

Kaspar Lægring, Badeloch Vera Noldus (red.): *Skjulte skatte i grænselandet. Dansk bygningsarv i Slesvig og Holsten*. København: Forlaget Bianco Luno 2010, 295 S.

For those who travel to Stralsund, Greifswald or Wismar, the Swedish history of these towns is never far away. In the centre of Stralsund, you will find “Svenska Vågar” – landmark signs commemorating places or monuments of the Swedish past. In those parts of Northern Germany with a long and close relationship with the Danish king, it is much more difficult to find traces of a Danish-German past. Both sides have invested remarkable energy in forgetting or even repressing their common history, and they have been quite successful in constructing parallel and strictly separate national cultures. In fact even the most fervent nationalists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century could hardly have imagined that their nation could rid itself so effectively from the unwanted other.

The ideological construction of diversity and national particularity also left its mark upon architecture. Ideas of what is “Danish” or “German” often decided which architecture was considered good or bad, as well as which should be remembered and which should be forgotten. These are among the themes of a book about the hidden treasures of a Danish

architectural heritage in the region of Schleswig and Holstein. *Skjulte skatte i grænselandet* is thorough, detailed and beautifully illustrated with photos by Roberto Fortuna and represents a very welcome effort to overcome this amnesia, at least in Denmark. Without any expansionist implications, it is also very positive that the editors chose *grænselandet* (the borderland) for the title, thereby stretching this region to encompass the whole of the former Duchies instead of restricting it to Schleswig, which actually has usurped the role of *the* borderland since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Throughout history, the Duchy of Holstein was in fact as much a borderland as Schleswig, and some of the most interesting examples of the book are actually situated in the region between the Eider and the Elbe.

This broad and ambitious approach includes a number of different aspects concerning heritage, *lieux-de-mémoire*, and architectural history related to this borderland and the tensions between regional and national ideas. It works out very well, and even though some of the articles employ a specialized vocabulary, they all present inspiring new thoughts and previ-

ously mostly unknown information. Most readers will learn many new things about this interesting region. All articles are written in Danish and it probably would have been worthwhile to have included a short version in English or German. For those who do not read Danish there are still the photos, an index and maps showing where to find Danish architectural heritage in Schleswig-Holstein. This list can be used for interesting excursions and a rediscovery of a forgotten Danish influence in a region that was once a vivid and inspiring “in between” where Danish and German influences met and competed.

The articles in the first part of the book are concerned with more general aspects of heritage, architecture, monuments and the effort to establish an ethnographic border between the nationalities on the basis of the architectural style of farm buildings. The texts are free from that elegiac and self-righteous tone that is closely associated with traditional borderland discourse, and even if we do find observations and reflections concerning traditional questions, like the existence of “a specific Danish” style or architecture, most authors take a more post-national position. The predominant impression is of a region of transition that has always been strongly influenced from the outside. Accordingly, the architecture is generally more hybrid, but of course the specific conditions in an area, where at least

German, Danish, Dutch and Frisian influences made an impact, also created a unique regional mixture of styles. As Peter Dragsbo concludes, this region remained for centuries a place where different cultures, ideas and fashions met, before two national versions of the same globalised western culture developed.

The concept of heritage plays an important role and Gregory J. Ashworth’s article focuses on its relevance for identity and territorial claims. A very interesting approach is developed by Peter Dragsbo when he talks about “inconvenient heritage” to describe those buildings, monuments, influences etc. that are not included in the national definition. This was very much the case in North Schleswig, which the Danes regained after the referendum of 1920. In this area the Danes found lots of examples of inconvenient heritage, and they often had few qualms about destroying what they were not prepared to accept.

This point is also made in the article by Inge Adriansen describing the fight for monuments between the two nations in the borderlands. She also takes up the important question about how the national ideologies explicitly engaged in efforts to put their stamp on the landscape. Building monuments and destroying others led, for instance, to a “danification” of the landscape north of the modern border.

It is, however, hardly surprising that the Danes, with their more homogeneous national culture and perception of being threatened by their big neighbour, were especially offended by this inconvenient heritage. Given the widespread stereotypes of the differences between Danish and German culture, it is interesting that the book clearly demonstrates that the Danes were the antagonists when it came to destroying or ruining monuments or architecture. In most cases they have been so effective that there is no risk that these old, destroyed monuments will resurface. Consequently, they will not face a situation like the one in Flensburg, which now has the dubious honour of getting back the old monstrous Danish victory memorial, the "Lion of Isted", which was removed from the old cemetery in 1864.

The second part of the book is dedicated to the works of some of the Danish architects that contributed to the architecture of the Duchies. The most famous is, of course, C. F. Hansen, who not only put his stamp on Altona and built the impressive villas along the Elbe, but together with most of his colleagues, produced works which were clearly influenced by international ideas. One of the most surprising articles describes how M. G. Bindesbøll engaged in the building of 17 stations along the railway line constructed in Southern Schleswig in the 1850s. This railway was an important Danish infra-

structural investment to secure the possession of that Duchy. Bindesbøll chose a style that had its roots in the Dutch renaissance that had influenced the building programme of the Danish 17<sup>th</sup> century king Christian IV and therefore had strong connotations of political importance and greatness. This example demonstrates nicely the very mixed nature of architecture and heritage in the border region.

*Steen Bo Frandsen (Sønderborg)*