

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF RESEARCH

2.1 THE PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER

In the 15th and 16th centuries, the European knowledge about Greenland was vague and fanciful. The great discoveries gradually changed the concept of the world, and the art of map making developed with the need for more precise navigation.

Several concepts concerning Norse Greenland came to in this period, and influenced much of the later research.

In the early 18th century, Hans Egede started the modern recolonization of Greenland, and began a futile search for the descendants of the medieval Norse colonists. In time, this quest gradually gave way to systematic historical and archaeological research. This research was strongly influenced by the contemporary political events. This process is indeed interesting, because it created the basis for our present knowledge.

In the following, I have tried to give a fair, but critical survey of the literature on Norse Greenland. Basically, the presentation follows the chronological sequences, but certain topics have been isolated to give a better line of argument.

Due to the nature of the material, certain glances towards contemporary politics are made. Also, the causes and effects of the so-called "Greenland Case" between Denmark and Norway in the period 1921 - 33 is being discussed.

During the last stages of my writing, Frode Fyllingsnes has presented his thesis in history at the University of Oslo. The title is: "Undergangen til dei norrøne bygdene på Grønland i seinmillomalderen. Eit forskningshistorisk oversyn", ("The extinction of the Norse settlements in Greenland during the Late Middle Ages. A review of its research history", Fyllingsnes 88).

With his kind permission, I have been able to include some of his viewpoints in this chapter, and I have been able to draw on his valuable list of literature.

This chapter should be read with three issues in mind:

1. To get an understanding of why and by whom the research was done.
2. To get a picture of what our present state of knowledge is, and what subjects and theories have been discussed.
3. To get a literary background for the analyses presented later.

2.2 THE PERIOD 1420 - 1721: CARTOGRAPHY AND DISCOVERIES

The beginning of the end, or the end of the beginning? Paradoxically, it is difficult to distinguish between the late history of Norse Greenland and the history of its early research.

Surprisingly little of the Norse tradition concerning Greenland seems to have been communicated to the learned circles of the European clergy, and what was conveyed was often misunderstood or twisted. Most of their knowledge seems to have been based on that of the classical writers, combined with more or less fanciful reports from the few explorers who penetrated the Arctic waters in the Late Middle Ages.

Also, little is known about the doings of the 15th and 16th century adventurers. Did they merely add to the Europeans' knowledge about Greenland, or did they also contribute actively to the downfall of this colony? Several of the early "explorers" were in fact accused of piracy in Iceland and Greenland.

Interesting as this may be, it is not the main subject of this section. What is important is this: what did people in Europe know about Norse Greenland? How was this knowledge obtained, and what conceptions continued to exist until modern times? To give an understanding of this, we shall have a closer look at 15th century conditions.

2.2.1 Geographical confusion - Claudius Clavus and the Karelians:

During the Late Middle Ages, maps of the world were to a great extent based on the works of the Egyptian astronomer Claudius Ptolemy (2nd century). Numerous copies of his work were made in this period. This was the most important basis for the geographical conception in Europe in this period.

Originally the Nordic countries were not included in these maps. From the 15th century, however, several maps of Northern Europe appear as "additions" to those based on Ptolemy (Bjørnbo & Petersen 04:71-72). It is generally agreed that these "additions" to Ptolemy were based on information derived from the Scandinavian countries (op. cit.:61).

These "Nordic maps" are usually divided in two groups, called the "A-type" and the "B-type".

Characteristic of the B-type maps is that Greenland is depicted as lying north of Norway.

While in the A-type, Greenland is located roughly in its correct

position, i.e. west of Norway (op. cit.:52).

The origin of these Nordic maps were subject to lengthy discussions (see Bjørnbo & Petersen 04:49-62 for a review), but most writers now seem to accept that the author was the Danish cartographer Claudius Claussön Swart.

Claussön was usually called by the Latinized name Claudius Clavus, more seldom Nicolaus Niger. He is probably identical with the man "Nicolaus Gothus", whose presence in Rome was recorded in January 1424 (Bjørnbo & Petersen 04, Nansen 11 vol. II:249).

During his stay in Italy, he made his first map, probably some time between 1424 and 1427. This must have been the original from which the later B-type maps were copied.

Together with the map was a written description, which is referred to in the literature as the "Nancy-text".

After having made this map, Clavus seems to have travelled to the Nordic countries, and even claimed to have been in Greenland (see Bjørnbo & Petersen 04:213-225). This is, however, more than doubtful (discussed below).

His second map was made later, probably some time around 1450. It was of the A-type, and was followed by a description which is usually referred to as the "Vienna-text".

None of Clavus' works have survived in the original, but exist in numerous more or less corrupted copies. It may be a source of confusion that the B-type map is older than the A-type. To make things easier to the reader, the two versions are presented in a schema:

B-type map	A-type map
Made ca. 1424	Made ca. 1450
Source: "The Nancy text"	Source: "The Vienna text"
Greenland north of Norway	Greenland west of Norway

The maps indicated a connection of land between Greenland and Lappland ("Pillapelanth") of northern Norway. This was in line with the concept of classical writers, who saw the Atlantic as surrounded by land on all sides.

Clavus was probably the first to introduce the Norse name "Grønland" (Greenland) into European cartography. His geographical knowledge was, however, limited. His maps contained a number of fictitious names, even in the then-known parts of Scandinavia, and the names in Greenland had no resemblance with those known from historic documents. In his younger map, the "place-names" of Greenland can be joined to form a verse, derived from a popular folk-song of the time:

"Der bor en mand i en Grønlands å ..."
 ("There lives a man in a Greenland river ...")
 (Bjørnbo & Pettersen 04).

Lacking knowledge in the Scandinavian tongue, later scholars permitted these "place-names" to live on in the literature until the

17th century. The Zeno map (Section 2.2.4 below), featured the name "Engronelant", possibly a misspelling for "en Grønlands å" - ('a Greenland river').

Another of his feats was placing "Karelians" and "Pygmies" in Greenland, an idea believed by most writers to have been derived from classical sources like Ptolemy (Storm 89 & 90, Nansen 11,II:248-274, Bobé 28:1, Trap 28:139, Gad 67:210-215 and 234).

This was undoubtedly true as far as the Pygmies go, and the name "Pygmy" continued to cling to the Inuit population for a long time (see for instance Olaus Magnus, below, Section 2.2.7).

In the younger work from about 1450 (the Vienna-text) Clavus described the northern limit of Norway like this:

"...the uttermost limit is marked with a crucifix, so that the Christians shall not venture without the king's permission to penetrate farther, even with a great company. And from this place westward over a very great extent of land dwell first **Wildlappmanni** (Wild Lapps, i.e. the Sami population, my comment, but see Nansen loc. cit.), people leading a perfectly savage life and covered with hair, as they are depicted; and they pay yearly tribute to the king. And after them, farther to the west, are the little Pygmies, a cubit* high, whom I have seen after they were taken at sea in a little hide-boat, which is now hanging in the Cathedral at Nidaros; there is likewise a long vessel of hides, which was also once taken with such Pygmies in it." (Cited from Nansen 11, II:269, underlined by me).

* Cubit = ancient linear unit based on the length of the forearm, 18 inches or 45,72 cm (Doursther 40:119, see also Random House:323-324). It is a much used Biblical term.

In his description of the Karelians, Clavus writes:

"The peninsula of the island of Greenland stretches down from land on the north which is inaccessible or unknown on account of ice. Nevertheless, as I have seen, the infidel Karelians daily come to Greenland in great armies (bands of warriors, "cum copioso exercitu") and that, without doubt, from the other side of the North Pole." (From the Vienna text, cited from Nansen 11, II:270).

Bjørnbo and Petersen holds that Clavus actually must have visited Greenland some time between 1425 and 1450 (Bjørnbo & Petersen 04:224). Against this, Nansen has noted that if Clavus had visited Greenland, or even spoken to people familiar with the Norse traditions about this country, he would undoubtedly have picked up the Norse name for the Eskimo population, the 'Skrælings'.

Storm suggests that Clavus' term "Karelian" is a corruption of the word "Skræling" (Storm 90a:383, Karlsson & Storm 02:20), but the argument is hardly convincing (see Bjørnbo & Petersen 04:237).

Much of Clavus' information concerning the Sami population seems to be correct. Considering his poor geographical knowledge in general, Clavus must have obtained this information from some written source, or from a person familiar with northern Norwegian

conditions.

Nansen suggests (op. cit.: 270) that he got his information from an anonymous letter to Pope Nicholas V, from about 1450, which describes the geographical location and "wonders" of Norway (Storm 99). This letter exists in a French copy only. It certainly describes Pygmies in Greenland, as

"small people an ell high" - 'de petis hommes haulx dune seule couttee',

(note Clavus' description of the Pygmies above, underlined), and Finnmark is described as lying next to Greenland. The heathen population of this country is, however, described as "Lapprens, Rebiens and Hergons". The Karelians mentioned by Clavus, and the 'Skrælings', both of whom are known from the old Norse literature such as the "Historia Norvegiæ", are definitely absent.

(Gustav Storm assumes that this letter was based partly on a lost description of the north written by Nicholas of Lynn around 1360 (Storm 99), others have argued for Cnoyen (see Steinnes 58, Ingstad 85:373-383).)

The origin of Clavus' information on the hostile Karelians may, as we shall see, be of vital importance as regards Norse Greenland.

During a period of nearly 200 years, Russians and Karelians harassed northern Norway under a series of military raids (Karelia was included under Novgorod in 1220).

In 1278 a group of Karelians and 'Kvens' (the northern Norwegian term for Finlanders) kidnapped the 'sysseman' Torbjørn Skene (District Governor of Troms) holding him for ransom, and killing 35 of his men (Eidnes 43:115).

Other attacks were made in 1322-26, allowing the Swedish-Norwegian King Magnus Erikson to draw from the crusade tax to fight them off (Reg. Norv. vol. IV doc.s 192, 261, 444, 445, 479 (a forgery?), 528 & 530): In a letter to Pope John XXII (in Avignon) from about 1323, King Magnus Eriksson describes the attacks and asks for economic support to fight "the infidels" (Reg. Norv. vol. IV, doc. 261.)

In his answer of August 30. 1326 the Pope promises to support a crusade against the pagan Russians and Karelians

"...pro expugnandis inimicis Christi, paganis videlicet Rutenis et Carelis." (Reg. Norv. vol. IV, doc. 444, cited from GHM III:114).

Also, in a letter from Bishop Audfinn in Bergen to Archbishop Eilif in Nidaros, dated Bergen January 1326, the attackers on Hålogaland are described as Finns, Russians and Karelians (DN vol. 8, doc. 79. See also doc. 623 in the same volume.)

Peace with Novgorod was reached June 3. 1326 (DN vol. 8 doc. 80), but in 1349 a new attack was launched (Vorren 88:70 after Arntzen 71).

Another attack occurred in 1385. This seems to have been expected, because in 1384 King Olav Håkonson (or really Margrete) proclaimed that people in Hålogaland and

Finnmark were not to deliver their fish to the southern towns (i.e. Trondheim and Bergen), but to Vågan in Lofoten

"...because the Karelians and Russians have cancelled the peace with the men of Norway" (NGL vol. III:22 Olav Håkonsons Skipan, my translation. See also Helland 08:864-865, Eidnes 43:115).

The Karelian attacks on a far-off part of Norway was, in other words, common knowledge in Copenhagen as well as in Avignon throughout the 14th century. As we shall see, it was even known in Italy during the 15th century (below).

Thus there is nothing strange in Clavus obtaining this knowledge, or including it in his description for that matter.

What is puzzling is that he described the Karelian attacks as having taken place in Greenland, but this may be explained as a logical consequence of his geographical conception, in which Greenland adjoined northern Norway. Thus Bjørnbo and Petersen write:

"Illustrating to these relations (refers to the problems of projection) is the way in which the name Karelians was shifted about in the maps. To us this is of special interest, as even Clavus was led astray and identified the Karelians with the Eskimos of Western Greenland."

They then describe how the name Karelians was placed more or less correctly (i.e. north west of Russia) in 14th century maps, and continue:

"This way, the Karelians came to live exactly where, as we have seen, Greenland was supposed to lie".

On Clavus' fanciful descriptions of the Karelians "coming daily to Greenland in great armies", they write:

"...the people he (Clavus) denotes "Pygmies" were Eskimos that were picked up at sea and then taken to Norway. Those he denotes "Karelians" were, on the other hand, the hostile Eskimos of Greenland. Further, the names "Karelians" and "Pygmies" were already established in the older Nancy-map, to which it was imperative for Clavus to adjust his later travel-experiences." (All cited from Bjørnbo & Petersen 04:236-237, my translation.)

Clavus' geographical confusion may have direct bearing on a document of vital importance to Norse Greenland research:

On December 20, 1448 (i.e. before or contemporary with the Vienna-text of Clavus), Pope Nicholas V wrote a letter to two adventurers, a German named Marcellus and his confederate Matheus, who by means of false representation had induced the Pope to consecrate them Bishops of Iceland (Marcellus had previously been convicted for fraud) (Nansen 11, II:114, Helgason 25 vol. II:14, Kolsrud 58:293-300, 304, 375).

This happened during the final stages of the Great Schism in the Roman Catholic Church. From 1378, there was one Pope in Avignon, and another in Rome; of which the Norwegian Church supported the latter. This conflict led to the reform council in Basel 1431 - 1449. In 1436 a revolt was released in Sweden and Norway, ending with the removal of King Erik of Pomerania from office in 1440. In this situation, the contact between the Norwegian Church and Rome was broken till 1449, and this situation was exploited by the two adventurers.

The letter from 1448 states that

"...As regards our beloved sons, the natives and inhabitants of the island **Greenland, which, as we are told**, is situated at the utmost limit of the northern seas, north of the kingdom of Norway, in the Province of Nidaros, so have their sad complaint come to our knowledge and shaken and disturbed our mind...

...From the neighboring coasts of the heathens the barbarians came thirty years ago with a fleet, attacked the people living there with a cruel assault... They carried the miserable inhabitants of both sexes as prisoners to their own country, especially those whom they regarded as strong and capable of bearing constant burdens of slavery, as was fitted for their tyranny. But since, as the same complaint adds, in the course of time most of them have returned from their said imprisonment to their own homes, and have here and there repaired the ruins of their dwellings, they long to establish and extend divine service again, as far as possible, in accordance with previous practice, as, due to their misfortune, as well as starvation and poverty, they have not been able to support priests and bishop, they have for the said period of thirty years lacked the solace of the bishop and the service of the priests, unless some, for want of service, ventured on a lengthy journey of many days to those churches that were unharmed by the hands of the Barbarians..." (GHM III:171, DN vol. 6 doc. 527, Rey 76:143-146, translation partly based on Nansen 11 vol. II:113. Underlining by the present author).

The complaint mentioned is by some assumed to be false, constructed by the two adventurers in order to gain influence with the Pope (Storm 92:399, Nansen op. cit.:114 - 115).

This view is opposed by Lars Hamre, who has pointed out that by the time the papal letter was written, Marcellus had not yet been in the Nordic countries, and would have no economic advantage from such a forgery (Ingstad 59:526).

Nevertheless, Marcellus and Matheus may have had a hand in supplying the Pope with the necessary information on the subject.

The "barbarians" mentioned in the letter are by some believed to be Eskimos (Rafn 54:413, Rink 77:22, Holm 84a:159, Bruun 96a:175, Gad 67:193), some think they were Vitaline pirates (GHM III:467), others that they were English. Thus W. A. Graah linked this event to the deal between the Danish - Norwegian King Eric of Pomerania and the English King Henry VI in 1432, which stated that the abducted people should be returned (Graah 32a:5, Nansen 11 vol.

II:11, Ingstad loc. cit.).

Nobody seems to have doubted that the letter concerns Greenland.

This letter has been the basic argument for what Fyllingsnes has called the Pirate-theory, i.e. that the downfall of the Greenland settlement was due to pirate attacks (Fyllingsnes 88:127), and also a major argument for the Confrontation-theory, i.e. that the colonies had been deserted due to Eskimo attacks (Fyllingsnes 88:30).

The question is, where did Pope Nicholas obtain the knowledge of this attack, which must have occurred around 1418? We have no records of ships visiting Greenland after 1408, and the source of this complaint has therefore remained quite a mystery.

There are, however, records of an attack from this period which had a great many features in common with that described by Pope Nicholas. The question is: where did it occur, and where did the Pope think it occurred?

In a letter from Bergen, dated--September 5. 1420, the inhabitants of Finnmark and Hålogaland complained to King Erik of Pomerania that, being poor and without any support of soldiers or officials, they could not withstand the Russians and heathens who attacked them, abducted their women, and caused great destruction. The letter was to be brought by two men, who were to voice their complaint to the king (DN vol. I, doc. 670).

(24 years later, i.e. around 1446, a Swedish-Norwegian force retaliated with a raid to the White Sea, and about that time the attacks came to an end (Keyser 58 vol. II:497, Eidnes 43:115).)

The description in this letter has a peculiar similarity to Pope Nicholas' description of the attacks on Greenland. Could the Pope, or the person who brought the case to his attention, have mistaken the attack on Northern Norway with an attack on Greenland?

The idea may seem absurd, but it is, in fact, not unlikely.

Knowledge about the Karelian attacks was undoubtedly available in Italy at the time. In fact, King Erik himself visited Venice in 1424 on his pilgrimage to The Holy Land (Bjørnbo & Petersen 04:242, Kjersgaard 63:515-516). This was 4 years after the letter of complaint about the Karelian attack was written, and it is possible that he aired the problem on this occasion.

Another contact was made when a Venetian nobleman Piero Qverini shipwrecked near the island of Røst in Lofoten in Northern Norway (Helland 08:865-908). He and his company later travelled south to Trondheim, across to Sweden, and then home. Their experiences were recorded in detail (Helland loc. cit.). On their travels, they spoke with Norwegian and Swedish noblemen and clergy, and may have learned about the Karelian raids.

Also, contact between Bergen and Rome was maintained with irregular intervals in this period. One such contact was recorded in 1442 (Losman 70:151, possibly mistaken for 1440, see DN vol. II:558).

Thus the two adventurers Marcellus and Matheus may well have picked up information about the Karelian attacks in Italy, and conveyed it to the Pope. Then, a confusion with Greenland and Northern Norway would be close at hand. In his letter from 1448, the Pope definitely states that he is

"told... that the island of Greenland lies north of Norway"

(above, underlined). This is completely in line with the geographical conception in the maps of the "B-type". Further, the Pope describes Greenland as an island, which corresponds with the Nancy text, as well as with previous concepts in the Curia. It may therefore seem as if the Pope had Clavus' map and text in front of him when he wrote his letter.

After all, Clavus had resided in Rome in the 1420ies, and was in contact with the Cardinals Giordano Orsini and Guillaume Fillastre, as well as the Papal Secretary Francesco Poggio (Bracciolini), who were interested in geography (Bjørnbo & Petersen 04:241). Thus we may safely assume that the Curia was familiar with Clavus' early work.

On the basis of a B-map, a report pertaining to the Karelian attacks could easily be misunderstood as having taken place in Greenland. (Already Bjørnbo and Petersen observed the similarity in the geographical conception in Clavus' early work and Pope Nicholas' letter (op. cit.:235).

Even the description of the poor state of the church in "Greenland" may well pertain to Northern Norwegian conditions, where the church owned considerable property. The priests themselves did, however, rarely visit their parishes. Most of them lived in wealthy comfort further south, while their churches and properties were tended by curates or chaplains. This caused considerable stir, which was well known in the Curia (Helland 08:865).

However, the Pope also refers to the "real" Greenland in his letter. Obviously, some of the information in this letter was based on knowledge about Greenland previously obtained by the Curia.

Still, he was evidently ignorant of the fact that a Bishop of Gardar, Gregorius, actually served and resided at Nidaros at the time (GHM III:897). (Another Bishop of Gardar, Andreas, seems to have resided in Denmark in the same period (Losman 70:158).)

It is, of course, possible that the Pope was unaware of the fact that the title "Bishop of Gardar" pertained to Greenland.

Any way, these are strong indications that the "complaint" did not come as an official letter from the Norwegian Church, but from some other, less informed, source.

It is therefore, in my opinion, likely that the letter from Pope Nicholas V of 1448 was the result of geographical confusion in the Curia, and that the events described really took place in Northern Norway. This is, on the whole, easier to believe than that the letter should be evidence of one (or even two) unrecorded voyages to Greenland between 1418 and 1448.

Thus in my opinion, the letter from 1448 is not a source concerning Norse Greenland, but a source concerning Northern Norway. If so, the Pirate-theory has received a serious blow.

Whatever the truth may be, the case clearly demonstrates the confused geographical concepts of the period, and the poor knowledge about Greenland.

2.2.2 Discoveries:

In 1472 or -73 (some sources claim -76, see Brøgger 37:180-183), an expedition was sent to the northwest Atlantic by the Danish King Christiern I, at the request of his in-law, King Alfonso of Portugal. It was lead by Didrik Pining, sometimes thought to be a Norwegian nobleman, but most likely a German (Daae 98:195-197), and Hans Pothorst, a Dane from Helsingør (Gad 84:82). With them was a Portuguese named Joao Vaz Corte-Real, and a Norwegian named Johannes (or Jon) Skolp (Latinized "Scolvus", probably meaning "from Northern Norway"). The latter was supposedly familiar with the route to Greenland!

(Some authors have maintained that Skolp lead an independent expedition to Greenland (Storm 86 & 88b), while others claimed he was Polish (see Meldgaard 66b)).

They presumably arrived near Ammassalik, where they were attacked by "enemies" in small boats. Later Skolp (?) discovered a land and named it Labrador (Storm 88). This name has, by the way, also been used for Greenland. (Bruun 96:174 and 18:142, Nansen 11,II:345-378, Bobé 28:2-3, Gad 67:216-217, Ingstad 85:385-388).

Pining and Pothorst were described by Olaus Magnus as villains and pirates (Olaus Magnus, book 2, ch. 11, see Daae 98 for comments). It has even been suggested that Pining and Pothorst had to seek refuge in Greenland around 1490 or -94 because of their piracy (GHM III:473-481, Storm 88b, Aubert 16:153).

Skolp, however, was not the first to discover Labrador. Basque whalers, according to tradition, reached Newfoundland around 1372 (Gad 67:196, no source given). While following whales northward to the Strait of Davis, they came in contact with the local population, possibly even the Norse settlers. They were, moreover, observed near Iceland in 1412. (Dalgård 62: see index 447 "Biskayen", Gad 67:196-198). A dozen whaling stations have recently been located in Red Bay in Labrador. Investigations this far indicate they date back to the 16th century (Tuck & Grenier 81, Tuck 81 & 85, Grenier 85. See also Herjolfsnes, Section 2.6.2 below).

In 1497 a naturalized Englishman, John Cabot (sometimes called John Cabot Labrador, see Huntford 88:13), sailed to the same region in an effort to reach China, and later, in 1498, tried to repeat the trip with five ships. One returned shortly after the departure, the others were probably lost after reaching Newfoundland (Nansen 11,II:291-344, Ingstad 85:389-391).

Cabot was born in Genoa under the name of Giovanni Caboto, moved to Venice where he received citizenship in 1476, and later to Bristol around 1490 (Brøgger 37:183-187). His son Sebastian continued his fathers maritime activity, but records from his voyages are somewhat inconsistent (Nansen 11, II:295-296 notes).

Bristol was, at this time, a center for fisheries in Icelandic waters, and had, interestingly enough, many Norwegian residents (Nansen 11,I:293, Brøgger 37:184, Ingstad 85:393).

(Some have argued Christopher Columbus visited Iceland and learnt about the Bristol discoveries; later also about Cabot's navigation (Storm 93, Bobé 28:3, Brøgger 37:189-192, Morison 71 in Ingstad 85:389-392.)).

In 1500 and 1501 one of Corte-Real's sons, Gaspar, made a voyage to the Strait of Davis, where he sighted the west coast of Greenland (Nansen 11,II:359-376, Gad 67:217).

The so-called Cantino map of 1502 shows a surprisingly correct

outline of southern Greenland, leaving little doubt that the country had been rediscovered. The text on the map positively states that the Portuguese had not been ashore (Ingstad 85:393-394). The detailed outline of the west coast may indicate that an unrecorded expedition to the area took place, possibly by Corte Real (Nansen 11,II:369-370).

There are also indications that the English had been ashore in Greenland at about the same time (Ingstad 85:396-397).

There is evidence that people were kidnapped on these voyages. Expeditions to Greenland and Labrador regularly abducted natives, and it has been suggested that some of them, brought to the court of King Henry VII. in 1501, may have been of Norse origin (Hakluyt 50:23, Nansen 11,II:33-334, Ingstad 85:397. See also GHM III:165-176).

(The kidnapping continued as part of the official Danish policy. Danish ships abducted Greenlanders in 1605, and continued to do so for the next 50 years, in response to a royal command (Erngaard 72:30). A dead kayaker was found outside Hull in 1613, probably an escapee from a European ship. A similar instance occurred in Aberdeen in 1728 (Petersen 1986:59).)

The most important conclusion to be drawn from this period is that the economic and political initiative in the North Atlantic shifted from Denmark-Norway to England. Thus King Erik of Pomerania sent several complaints to England about the illegal foreign trade going on in the Norwegian tier islands, in 1413, 1425, 1431 and 1432 (GHM III:159-160, 160-161, and 162-164). The embargo on foreign trade on Iceland, Greenland, the Faroes, Shetland, the Orkneys, Helgeland and Finnmark was reconfirmed by King Henrik VI in 1444 (GHM III:163), and seems to have lasted until 1451 (GHM III:163). It may be assumed that in this period it mainly applied to Iceland and Northern Norway.

The English interest in Icelandic waters decreased after the discoveries of the rich fishing-grounds off Newfoundland (Brøgger 37:186).

2.2.3 Saving written records:

In Denmark-Norway, the tradition of the Greenland colonies was not totally forgotten. A Danish nobleman, Erik Axelsson Valkendorf, followed Danish Prince Christiern (later King Christiern II) to Norway as a councilor, and in 1510 he became Archbishop of Nidaros. He came in conflict with the king in 1517, fled abroad, and in 1521 he ended up in Rome where he died the following year (Hamre 43).

During his stay in Norway he became interested in Greenland. Lars Hamre (43:49) suggests that this interest was awakened during his stay in Bergen 1506 - 1507. He collected whatever written material he could find on the subject, the most valuable being the Description of Greenland by Ivar Baardson, together with directions for the navigation, derived from chapter 112 of the longer "Oláfs saga Tryggvasonar" (Hogg 89:10). It has also been suggested that a now lost map was produced on this occasion (Hogg 89:16-19). The survival of the manuscripts until today (although in later copies) no doubt is due to Valkendorf's effort.

He also tried to launch an expedition to Greenland, but this was never realized (Torfæus 07:197, GHM III:482-504, Hamre 43:47-53,

Gad 67:222-225). Valkendorf was also one of the very few archbishops to visit Finnmark. In his description of the area, the Skrælings are described as living next to the Sami population (Karlsson & Storm 02).

During his stay in Rome he probably came in contact with the Bavarian geographer, Jacob Ziegler (died 1549). Ziegler wrote the geographical description "Schondia", and describes his source as "the old ('senior') Archbishop of Nidaros" (GHM III:498, Hamre 43:63).

According to a note in 1541, the Governor of Iceland, Christopher Huitfeldt, brought to Norway old sailing directions to Greenland, in Latin (?) and Norwegian (Bobé 28:4-5). A copy of these directions from 1595 exists in the University Library in Oslo (Hogg 89:17-18).

(In 1664 all records in Trondheim concerning Iceland and Greenland were sent to Copenhagen, probably on the king's order. They were never returned, and—much of it is now lost, probably destroyed in the fire in Copenhagen 1728 (Storm 95:5)).

After the time of Valkendorf, several incidents pertaining to Greenland took place in the Scandinavian countries (see GHM III:625). Only a few are of interest in this connection:

2.2.4 The land-bridge between Greenland and Norway, and more false names:

In 1551, the Mayor of Kiel, Carsten Grip, sent a letter to King Christian III of Denmark-Norway. He described Greenland and Norway as being part of the same landmass, joined together north of Vardøhus, the fortress at Vardø. This was probably a common belief, partly conveyed by the maps of Clavus. At this time the world was seen as a flat disk; sometimes with the North Pole in its center, sometimes not, as depicted in the so-called wheel-maps.

The world concept presented in "Historia Norvegiæ" and the King's Mirror reflects the same idea, probably taken from the medieval writer Isidore. (Nansen 11,II:182-193 and 247, Bobé 28:2, Trap 28:137-147, Gad 67:211 & 216-229, Jóhannesson 69:86-87, Nordenskiöld 70, s'Jacob 81, Hogg 89:4-8, but see Hastrup 85:50-69 and Henriksen 87:33-37 on Icelandic concepts). A related concept existed in Norse tradition, which is expressed in terms like "Havsbotten" ('oceans' end) or "Trollebotten".

At this time is recorded a Russian interest in "Greenland" (Arlov 86:175-177). In 1528, Søren Norby, who had been released from Russian captivity, wrote to King Christiern II that the Grand Duke of Moscow had two dioceses in Greenland. In a later letter, he speaks about

"...Greenland and other countries of which the Grand Duke has robbed Your Highness." (Cited from Hamre 43:51-52, my translation. DN vol. XIV:615, and vol. IX:604, see: Bobé 28:4, Pedersøn Beyer in: To norske...:50).

Peter C. Hogg has noted that

"Søren Norby's report in 1526 that the Muscovites had occupied two bishoprics in Greenland ... must be due to

confusing the Bárðarson passage (i.e. Ivar Baardson's Description of Greenland, my comment) with hearsay about the recently established Orthodox chapels at Pechenga and Kola." (Hogg 89:15 note 35).

Søren Norby's "Greenland" may have reference to Svalbard (Spitsbergen), Novaya Zemlya, or more probably to the more vague Norse concept "Bjarmland", i.e. the land beyond Finnmark. The confusion with the old (and by this time rather fanciful) tradition of Greenland is apparent (Section 2.2.1 above).

Greenland proper was by this time called Straat Davis (Strait of Davis), at least in Western Europe (Bobé 28:4-5). And in 1624, the Danish Norwegian King Christian IV defined Greenland as

"...all land (situated) north of Iceland and Nordkapp" (Erngaard 72:39).

This view was to have political consequences up to our time (Haagdommen 33:16).

The land bridge between Greenland and Norway also became depicted on the Zeno-map, named after two Venetian brothers who claimed to have sailed to Greenland in 1380. Although the map and manuscripts have been later proved beyond doubt to be 16th century forgeries, they enforced the concept of a land-bridge. They also featured a number of invented locations, among these an island south of Greenland called Friesland (most probably a misunderstanding of the location of the Faroe islands).

More interesting for us was the creation of the fictitious monastery of St. Thomas on the East Coast of Greenland (GHM III:529-624 and Tab.II, Trap 28:146-147, Gad 67:232-243, s'Jacob 81, Ingstad 85:324 & 340). This led much of the later interest in research towards the desolate East Coast (below).

2.2.5 The Eastern Settlement on the East Coast:

Around 1600 two maps were drawn on the basis of Icelandic tradition; one by the learned Icelander Sigurdur Stefánsson, the other by the Danish bishop Hans Poulsen Resen (Ingstad 85:323-337, Hogg 89).

Peter C. Hogg has, in line with G. M. Gathorne-Hardy and Helge Ingstad, argued that both maps were derived from a common source (Gathorne-Hardy 29:289-296, Ingstad 85:323-337). Hogg suggests that this "common source" was a now lost map produced in connection with Valkendorf's collection of material concerning Greenland (Hogg 89. See also Section 2.2.3 above).

Resen wrote, contrary to the information on his own map, that the Eastern Settlement was located on the East Coast. The idea is inherently logical, but the misunderstanding seems to have been derived from the placement of the fictitious St. Thomas monastery on the Zeno-map (Ingstad 85:328, and above, Section 2.2.4). This led to a misconception that prevailed until officially disproved by Graah in 1831. The search on the East Coast continued, however, until 1883 (Section 2.3.2 below).

2.2.6 The idea that led Hans Egede to Greenland:

In 1567 Absolon Pederssøn Beyer, a clergyman from Bergen wrote a description of Norway and its tier islands, Greenland included (To norske...).

He described with indignation how the Greenlanders had been forgotten, and lived without visits or assistance from abroad. He then put forward the idea that it would be an honor for the Christian Church and for Norway if the people of Greenland could again be won for Christ. He also made this interesting statement:

"...many (Norwegian?) noblemen have property deeds in Greenland, but know nothing about the country and (their?) possessions." (To norske...68:50, my translation).

He also stated that people of Hardanger, in western Norway, had had prosperous trading connections with Greenland, selling salt, iron and other goods (op. cit.:70). This is especially interesting, as Roussell has pointed out that the Eidfjord church in Hardanger (built ca. 1300) is nearly identical to the church at Qaqortukulook (Hvalsey) (Roussell 41:124).

Vera Henriksen has linked Pederssøn Beyer's information to the extensive production of bog-iron in the nearby locations Sysendalen and Møsstrand (Henriksen 88:65, see Johansen 73, Sognnes 79, Martens 87).

A ship returning from Greenland with a captain from Hardanger is recorded as visiting Vestmannaeyjar in Iceland in 1216 or 1217 (GHM II:780-783, Helle 82:362).

Pederssøn's script was too provocative to get printed in his own time, but existed in longhand copies. (It was published in Kristiania 1895, in a collection: To norske Historisk-Topografiske skrifter...). But his idea caught on:

In 1568 King Frederik II wrote a letter to the inhabitants of Greenland, in a mixture of Danish and Old Norse. In the letter, the king openly regretted that communication had been neglected. The plans for an expedition were, however, cancelled.

But in 1578 Greenland was "rediscovered" by the English adventurer Sir Martin Frobisher, thus forcing King Frederik II to reconsider his plans to win the Greenlanders for the (reformed?) Church. The expedition set sail in 1579, led by the English navigator James Alday, and was a total failure. (GHM III:637-650, Gad 67:230-231, 236-238. On Frobisher, see Mountfield 74:27-38).

For the sake of chronology John Davis' expeditions in 1585 and 1586 must be mentioned. He spotted the south east coast of Greenland and named it "The Land of Desolation", and later landed near present-day Nuuk (Godthåb) (Gad 67:242, Mountfield 74:31). A peculiar incident was his discovery of a grave in Gilbert Sound (Nuup Kangerlua, Godthåbsfjord), where several bodies lay covered by a seal-skin, with a cross resting on top (from Nørlund 67:146, no exact reference given).

In the years after 1600 King Christian IV sent three expeditions to Greenland, with orders to search for the Eastern Settlement on the east coast. The purpose was obviously juridico-political, as an identification of the settlement would support Denmark-Norway's claim to Greenland, or Straat Davis as it was then called, in the current conflicts with Dutch and English whalers (Gad 67:264-280). An Icelandic and a Norwegian interpreter were brought on one of

the trips, evidently to communicate with the Norse descendants (Bobé 28:7-15, Nørlund 67:146).

Behind this activity were disputes over the rights to the rich whaling grounds discovered off Svalbard, or Spitzbergen ('Pointed Mountains'), as it was called after Willem Barentsz' discovery in 1596. Svalbard, and in fact all land north of Iceland, was then considered part of Greenland (Bobé 28:13-14, and above).

(The Russian name for Svalbard; "Grumant", is believed to originate from the name Greenland (Mathisen 51:3), and Soviet historians have argued that Svalbard was discovered by Russian mariners before 1596. Curiously enough, this is partially based on a letter from the Danish-Norwegian King Frederik II from 1576, concerning a Russian captain who sailed regularly to "Greenland"; interpreted by some as being Svalbard.

The question on the discovery of Svalbard has even greater political implications than that of Greenland. During recent years Soviet archaeologists have excavated the greater part of the Russian hunting stations in the archipelago, and claim that Russians discovered Svalbard before Barentsz. Without questioning the motifs of Soviet archaeologists, the political implications of such conclusions are obvious (GHM III:635-637, Arlov 86:175-177, Starkov 86 & 88, Albrethsen & Arlov 88, Chernikh 88. See Heintz 66 for a review of the earlier discussion. See also the reference to Søren Norby's letters from 1528, and Pedersøn Beyer 1567, above, Section 2.2.4.)

The Muscovy Company tried to claim Svalbard for the British Crown in 1613, and King James I offered to buy Svalbard in 1614. King Christian IV turned down the offer, but later had to grant the British (Muscovy Company) and the Dutch (Noordsche Compagnie) permission for whaling. (Ræstad 12:1-43, Mathisen 51:1-15, Dalgård 62:35-55, Bruijn 81, Jackson 81. See also Sollied & Solberg 22).

It is of interest to note that the 15th to 18th century discoverers always landed in the Nuuk (Godthåb) area, and not further south. This can be explained when considering access to the ports Nuuk (Godthåb) and Qaqortoq (Julianehåb) today. Nuuk is open to year-round navigation, while access to Qaqortoq is difficult by ordinary ships from the beginning of March until the end of July (Atlas-håndbog... :71). During the Little Ice Age, the drift-ice may have isolated the Eastern Settlement from outside sea contact most of the summer (see Nørlund 27:393-395 for a discussion of late medieval conditions).

2.2.7 Compilations:

During the 16th century a Swede, Olaus Magnus, published two great works on the Nordic people and their culture:

In 1539 he published his "Carta Marina", which included Iceland and Greenland. The map featured an interesting detail. On southern Greenland two men were depicted fighting with spears, one of them evidently a Pygmy.

In 1555 he published his great opus "Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus", ('History of the Nordic Peoples'). Part of his description was based on Archbishop Erik Valkendorf's description of Finnmark, which he refers to (book 21, chapter 5, see Gustav Storm

in: Karlsson & Storm 02:3, Hamre 43:65).

It is worth noting that Olaus Magnus does not use the Norse term for the Eskimos, the "Skrælings", as described in Valkendorf's work (Karlsson & Storm 02:20). Instead he uses the classic term "Pygmy", see Section 2.2.1 above. In book 2 chapter 11 A he describes the Pygmies of Greenland. In the same chapter (!) he also describes the pirates called "Vitalines".

(These privateers, originally a "brotherhood" of militant sympathizers of the Hanseatic League, organized a blockade of the Nordic countries in the late 14th century, captured and looted Bergen in 1393, 1428 and 1429, and effectively impeded the contacts with Iceland and Greenland in this period. (The last Norwegian ship was recorded in Iceland 1428. Magnús Stefánsson pers. comm.). Little is known about these men, and it is worth asking whether they also played a more active part in determining the fate of—Norse Greenland (Storm 98, Benninghoven 73, KLNMI:471, 18:27 & 20:197)).

It is worth noting that the term "Screlingers" was used in Mercator's globe from 1541, and linked with the "Pygmies" of Greenland in his map of Europe from 1544. This is believed to be derived from Valkendorf's description of Finnmark (Hogg 89:14, see Section 2.2.3 above).

Several compilations of old manuscripts concerning Greenland were made during the 17th and 18th centuries, and much of the medieval material that survived is the result of this effort. Among the works must be mentioned Arngrímur Jónsson's "Gronlandia" from around 1600, Bishop Peder Hansen Resen's map and description from 1605, Claus Christophersøn Lyschander's "Den grønlandske Chronica" from 1608 (he positively used information from Erik Valkendorf as a source), "Grænlands annál" from ca. 1623 (usually believed to be compiled by Björn Jónsson from Skardsá, but most probably written by Jón Gudmundsson "Fródi" i.e. 'the learned', see Halldórsson 78:449), and Bishop Theodor Thorlacius' (Thordar Thorláksson) "Description of Greenland" from 1668 -69.

The most important was perhaps Tormod Torfæus' "Gronlandia Antiqua" (Torfæus 1706). He was also the first to suggest that Greenland be recolonized, by homeless and unemployed people from Iceland (Gad 67:379).

His idea was taken up by Magister Arngrímur Thorkelsson Vídalín, who wrote "De veteri et nova Gronlandia diatribe" in 1703, where he suggested a grand scale colonization.

The idea was, however, more effectively forwarded by Torfæus' pupil Jacob Rasch, who copied some of Valkendorf's material, as well as managed to get Torfæus' book printed in 1706.

The interest in Greenland had, in other words, increased steadily, ultimately leading to Hans Egede's expedition (Gad 69:5-12, Sollied & Solberg 22, Bobé 28 and 36, For latest references, see Ingstad 85).

2.2.8 Contemporary Scandinavian Archaeology:

It is now time to stop and compare the interest in Norse Greenland with the interest for Scandinavian history in the same period:

In 1588 the long dolmen "Langben Rises Høj" near Roskilde was excavated. There was, however, no trace of the giant believed to be buried there. Depictions of the prehistoric monuments at Jelling

were published together with their runic inscriptions in 1591.

In 1644 the Danish scholar Ole Worm published his "Monumenta Danica", an opus in six volumes describing antique monuments in Denmark-Norway (and partly Sweden). His work was based on material which had been systematically collected by bishops and clergymen. His work was followed with great interest by King Christian IV, to whom Worm acted as personal physician.

In Sweden, similar activities took place. At the University of Uppsala, a Chair of Antiquity was created in 1662, and the first Law for the Protection of National Antiquities was passed in 1668. Under the leadership of men like Johan Hadorph and Olof Rudbeck, monuments were surveyed and excavated, and stratigraphic methods were employed for the first time. Icelandic literature, like the *Flateyjarbók*, was studied.

But the political purpose was also evident. Rudbeck claimed that Sweden was the old Atlantis, and hence the source of all culture, a view aimed to support Swedish political interest in Europe. (From Klindt-Jensen 75:14-20).

This interest in national antiquities occurred at the same time as the rise of interest in the Norse colonies in Greenland. This was no coincidence. During the 16th century, the European states had undergone fundamental changes, both economically and politically. The old feudal economy had given way to monetary economic systems, and the monarchs engaged directly in financial operations on behalf of their states. This led to political instability and a need to justify territorial claims. The interest in the old Norse colonies abroad, and the interest in national antiquities at home were, so to speak, products of the same forces.

2.3 THE PERIOD 1721-1831, THE MODERN COLONIZATION

2.3.1 Hans Egede:

Hans Poulsen Egede was born in Northern Norway in 1686. He was curate in the parish of Vågan in Lofoten from 1707 - 1718. From 1708 he worked to establish a Christian mission in Norse Greenland. But in spite of the interest mentioned above, the idea of a mission to Greenland was hard to sell. Egede tried in vain to win the king's support. He finally managed to persuade merchants in Bergen to establish a trading company, with the combined purpose of mission and trade in Greenland. Its name was "Det Bergen Grønlandske Compagnie". With approval of the Missionary College in Copenhagen, Egede left Bergen with the ship "Haabet" ('The Hope'), and landed in Greenland July 3rd 1721, on what he called "Haabets Ø" ('The Island of Hope') (Gad 69:23-45, see also Gulløv & Kapel 73 & 79).

His quest to find descendants of the Norse colonists was never fulfilled, but he spent whatever time he could spare in search of the remains of their settlements. In a report to the company, dated July 3. 1723, he was able to announce that the Western Settlement had been found (Sollied & Solberg 32:64).

On a later expedition the same year he attempted to reach the settlement on the east coast, but was forced to turn back at Nanortalik because of lack of provisions. He did, however, describe a

number of ruins in his diary (Medd. o. Gr. vol. 54. See also Egede 1741). What is more, he carried out the first archaeological excavation in Greenland, in the ruins of what is now known as Hvalsey church (Medd. o. Gr. vol. 54:99, Ostermann 42b:103, Albrehtsen 71:290-292).

Hans Egede had, in other words, found the Eastern Settlement without realizing it.

In 1724 the company in Bergen sent a ship bound for the east coast, in order to find the Eastern Settlement. The captain had even been issued a glossary of old Norse words. They never managed to reach shore. In 1728 another attempt was made: an overland expedition led by Claus Enevold Paars tried to cross the inland ice-cap, and a vessel under the command of Jesper Reichardt, tried to approach the coast by sea. Both attempts failed (Bobé 28:25-26).

(For references on later trade, see Sollied 22, Sollied & Solberg 32, Gad 69).

2.3.2 Archaeological surveys:

Peder Olsen Walløe tried, in 1751-53, to find the Eastern Settlement on the east coast, on behalf of the Missionary College in Copenhagen. He managed to get past Lindenow Fjord, where he had to turn back for lack of food, as well as ice trouble. He described a number of ruins on the southern part of the west coast. His diary was published in 1787 (Tidsskriftet Samleren, vol. 1).

By this time, a colony had been established, and around 1770 a Norwegian colonist Anders Olsen discovered a number of ruins near what is now Qaqortoq (Julianehåb). In 1776 or -77 he surveyed the east coast, more or less retracing Walløe's route. Few of Anders Olsen's original records have survived (Ostermann 42a:110-122, see also Brøgger 32 and below, Section 2.5.2).

In 1776 E. Thorhallesen published a book in Copenhagen, describing the Norse ruins of Greenland, the first attempt to present the Norse material in its entirety. A few years previously he had surveyed the Nuuk (Godthåb) area for possible settlement, and had recorded and described the ruins he found there. Included was a comment on the extinction of the colonists. He also published Anders Olsen's observations made in the Qaqortoq area, thus preserving this information for the future.

In 1777-79 Aron Archtander made a detailed survey of the Qaqortoq (Julianehåb) area together with A. Bruun. Both were commerce assistants, but their descriptions have proved very valuable, especially because most of the ruins described were in a far better state of preservation than they are today.

Archtander's diary was published by H. P. von Eggers in Tidsskriftet Samleren vol. 6 in 1793. On the basis of these descriptions, von Eggers set forward the theory that the presumed location of the Eastern Settlement on the east coast was the result of a misinterpretation of the written sources (Eggers 93).

The discussion that followed was heated, and the question remained in dispute until 1831, when W. A. Graah made his famous "Umiak-expedition" along the east coast as far north as Lat. 65°15' 36", without finding a trace of the settlement (Graah 32a. Graah also made an investigation of the Hvalsey church ruin (Graah 32b)).

This was a turning point in Norse Greenland research. From now on, work could be directed towards the material at hand, instead of seeking a fictitious "Utopia" on the east coast. (This Section is mainly narrated from Albrethsen 71:292-296).

But, as late as 1883, a Swede Nordenskiöld, led an expedition to the East Coast ("Andra Dicksonska Expeditionen till Grönland") to locate the Eastern Settlement (From Bruun 96:178).

2.3.3 The Kingittorssuaq stone:

One find from this period deserves special mention. In 1824 a Greenlander called Pelimut, found a stone slab with a runic inscription in a cairn north of Upernavik. The stone was brought to Denmark by Captain Graah in 1824. It was described and interpreted by R. Rask and Finn Magnussen in *Antiquariske Annaler* IV 1827, and also included in C. C. Rafn's great work "*Antiquitates Americanæ*" from 1837, and by J. J. A. Worsaae in *GHM* III:843 (See also Kragh 27, Rask & Magnussen 27:309-342, and Rask 38:423-426). In our century, the text was subject to several publications and comments (Isachsen 07 & 33, Nansen 11,I:297-298, Jónsson 14, Olsen 32, Thalbitzer 49, Ingstad 59:159-162, Gad 67:168, Rosenkrantz 67a:349-362, Krogh 82a:154, see also Rosenkrantz 67b:377-383).

The stone was evidence that Norse colonists had journeyed nearly 1000 kilometers north of the Western Settlement. According to Olsen the text dates itself to 1333 (but see Krogh 82a:154). This cast a completely new light on the mobility of the settlers, and also inferred the location of Nordrsetur, the northern hunting grounds. The inscription also became an important argument in the discussion of the Norse discovery of America. It was also of interest to Norwegian authors in the first half of the 20th century (below, Section 2.5).

2.3.4 Contemporary Scandinavia:

In Europe, the 18th century was the time of colonialism. Remote parts of the world were brought under the control of the European countries, and the mercantile system promoted the ideology that a country should accumulate precious metals and export more than it imported. It was also the time of the Enlightenment, when the medieval concept of God's intervention was substituted by reason and knowledge.

In a general sense, this was the background that allowed Hans Egede to realize the plans that had been put forward nearly 200 years earlier (Gulløv 78:26-30).

In Scandinavia, economic expansion and population increase led to the increasing destruction of prehistoric monuments, but also to the discovery of valuable archaeological finds. Laws to protect antiquities were improved, and museums founded.

Among the great scholars of the time, the Dane Erik Pontoppidan (1698-1764) must be mentioned. Being a theologian, he was well acquainted with the works of the classical writers. He also conducted independent studies of archaeological material, and drew a number of intelligent conclusions from this basis. He suggested a cultural succession from an early Stone Age to a later Metal Age.

This idea was further developed by a Norwegian, P. F. Suhm, who introduced the developmental sequence of stone, copper and iron, in

other words, the basis for what C. J. Thomsen would later develop into his famous Three-Period-System, around 1820. (From Klindt-Jensen 75:32-52).

During this period, Scandinavian archaeology profited from the spirit of the Enlightenment, and although influence from the classical writers still dominated the concepts of historical development, archaeology was on its way to becoming an independent discipline.

The search for the Eastern Settlement in Greenland, and the surveys of Norse ruins on the west coast were characteristic pursuits of the period. The fact that they were carried out under difficult conditions in a desolate land bears evidence to the political importance attached to cultural history at this time. The activity of this period was used as an argument during the proceedings in The Hague in 1933 (Haag-dommen 33:20-21).

2.4 THE PERIOD 1831 - 1920, SYSTEMATIC RESEARCH

Research in this period was clearly dominated by the Danes, and I have tried to follow their tradition throughout the period. Norwegian authors represented, in a way, a different kind of approach, and are for this reason, discussed in a separate section (2.5 below).

2.4.1 The GHM:

A big step forward in Norse Greenland research was taken in 1834, when a Danish literary commission, "Det Kongelige Nordiske Oldskrift-Selskab", decided to start work on "Grønlands Historiske Mindesmærker" (GHM I-III); a collection of all written material available on the subject.

The task was completed in 1845, and included a special section on topography, illustrations of finds, as well as chronological tables. For the first time, a thorough and critical study of the Norse Greenland settlement and its fate had been compiled, forming a basis for further discussion.

This first chance to produce a holistic view was, however, hampered by political biases. In the introduction to the first volume, the difficulties caused by the Eskimos, climate, and drift-ice were discussed. The authors left, however, no doubt as to what they considered to be the real cause of the colonies' misfortune, namely its submission to the Norwegian Crown in 1261, and to the "cruel royal monopoly" imposed on Icelandic and Greenlandic trade which was said to have left these countries in irreparable desolation.

These were harsh words, and also misleading ones. They referred to an embargo on foreign trade issued by King Magnus Erikson (Smek) of Sweden-Norway in 1348. (GHM III:117-119, Reg. Norv. vol. V doc. 1014). The monopoly was in fact held by the merchants of Bergen (see Stefánsson 86:81), and was part of the King's policy to control the increasing power of the Hanseatic traders (see Helle 82:484-485, 731, 806).

Ella Anker (who was far from unbiased politically) argued that the idea of a "royal monopoly" was created by Arild Huitfeldt, who wrote "Danmarks Riges Krønike" (The Chronicle of the Danish Kingdom) in 1604. It probably derived from a misunderstanding of the documents on the trial of Björn Jorsalfare, under Queen Margrete in 1389 (GHM III:135 - 142, Anker 23 & 31:3-5).

The Norwegian historian Knut Helle has taken a different attitude towards the monopoly. He argues that Bergen gradually developed a "stapel" monopoly on trade to Northern Norway and the tier islands. Restrictions on foreign trade were passed in Bergen in 1282. With a series of declarations passed by King Håkon the 5th in 1294, 1299 and 1302, foreign trade in Norway became restricted to the cities only. This was invigorated in the city laws for Bergen passed some time between 1302 and 1313, when foreign trade north of Bergen and on the tier islands was prohibited. King Magnus Erikson's embargo from 1348 must be seen as a confirmation of these rights (Helle 82:351).

Further, the GHM accused the Norwegian king of having failed to fulfill his obligation to send ships to Greenland (GHM I:VI).

This obligation seems to have been an assumption. In 1262, a treaty concerning the subjection of the Icelanders to the Norwegian king was signed, the so-called "Gizurarsáttmáli" (Jóhannesson 69:236, Stefánsson 86:78). According to this deal six ships were to go from Norway to Iceland in the first two summers. Later the king and peasants were to decide how many ships were needed. It has been assumed that a similar demand was made by the Greenlanders.

From 1388 the Danish Queen Margrete was the Danish-Norwegian monarch, and from 1397 the three Scandinavian countries were joined in the Union in Kalmar. For Denmark-Norway, this Union lasted until 1814.

The practical implementation of the Greenland trade was, in other words, out of Norwegian hands during the period when the contact with the Norse colonies in Greenland was lost. (Whether this shift in nationality was of any consequence to the Greenland colony is, as we shall see, another matter.) These facts were, however, conveniently withheld from the discussion.

The Icelanders complained about lack of overseas contact in the early 1300s. Trade with Norway seems to have increased until the Black Death hit Bergen in 1349. Contact with Iceland suffered, but increased again until the 1390ies. From that time, the Vitalines prevented navigation on Bergen, and English traders took over the Icelandic trade. In 1419 King Erik of Pomerania tried to prevent the Icelanders from trading with foreigners, but the Icelanders answered by pointing out that the six ships promised in the deal of 1262 had not come for several years. In 1428 the last Norwegian ship in the century visited Iceland. (From Stefánsson 86:81-85). Thus Bergen had lost its position as the trade center of the North Atlantic. We may safely assume that this development was harder on the Greenlanders than on the Icelanders.

Let us, however, return to the GHM. Why these angry outbursts in a publication otherwise so unbiased for its time? The reason is, no

doubt, a political one.

In 1814, Denmark had to relinquish Norway and its possessions (Greenland, the Faroes and Iceland excluded) to Sweden, by the terms of the Kiel-treaty. The treaty was never acknowledged by Norway, and the question of Greenland was again raised under the Settlement of Debt between Denmark and Norway 1819-21. The case was only finally decided in The Hague in 1933. (Brinchmann 22, Blom 73:13-14).

The bitter feelings created by these events were probably enhanced by the rising of a nationalistic movement among Norwegian historians in the 1830s ("Den norske historiske skole"). This movement attempted to prove that Norway was an autonomous state at a time when its political independence was questioned by Sweden and Denmark alike (Dahl 70:36-37).

A quotation from the leading Norwegian historian of the time may illustrate this trend:

"That Norway descended to the insignificant position it adopted during the union with Denmark was the consequence of a maladapted and badly administered constitution, from which the people acquired an indifference to public matters" (Keyser, posthumous works 1867, from Dahl 70:51-52, my translation).

In 1834 King Frederik VI of Denmark took actions to secure that former Norwegian "dépendances" were now to be considered part of the Danish Kingdom. In 1843 Iceland was indirectly declared a Province of Denmark, an act that initiated Iceland's struggle for independence (Brinchmann 22:91).

The statement in the GHM must therefore be regarded as an argument aimed to prove that Norway, by preventing private and foreign trade on Iceland and Greenland, had failed to fulfill its constitutional obligations. Under the current political situation, such a statement implied that Norway had lost any claims to Iceland and Greenland.

It is strangely ironic that the first attempt to issue a well founded explanatory theory on the desertion of Norse Greenland should be discolored by political motives.

Contemporary Norwegian historians were, by the same token, just as politically biased (Dahl 70:53-54, Seip 75:185-195). The Norwegian historian Peter Andreas Munch argued in 1845 that the Danes tried to rob the Norwegians of their achievements in the past, such as the colonization of Iceland and Greenland. In the texts, Norwegian feats were camouflaged as being done by "Norsemen" or "Scandinavians" (Munch 73:102-148).

It may therefore be stated that even though the historical data were now available, the political climate hindered its proper use.

A section in the GHM of more direct importance to later research was the one written by the Icelander C.C. Rafn, entitled "Udsigt over Grönlands gamle geographie" ('A View of the Old Geography of Greenland' (GHM III:845). Here, Rafn evidently worked hard to squeeze most of the place-names known from the written sources onto his map.

He stated in a footnote that he was not aware of von Eggers' paper from 1793 at the time of writing. Like Eggers he was uncritical in his use of written sources, but his conception of the

location of Herjolfsnes, Hvalsey and Einarsfjord has been accepted by most writers.

But, contrary to later theories, he believed that Gardar was located at "Kaksiársuk" (now: Igaliku Kujalleq? Probably Ø-66), and that Brattahlid was located at present-day Igaliku. This was to become a source of confusion, as later writers, such as Daniel Bruun and to some extent Nørlund, continued to use some of his misconstrued Norse names for the ruin-groups they investigated.

2.4.2 Scandinavian Archaeology:

At about the same time as the GHM was issued, National Romanticism developed in Europe.

This spawned a new wave of interest in national antiquities and provided, economically as well as philosophically, the basis for modern archaeology.

The 19th century saw the rise of outstanding archaeological figures such as Danish J. J. A. Worsaae, (who also collected and described material from Greenland in "Antiquarisk Chorografie af Grønland" (GHM III:795)); Oscar Montelius in Sweden, the man who developed the method of typology; and Sophus Müller in Denmark, who organized of the first "Kitchen-midden Commission", where scholars from a number of related disciplines first joined forces in an archaeological investigation. He also developed the methods of stratigraphy to a scientific level.

In Denmark, excavations at Jelling and Skodsborg had been followed personally by King Frederik VII, and Danish archaeology retained its high social status throughout the century (Klindt-Jensen 75:81-96).

2.4.3 Historical research in Scandinavia:

During the 19th century, Scandinavian historians, the Norwegian in particular, were engaged in interpreting the texts of the Norse 'sagas', and discussed their age, origin, and value as historical sources (Bugge 08, Jónsson 12-15 & 23).

A review of this work is given by Else Mundal in her book "Sagadebatt" from 1977 (see also: Holmsen 66 and Sveaas Andersen 77).

Of interest to our subject were the many attempts to identify the place-names from the sagas. Forerunners in this field were historians like P. A. Munch, and after him Oluf Rygh, who wrote "Topografiske oplysninger til Kongesagaerne" ('A topographical guide to the royal sagas') in 1898. The latter was already well versed in the subject, having started his gigantic series "Norske Gaardnavne", a study of the etymology and origin of all the names of Norwegian farmsteads.

The Icelander Finnur Jónsson was an interpreter of Icelandic medieval literature (see the list of literature), and his works on the Greenland material are typical for the time (discussed below).

Another person who deserves special mention is the Norwegian historian Gustav Storm. He was an authority on medieval documents, and published much of the material that has formed the basis of later studies of Norse Greenland. In 1887 he published a paper on the Vinland voyages (Storm 87), and later he produced the important "Islandske Annaler indtil 1578" (Icelandic Annals up to

1578) in 1888 (Isl. Ann.). He took part in editing "Norges gamle Love" (Norway's Old Laws) (see Dahl 70:207-228), and also published a number of papers on subjects of importance to Greenland research (see the list of literature).

2.4.4 Gustav Holm:

In Greenland, archaeological activity was virtually dormant between 1850 and the 1870ies, but between 1880 and 1903 archaeological surveys were made with regular intervals.

It is difficult to find a good explanation for this fluctuation. In Norway, the fight for home rule was started in the 1870ies, and in 1884 independent parliamentarism was introduced. It ended with the liberation from Sweden in 1905. We may suspect that this political activity created a fear in Denmark that Norway would again raise the question of Greenland, thus triggering increased Danish research in Greenland. But this is just an assumption.

In 1878 a Commission for the Direction of the Geological and Geographical Investigations in Greenland ('Kommissionen for ledelse af de Geologiske og Geografiske Undersøgelser i Grønland') was founded. (Originally, the name was 'Kommissionen for ledelse af de Geologiske Undersøgelser i Grønland', the word "Geographical" was added in 1879 (Arneborg IN PRESS)). The Commission has since this time published the major series on topics pertaining to Greenland: "Meddelelser om Grønland" (Medd.o. Gr.). In 1931 the Commission changed name again, to 'Kommissionen for Videnskabelige Undersøgelser i Grønland' ("The Commission for Scientific Investigations in Greenland") (Arneborg IN PRESS).

In 1880 the Commission sent an officer, Gustav F. Holm, to make a survey of the Norse ruins of the Eastern Settlement.

During the summer Holm registered around 40 ruin-groups consisting of roughly 300 single ruins, in Tunulliarfik, Igaliku Fjord and Tasermiut. He also carried out an excavation at Ø-66 at Igaliku Kujalleq.

His report was published in Medd. o. Gr. vol. 6 in 1884 (Holm 84).

The quality of this work was good by contemporary standards. Descriptions and measurements were fairly accurate, and the maps clearly showed the location of the sites and their surrounding landscapes, probably a result of his military training.

In 1884 -85 he travelled to Ammassalik together with T. V. Garde and Hanserak (Johannes Hansen) and stayed the winter. This was considered the final evidence that no descendants of the Norse population had survived on the East Coast.

In the Western Settlement, another military man, J. A. D. Jensen conducted topographical surveys for the Commission in 1878 and 1885. The surveys included Norse ruins, published in Medd. o. Gr. vol. 1 1879 and vol. 8 1889. The material published was, however, scantily described and contained few illustrations.

(Narrated from Albrethsen 71:298).

2.4.5 Dwellings:

During the later part of the 19th century, the ruins of Norse Greenland were little understood among Scandinavian historians. A reason for this was the apparent lack of comparative material in

the other Nordic countries.

As late as 1883 it was stated at a conference in Copenhagen (Congr s international des Am ricanistes) that no resemblance between the Greenland ruins and the Icelandic farmsteads could be demonstrated (Steenstrup, from Bruun 96:179 notes. Steenstrup had accompanied G. Holm on the expedition in 1876).

It was not until V. Gudmundsson published his "Privatboligen paa Island i Sagatiden" ('The private dwelling in Iceland during the Saga era') in 1889 that a basis for comparison was established.

He argued that the best preserved ruins in Greenland were those built in dry stone walls. These were, however, not to be associated with the dwellings, but with other farm buildings. The dwellings were, like the Icelandic ones, built in stone and turf, and thus badly preserved and difficult to identify.

2.4.6 Daniel Bruun:

This was the situation when Daniel Bruun, the most outstanding figure in Norse Greenland archaeology, was sent to Greenland in 1894. He was to become the most important archaeologist and writer in Norse Greenland archaeology.

He was a military man, but proved his archaeological ability in the field in an extraordinary way. He was given instructions from the Commission as well as from the Danish National Museum to survey and excavate Norse ruins in the district of Julianeh b (Qaqortoq). During the summer, Bruun registered no less than 83 sites, which he called "ruingrupper" (ruin-groups).

He introduced the system of ruin-group numbers that has been in use until this day. Kalaallit Nunaata Katersugaasivia (The Greenland Museum) has recently created a new system of "preservation numbers". A cross-reference list has been published: (Berglund 86:129-134)), see Appendix II.

He also carried out several excavations. At ruin-group  -2 in Tasiussaq in Nordre Sermilik he determined for the first time the function of the different rooms in a Norse dwelling (Bruun 96:216).

He was also able to identify the different buildings making up the farm, such as dwellings, byres, stables, and storage houses (Bruun 96:425-430).

He was less fortunate in his use of Norse names, calling ruin-group  -47 (Igaliku) for Brattahlid, in accordance with Rafn's "identification". He did, however, suggest that the identification of the churches would be of primary importance for reconstructing the topography. Bruun published his report in 1896 (Medd. o. Gr. vol. 16), and the quality of this work was to set the standard for later surveys.

In 1903 Bruun worked in the Godth b area for 6 weeks. The shorter time spent in the field is noticeable in the report, which is not nearly as good as the one from 1896 (Bruun 04).

The Western Settlement was therefore not as well surveyed as the Eastern Settlement. Additional surveys were occasionally made by other officials, such as J. A. D. Jensen, O. Bendixen and Eigil Knuth.

In 1893 Finnur J nsson published a paper on the history of the Icelandic-Greenlandic colony, and in 1898 he published "Gr nlands gamle Topografi efter Kilderne", Medd. o. Gr. vol. 20, where he tried to reconstruct the place-names from the literature, mainly

Ivar Baardson's "Description of Greenland".

Like Rafn, he managed to place most of the old place-names on the map. Most important was his claim that Ø-47 (Igaliku) was not the location of Brattahlid, but of Gardar and the cathedral. And that Brattahlid instead was to be found on the north side of Tunulliarfik, at Ø-29 (Qassiarsuk), an idea that had been forwarded by the Norwegian architect H. M. Schirmer in 1886 (Schirmer 86. See also Schirmer 05a).

Unfortunately, Jónsson did not heed Bruun's advice that the church-sites should be identified first, and today this work appears as highly uncritical (Langer Andersen 82:164).

Meanwhile, Bruun travelled in Iceland and the Faroes and recorded ruins as well as contemporary farmsteads, illustrating his findings. This material has proved valuable for Greenland archaeology as well as for Norse ethnology in general (Bruun 96b, 02, 28a & 29). Especially important was the book "Fortidsminder og Nutidshjem paa Island" from 1928. His early work was even published in Norway (Bruun 1908a).

He also collaborated with Finnur Jónsson, in excavating what they believed to be pagan temples (hov) in Iceland (Bruun & Jónsson 09, see Olsen 66:202-204 for comments).

Perhaps it was the cooperation with Finnur Jónsson that led him to abandon his own advice concerning the reconstruction of the Norse topography of Greenland. In a large work, "Erik Den Røde og Nordbokolonierne i Grønland" from 1915, (released in English under the title "The Icelandic Colonization of Greenland and the finding of Vineland", Medd. o. Gr. vol. 57 1918), he presented a full topographical reconstruction of colony based on place-names. This work was strongly influenced by Finnur Jónsson, and equally unreliable.

Contrary to Nansen (below, Section 2.5.1), Bruun was certain that the desertion of the settlement was due to Eskimo attacks. The Norse Greenlanders were unable to repulse, cut off as they were from Europe. His main argument rested on the Inuit tales about the "Kavdlunaq", the Norse Greenlanders (Rink 71).

Bruun's book was, however, to have a marked influence on later literature on Norse Greenland:

By alternating between Icelandic sagas, official European documents, archaeological material and Inuit tales, he created a thrilling description of the Norse Greenlanders and their history. Considering his enormous influence, his insubstantial use of Norse names is all the more regrettable. His style is easily recognizable in later popular and semi-popular books on Greenland, where Bruun's outline can often be traced from page to page. Compared to his book, they look much like updated versions of the same product. Bruun had, once again, set the standard.

The book was reviewed by Oscar Albert Johnsen in 1916.

In 1918 H. P. Steensby continued the discussion of the Vinland voyages in "Norsemen's Route from Greenland to Wineland", Medd. o. Gr. vol. 56 no. 4.

In 1930 Finnur Jónsson published "Det Gamle Grønlands Beskrivelse af Ivar Bárðarson", an edition based on the discovery of an older version of Ivar Baardson's "Description of Greenland". Like the 1898 edition, Jónsson believed he had identified most of the place-names in the description. The publication was reviewed by O. Solberg, who also supplied important information on the history and

origin of the different copies, particularly the so-called "Dresdener Codex", and pointed out weaknesses in Jónsson's work.

Solberg's article is seldom referred to, but appears as an important supplement to Jónsson (Solberg 31).

2.4.7 Scandinavian research - and the "Greenland Case":

The beginning of the 20th century marked the period of methodical development in Scandinavian Archaeology.

The Swedish archaeologist Oscar Montelius developed his theory of typological succession, and linked it to the theories of biological development that Charles Darwin had presented. Danish Sophus Müller was his opponent, and the discussion that followed about archaeological method was remarkable, as it represented a surprisingly neutral approach compared to the nationalistic and racialistic archaeology of other countries in the same period (Keller 78:65-70).

Quite a different figure was the Norwegian archaeologist Ingvald Undset who, through his international studies, created the concept of prehistoric culture areas in northern Europe, an idea that was to be seriously misused in later times (Keller 78:61-76).

In Norway, the discovery of the three Viking ships (the Tune ship in 1867, the Gokstad ship in 1880, and the Oseberg ship in 1904) and the Atlantic crossing made by Magnus Andersen in a copy of the Gokstad ship in 1893, created a new understanding of the conditions under which Iceland and Greenland were colonized (Andersen 93, Brøgger et. al. 27, Brøgger & Shetelig 51).

It must also be mentioned that Norway gained its independence from Sweden in 1905.

Norway was given sovereignty over Svalbard in 1920. Svalbard had not been mentioned in the Kiel treaty, although it was known at that time that it was not connected to Greenland. Svalbard had been declared "terra nullius", no man's land, by several states.

In 1910 the Danish government declared that Denmark had little interest in Svalbard, and later supported the Norwegian claims to the archipelago. This support was given on the condition that Norway declared that they would not object to a similar Danish claim to the sovereignty of all Greenland. This declaration was given orally by Nils Claus Ihlen, the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, in 1919 (Mathisen 51:179,207,208).

However, the Norwegian attitude did not last for long. After World War I, the Norwegian interest in Eastern Greenland increased. In 1921 Denmark asked for a written confirmation of Ihlen's declaration. This was refused (Mathisen 51:208 notes 1). Norway argued that Denmark, according to Natural Law, could only claim the settled parts of Greenland (Haag-dommen 33:11 & 19. See also Mogens 31). The rest was "terra nullius".

On May 10th 1921, Denmark declared that all of Greenland was to be considered a Danish colony (Haag-dommen 33:28, Blom 73:24-25). This was done without regard to the on-going negotiations with Norway, on the poor excuse that this was the bicentennial for Hans Egede's arrival.

The declaration unleashed an escalation of the conflict. In 1929 the Norwegian government declared that Jan Mayen was part of Norway, and in 1930 Norwegian police authority was issued to the Norwegian trappers in North East Greenland, in order to counter a

planned Danish navy expedition to the area. It was believed, and later confirmed, that the leader of the Danish expedition Lauge Koch had in 1928-29 been given police authority over non-resident (i.e. Norwegian) citizens in the area. The execution of police authority was acknowledged by both parties as essential for their juridical status (Blom 73:249).

On June 28th 1931 two Norwegian trappers, acting on their own initiative, occupied the area for Norway, which was named "Eirik Raudes Land" (Land of Eric the Red) for the occasion. Surprisingly enough, the occupation was acknowledged by the Norwegian government on July 10th.

The same year, Helge Ingstad was appointed Norwegian 'sysselmann' (District Governor) for north-eastern Greenland.

In 1932 another area further south, called "Gunnbjørns Land", was occupied by a larger party (see: Dansk og norsk...39:23-46, Blom 73:249-281).

This forced Denmark to bring the case before the International Court of Justice in The Hague, and became known as "The Greenland Case" (Haag-dommen 33, see also Skeie 31, Berlin 32, Blom 73).

The sentence fell April 5th 1933. The Norwegian occupation was condemned as illegal, and Denmark's claim to all Greenland confirmed.

The Norwegian interests in this case appear to have been promoted by two small, but active groups. One group was clearly nationalistic, and wanted all of Greenland to become Norwegian. The other group was more interested in the economic potential, and went for the unsettled parts of the east coast. The official Norwegian claim concerning Greenland was brought to an end after the outcome of the trial. A small minority became Nazi collaborators during World War II, and in cooperation with the novelist Knut Hamsun they tried to reopen the case, using the German animosity towards the United States as a lever. They were not successful (Smedal 49, see also Smedal 28, 30, 32, 34, 38).

The repercussions of the Greenland Case were to be felt in Norse Greenland archaeology until this day.

2.5 NORWEGIAN AUTHORS ON NORSE GREENLAND AFTER 1900.

2.5.1 Fridtjof Nansen, and Norwegian expeditions:

In 1888, Fridtjof Nansen, Otto Sverdup and four companions crossed the Greenland ice-cap on skis, from Ammassalik to Nuuk (Godthåb). After spending the winter in Nuuk, Nansen wrote the book "Eskimoliv" ('Eskimo Life') published in 1891. His view upon the Inuit was romantic, and in line with Rousseau's idea of "the noble savage". The book was a flaming attack on modern civilization and its effect on indigenous peoples. Denmark did not escape criticism, and Nansen became highly unpopular with Danish officials. Among some, this negative attitude towards Nansen has prevailed till our time (see for instance: Bogen om Grønland 76:109).

During the period 1898 to 1902, Nansen's old ship "Fram" made "The 2nd Fram Expedition" to north west of Greenland, under the command of Nansen's old companion Otto Sverdrup (Sverdrup 03). In the period 1902 to 1906, Roald Amundsen negotiated the North West

Passage with the ship *Gjøa* (Amundsen 07).

These expeditions had some side-effects on our subject. In 1907 Gunnar Isachsen, who had participated in the 2nd Fram Expedition, wrote a paper on the Norse Greenlanders' travels to the North. Among the evidence used were the so-called "eider-duck nests", found south of Ellesmere Island in 1901. (For comments on these "nests", which were later identified as Dorset fire-places, see Section 2.7.4 below. Isachsen was later to play an important role as one of the most active persons in the Greenland Case).

Further evidence was the observation of two pairs of cairns, one pair in Jones Sound, the other at Washington Irving Island (see Tornøe 44:147-157, Bakke 87). It was claimed that the Norse Greenlanders had travelled to the northern shores of the Baffin Bay. A contention that was revived during the Danish -Norwegian conflict in the 1920ies (below).

In 1911 Amundsen and Scott began their race for the South Pole (Huntford 79). The same year, Fridtjof Nansen published his book "Nord i Taakeheimen" (released in English under the title "In Northern Mists"), on arctic exploration in early times.

Nansen combined his practical experience in arctic exploration with studies of ancient cartographers and explorers, from the ancient past to the 16th century.

Included was a curious detail; the drawings of the Viking ships from Gokstad and Oseberg, as they appeared at the time of writing, i. e. before the boughs and sterns had been reconstructed (Nansen 11,I:246-247).

He also commented on the Norse settlements in Greenland, which he assumed had been deserted as a consequence of their isolation from Europe. He rejected the theories that the desertion was the result of Eskimo attacks or of climatic deterioration (and was skeptical to Ivar Baardson's description for that reason). Instead, he suggested that the Norse population had been assimilated by the Eskimos. In other words, a continuation of the view held by Hans Egede. (Later investigations on the skeletal remains of Norse and Eskimo populations have not provided evidence to support this view (Sellevold 77), but few analyses have been made on Late Medieval material).

Nansen also discussed the location of "Wineland the Good". He pointed out that the description of "Wineland" (Vinland) had many similarities with Isidore's description of the legendary Irish island "Insulæ Fortunatæ", and that the names may have been products of the same tradition.

"Vinland hit Góda" might even have been a direct translation of the Irish name. He argued that the story was derived from the Irish "Imram Maelduin" (the tale of Maelduin's voyage), and was completely fictitious.

This was not meant to disprove that the Greenlanders had visited the American continent, only that the literary evidence was foul (Nansen 11,I:382-384, and 11a:579, the discussion). Nansen's view has later been misunderstood by distinguished writers, such as Wahlgren (86:27).

Nevertheless, Nansen's book became an important reference for later studies of early voyages to America, for which Helge Ingstad was later to be the most active exponent (discussed below, Section 2.5.4).

Another person who deserves mention is the Norwegian geographer

Werner Werenskiöld. In 1945 he suggested that the Norse settlers and their animals could have caused damage to the vegetational coverage, and released an erosion. He pointed to examples of soil erosion in the countries around the Mediterranean, in the Alps, in Provence in France, and in the American Midwest. (The latter had recently been brought to the world's attention by John Steinbeck's novel "The Grapes of Wrath" from 1939). He also argued that thousands of Norwegian 'saeters' or shielings in high altitudes has been deserted because of local deforestation and soil erosion. The climatic conditions in these areas are comparable to those in Greenland.

Helge Ingstad later referred Werenskiöld's theory, but he did not accept them of significance to the desertion (Werenskiöld 45, Ingstad 59:487).

2.5.2 Bull, Brøgger and others:

Edvard Bull (the older) was Professor of history at the University of Oslo. He was a Marxist and in addition a politician. In 1922, obviously inspired by the escalating conflict with Denmark over Greenland, Bull wrote the paper "Grønland og Norge i middelalderen" ('Greenland and Norway in the Middle Ages').

This was to be the last serious attempt at analyzing the relationship between Norse Greenland and medieval Norway. In the aftermath of the Danish-Norwegian conflict, Danish authors often avoided reference to Norwegian material. And most works by Norwegian authors were hopelessly slanted.

Bull rejected, with reference to Nansen, the theories of Eskimo attack. Instead, he supported Nørlund's theory that the worsening climatic conditions might have led to decreased fertility among the population. (Later, Nørlund and Fr. C.C. Hansen were to expand this theory considerably (discussed below, Section 2.6.2)).

Contrary to the view expressed in the GHM, Bull saw Greenland's subjection to the Norwegian king as a positive development, and not as a cause of the decline (Bull 22:36). Still, Bull believed that the real reason for the decline was the lack of contact with and supplies from Norway. Bull's view was later supported by Nørlund (Nørlund 67:25).

At this time, the "Climate-theory" was an important issue in Norwegian history:

Many Norwegian historians believed that the downfall of Norway in the Late Middle Ages was due to a harsher climate. Evidence of a colder climate was, at that time, insubstantial. The idea of a climatic deterioration had been set forward by the Swede Rutger Sernander in 1910, on the background of botanical studies of Swedish bogs. Thus Nørlund's "discovery" of permafrost at Ikigaat (Herjolfsnes) was most welcome among Norwegian historians, and released a lively discussion on this subject in 1925-27 (see Section 2.6.2 below for details).

The archaeological counterpart to Bull was A. W. Brøgger, Professor of archaeology at the University of Oslo. Like Bull, he was politically active, and was a member of the Parliament for one period. But being a national liberalist he was clearly right wing, while Bull was on the left (Blom 73:228).

Also, he was interested in the Norse westward expansion, as well as the modern expansion into the same areas. In 1926 he became

chairman for "Oslo Grønlandsforening", later also for the parachute organization "Norges Grønlandslag". These associations were formed to lobby for Norwegian territorial claims in Greenland, on the initiative of Gustav Smedal (Blom 73:115-116, 122-123). Brøgger also wrote articles in the newspaper "Tidens Tegn" in support of these ideas (*ibid.*).

In 1926 he wrote "De gamle nordmenns seilaser i Norskehavet" ('The voyages of ancient Norwegians in the Norwegian Sea'), and in 1928 he published a small book, "Gamle emigranter" ('Ancient emigrants'), on the Norwegian settlements in the North-Atlantic islands. His description of Greenland was matter-of-fact and contained nothing new.

Brøgger's political views about modern Greenland was, however, influenced by his archaeological background. In 1926, he wrote:

"I will just remind (you) that it (the Greenland Case) concerns access to a country once colonized by Norwegians and Icelanders, which was first settled over a period of 500 years by people of Norwegian stock, which was next resettled by Norwegians with Hans Egede at the helm, which up to 1814 was subject to Norwegian colonization of all kinds, and even after 1814 a considerable contingency of Norwegians was part of the constructive initiative in Greenland." (From: Blom 73:148, my translation.)

A short paper from 1932, "Nordmenn på Grønland", which mainly dealt with the Norwegian emigrant Anders Olsen (discussed above, Section 2.3.2), was equally chauvinistic. These works may, however, be considered a reply to Danish Louis Bobé, who pompously had argued that

"DURING THE TWO CENTURIES in which Denmark and Greenland has been connected, far-reaching pioneer deeds have been made under Danish flag in this remote arctic country. Our people may well be proud of this work, and in the eyes of the world it has justified our right to now claim the whole country under Danish rule. Danish men in Greenland have, by their courage and persistence, expanded the colony across the latitudes, to the north and to the south.

... Nearly each of the last fifty years has been marked by some research achievement or other, which has brought us closer to Greenland." (Bobé 21:3, cited from Fyllingsnes 88:109, my translation).

Later, Brøgger also commented on the trial of the Greenland Case (Brøgger 33 a & b), which he followed in The Hague as a reporter for the newspaper "Tidens Tegn" (Anders Hagen pers. comm.).

In 1937 he published his much more serious book "Vinlandsferdene" ('The Vinland Voyages'), where he referred to much of the material excavated by Nørlund (discussed below, Sections 2.6.1 to 2.6.5). Brøgger thus continued the "Vinland-tradition" of Storm and Nansen.

During the conflict with Denmark from 1921, and after the trial in The Hague in 1933, numerous more or less nationalistic historical

papers on Greenland were published in Norway (for instance Anker 23, 31, Reynolds 26 & 31, Tornøe 35 & 44).

Few of these writings deserve special mention. The political bias is for instance clearly visible in the following title:

"Det norske folks undergang på Grønland under Danskestyret. Intet kongemonopol for handel og seilads" (Anker 31). ('The extinction of the Norwegian people in Greenland under Danish rule. No royal monopoly on trade and navigation').

This paper had been written as a thesis in history by Ella Anker in 1923, but was later released as a weekly serial in 1931. It was clearly aimed to discredit the view that had been forwarded in the GHM (see Section 2.4.1 above). With the same weekly serial she published a short paper in (poor) English, as a contribution to the case in the Hague. She wrote

"We challenge Denmark to answer before the Hague tribunal. Because of the union of Norway and Denmark 1389 under a common king, and the first Danish rulers, stopped the sailing to Greenland. They broke the fundamental treaty and left the colony to the eskimos." (Anker 31, Tillegg 58:2).

Anker claimed that her view on the trade monopoly was supported by the historians Halvdan Koht and Edvard Bull (the older), but this is an open question, especially in the light of Bull's authorship on the subject. Thus Bull argued in a newspaper article in "Arbeiderbladet" August 1. 1931 that her English paper was "incorrect altogether" (Berlin 32:22).

In 1933 Ella Anker published a historical play entitled "Eirik Raude. Sogespel" ('Erik the Red. A Historical Play').

Many authors were inspired by the Greenland Case, and a great number of papers were published in this period (Isachsen 21, Skeie 31, Isachsen & Isachsen 33, Brøgger 33 a & b, Smedal 28, 30, 32, 34, 38, 49, Tornøe 35 & 44).

After the sentence fell in 1933, the Norwegian interest in Norse Greenland subsided. In an introduction to a book on Norse Greenland in 1945, Brøgger found it necessary to emphasize that

"The so-called Greenland Case 1923-33 had absolutely nothing to do with the old Norwegian Greenland." (Brøgger in Bolstad 45:31, my translation).

Recalling his chauvinistic statement of 1926 (cited above), it is tempting to suggest that Brøgger suffered from a severe case of selective memory! His introduction gave, however, a sober review of Norway's relationship to Greenland in a historical perspective, and was devoid of political bias.

It is likely that Brøgger was greatly disillusioned at this time: His former lobby associates Gustav Smedal and Adolf Hoel had become Nazi sympathizers during the war, while Brøgger himself was detained in a Nazi prison camp (Smedal 49, Marstrander 86:15). He was, however, released after one year of imprisonment, officially for health reasons. This created a certain suspicion about his

nationalistic sentiments. It may therefore have been imperative for him in 1945 to demonstrate a distance to certain of his previous associates.

Brøgger's colleague in Bergen, Professor Haakon Shetelig, also showed some interest in Norse Greenland, but published surprisingly little on the subject. In a lengthy newspaper article from 1924 he demonstrated detailed knowledge of the historical sources, but his later paper on Norse architecture in Greenland from 1942 is extremely uninteresting.

In a book from 1944, J. Kr. Tornøe discussed the written sources on Greenland, and tried to identify a number of the place-names from the written sources. He argued that Norse ruins had been found on the east coast, in "Eirik Raudes Land", thus opposing the arguments forwarded in The Hague that these areas had been uninhabited in the Middle Ages (Tornøe 44:77-81. A private copy of the book contains a dedication from the author to Minister Rolf Jørgen Fuglesang of the Quisling Government).

He also commented on the "eider-duck nests" (below, Section 2.7.4) and the cairns at Washington Irving Island (op. cit. 147-178, see above, Section 2.5.1). He was also critical to the work by Jón Dúason (below, Section 2.5.3), which he argued was politically biased (op. cit. 199-206).

2.5.3 Jón Dúason:

In 1928 an Icelander, Jón Nordmann Dúason, published his book "Grønlands statsretslige Stilling i Middelalderen", on the constitutional status of Greenland up to 1261.

His main point was that Greenland had remained under Icelandic jurisdiction (Icelandic "Lög", i.e. "Law" also "area of jurisdiction") since the colonization and, accordingly, had never been an independent state (Dúason 28:205-206).

The book had been rejected as a dissertation in Copenhagen, but on November 22nd 1928 he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Law at the University of Oslo, undoubtedly on political grounds.

He met, however, severe opposition from Norwegian historians. Professor Halvdan Koht, who was also a politician, was on the examination committee, and although giving Dúason some credit, criticized him for being uncritical and inventive (Koht 27-29). The others in the committee were Absalon Taranger, M. H. Lie, and on Lie's death, Frede Castberg. (From: Archives of The University of Oslo. See review by Taranger 29).

(Koht was, however, far from unbiased in this matter. Five years earlier he was member of the delegation dealing with the Danes in the "Greenland Case", and in 1924 he gave a report to the Norwegian Parliament on the historical background to the conflict, in which he concluded that Denmark had no right to the unsettled parts of Greenland (Blom 73:27 & 29, Koht 24:3 notes).)

Edvard Bull (the older) opposed Dúason 'ex auditorio', and accused the author of a total lack of knowledge in critical historical methodology, and of basing his conclusions 'e silentio fontium': on the silence of the sources (Bull 29).

The Danish Professor and Doctor of Law, Knud Berlin, argued in a newspaper article that the book was not only uncritical, but also a piece of plagiarism, presumably stolen from a paper by the

Icelander Einar Benediktsson, "Nylenda Islands" in "Eimreidin" 1924 (from: Bull 29. See Berlin 28, 29 & 32:34, and Jónsson 29b). (Like Koht, Berlin was an authority on the subject, and like Koht, he was politically biased. In 1932 he published a book "Danmarks Ret til Grønland" ('Denmark's Right to Greenland') which was highly polemic.)

Dúasson's view was also commented on by Tornøe, who argued that the concept of Iceland and Greenland as "freestates" was politically biased (Tornøe 44:199-206).

Nørlund evidently referred to Dúason (without mentioning names) when he wrote:

"An Icelandic author has in our time attempted to show that Norse Greenland society was even part of the Icelandic state, but he has received no support." (Nørlund 67:24, my translation).

Dúason's ideas was later to play a part in Canadian history. The Canadian historian Tryggvi J. Oleson argued that the ancestors of the present-day Inuit, the Thule people of Labrador and Baffin Island, were in fact a mixture of emigrated Norse Greenlanders and people of the Dorset culture (Dúason 41, Oleson 64:8). These ideas have been used to justify suppression of the Inuit in the area (Meldgaard, pers. comm.).

2.5.4 The Ingstads:

In 1953 Helge and Anne Stine Ingstad explored the Norse settlements in Greenland by boat and foot.

Their impressions from this trip were published by Helge Ingstad in 1959 in his book "Landet under Leidarstjernen", English edition 1966 "Land under the Pole Star" (reviewed by Meldgaard 61b, see Section 2.7.4).

Much of the book is concerned with the saga-literature and the location of Vinland, but it also made an original contribution to the understanding of Norse Greenland, from what we today would call an ecological approach. His descriptions present a realistic picture of how the colonists secured a livelihood in a sub-arctic region. In contrast, Nørlund regarded Greenland as far more hostile.

Ingstad also made important observations which were neglected for years, probably because of his previous engagement as Norwegian "Sysselmann" in Eastern Greenland during the Greenland Case. He was, to my knowledge, the first to identify and describe the irrigation ducts at Igaliku (Gardar) (based on information from the Greenlander Abel) and other farms, and he discussed Norwegian and Icelandic traditions of irrigation. (Ingstad 59:109, 307-309).

Ingstad's main point, which he was to elaborate in his later books, was that the people of the Western Settlement had emigrated to 'Vinland' (America).

Later, the Ingstads made their names famous through the discovery of the Norse ruins at L'Anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland, in 1960, and the excavations in 1961-68 (Ingstad, A. S. 75 & 77, Ingstad, H. 65 & 85, see Wahlgren 86:139-146. The reference list in Ingstad 85 is extremely valuable). Experts from all the Nordic countries except Denmark participated in the excavation.

In 1956 Jørgen Meldgaard (Section 2.7.4. below) had surveyed the

adjacent areas in Newfoundland (Meldgaard 61a:371), dangerously close to the site discovered by the Ingstads. Hence Ingstad's announcement of the finding of Vinland released a debate in Danish newspapers, arguing that Meldgaard's work had led Ingstad to the spot. The debate was mainly advanced by Aage Roussell. Meldgaard himself has, however, expressed little concern (Meldgaard pers. comm.).

2.5.5 The later years:

In 1953 a Norwegian ethnologist, Odd Nordland, published a paper on an undated letter from Pope Alexander III to the Archbishop of Nidaros, i.e. written in the 12th century.

The letter had been discovered in England in the 1930'ies, and concerned rules for marriage between relatives on "an isolated island", 12 days distance from Norway. He argued that this letter referred to Greenland (Nordland 53 and Section 8.1.2 below). His assumption has been confirmed by later findings (Skånland 62:136).

Norwegian archaeologists took part in the excavations of the so-called Tjodhild's Church in the 1960ies, in the Inuit-Norse Project in the Western Settlement in the 1970ies, and the joint Nordic Archaeological Expedition to Qorlortoq in the Eastern Settlement in 1976-77, in which the present author participated.

In 1978-82 the present author surveyed ruin-groups in high altitudes together with Svend Erik Albrethsen. From this work, our theory on Norse "saeters" (transhumance stations) was forwarded. Tentative estimates of fodder demands and resources were also made (Keller 83, Albrethsen & Keller 86, see Albrethsen below). A short article on the demography of Norse Greenland was published in 1986 (Keller 86).

In the spring of 1988 Frode Fyllingsnes majored in History at the University of Oslo. The title of his thesis was: "Undergongen til dei norrøne bygdene på Grønland i seinmillomalderen. Eit forskingshistorisk oversyn" ('The extinction of the Norse settlements in Greenland in the Late Middle Ages. A survey of its history of research') now in press. Some of his conclusions appear to be undifferentiated, but he collected a lot of interesting literature, and presented the various explanatory theories of the desertion in a wider perspective.

2.6 THE PERIOD 1920 - 1940, THE "CLASSICAL" EXCAVATIONS

2.6.1 Poul Nørlund:

Danish activity in Eastern Greenland was increased markedly after the declaration by the Danish Government of May 10th 1921, (Haagdommen 33:62). Obviously, the research was being done in order to justify the territorial claims.

Shortly after, the Norwegians increased their activity and research in the same area, undoubtedly for similar reasons.

This was also the period of the 5th Thule-expedition, when Knud Rasmussen made his fantastic journey across the North American continent.

The intensive Danish archaeological investigations on the west

coast of Greenland in the same period was obviously a result of the same fervor. This does not, of course, reduce the importance of these investigations.

The person in charge of most of the archaeological activity in this period was Poul Nørlund, a medievalist from the Danish National Museum of which he later became director. His various excavations in Greenland deserve special mention:

2.6.2 The Herjolfsnes excavation:

In 1921, the bicentennial for Hans Egede's arrival in Greenland, an expedition was sent by the Commission to excavate the Norse site at Ikigaat (Herjolfsnes).

The excavations were carried out in cooperation with the Danish National Museum. There was a special reason for this. It had been observed the 1830ies that coffins and shrouds were being washed from the churchyard into the sea, due to erosion and the sinking of land. Excavations had been made by the commerce official Ove Kielsen in 1840. At this time it became evident that the shrouds were extremely fragile, and required immediate technical treatment if the cloth was to survive excavation and transport (Nørlund 24:16-19).

Nørlund and his crew excavated the churchyard and found the now famous garments. They further excavated the church ruin and the nearby houses. The reports from the expedition were published in *Medd. o. Gr.* vol. 67 in 1924. The garments created quite a stir when exhibited in Copenhagen, and rightly so. But the conclusions drawn from the investigations hardly deserved the same applaud, although they were equally astonishing:

While excavating Nørlund found that the thaw had not reached the level of the graves, which were still frozen. With basis in this observation he forwarded the theory that colder climatic conditions had set in shortly after the last burial, and conserved the cloth in the permafrost. From this he concluded that the climate had contributed to the desertion of the settlements. (Nørlund 24:237-244).

Nørlund's excavation rekindled an old discussion among Norwegian scholars; the theory of climatic deterioration, and its presumed connection with Norway's decline in the Late Middle Ages (see Section 2.5.2 above).

Edvard Bull (the older) more or less accepted Nørlund's view, while Hasund and Nansen were skeptical (Nansen 25, 26, Bull 13, 25, 27, Hasund 24, 25, 26, 27, Nordmann 25, see Sernander 10, Petterson 13 & Norlind 15 for background material).

Nørlund defended his conclusion in a paper in 1927 which, in many respects, was more interesting and to the point than his book (Nørlund 27).

Although a Late Medieval change in climate has later been confirmed by the analyses of core-samples from the Greenland ice-cap (Section 2.9.4 below), Nørlund's argument has lost most of its credibility.

Later excavations in the Eastern Settlement have shown that permafrost rarely occurs in these areas, and Nørlund's observations must therefore be the result of the extremely harsh weather in 1921 which, by the way, is vividly described in his book (but see Bruun 96:186 & Fredskild 78:39). When he revisited Herjolfsnes in 1926, he was astonished to observe that

"...the soils everywhere in southern Greenland, even at Herjolfsnæs, which I revisited, were completely thawed, in sharp contrast to the conditions observed five years earlier. There are, in other words, considerable fluctuations from one year to another, and it is therefore impossible to solve the climatic problems by this approach." (Nørlund 28a:58, my translation).

Accordingly, Nørlund later modified his view on climatic deterioration as a cause of the desertion (Nørlund 67:139-140).

Nørlund had sought support for his view in the theories of the Swede Otto Pettersson, who dated the maximum of the cold period to 1433 on the basis of cosmic constellations; the ecliptic phases of the sun and the moon (Pettersson 13, Nørlund 27:398-401, but see also Norlind 15 and Nordmann 25).

Nørlund's rejection of the permafrost as evidence of a climatic change was, however, not widely known. Thus the historian Finn Gad referred to Nørlund's theory as late as in 1967 (Gad 67:189).

The skeletons from Herjolfsnes were transported to Denmark for investigation, and were examined by F. C. C. Hansen (Hansen 24 & 26). On the basis of Hansen's analyses and his theories of degeneration, Nørlund wrote (op. cit.:253):

"...the last Norsemen at Herjolfsnes were a degenerated race doomed to destruction. Lack of infusion of fresh blood was no doubt an essential factor, and the conditions of life were of such a merciless nature that, instead of hardening the race, they wore it out."

This theory was more than welcome among the pseudo-Darwinists of the 1920ies, and of the desertion theories, it's the one that's been most hard to kill (see for instance Lorentzen 79:15).

Typically, this theory was never questioned by Norwegian historians. Their interest was limited to climatic conditions, as this had direct bearing on the current debate on the Late Medieval decline in Norway.

Since Nørlund's excavations at Ikigaat (Herjolfsnes), a number of skeletons from other parts of the settlement have been examined without showing traces of deformation. Later checks on the Herjolfsnes skeletons (of which very little remain), have raised severe doubts about the credibility of Hansen's conclusions (Fischer-Møller 42).

The degeneration theory has therefore been totally abandoned (Ingstad 59:491-493, Krogh 67:43 & 82a:62, Gad 67:189-190, Albrethsen 72b:15, Balslev Jørgensen 75:151, Wahlgren 86:174).

It is quite possible that the skeletons at Herjolfsnes had become shrunken and deformed while in the ground. The later transport to Denmark caused them to dry out, thus increasing their fragility (Balslev Jørgensen, pers. comm.).

Fyllingsnes has argued that it was difficult for the Europeans of the 1920ies to accept that the "sturdy Nordic race" had succumbed to the "inferior Eskimos". The idea that the Norse settlers died out because of degeneration was an explanation which, in a way, could maintain the myths of Nordic racial superiority. (Fyllingsnes 88:164-167). Thus Fr. C. C. Hansen wrote that

"...the very fact that a group so insignificant in numbers, so weakened by unfavorable conditions of life, both internal and external, was nevertheless able to hold out at this outpost of the civilized world so long - way into the fifteenth century, longer than formerly thought possible - bears high testimony to the original quality of the race. The Norsemen must certainly have been superior to the Eskimos in battle, but the descendants of these people who sailed westward in small open boats and took land on Greenland's inhospitable shores, defying nature through hundreds of years - often with strife and dissension among themselves - were not overcome in a struggle with human forces alone. Under increasingly severe natural conditions, cold and slow periodic starvation, and more and more isolation, the Northern race finally had to succumb." (Hansen 31:419, from Fyllingsnes 88:167).

Nørlund described the people of Herjolfsnes like this:

"We are quite removed from the sturdy stock of colonists who, under the leadership of Eric the Red, took Greenland in their possession and impressed the Eskimos with their enormous physical strength. A passive bunch of sickly impaired individuals, midgetlike and deformed, was what they had become" (Nørlund 67:143 - 144, my translation).

Nørlund found a number of wooden crosses in the graves at Ikigaat (Herjolfsnes). Some of them were simplified "Celtic crosses", and Nørlund pointed to Ireland and Scotland for stylistic parallels (Nørlund 24:216). This view was challenged by Roussell (41:126).

Nørlund believed them to be grave-crosses, buried together with the deceased for ritualistic purposes. It has later been argued that they were "hand crosses", held in the hand during devotions. They may have been widely used during the Middle Ages, but apart from the Greenland examples, few have survived (Stoklund 84:101-113).

Nørlund's most important achievement was the excavation and publication of the garments. Using pictures and descriptions from contemporary Europe, he found that the hoods ("kaprún", French "chaperon") with a long tail or liripipe hanging down the back, (struthætter) had come into use among the common people in the late in the 14th century. He therefore argued that the graves from Ikigaat were from the latest period of the settlement (Nørlund 24:176, see Noss 74:53 and Nockert 85:90-91 for comments).

Later investigations of the material show that several of Nørlund's diagrams of the dresses are inaccurate (Nockert 85:76 & 91). Also, his dating of some of the hoods called "type I" to the middle or late 1300s is questioned. The Nockert assumes their correct dating to be around 1300 (Nockert 85:93).

In 1936 a body with well preserved clothes was found in a bog near Skjoldehamn, at Andøya in Northern Norway. Among the clothing was a hood which resembles Nørlund's type I, but of a simpler design (Gjessing 38:68-69). Gjessing suggested it dated from the late 15th or the early 16th century (op. cit.:70), but lately an accelerator analysis of the textiles gave a dating to the middle of the 13th century (Holck 88:114). This may seem to indirectly support Nockert's dating of this type of hood.

Aagot Noss has compared the Herjolfsnes garments with European material, but she does not comment on their dating (Noss 74).

In the graves, sometimes combined with hoods, were some short, cylindrical caps, some of which resemble the "pill-box hats" fashionable in the 1960ies. Nørlund argued that they appeared in medieval illustrations

"...from the close of the 14th until some way into the 16th century" (Nørlund 24:181).

I dare not challenge Nørlund as an art historian, but I do not find his arguments 100 % convincing. Pictures with hats of this type, especially on women, are not that uncommon, even from the earlier periods. Nørlund himself presents such an example, which he dates to the 12th century, but uses it as an illustration of the dress only (Nørlund NK:33).

Another find, which came to be of utmost importance, was a tall and slightly conical cap with a flat top. Nørlund argued that the latter came into use in the middle or late 15th century, that it was fashionable in the time of King Louis XI, and pointed to paintings by Dirk Bouts (dead 1475) and other painters of the early Flemish school. He concluded that the fashion may have reached the Nordic countries late in the 15th century. In other words, Greenland had presumably been visited by foreign ships late in that century (Nørlund 24:183).

Later authors have, somewhat misleadingly, termed this cap "Burgundian", probably because Nørlund presents an example of a "weeper" from a sarcophagus of the Duke of Burgundy (Nørlund 24:174) in this connection (Gad 67:197). The "weeper" does not wear a tall cap, however, but is used by Nørlund to demonstrate the combination of cap and hood.

Nørlund's conclusion on the dating of this tall cap has not been seriously questioned, although Gad (67:197) suggests that the caps may have been copied from the dress of visiting Basques. But to my knowledge no serious arguments have been presented to disprove Nørlund's dating.

This is, in a way, surprising. After all, this is the single piece of archaeological evidence that the Eastern Settlement was inhabited in the later half of the 15th century. Even the written material does not give substantial evidence of habitation after 1408. Tall headgear of all sorts became popular with Gothic period dress which spread over Europe in the 13th century. To build all later arguments on the termination of the Eastern Settlement on this single cap seems to me as something of a gamble. Would not an accelerator dating of one of its fibers be in place?

2.6.3 The Gardar excavation:

In 1926 Nørlund returned to Greenland together with J. Raklev from the Danish National Museum and the architect Aage Roussell. Their task was to excavate the St. Nicolaus Cathedral and the bishop's farmstead at Gardar, by then identified as present-day Igaliku. The church, the churchyard and several houses were excavated.

A preliminary report was published in 1928 (Nørlund 28). And the final report in Medd. o. Gr. vol. 76 in 1930. It included reports on the on animal bones by Magnus Degerbøl, on runic inscriptions by

Finnur Jónsson, and on iron ore by Niels Nielsen.

The skeleton material was later published by K. Brøste and K. Fischer-Møller in "Mediaeval Norsemen at Gardar", Medd. o. Gr. vol. 89 no. 3 1944. Fr. C.C. Hansen wrote a paper "Homo Gardarensis" in 1931.

A find of special importance was the grave of a bishop which lay under the floor of the north chapel. Buried alongside the body was a stave with the now famous crozier head (Nørlund 29 & 30a:68). Nørlund identified the body as that of Bishop Jón Arnason "Smyrill" ('merlin' i.e. Falco columbarius, see Mountfort & Hollom 64:132. Nørlund incorrectly translates the nickname as "Sparrow Hawk"). Nørlund's arguments on the dating are somewhat contradictory, as later discussed in this book (Section 6.2.5).

In a paper written in 1928 Nørlund stated that one of the major objectives of Norse Greenland research was to match the place-names mentioned in the medieval written sources with the sites discovered in the field. This, he argued, could not be done until all the churches were located (Nørlund 28a). Thus Nørlund made himself spokesman for a type of historical reconstructionism, following the tradition of Finnur Jónsson and Daniel Bruun.

2.6.4 The Brattahlid excavation:

In 1932 expeditions were sent to the Eastern Settlement, lead by Poul Nørlund, and to the Western Settlement, lead by Aage Roussell. With Nørlund was Erik Holtved, and the Swedish archaeologist Mårten Stenberger. Their main investigation was carried out at Qassiarsuk (Brattahlid).

Their report was published in Medd. o. Gr. vol. 88 no. 1 in 1934. An analysis of the animal bones was published by Magnus Degerbøl, and of iron slag by Niels Nielsen, both in the same volume.

In addition to the investigations at Qassiarsuk, the group also conducted smaller investigations at other sites in the Eastern Settlement. Some of these were to have far-reaching consequences. Nørlund and Stenberger located two churches in Qorlortup Itinnera (Ø-33 and Ø-35), which later became known as the Qorlortoq-type.

This lead Nørlund to draw erroneous conclusions about the name-topography, as the number of churches known at this time seemed to match the number in the written sources (Langer Andersen 82:166).

At Qassiarsuk (Brattahlid), Nørlund and Stenberger excavated ruin no. 2 at Ø-29 (the one called "The North Farm" by archaeologists). They apparently believed they had found the hall of Eric the Red, or that of his near descendants. This "identification" accordingly made it the oldest house in Greenland.

Later, an older house has been found below this house, probably from the 11th century (Albrethsen 82). "Eric's Hall" was subsequently proved to be a later type, dating perhaps to the 12th century. Another, older house has been located in one of the fields near by, ruin no. 60 (Krogh 82a:37), see Section 2.7.2 below).

Nørlund was also interested in establishing a church chronology, and argued, on the basis of British parallels, that the rectangular churches, like Brattahlid III and Hvalsey, were the oldest in Greenland, and dated from the first part of the 12th century (op. cit. 38). His chronology was later disproved (Roussell 41:127-135 and 328, Krogh 76:304-306, see Section 6.2 below).

2.6.5 Comments on Nørlund:

In 1934 Nørlund published his popular book on Norse Greenland, "De Gamle Nordbobygder ved Verdens Ende". It was released in English in 1936 under the less poetic title "Viking Settlers in Greenland and their Descendants during Five Hundred Years". The book became somewhat of a best-seller (4th ed. was published in 1967), and his theories were widely accepted by the general public.

The impact this book had on the public can hardly be over-estimated. In many respects it resembles an updated version of Bruun's book from 1918, but with recent finds from Herjolfsnes and the other excavations as important additions.

Quite remarkable was Nørlund's statement that the churches in Greenland bore no resemblance whatsoever with Icelandic or Norwegian churches. The origin of the Greenland churches must, in his opinion, be sought in the British Isles (Nørlund 67:32). It was probably this idea which led him astray as regards the chronology of the churches.

It would, however, be unjust to label Nørlund as anti-Norwegian. He was obviously an admirer of the Norwegian historian Edvard Bull the older (Nørlund 27:385 & 400), and later he forwarded Bull's theory of the effects of the Greenlanders' subjugation to the Norwegian king in 1261, although without reference (67:24-25 & literature).

If a great many of Nørlund's theories have later been rejected, this is at least partly due to the results of excavations made after his time. If he is to be criticized, it must be for continuing the tradition of historical reconstructionism of the 19th century.

It is remarkable that Nørlund's archaeological methods bore little resemblance to those used in Denmark at the time. Still, it would be incorrect to say that Nørlund was diverging from the archaeological tradition of the 1920ies.

Nørlund was trained as a historian, and must have been influenced by Erik Ipsen Arup, the leading Danish historian of the time (see for instance Nørlund 27:394-395). Thus his investigations in Greenland were probably fairly representative of the historical tradition of the medievalists.

This influenced his archaeological work. Several of his faulty conclusions result from his over-reliance on the written records.

2.6.6 Aage Roussell:

Trained an architect, Roussell assisted Nørlund at the excavations in Igaliku (Gardar) in 1926, and in 1930 they coexcavated what was believed to be the Sandnes farm (V-51), at Kilaarsarfik at the inner end of Ameralik Fjord of the Western Settlement.

In 1932 Roussell conducted excavations at Kilaarsarfik, which were completed in 1934, and in addition investigated other farms in the neighborhood: V-7 at Ujarassuit, V-52a Umiivarsuk, and V-8. The results of these investigations were published by Roussell in "Sandnes and the Neighbouring Farms", Medd. o. Gr. vol. 88, no. 2 1936, which on the whole is a purely descriptive work (see also Roussell 36b). A more popular article on the excavations in Austmannadal was published in 1938. The runic inscriptions were published by Erik Moltke, "Greenland Runic Inscriptions IV", in the same volume. The skeleton material was published by Fischer-Møller in Medd. o. Gr. vol. 89 no. 2 in 1942.

The investigations were made under difficult conditions. At the time of excavation the church and the churchyard were already half-way into the sea, due to the sinking of land.

The ground-water table in the area was high, and a great many objects of organic material had survived. A unique collection of everyday implements were retrieved, together with an extraordinarily well preserved selection of animal bones, published by Magnus Degerbøl in *Medd. o. Gr.* vol. 88 no. 3 in 1936. An analysis of iron slag was published by Niels Nielsen in *Medd. o. Gr.* vol. 88 no. 4 1936.

At the same time, Eigil Knuth made a survey of inland farms in the neighborhood, published in 1944.

In 1937 Roussell published a paper "Haus und Hof der Germanen in Norwegen, Island und Grönland" ("House and farm of the Germanic peoples in Norway, Iceland and Greenland", my translation). It was a paper held at "The 1st Nordic Scientific Conference "House and Farm"" in Germany 1935. It was published in a book edited by the German archaeologist Hans Reinerth. Reinerth was a member of the Nazi party from 1920, and at the time of the conference a leading Nazi ideologist on historical and racialistic questions (See Bollmus 70:154-155, and Keller 78:71-72). In his opening address to the conference, Reinerth said:

"...Just in this awareness of the old, solidly rooted culture of our people, and of the culture of each single Germanic tribe (Volk), we can see the inheritance which ties us all together..."

We know, that not only do we stem from the same blood, but the cultures of our countries rest on a common ground, and fruitful (cultural) exchange has taken place during the shift of times." (Reinerth 37a:1, my translation).

Today, it is not difficult to unveil the purpose behind these words; to use archaeology to justify the ideas of Pan-Germanism, which was the ideology behind Hitler's expansive pursuit.

Roussell's paper was, however, neutral and devoid of any ideological bias. Most probably, he was unaware of the fact that he was in bad company.

2.6.7 Excavations in Iceland:

After the investigations in Greenland 1932, Nørlund and Stenberger made a stop-over in Iceland.

There, the idea of a joint Nordic archaeological project in the West Atlantic was first conceived. The project was first planned to take place in Greenland, but this idea was discarded because of the current Norwegian animosity against Denmark (Arne Emil Christensen jr., pers. com.). Instead, it was decided to make a project in Iceland, which was considered neutral ground. As we shall see, this was not enough to soften the Norwegian attitude:

In the spring of 1937, Professor Matthías Thórdarson, the Chief Antiquarian of Iceland, sent an official invitation to the archaeological institutions of the Nordic countries to participate in the project.

The Norwegians turned down the invitation with the excuse that

they were unable to obtain the necessary funding (Nørlund in Stenberger 43:8). This was, however, not the real reason. One of the declared aims of the project was to bring Greenlandic and Icelandic archaeology closer together (Nørlund in Stenberger 43:7). Thus the negative attitude among Norwegian archaeologists was undoubtedly the result of a general animosity against Denmark after loosing the trial in The Hague (Anders Hagen, pers. comm.). We may guess that this attitude was greatly due to A. W. Brøgger's engagement, and to his general nationalistic and anti-Danish sentiments (see Blom 73:151 & 155 on Brøgger's general attitude).

The investigations took place during the summer of 1939, when now famous sites like Stöng and Skeljastadir were excavated.

This became a milestone in the study of Viking Period and Medieval farm history, and of utmost importance to the understanding of Norse farms in Greenland. The reports were published in the book "Forntida gårdar i Island" (Stenberger ed.:43). Roussell was responsible for the excavation at Skallakot, and for writing the comparative part of the book.

The Norwegian rejection of the invitation to the project had two effects:

First of all, that Norwegian material remained relatively unknown, or was seldom referred to, by Norse Greenland archaeologists. Thus important comparative material, especially from Northern Norway, was left out of the discussion.

Second, that this field of research was not given the priority among Norwegian archaeologists and historians that participation in this project might have induced. Instead, the Norwegian archaeologists became isolated what Iron Age farm history was concerned.

This development cannot be regarded as anything but a loss for both parties.

2.6.8 "Farms and Churches...":

In 1941 Roussell presented his dissertation "Farms and Churches in the Medieval Norse Settlements of Greenland", Medd. o. Gr. vol. 89 no. 1. (Reviewed by Marstrand 1943).

The book won little acceptance among scholars when issued, but has often been referred to in later literature. Admittedly, a great many Norse topographical names were used, perhaps uncritically, but Roussell's main objective was to establish a chronology based on archaeological methods. This was a marked break with the historical reconstructionism represented by Nørlund. Roussell ordered the Norse Greenland dwellings into a typological series consisting of three stages:

The first stage was the extended long-house.

The second stage was the passage house.

The third stage was the centralized house.

This chronological sequence was applied to the whole settlement in well-arranged tables. The chronology became widely accepted, but has lately been subject to severe criticism (Jansen 72:80-99, Andreassen 81, Albrethsen 82, see Sections 5.4.2 - 5.4.4 below).

Roussell also established a church chronology, based on stylistic and metrological studies.

He argued that the churches with a narrow chancel were plotted in Romanesque feet, and hence were earlier than the rectangular churches. These were plotted in Carolingian-Greek feet, and belonged to the Gothic period. Thus, he turned the church chronology suggested by Nørlund upside down.

Later research, mainly by Knud Krogh, has greatly confirmed Roussell's chronological sequences for the churches, although by different methods (see Sections 2.7.2 and 6.2 below).

2.6.9 Butterfly larvae:

In 1932, a geologist, Johannes Iversen, witnessed an attack of butterfly larvae (*Agrotis Occulta*) in the Nuuk (Godthåb) area, i. e. the Western Settlement.

The larvae had stripped large areas of all green foliage. He observed layers of dead larvae in bogs near the Norse Settlements, and concluded that such attacks might have caused the colonists to abandon the settlement.

He also observed layers of sand in association with cultural layers in the bogs, and suggested that a drier climate, combined with sheep-grazing, had caused severe soil erosion (Iversen 32 and 46).

With reference to Iversen and Nørlund, Roussell referred to over-grazing and soil erosion as a possible cause of decline (Roussell 41:9).

As I am writing this (summer 1987), news has arrived of a similar attack in the Eastern Settlement. The reports from this attack will undoubtedly prove interesting.

2.7 THE PERIOD FROM 1945 UNTIL TODAY

2.7.1 Christen Leif Vebæk:

In 1939 Vebæk excavated two farms in the Eastern Settlement, Ø-64 a and Ø-64 c, and surveyed a number of others in the area believed to be Vatnahverfi, i.e. south of Igalikup Kangerlua.

The report was published in "Inland Farms in the Norse East Settlement", *Medd. o. Gr.* vol. 90 no. 1 1943.

The excavation of Ø-64 c showed that the farm had been covered by thick dunes of aeolian sand from an eroded wasteland near by, and was probably abandoned for this reason. An interesting find was an Eskimo towing-line handle of walrus tusk, and an Eskimo ice-pick of whalebone. Whether these items were the result of direct contact between the two peoples, or were just accidental souvenirs, is not known.

After World War II The Commission for Scientific Investigations in Greenland was reduced to a consultative organization, leaving the disciplines engaged in Greenland research directly in charge (Arneborg IN PRESS). Vebæk, who had been employed as a curator at the Danish National Museum in 1946, continued his work in the Eastern Settlement. In 1950-51 he found the ruins of a church at Sillisit, Ø-23, which he believed to be the church Undir

Solarfjöllum mentioned in the Flateyjarbók (see Section 7.1.3 below). With the discovery of this new church, the number of registered churches suddenly exceeded the number of those mentioned in the written sources. This caused Nørlund's careful reconstruction of the church topography to collapse.

In 1952 Vebæk suggested that the small churches of the Qorlortoq-type were annex-churches, and hence not recorded by name. But after the small church Brattahlid I (usually called Tjodhild's Church) at Qassiarsuk had been dated to the 11th century, Vebæk changed his mind. In 1965 he argued that the small churches were the oldest (Vebæk 65. See Section 2.7.2 below).

In 1949 he excavated the farm Ø-167 in the Igalikup Kangerlua (Vatnahverfi) area. In the passage between the rooms were found the remains of a human body, probably Norse. As Vebæk rather dramatically records, it might have been

"...the last inhabitant of the farm, yes, perhaps of the whole settlement." (Vebæk 52:114, my translation).

From 1954-62 Vebæk excavated a ruin-group Ø-17 a at Narsaq. The house was dated to the early 11th century, and among the finds were a number of antler arrowheads, similar to 11th century iron types well known in Scandinavia (Vebæk 64). Another find was a small stick with a runic inscription, the so-called "Narsaq stick". This is the oldest inscription yet to be found in Greenland (Moltke 61).

During this period he made a number of surveys, and also made investigations at ruin-group Ø-149, which he tentatively identified as the Benedictine nunnery.

Vebæk contributed much to our knowledge of the Eastern Settlement, first of all through his many and important excavations and surveys.

As a scholar, he continued much of the tradition set by Nørlund. Still, his contribution has an original turn, in the way that he concentrated on sites far from the big centers such as Brattahlid and Gardar. Thus much of our knowledge about the ordinary population of the Eastern Settlement is due to his work.

This interest for the "common man" no doubt is due to Vebæk's scholarly background as a prehistorian. Unlike most Danish archaeologists in Greenland, he belonged to the National Museum's 1st Department, which deals with prehistoric archaeology. Most of Vebæk's work in Greenland was, however, done in holidays and periods of allowance.

The '2. afdeling', i.e. the 2nd Department was formally in charge of Norse Greenland, but demonstrated practically no activity in Greenland between 1945 and 1962 (Arneborg IN PRESS).

Most of Vebæk's writings are, unfortunately, limited to small papers, which are often difficult to come by (see the list of literature.) This is, in fact, true for much of the literature from after World War II. The reason for this is probably that the Commission no longer supervised archaeological research in Greenland. From World War II till 1981, the preservation of monuments in Greenland was the responsibility of the Danish National Museum, and the tradition of publishing archaeological reports in "Meddelelser om Grønland" was broken.

2.7.2 Knud J. Krogh:

In 1961 a number of skeletons were found at Qassiarsuk (Brattahlid), and soon after a short investigation was made.

The site in question appeared to be a small churchyard, belonging to a small, hitherto unknown church of the Qorlortoq-type. It was called Brattahlid I, better known as Tjodhild's Church (Meldgaard 82, also Vilmundarson 61).

In 1962 archaeologists from Greenland, Denmark, Iceland, the Faroes, England and this time even Norway, participated in the excavation, which was completed in 1965.

The excavation in 1962 was directed by Jørgen Meldgaard. With him was Knud J. Krogh, a trained architect from the Danish National Museum, who was to direct the excavations in 1963 and 1965 (Halldórsson 79).

The anthropological investigations were directed by Jørgen Balslev Jørgensen. A preliminary report was published in Nationalmuseets Arbejdsmark 1965 (Krogh 65). Balslev Jørgensen's report, although written, has not yet been printed (Balslev Jørgensen, pers. comm.), nor has the final excavation report been published.

The church was dated to the early 11th century, on the basis of the curved walls known from Viking Period houses, and the posture of the bodies. No radiocarbon datings have been published.

In 1967 Krogh published his popular book "Erik den Rødes Grønland". The excavation of Tjodhild's Church and the skeletal material were described. Contrary to Vebæk, Krogh held that the small churches of the Qorlortoq-type might have been proprietary churches or prayer-houses, drawing on parallels from medieval Iceland (op. cit.:90). Apart from this, Krogh's book was cast in the same mold as Nørlund's from 1934, and Bruun's from 1915. The church topography was discussed and updated according to the latest findings.

In 1974 he published a paper dealing with the 100 cows at the bishop's farm at Gardar (Igaliku) (Krogh 74, see also 75a). He revealed that the "secret" behind this big farm was the extensive irrigation system on the site. Krogh overlooked, however, that Ingstad had published his observation of the same system 15 years earlier (Ingstad 59:109), and that this had been discussed by Gad (67:84). For further observations of irrigation systems, see Bak 70c, Albrethsen & Keller 86. For comparative ethnological material in Norway, see Kummen 83).

Krogh expanded upon his theory of proprietary churches in a paper from 1975. He argued that these churches may have been in existence for a long period, and that the churches mentioned in the records were limited to those receiving the tithe from larger areas (Krogh 75a:132).

In 1976 he published the ground-plans of all the church ruins in Greenland (see Plate 26 in the present volume). He also presented arguments to show that a number of the churches must have been wooden buildings surrounded by a protective wall of stone or turf, which left only the west, wooden wall exposed (Krogh 76:306-308). The theory was based on his recent excavations of similar constructions at Sandi in the Faroe Islands (Krogh 75b). This was in sharp contrast to the previous interpretations of Nørlund and Roussel. The chronological sequence proposed by Roussel was, however, not challenged.

In 1974-77, Krogh was in charge of the joint Nordic

Archaeological Expedition working in Qorlortup Itinnera, where the present author participated. The project was never finished, and no report has been published.

In a paper on Brattahlid, Krogh reported the discovery of a small ruin (no. 60), as being of an earlier type than the "hall" excavated by Nørlund. It was perhaps the first dwelling on the site, and located less than 20 meters from the oldest church (Brattahlid I). On this basis, Krogh argued that part of Eiriks Saga Rauda was a product of fancy. According to the story, Eric's wife Tjodhild erected a church "far from the houses", because of Eric's displeasure with Christianity. Krogh argued that the short distance between the contemporary dwelling and church disproves the description in the story (Krogh: Hoops).

In 1982 Krogh presented the churches of Greenland in a small paper, and tried again to match them with those mentioned by name in the Flateyjarbók and Ivar Baardson's "Description of Greenland". This attempt was more critical than the one presented in his book from 1967, and the number of "identified" churches was reduced. He also pointed to the possibility that not all churches of the Eastern Settlement had yet been found, using more or less the same criteria as Finnur Jónsson (Krogh 82b).

In 1983 he drew attention to the close connection between farm and church in the Norse areas. Using examples from the Faroes and Greenland as his main references, he postulated that a similar connection had also existed in Norway. His concept of church organization was, as in his previous works, modelled on the system in Iceland (Krogh 83).

In 1982 Krogh published a new version of "Erik den Rødes Grønland". The book was in Danish and Inuit in parallel columns, and included a number of beautiful color pictures. Otherwise the text was basically an updated version of the one from 1967, with a few exceptions; the paleo-Eskimo section was slightly enlarged, the Greenlanders buried at Brattahlid I gained 2-4 centimeters in stature, and the saga-texts were presented in their latest translation (written by Hans Bekker-Nielsen).

A new angle was presented in the section on vegetational resources (Krogh 82a:65-108), where Krogh employed a more ecological approach than before. This was undoubtedly the result of his cooperation with the Project for Vegetational Mapping in Southern Greenland 1977-81 (Thorsteinsson 83, see below). He also presented a number of small "sætergårde" ("saeter-farms"), i.e. shielings, discovered under the Nordic Archaeological Expedition in 1974-77 and by Svend Erik Albrethsen and this author in 1978-79 (Keller 83, Albrethsen & Keller 86, see Sections 2.7.8 and 4.2 below).

The section on the voyages to Nordrsetur and Vinland were also enlarged, and featured the discovery of the Norse settlement in Newfoundland by the Ingstads.

Most surprising was his discussion of the explanatory theories for the desertion. With reference to climatic fluctuations, pollen analysis and observed cases of soil erosion, he supported the theory that the decline might have resulted from over-grazing of pastures (op. cit.:183). In other words, much the same as Iversen, Roussell and Werenskiold had suggested (Iversen 32 & 46, Roussell 41:9-10, Werenskiold 45).

As an author, Krogh is in line with the Bruun/Nørlund tradition,

although he clearly disagrees with Nørlund's view upon races and degeneration. His literary references are limited to a few standard works. He is, especially in his later works, more critical to the written records than his predecessors, but his historical view is much the same. His conclusions drawn on the basis of the available architectural material are, however, outstanding.

2.7.3 A Scandinavian perspective:

The authors Nørlund, Vebæk and Krogh can be said to have established the main-stream in Norse Greenland archaeology since World War I, with Roussell playing an important supporting role.

In this perspective, it is almost unfair to compare Norse Greenland archaeology with developments in Scandinavian archaeology since 1920.

The great inroads made in chronological studies in the 1920ies and 30ies, the introduction of the radiocarbon dating method in the 1950ies, and the New Archaeology of the 1970ies had virtually no impact on Greenland archaeology.

How can this apparent isolation be explained? The reason must be that, with the exception of Vebæk, the Norse Greenland archaeologists of this period did not belong to the Scandinavian archaeological tradition, but to the historical and architectural tradition of the medievalists.

Most probably this reflects the organization of the Danish National Museum, where prehistoric archaeology belongs to "1. afdeling" (1st department), while medieval archaeology, Greenland included, is part of "2. afdeling" (2nd. department). This, in turn, has influenced the investigations carried out by the respective departments.

If we look at Scandinavian archaeology in this period, virtually no interest in Greenland was shown. In Norway, there was some discussion among the historians, but with the exception of Brøgger, Norwegian archaeologists stayed surprisingly passive in the debate. Furthermore, the historians were mainly interested in what the Greenland material could tell about Norway's decline, or to use the Vinland material to illustrate the grandeur of Medieval Norway. The mystery of the disappearing colonies seems to have evoked little interest in itself, except as a political argument.

This is surprising, as archaeological investigations in Norway's old possessions abroad were chosen as a target area for Norwegian archaeological research, in 1927. With all probability, the idea was forwarded by A. W. Brøgger.

Another possibility is that "historical archaeology" had little prestige among Norwegian archaeologists. Some of the blame may, in other words, be put on the strict divisions between the disciplines of archaeology and history.

2.7.4 Jørgen Meldgaard:

As a Danish social anthropologist, Meldgaard's main interest has been the study of the paleo-Eskimo cultures of Greenland and eastern Canada.

His extensive field of interest also includes Norse Greenland archaeology. In spite of a somewhat modest literary production, his influence must not be under-estimated.

Unlike other Danish archaeologists, he works for the Ethnographical Collection of the Danish National Museum, and thus has a rather different approach to the subject.

He took part in the search for Norse ruins in Newfoundland (Meldgaard 61a:370-384, and 61b, see Section 2.5.4 above), and in the discovery and excavation of the so-called "Tjodhild's Church" (Brattahlid I) (Meldgaard 61a & 82, see Section 2.7.2 above).

He added his original insights in the debate about the validity of the Yale-map and of the discovery of America (Meldgaard 61a).

In a review of Ingstad's book "Land under the Pole Star" he demonstrated that the "eider-duck nests" believed to have been built by Norse settlers for collection of down (Isachsen 07 & 33, Porsild 38, Tornøe 44:147-178, Ingstad 59:171-174), were in fact fire-places of the Dorset culture (Meldgaard 61b:95-96). His view has later been supported by Robert McGhee (McGhee 82). Ingstad has, however, argued against this identification (Ingstad 85:414).

In 1966 he visited ruin-group V-18 at Qinnua in Kangiusaq, and thus scotched Bjørgmose's wide-spread pronouncement that the Steinsnes Cathedral had been found (Bjørgmose 64 & 65). The "cathedral" proved to be an ordinary house (Meldgaard 66).

Later, Meldgaard took the initiative in forming the Inuit-Norse Project, which came to represent a completely new direction in Greenland archaeological research (discussed below).

2.7.5 The Inuit-Norse Project 1976-77:

In a joint collaboration between the Danish National Museum and Kalaallit Nunaata Katersugaasivia (The Greenland Museum), amateurs and professionals from several countries conducted multi-disciplinary investigations around the inner parts of the Ameralik Fjord, in the Western Settlement.

The idea was to cast light upon the first encounter between the expanding Inuit and the resident Norse populations in the 14th century (Meldgaard 77a & b).

Although the project did not locate sites useful to this specific problem (Andreasen 82:177), it nevertheless produced a great deal of important material. This launched a new wave of paleo-ecological activity based on principles quite different those which had been previously employed. A number of the presently active Greenland archaeologists and paleo-ecologists took part in this project. Thus it can safely be argued that the project marked a shift in the research of Norse Greenland.

2.7.6 Finn Gad:

Another author deserving mention is Finn Gad, a Danish historian. In 1967 he published the first volume of "Grønlands historie", released in English in 1970. An abridged and updated version called "Grønland" came out in 1984 as a supplementary volume to "Politikens Danmarkshistorie".

Although he gives a differentiated presentation of the extinction of the settlement, he greatly favors the Skræling-theory.

Gad's authorship is above all that of the professional historian. His books are accurate, his perspective considerably wider than most, and his conclusions are on the whole careful and sober. The primary importance of his work lies, however, in a reference system

of outstanding detail, making his books important tools for further research.

2.7.7 Henrik M. Jansen:

Jansen participated in the excavations at Qassiarsuk and Narsaq, under the leadership of Krogh, Meldgaard and Vebæk.

In 1969 Jansen completed a study on some of the historical and archaeological sources on Norse Greenland. It was published in 1972 under the title "A Critical Account of the Written and Archaeological Sources' Evidence Concerning the Norse Settlements in Greenland", *Medd. o. Gr.* vol. 182 no. 4.

In spite of the ambitious title, Jansen's research concentrated mainly on the early stages of settlement, with detailed discussions of the most important saga-texts. The book was critical, and included a good summary of early and modern viewpoints, and a useful reference system. If read together with Langer Andersen's article "De norrøne stedsnavne i Østerbygden" (Langer Andersen 82), the limitations of the written records become clearly apparent.

2.7.8 Ove Bak:

Ove Bak, a teacher and an amateur archaeologist, made a series of surveys in the southern part of the Eastern Settlement from 1969 to 1972. His surveys have no doubt proved valuable, and his findings are published in a series of popular papers, mainly in the Danish periodical "Grønland", but also in the Norwegian "Polarboken".

There has, however, been some doubt as to his ability to distinguish between Inuit and Norse ruins. His observations have therefore not been included in the official ruin-group maps unless they have been checked by professional archaeologists (Svend Erik Albrethsen pers. comm.).

Among his interesting observations are the finding of a number of small "booths" at Máukarneq, near Ikigaat (Herjolfsnes). He assumes that Máukarneq is the medieval harbor "Sand", mentioned by Ivar Baardson, but unconfirmed by other sources (Jónsson 30a:19, Bak 70c:40-43). Other important observations are possible irrigation ducts at one of the ruin-groups in Igalikup Kangerlua (Vatnahverfi) (Bak 70c:fold-out list before page 28, no. 69), and modern erosion at several locations (bak 70c:29 & 41).

2.7.9 Svend Erik Albrethsen:

After having participated in the excavations at Qassiarsuk (Brattahlid) in the 1960ies, Albrethsen made a systematic survey of most of the Norse ruin-groups in the Eastern Settlement during the years 1969 - 71. He also brought the Norse Greenland archives in the Danish National Museum in order.

In 1971 he published a paper "Træk af Nordboarkæologiens Historie" ('Features of Norse Greenland Research History'), which covered the period from 1721-1921.

After a trial-excavation in 1972 he reported the finding of an unknown church at Ø-1 Nunataq (Albrethsen 72). He also wrote a short article on Hans Egede's search for descendants of the Norse settlers (Albrethsen 72b).

He took part in the Nordic Archaeological Expedition (NAE), investigating the Qorlortup Itinnera 1974-77, and surveyed and mapped ruins in altitudes of around 400 meters together with the present author in 1978-79. This work led to the theory that several small ruin-groups located in high altitudes had been "saeters" (shielings). On the basis of Norwegian and Icelandic ethnological material, ruins were tentatively classified as "full-saeters", "dairy-saeters" and "haymaking-saeters" (Keller 83, Albrethsen & Keller 86 and Section 4.2 below).

In 1982 he wrote a short, but critical article "Træk af den norrøne gårds udvikling på Grønland" about the evolution of house-types in Norse Greenland. He demonstrated that the Greenland dwelling followed the same chronological development as the dwelling in Iceland (Albrethsen 82. See also Andreasen 81, Berglund 82, and Sections 2.7.10 & 2.7.11 below).

Albrethsen has lately concentrated on excavating sites from the whaling-period in Svalbard (Spitsbergen).

2.7.10 Claus Andreasen:

In 1981 Andreasen published an article "Langhus - ganghus-centraliseret gård" where he discussed the three developmental stages of the dwelling as first established by Roussell: The long-house, the passage-house and the centralized farm.

This article may, at first glance, seem very similar to Albrethsen's of 1982 (above), but they did, in fact, supplement each other.

While Albrethsen aimed at giving a critical account of the material available for dating, Andreasen gave only a brief outline of this material.

Instead he presented the socio-ecological theory that the long-house lived on as an upper-class phenomenon on the major farms, while the poor farmers with little land developed the centralized farm as a response to the need to concentrate their buildings as much as possible (Andreasen 81. See also Berglund 82, below).

As a participant in the Inuit-Norse project, Andreasen published an article in 1982 "Nipaitsoq og Vesterbygden" on the ruin-groups V-48 Niaquusat, V-54 Nipaatoq, and V-59 Eequaluit ilorlit. These investigations produced two radiocarbon datings of considerable importance, from Niaquusat 1395 \pm 50 A.D. and from Nipaatoq 1405 \pm 65 A.D. (correction/MASCA not given). This indicated habitation after the time at which Ivar Baardson had reported the Western Settlement deserted. The datings have later been seriously challenged (Section 5.2.3).

Andreasen was a co-author of two papers on the project (Buckland et. al. 83, McGovern et. al. 83).

2.7.11 Joel Berglund:

In 1973 Berglund reported the finding of a Norse hunting-station on the outer coast west of Nuuk (Godthåb).

In 1982 he published an article "Kirke, hal og status", where he discussed the social significance of the long-halls found at the major farms at Herjolfsnes, Hvalsey, Gardar and Brattahlid. He argued that the long-hall, which originated from the Norse Viking Period long-house, continued as an upper-class tradition (Berglund 82a). His view

thus supported that of Andreasen, referred to above.

In 1986 he published a longer article, "The Decline of the Norse Settlements in Greenland", in *Arctic Anthropology* vol. 23. He argued that the population of the Western Settlement moved to the Eastern Settlement during the 14th century, sighting a steadily decreasing population, impoverished natural conditions, and possibly over-exploitation of vegetational resources as decisive factors.

The article also contained an appendix with a list of cross-references which correlated the old ruin-group numbers and the new preservation site numbers (see Appendix II, below).

2.7.12 Thomas H. McGovern:

The most active writer on Norse Greenland during the last few years is undoubtedly McGovern, of Hunter College, City University of New York (CUNY). He participated in the Inuit-Norse Project (above). In his work, McGovern has mainly concentrated on animal bones and ecological problems.

In an article from 1980 he discussed the site-catchment areas of Norse farms in the Western Settlement, the migrations of caribou and harp seal, and the relative frequencies of domestic and wild mammal bones found in a number of farm-middens (McGovern 80a). In another article from the same year he discussed the question of ecological adaptation and the extinction of the Settlement in more detail (McGovern 80b).

In 1981 he expanded upon this subject in "The economics of extinction in Norse Greenland". McGovern's main issue, which he was to discuss in a number of later works, was human responses to climatic stress. He pointed out that the material culture of the Inuit hunters was better adapted to the environment than that of the Norse. Seen from this angle, he found it necessary to ask what social barriers had prevented a diffusion of Inuit cultural elements into Norse culture.

"Did Greenland's managerial élite succeed in enforcing ideological purity, only to fail in maintaining economic security?" (McGovern 81:430).

In "The Vinland Adventure: A North Atlantic Perspective" (McGovern 81b), he gave a well-informed account of the Greenlanders' voyages to the American continent, and placed them in a wider perspective.

In 1982 he discussed the floor area of dwellings and economy buildings, and compared the figures with the ratio of domestic animal bones from the middens on different farms (McGovern 82). The results were applied in a more general paper on Inuit and Norse settlement and land use in the inner fjords of the Godthåb district (McGovern & Jordan 82).

In 1983 he published a paper on faunal and floral remains in Niaquussat (V-48) and Nipaatsok (V-54) (McGovern et. al. 83).

In 1985 he published the work, "The Arctic Frontier of Norse Greenland", on the cash-hunts to Nordrsetur. The location of these northern hunting-grounds was discussed, and the historical and archaeological evidence compared to biological surveys of walrus feeding grounds. Especially important was his attempt to locate the so-called 'uglits', i.e. beaches where the walrus haul themselves out

of the water to rest in large concentrations. From this he argued that the most likely hunting-grounds must have been in the Disco-area (McGovern 85:296). He also discussed the social structure of the Norse Greenland society and the mobilization of labor.

In 1984 he participated in the "Sandnes Archaeological Rescue Project", a cooperation between Kalaallit Nunaata Katersugaasivia (The Greenland Museum), the Danish National Museum, and Hunter College, excavating the site V-51 in the Nuuk (Godthåb) area (McGovern & Bigelow 84).

His most imaginative paper was one presented at the American Anthropological Meetings in Washington 1985 together with Gerald Bigelow and Daniel Russell: "Northern Islands, Human Error, & Environmental Degradation: a View of Social & Ecological Change in the Medieval North Atlantic".

As the title indicated, the subject was the destruction of the productive environment, and maladapted responses to ecological change. Simulation models for fodder supply and demand were discussed. The main question raised in the paper was, however, whether or not the effects of the Little Ice Age were interpreted correctly by the landowning élite, and further, what measures were taken to meet the impact of the climatic change. The authors seemed convinced that

"The western tier of the Scandinavian North Atlantic Islands would seem to provide one clear example of such unhappy conjunction of social and economic pressure on deceptively fragile ecosystems."(McGovern et. al. 1985:31, but see Section 9.2 below).

It was, of course, no accident that these ecological questions were raised in the 1980ies. The "Green Wave" hit universities and politics of the western hemisphere in the 1970ies, and also left its mark on archaeology. The so-called "New Archaeology" has been criticized for being eco-functionalistic, to the extent that social and cultural change mainly were explained as resulting from external forces (Section 1.5.4).

McGovern's work is representative for the type of cultural ecology that evolved in this period. His use of the written sources may at times be questioned, but his models represent a total break with the Norse archaeological tradition, and are good starting points for further discussion. Thus McGovern must be credited with being the person who has been most influential in bringing Norse Greenland archaeology in touch with current international debate.

McGovern has lately concentrated on excavations in Iceland.

2.8 EFFECTS OF "THE GREENLAND CASE" ON HISTORICAL RESEARCH

As described above, the Danish-Norwegian dispute over Greenland was to leave its mark on Norse Greenland archaeology and history for many years to come. The positive effect was that much energy was spent in Greenland research. This was obviously part of a political doctrine to justify territorial claims, but it did in fact lead

to a number of interesting results. The negative effect was that much of the research was politically biased, leading the debate into a maze of blind alleys.

Frode Fyllingsnes has pointed out that 1261 became the "magic year" for the Danes - it marked the Greenlanders' subjection to the Norwegian king. Whereas the year 1380 came to be of similar importance to the Norwegians. This marked the commencement of Danish rule over Norway (Fyllingsnes 88:233).

Part of the debate came to focus on an assumed royal monopoly of the Greenland trade, which in turn prevented communication. The Danes argued that the Norwegian king had failed to fulfill his obligation to send ships to Greenland. As a result, the isolation of Norse Greenland became over-emphasized.

The Norwegians, on the other hand, argued that the break in communication was a result of the union with Denmark.

Thus the historians spent much time in disputes over problems which, historically speaking, were of marginal interest. Consequently, the problem has hardly been touched since 1933.

Fyllingsnes has also pointed out that the Danes were accused of "stealing" the Norwegian landnåms, by veiling the achievements of the Norwegians behind anonymous terms like "Norsemen" or "Scandinavians". The Norwegians, on the other hand, had no scruples about terming the Icelanders and the Greenlanders "Norwegians" (ibid.).

These effects of the Danish-Norwegian conflict are relatively obvious, while others are more subtle. Part of the problem seems to have its origin in different spheres of interest.

The Norwegians were primarily interested in proving that climatic deterioration was the cause of Norway's decline in the Late Middle Ages. Place-name topography and architectural evolution were subjects that required a thorough knowledge of western Greenland conditions. Greenland was not easily accessible to foreigners, and to Norwegians in particular:

In a letter from 1925, an American group applied to the Danish National Museum for permission to carry out excavations in Greenland. The application was rejected on with the explanation that "our Norwegian friends" might apply for a similar permission (Archives of the Danish National Museum, 2nd. department). In spite of this, Gustav Rasmussen three years later wrote:

"Control of access to Greenland is still maintained, but nowadays it no longer has in view the safeguarding of the trading interests of the Danish State.... However, it is by no means desired to prevent foreigners from visiting Greenland, for instance for the purpose of carrying out studies, or conducting expeditions..." (Rasmussen 29:16).

Thus in the Norse Greenland archaeology of the 1920ies a research tradition was established in which Norwegian material played only a minor part. This has, in turn, created a gap which has taken many years to bridge. I will cite a few examples:

In his discussion of churches, Nørlund obviously looked to the British Isles for stylistic and architectural parallels, in spite of his knowledge that the Greenland Church was under the Archbishop of Nidaros from 1152, and that one of his main sources, Ivar Baardson, was a Norwegian addressing a Norwegian audience.

Equally, Krogh has looked mainly to Iceland when discussing church building and -organization in Greenland.

Nørlund and Roussell were, in contrast to Bruun, conspicuously hesitant of labeling the small ruin-groups as "saeters" (which is a Norwegian term), but called them "cots", "crofts" or "saeter-farms" (Nørlund and Stenberger 34:45, Roussell 41:288, see Albrethsen & Keller 86:95-96).

Even the concept of the farm, its organization and economic basis, has been discussed with surprisingly little reference to Norwegian material. Thus most of the important archaeological material in Northern Norway has been totally ignored in the debate.

Most important is probably the tendency to over-emphasize Greenland's isolation, thus creating a more dramatic historical picture than necessary.

The worst effect of the Greenland Case seems, however, to have resulted from the fact that Norse Greenland archaeology came to be a field open only to a handful of people. This allowed the research tradition to fall hopelessly behind the development in Scandinavian archaeology.

The list may be prolonged, but I find it more important to emphasize that during the last decades, the atmosphere in Norse Greenland archaeology has been dominated by cooperation and mutual exchange of knowledge.

Let us hope that our generation of archaeologists can contribute to mend the scars of the Greenland Case.

2.9 IMPORTANT WORKS IN OTHER DISCIPLINES

2.9.1 Christian Vibe:

In 1967 the biologist Christian Vibe published his dissertation "Arctic Animals in Relation to Climatic Fluctuations" in *Medd. o. Gr.* vol. 170 no. 5.

Through studies of ocean currents, occurrence of drift-ice, and catch-reports from western Greenland, he constructed three main drift-ice stages that seem to have fluctuated, creating important changes in climatic and ecologic conditions in Greenland. He also tried to make backward projections to the Middle Ages, and supported his results with historical and archaeological material. He has also published articles on the subject.

2.9.2 Anker Weidick:

In 1968 Weidick published his dissertation "Observations on some Holocene Glacier Fluctuations in West Greenland", in *Medd. o. Gr.* vol. 165 no. 6.

The book had few direct bearings on Norse Greenland archaeology, but it created a basis for understanding glacial fluctuations during the Little Ice Age, and hence what areas had been disturbed since the Middle Ages.

A popular article was published in 1982. This was directed towards the history of the Norse settlements, and concluded that the glacial situation today is not unlike that of the *landnám* period. The advancing glacier lobes hardly affected the Norse settlers in

their time, but a number of their ruins may have been later destroyed (Weidick 82:250).

2.9.3 Bent Fredskild:

As a botanist and palynologist Fredskild took part in the investigations at Qassiarsuk (Brattahlid) in the early 1960ies (See Section 2.7.2 above). By analyzing the sediments in a small lake "Galium Kær" nearby, he was able to show that the water-level of the lake had been artificially lowered after the *landnám*, most probably for irrigation purposes.

He also made analyses of the vegetational history of the area (Fredskild 69, 88).

In 1973 he published his dissertation "Studies in the Vegetational History of Greenland", in *Medd. o. Gr.* vol. 198 no. 4.

He showed that before the *landnám*, *Salix* and *Betula* had covered the hillsides. With the coming of the Norse settlers, the shrub was destroyed, evidently not by fire, and grass and herbs became dominant. Towards the end of the settlement period, the climate seemed to have become wetter and colder. The termination of the effect of grazing on the vegetation was dated to 560 ± 100 B.P. by radiocarbon dating (probably uncorrected).

The Norse settlers had, however, imported plants and brought about changes in the vegetation that to some extent were permanent, even though the shrubs regenerated. Fredskild argued, however, that the number of "Norse plants" were considerably less than previously assumed.

In a short article in 1982 he discussed the settlement period in more detail. He showed that the grazing effect on the vegetation had decreased over a period of time. He observed an increased amount of sand in the sediments of Galium Kær, indicating periods of erosion during the time of settlement (Fredskild 81 & 82). This was one of the arguments used by Krogh to substantiate the theory of overgrazing (Krogh 82a:179-183, discussed above).

2.9.4 W. Dansgaard and his colleagues:

The Greenland ice sheet consists of layers of ice dating back perhaps 100.000 years. Each layer represents the annual precipitation, and contains valuable information on climatic and atmospheric conditions through time. Various methods are used to measure variations in temperature, acidity and dust-contents, as well as for dating.

In 1964 ice cores down to a depth of 1390 meters were collected at Camp Century in northwest Greenland (Dansgaard et. al. 1969). In 1975 Dansgaard and others presented an article: "Climatic Changes. Norsemen and Modern Man" in *Nature* 255, May, London. The curves seemed to agree with the palynological results of Fredskild, as well as with historical evidence from Europe (Lamb 77:95-98).

In 1971 Denmark, Switzerland and The United States formed a joint forces in a project called GISP (Greenland Ice Sheet Project).

In 1981 they managed to drill through the ice sheet at Dye 3 in southern Greenland, to a depth of 2037 meters (Dansgaard & Gundestrup 81b). Measurements indicated that volcanic activity was

the cause of 27 % of the temperature fluctuation during the last 1400 years. Most important, however, was the comparison of the Greenland curves with a number of other curves, based on tree ring chronology, deep-sea sediment cores, glacial fluctuations in the Alps, and historical evidence. These comparisons indicated that the climatic changes in Greenland had occurred somewhat earlier than in Europe (Dansgaard & Gundestrup 1981a).

2.9.5 H. H. Lamb:

In 1977 Lamb published his authoritative edition "Climate, present, past and future", vol. 2.

His world-wide study of climatic change was to give valuable background references for Greenland studies. Included was a presentation of the curves of the oxygen isotope ratio in the ice sheet of northwest Greenland produced by Dansgaard et. al. (Lamb 77:99).

He was less critical in his use of the story from Landnámabók about Thorkel Farserk who swam the Hvalsey Fjord. The incident, he argued, suggested the water temperature was 4 degrees centigrade warmer than today (op. cit.:184-185). Equally astonishing was his acceptance of a story which reported that a Viking ship had negotiated the Northwest Passage and reached California (op. cit.:253).

In general the book is, however, an outstanding work.

2.9.6 The Vegetational Mapping Project in Southern Greenland:

In 1977-81 a systematic mapping of the pastures in an area roughly covering the Eastern Settlement was carried out. The project was a joint effort conducted between the Research Station in Upernaviarsuk and the Institute for Agricultural Research in Iceland.

The objective was to estimate the carrying capacity of the pastures as part of a plan for sheep farming development. The report was edited by Ingvi Thorsteinsson in 1983.

2.10 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Studies of the marginal areas of the European civilization often reveal cultural fluctuations that are barely perceivable in the more central areas. This is, for instance, clearly apparent in the archaeological material from the mountain regions of Norway. The colonization of distant Greenland was, in all respects, a typical example of this phenomenon. In spite of this, most authors have made great efforts to emphasize the exceptional aspects of the Norse colonies, and thus the isolation and vulnerability of the society has often been overestimated.

It is therefore extremely interesting to note that the research history of Norse Greenland has followed a similar pattern. Periods of intense activity and excellent research alternated with periods of reduced activity and stagnation, in response to the fluctuating forces of economics and politics. By the same token, research strategies,

explanatory theories and paradigms were not the results of activity within Greenland, but of the prevailing ideas in the scholarly circles outside Greenland.

Frode Fyllingsnes has classified the explanatory theories of the desertion. He distinguishes between what he calls the "Theory of Confrontation" and the "Theory of Assimilation". He argues that it was inconceivable to the Europeans of the 18th and 19th centuries that an "inferior race" like the Inuit had survived in the area, while the "sturdy Nordic race" had succumbed. As the Inuit could never have defeated the Norse in open combat (!), explanations were forwarded that they had killed the Norse by means of treason, ambush or arson (conveniently overlooking that these techniques were all too familiar in contemporary Iceland). Another explanation was that the Norse settlers had been weakened by disease or degeneration before the Eskimos attacked. These ideas were forwarded by people like Egill Thorhallesen, Therkel Mathiassen, Finnur Jónsson and Poul Nørlund. (From Fyllingsnes 88:30-42).

Near connectet to the confrontation-theory was, as already mentioned, the Theory of Degeneration (Fyllingsnes 88:161), which was forwarded by Fr. C. C. Hansen and Poul Nørlund. This theory became largely popular with the public. Undoubtedly, the dramatic descriptions of the last "midgetlike and sickly impaired" colonists served to support the racialistic ideas of the 1920ies and 30ies in the Western World. Even today, when the theory has lost all credibility in scholarly circles, it has a strong hold on the public.

An alternative to the Theory of Confrontation was the Theory of Assimilation. Ideas of assimilation can be traced back to Hans Egede, who thought that the Inuit population were, at least i part, descendants of the Norse colonists. This explanation was later regarded as a "possibility" by the Norwegian historian Eilert Sundt. He observed that people generally hesitated to accept the idea that a

"...superior, Christian and reasonably civilized population could descend and disappear by mixing with a more barbarian tribe." (Sundt 60:161, cited from Fyllingsnes 88:56, my translation).

Daniel Bruun also saw assimilation as a possible explanation, although not the most likely one. The idea of assimilation was primarily voiced by Fridtjof Nansen, but it also gained some support from Edvard Bull (the older). (From Fyllingsnes op. cit.: 55-67).

Another theory was that of Pirate attacks (Fyllingsnes 88:127). This was based on some very vague written sources, and most of the discussion has dealt with the interpretation of these sources. Some have argued that the pirates referred to were in fact Eskimos, while others claimed that they were of European (or even Algerian) origin. Considering the fact that piracy occurred in most of the Atlantic islands in this period, it is not unlikely that similar attacks may have taken place in Greenland. The sources are, as shown i Section 2.2.1, too weak to substantiate the theory, and it is hard to believe that a pirate attack should be fatal for a community the size of Norse Greenland.

Most of the energy was, as we have seen, spent on the Theory of

Isolation (Fyllingsnes 88:74). Although over-communicated, the isolation was undoubtedly a historic reality, and in the end it may have proved fatal. It was, however, the cause of the isolation which was the main subject of dispute, and not the effect. The political potential of this problem led Danish and Norwegian historians into a split-hair discussion which did little to bring about useful knowledge about Norse Greenland. Consequently, the debate waned after the trial in the Hague was brought to an end.

The Danish-Norwegian conflict finally led to the unhappy development that a barrier was created between the archaeologists of Norway and those of the other Nordic countries, especially where Iron Age architecture and farm history was concerned. And in Norse Greenland archaeology, Norwegian material was referred to as little as possible, finally leading this research to a near standstill, if compared to the general advances in Danish archaeology.

As time goes by, the effects of these political conflicts are beginning to wear off, partly because of a shift in generations, partly because of changing interests among archaeologists.

Thus it is no coincidence that scholars of the 1970ies and 80ies were fascinated by the idea that the Norse Greenlanders destroyed their own environment by over-exploitation, and suffered extinction in return. The parallel to the modern world with its increasing pollution and environmental crisis is all too obvious.

Today, the cultural heritage of the Norse settlers may not be a relevant symbol of national identity among modern Greenlanders. But it is indeed a symbol of the vulnerability of the ecological basis of the modern world. Regarded this way, Norse Greenland archaeology is perhaps a subject of greater significance to the outside world than to Greenland itself. But it is also a reminder that modern Greenland is subject to the same forces as the Norse colonies once were.