

The Reunification of Southern Jutland 1920-2020



Guest Editors

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When in the beginning of September 2019, Queen Margrethe II visited Flensburg in Southern Schleswig as kick-off of the festivities of the centennial for the drawing of the border and the reunification of Southern Jutland and Denmark, she gave a speech in German. In the speech, she warmly advocated for intercultural cooperation between Danes and Germans:

Jahrzehnt für Jahrzehnt sind wir Dänen und Deutsche – und die Minderheiten beiderseits der Grenze – einander nähergekommen. Es gibt eine wichtige grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit – sowohl zwischen Institutionen als auch zwischen Menschen. Das müssen wir schätzen und entwickeln.
(Kongehuset 2019)

The Queen's appearance differed significantly from King Christian X's highly symbolic crossing of the Danish-German border at Kongeåen in 1920. At the time, the King resembled a lord of victory lord aloft on a white horse, the same way as Napoleon in 1807 was riding through the Brandenburg Tor. While the drawing of the bor-

der originally was a result of war conflicts, namely the Schleswig War II which in 1864 ended with Denmark's defeat and territorial losses, and later World War I. In our days, however, the border became a project of peace and the symbol of good neighbourhood across Danish-German national borders.

Danmark's reunification with the Southern Jutland parts of the country, a result of the treaty of Versailles after World War I, took place on July 9 1920 after a referendum in February the same year. This referendum would determine the geopolitical shape of Denmark which has lasted until our days. Referenda on territorial areas after the implosion of the German empire and the end of World War I were in no way a specific Danish-German event. People also voted on Vestpreussen, Posen (both whether the areas should belong to Poland), Eupen and Malmedy, on the relation to Belgium and Elsass-Lothringen on the relation to France (The Treaty of Versailles 1919, chapt. III).

Southern Jutland was reunificated with the rest of Denmark, nevertheless Flensburg and Southern Schleswig remained German. At the same time, the new location of the border resulted in the situation that many German-minded North from the border lost the connection to their homeland. On both sides of the new border emerged minorities who felt that they belonged to the country on the other side of the border. Thus, the reunification of Southern Jutland with Denmark did not appear to everyone involved as a success. This was also pointed out by the former Danish prime minister Niels Neergaard in a speech at Dybbøl Skanser on July 11, 1920:

Men i genforeningsglæden må vi også tænke på dem, der blev tilbage, der kæmpede så trofast og udholdende som nogen, og det kan jeg sige på regeringens, ja, jeg tør sige på hele det danske folks vegne: De skal ikke blive glemte! (Gerlow 1920, 28)

The new border only existed for 20 years, when it was removed by Hitler's Wehrmacht who occupied Denmark in 1940. World War II represented a big caesura of the Danish-German relation and created a new situation in the border area, but also in the whole of Denmark. The Danish conceived of the Germans, now more than ever, as a real threat, an occupying power and old enemy images

were revived and fixated. After the war, many years should go by to change this image of the Germans and the mental climate of the borderland was affected by prejudices and stereotypes. Generally, the populations were very skeptical towards their neighbours who identified with another nation than themselves.

After Denmark's liberation, the border of 1920 was reinstated, but there were voices in Denmark who advocated to move it more to the South. The fact that the border was not moved after all, even though Germany had lost another war, contributed to the fact that Denmark and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in 1955, in the declarations of Copenhagen and Bonn, were able to officially acknowledging the minorities North and South of the border and to securing their right of practicing their respective culture. This mutual protection by both the Danish and German government could strengthen the Danish-German relations, not only in the borderland, but also on a national level.

The reunification can be regarded as an important momentum in the Danish-German relationship, not only from a geopolitical perspective, but also from a cultural one. This relationship which was developed through the course of many centuries can be traced in numerous works of art, music and literature. Intellectuals always moved across the borders; Georg Brandes introduced Friedrich Nietzsche to the Danish public (Brandes 1901), Søren Kierkegaard travelled to Berlin, where he studied by Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling (Kierkegaard & Staubrand 2012), Bertolt Brecht lived several years near Svendborg (Hecht, et al. 1984). In recent years, the painter Emil Nolde – who lived for most of his life in the border area – became the topic of much debate after it became increasingly clear that he, in opposition to the image he had been giving his surroundings, was a fanatic Nazi and anti-Semite during the period of the Third Reich. Another famous German-Danish example is the cross-border writer Siegfried Lenz who in his novel *The German Lesson* (1968), among others, portrays a character with clear similarities with Nolde, depicting his old image before the recent revelations (Bak, et al. 2009; Schlosser 2011).

The cultural transfer can also be traced on a concrete level in the borderland where a number of lingual phenomena have emerged, e.g. Sydslesvigdansk, which is a sort of dialect and variation of the Danish language (standard Danish) characterised by a number of

variations from the German language. There are variations in vocabulary, phonetics and grammar (Christophersen 1996). In addition, there can be observed other dialects and lingual creations which can be traced back to the cultural and lingual meeting between Denmark and Germany. Specifically for Flensburg and its surroundings the so called Petuh can be mentioned. It is a mixt language of the regionally spoken languages German, Low German, standard Danish and South-jutlandish. The last received its name after the year card ("partout-billet") for salon-ferries, which sailed on the fjord of Flensburg between Denmark and Germany (Christiansen 2003).

By meeting across cultures and experiencing the differences of the respective other and discovering cultural common denominators, relations, solidarity and social cohesion can be strengthened. For this reason, several concrete projects in the region take departure in the cultural meeting between Denmark and Germany. Through several years, cultural meetings based on music have enjoyed the interest of the population in the borderland; for instance common church services in Danish and German and evenings with bilingual common singing. The cultural and musical landscape of the borderland even reached Christiansborg, where the former minister for culture, Bertel Haarder, in 2016 expressed thoughts about a fusion of the slesvig-holstensk symphonic orchestra (Schleswig-Holsteinisches Sinfonieorchester) with the symphonic orchestra of Southern Jutland – though with thoughts on saving in the back of the head (Heltoft & Benner 2016).

Another bridge across the border was built within the media: The big German broadcasting houses ZDF and ARD have among others discovered the interest of Germans for and their fascination of the crime genre Nordic Noir and Danish film culture. Since, there has been made several cooperation appointments regarding the crime genre and entertainment series. In addition, film productions, in these years, also receive economic from a bilateral cooperation appointment between FFHSH (Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein) and DFI (Dansk Filminstitut) with the aim of deepen the relations between North German and Danish film producers (SH-Landtag 2018).

On a more general level, there are also economic relations and cooperations, which were establish over time. The new border from

1920 resulted among others in a flourishing border trade ("grænsehandel") where after the war Germans bought butter and dairy products in Denmark and Danes today buy sweets, soda and beer in large amounts.

In this issue of *Akademisk kvarter* the centenary of the reunification is used as an occasion for an interdisciplinary view on the historical event itself and the discourses which revolved around it. We invite for studies of the borderland as well as studies on Danish-German cultural exchange more generally. Contributions from the established border studies, history, museology, Europe studies, literary studies and philologies within the field of Danish-German cultural transfer, film and media studies and other disciplines are invited.

Departing by the Southern Jutland reunification, the following topics can be included:

- The Danish-German referendum, e.g. in the context of other referenda in Europe
- Cultural exchange / cultural interactions before and after 1920
- Danish-German relations and the reunification in literature, art and film
- The minorities reflections on their own past
- The notion of minority, the intercultural meeting in the borderland and border culture
- Cooperations across the border aiming at strengthening culture and community across the border
- Economic relations between Denmark and Germany which were established or deepened after 1920

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Krämer, Felix (red.). 2014. *Emil Nolde. Liv og værk*. München, London, New York: Prestel Verlag.

Mariager, Rasmus, Niklas Olsen, Karl Christian Lammers og Den danske historiske forening. 2018. *Venskab og fjendskab i Danmark og Tyskland i det 19. og 20. århundrede: Festskrift til Karl Christian Lammers i anledning af hans 75-års fødselsdag 4. september 2018*. København: Den Danske Historiske Forening.

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Timetable

The first step is to submit a brief abstract in English, German or Danish of about 150 words to be mailed to Annemette Helligsø (anhe@hum.aau.dk) no later than January 15, 2019. The editors will then review the abstracts and notify the authors of their decisions soon after. Accepted articles – using the Chicago System Style Sheet (www.akademiskkvarter.hum.aau.dk/pdf/AK_word_template.docx) – should be e-mailed to Annemette Helligsø (anhe@hum.aau.dk) no later than March 15, 2020. Articles will then be reviewed anonymously in a double, blind peer review process. The articles should be around 3,000-3,500 words, and they can be written in English, German or in the Danish. Assuming that the articles are accepted by the peer reviewers and the editors, they should be revised, and the final version sent in by June 15, 2020. The issue is projected to be published in August 2020.

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