; Jens Baggesen, born 1764, 1792-3;[695] Gregers Otto Bruun Begtrup, born 1769, studied theology, but was more interested in agriculture and economy; he went through Germany, Switzerland France, Holland and England from 1795 til 1798;[696] Andreas Chrstian Gierlew, born 1774, traveled in Italy 1801-05;[697] Børge Riisbrigh Thorlacius, born 1775, went to France 1799.[698]

Each of these travelers and especially the prosopography of the whole group deserve detailed analysis. However, enough has been said to make us expect that such closer analysis will refine and improve rather than disprove and falsify the model of the subaltern traveler in a conglomerate world.

As we have followed the footsteps of so many different travelers to so many different destinations both inside and outside the boundaries of the Danish conglomerate kingdom, we have time and again been brought back to our point of departure: the fact, that so many travelers in so many different locations listened so eagerly to the voices of other people, the commands of their superiors, the arguments of their partners in conversation, the complaints, confessions or demands of the heathen they had come to baptize in India, Africa, the West Indies, Greenland or northern Norway or the subjects in the Scandinavian dependencies they were sent to interrogate about matters such as land use, property relations, natural history or religion. In all these cases our subaltern travelers appealed to their readers as humble witnesses to the view of others whom the travelers had listened to in so many different ways (or sometimes only read). Under the conditions of conglomerate absolutism, travel writing was a way of letting the subjects from all corners of the empire and the world have their own say. The travelers listened and quoted with varying degrees of empathy and understanding, but since they, too, were in subordinate and subaltern positions, they only rarely raised their voice in their own name.

Two of the best known pieces of Danish travel writing from the eighteenth century illustrate exactly this point. The subterranean voyage of Ludvig Holberg's *Niels Klim,* published anonymously in Latin in Leipzig 1741 famously shows how the world can be exposed to critique when seen from a series of strikingly different points of view without identifying either the author or the protagonist with any of these standpoints. Things had changed dramatically half a century later. For Jens Baggesen, who had translated *Niels Klim* into Danish, it was no longer enough to listen to the voices of others. In his Sterne-inspired travelogue *Labyrinten* from 1791-92 there is a remarkable passage which very well illustrates what powers could be released once travelers no longer restricted themselves to speak for other subaltern subjects, but felt empowered, in the name of humanity, to speak for themselves in speaking of the other. Towards the end of an ethnographic masterpiece in *Laby-*

rinten about the Jewish ghetto in Frankfurt, The Jew Street (*Jødegaden*) Baggesen exclaims:

> What would an earthling unacquainted with our history, an alien to European customs, at least a person free of our prejudices – a Huron, Peruvian or Peluanian[699] – what would he not think when hearing the following:
>
> That a people which God himself from the beginning of history had offered his special protection, himself had given laws and governance and for millennia had preserved from all dangers with a father's particular care for his best loved children – this according to the Europeans' own opinion and from the God whom they themselves worship –
>
> That a people which this God entrusted with humanity's particular Palladium, the understanding of His Unity – which he thereby consecrated to the world's other moral teachers – a people of whose womb sprang truly the first, the supreme moral legislator who is divinely recognized by the Europeans themselves
>
> That a people, finally, which Christians regard as their true spiritual paternity, whose religion they of necessity must consider their own religion's mother – that this people in these last times, from the moment that Christians, their spiritual sons, got into power, and for no other reason than that it was this peculiar people – that this people has been all but deprived of right to citizenship. Right to own land, access to the most common rights, deprived the use of most of their human powers and abilities, dispossessed of the right to support themselves honestly – and thus excluded from the benefits of civil society, thrown into a perpetual prison on the earth that God created for all of humanity, exposed to contempt, insult and persecution – completely left to the corruption that inevitably arises from lack of social respect, lack of participation in society's common means of refinement, and the most horrifying of all slavery?
>
> "Oh terror! Oh sacrilege! Oh bloody tenthousandfold patricide!" – that is what nature's non-political son would cry. And with this cry I finished my sorrowful observation.[700]