Governor Pløyen and Captain Cameron Mouat

by Steffen Stummann Hansen

In 1830 a young Danish civil servant, Christian Pløyen, turned up in Tórshavn in the Faroe Islands. Born on 12 January 1803 in Copenhagen, Pløyen was the son of a high-ranking civil servant. In 1826 he had graduated as a candidate in law, and after a couple of positions in public administration he was in 1830 appointed king's bailiff (landsfoged in Danish) in the Faroe Islands



Christian Pløyen in his younger days.

Photograph: Føroya Fornminnissavn

Shortly before his departure to the Faroes, Pløyen had married (on 2 April 1830) Emma Theodora Manthey, born in Copenhagen on 23 January 1806, herself the daughter of a prominent civil servant (the now obsolete Danish title *konferensraad*), Johan Daniel Timotheus Manthey (1771-1831). Emma Theodora gave birth to four daughters in Faroe, the last born in 1837.

In that same year Pløyen was appointed the chief civil officer of Faroe (Danish: *amtmand*) and at the same time commander-in-chief (Danish: *kommandant*).

Pløyen in the Faroe Islands

Pløyen was probably the most popular *amtmand* in Faroe in the nineteenth century. The English historian John West (1929-96) described his qualities this way: 'Pløyen managed to enter into the daily life and amusements of the Faroese in a way that endeared him to everyone. He learned to speak the Faroese language like a native, and was not only perfect conversationally, but also knew a number of the traditional ballads which use an older form of the language.'

Pløyen was an open-minded innovator, and became responsible for reforms which affected nearly all aspects of Faroese life. In pursuing his many visions, one of the most important and spectacular projects that Pløyen organised was a trip to Shetland, Orkney and Scotland in 1839.

The journey to Shetland

On 1 June 1839 Pløyen embarked on the *Hector*, a schooner of the so-called Monopoly in the Faroes. The purpose of his tour was to study improvements in agriculture, commerce and and living conditions in general which could be useful at home. In Pløyen's own words: 'From conversing with various Shetlanders of both upper and lower classes, who, from time to time, have visited Faroe; from reading Dr Edmondston's Description of Shetland; and, moreover, from having seen these islands in the distance several times when sailing past them, I had become convinced that there is a great similarity of soil and climate in the two groups, though Shetland has reached a higher state of development. I therefore judged that it might be advantageous to visit Shetland, accompanied by two or three intelligent Faroese, and endeavour to become acquainted with such improvements as might be available here'.

Pløyen was accompanied by Poul Joensen (1778-1850), a udaller of Eiðe on Eysturoy, Poul Joensen (1791-1857), a fisherman and boat-builder from the island of Nólsoy, and the peasant proprietor Mourits Mohr (1820-1857) of Hoyvík near Tórshavn.

While his fellow Faroese were studying techniques of fishing and fish-curing, Pløyen himself toured Shetland, Orkney and mainland Scotland to search ways of benefiting the Faroes. He liked what he saw, and the trip resulted in the bringing of important developments in conventional fishing to Faroe: first of all the introduction of the long-line with its hundreds of hooks left in the sea. He further 'popularised the use of Scottish and Shetland seed-potatoes; he introduced the labour-saving Shetland peat-spade, which soon superseded the native mode ... and encouraged intercourse not only with Denmark, but also with Shetland and Leith' (John West). Pløyen also was a constant advocate of free trade, thereby rejecting the existing monopoly trade run from Copenhagen.

However, Pløyen also had another agenda during his visit.

Pløyen and antiquarianism

Rather unnoticed until recently, Pløyen on his journey to Shetland also had an antiquarian mission.

In 1825 the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries had been founded in Copenhagen. One of its founders was Carl Christian Rafn (1795-1864), who acted as its secretary from then and until his death. Rafn's ambition was to buoy up the society with members from all over the world, and an impressive network was established, especially during the 1830s and 1840s. The benefits were twofold. The world-wide network was an important instrument whereby Rafn could distribute his own works, but it also provided the Society with important funding through membership fees. On top of this, it also provided the Society, and thereby the Museum of Antiquities in Copenhagen (later the National Museum of Denmark), with donations of antiquities from all over the world.

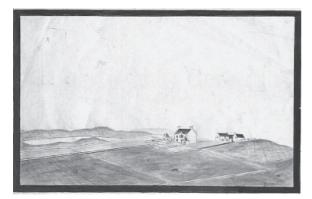
Rafn early established contact with Christian Pløyen in the Faroe Islands. Pløyen, who in 1833 was awarded membership of the society, soon provided the Museum of Antiquities in Copenhagen, with a flow of Faroese antiquities. And when Pløyen embarked upon his journey in 1839, Rafn saw the possibility of establishing a foothold in Shetland.



Christian Pløyen's membership certificate from the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries. He became a member of the society on 31st July 1833, as one of a small group of Faroese members, mainly Danish civil servants. At the top of the frame appears "hið konungliga norrana fornfraða felag" – the Society's name in Icelandic. At the bottom one reads in runes the motto of the Society: "Urðar orði kveðr engi maðr", meaning "No one can resist the Norns". It derives from one of the Old Norse Edda-poems. The certificate which Cameron Mouat received eight years later would probably have been similar. Pløyen's certificate is in the Museum in Holbæk, the town where he ended his days and lies buried.

When Pløyen arrived at Lerwick he was received by Charles Ogilvy (1802-1844) of Seafield, the Danish vice-consul. Ogilvy, who had a summer residence a quarter of a mile west of Lerwick, introduced Pløyen to Shetland society during the next few months.

Among his new acquaintances was Captain William Cameron Mouat (1780-1855) of Garth, who entertained Pløyen at his residence Gardie House in of Bressay. Pløyen stayed with him later during a visit to the island of Unst, at Cameron Mouat's manor house Belmont.



Belmont, where Cameron Mouat entertained Pløyen during his visit to Unst in 1839. The print, which is probably from the early 19th century, is in the Gardie House Archive.

Courtesy John and Wendy Scott

Pløyen left Shetland in early September. 'On the 5th September', he wrote, 'I quitted Shetland in the schooner *Lerwick*, which my friend Ogilvy kindly granted me for my voyage home. With a deep and sincere feeling of friendship and gratitude, I bade farewell to a family and a circle where I had so quickly and entirely become accustomed to feel myself at home. Ogilvy, Hay, and several other gentlemen accompanied me on horseback to Scalloway, where the vessel was lying, and soon I was far from my Shetland friends, whom I shall probably never see again, but who will always live in my memory. After a long and tedious voyage, I arrived on Monday, the 9th of September, again at Thorshavn, and found there, God be praised! all as I had left it.'

Soon afterwards, in 1840, Pløyen published an account of his journey in Danish. An English version, Reminiscences of a voyage to Shetland, Orkney and Scotland in the summer of 1839, was published in Lerwick in 1894, with a second edition in 1896.

After the return

Pløyen acted immediately after his return to Tórshavn. On 11 September he sent a letter to Rafn, informing him about the friendships he had made with Shetland antiquaries. 'On a journey which I



An alleged portrait of Pløyen, published in the English version of Pløyen's book. However, the publishers for some reason got it wrong. The portrait is of the udaller Poul Joensen of Eiði, one of three native Faroese who accompanied Pløyen on his visit to Shetland. The oil painting on which the illustration is based was made years later, after Poul Joensen had been hosted by Danish king Frederik the Seventh at a banquet at the Christiansborg Castle in Copenhagen.

made with public money during the past summer', he wrote, 'I have been so fortunate, among other places, to visit the Shetland Isles. I have in these islands, who in an antiquarian respects were very peculiar, and well-deserved to be surveyed by a Dane more knowledgeable than I with regard to Danish antiquities and coins, acquired the following objects, presented by the below-mentioned persons, namely ...'

Among the objects which Pløyen delivered to the Society in Copenhagen was an urn found in the island of Uyea, off the south coast of Unst; a stoneaxe ('Thunderbolt'), and a Shetland-knife, both of unknown provenance; a fragment of a stone-axe found on Mainland; and three Shetland knives, allegedly found together with another 11 on the island of Fetlar, the latter presented to him by Charles Ogilvy.



Some of the Shetland knives stored in the National Museum of Denmark.

Photograph: S. Stummann Hansen

Rafn quickly followed up Pløyen's information. On 9 November 1839, he wrote a formal invitation to John Glendenning Bryden (1787-1855), the parish minister of Sandsting, to join the society; and another to Charles Ogilvy in Lerwick.

In a letter of 5 December 1840 Rafn also approached Cameron Mouat, who immediately accepted the offer of membership. 'This very distinguished honour', he said, 'is as unexpected as it is unmerited on my part, and I beg you will assure the Royal Society of Northern Antiquarians that I highly appreciate this testimony of their esteem and respect.'

On 5 April 1841 Pløyen wrote to Rafn in Copenhagen: 'Sir, councillor of state Rafn! Those gentleman whom I have proposed for membership of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries, are Consul Charles Ogilvy, Capt. Cameron-Mouat of Garth, Rev. S. V. Barclay, minister of Lerwick, Rev. Mr. Hamilton, Rev. of Bressay, and Rev. Mr. Bryden, min. of Sandsting; Ogilvy has informed me, that they *all* with gratitude accept the offer, and regard my proposal as an honour to them. – I still hope that all five gentlemen will be accepted as members.'

The Copenhagen investment quickly paid off. On 11'May 1841 Cameron Mouat wrote to Rafn: 'I have been endeavouring to procure some of the ancient "Steinbarts" (or "Thunderbolts" as the common people

of "Ultima Thule" call them), but they are extremely scarce in consequence of being much sought for by the numerous strangers who have visited our islands of late years, - and if there are any Steinbarts still remaining the common people, who generally found them either embedded in peat moss, or buried in their arable ground along with what appeared to them to be ancient urns containing the remains of departed warriors, are very reluctant to part with the supposed thunderbolts, from a superstitious idea that any house which possesses one of these valuable thunderbolts will be effectually protected from lightning. I have however succeeded in procuring a few "Steinbarts" of different shapes, and as the Belgian Schooner of War the Louise Marie, which is on the eve of sailing from Brassay harbour, intends to touch at Thorshaven, I now send a small box containing these Steinbarts to my worthy friend H. Exc. Governor Ployen, who I have no doubt will embrace the first opportunity of forwarding the box to you; it contains also a small specimen of the Asbestos that is found in some of our Islands. I request you will do me the honor to present in my name to the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries at Copenhagen the few Steinbarts and Asbestos contained in the box, and to express my regret that I have been unable to procure larger and more perfect Steinbarts.'

Pløyen's efforts on behalf of the society are nicely demonstrated in a collection of archaeological objects which he sent to Rafn in Copenhagen from Tórshavn on 31 August 1843. The collection included 'a stone-axe found in Mainland Shetland' and 'a small coin found in the parish of Dunrossness' (Viking-age silver hoard). Pløyen stated in his letter: 'Both of these objects were stored by Mr William Bain, a ships-agent in Lerwick, in order to be handed over to relevant Danish museums. Mr Bain owns a beautiful small collection of Shetland archaeological objects, among which is the most wonderful example of a stone-axe I have ever seen; the museum in Copenhagen has not got its like.'

A personal tragedy

However, after his return to Faroe, Pløyen's successes were soon to be overshadowed by a personal tragedy. On 15 August 1841 his wife died, aged only thirty-five, leaving him alone with their four young daughters. Despite this serious personal setback, Pløyen stayed in the Faroes. He sent the two oldest daughters to live with his sister and her husband in Copenhagen, while the two youngest stayed with him.

Pløyen acted as *amtmand* in Faroe until 1848. Denmark was in the process of getting a free constitution that year, and a constituent assembly was established.

Three quarters of it were elected by universal suffrage, while the last quarter, including Faroe, was nominated by the crown. On 12 October Pløyen was appointed to represent Faroe. The same year he was appointed *amtmand* in Vejle County in Eastern Jutland, which was shortly afterwards changed to the county of Holbæk in Western Seeland. Pløyen's time in Faroe was over. On 5 June 1849 Denmark eventually got its democratic constituion.

Back to Denmark

On 1 January 1849 Pløyen began his new job as *amtmand* of Holbæk County. With him he had his two teenage daughters, and one of his Faroese servants, Cathrine Bergitte Hansen, born in 1809 in Tórshavn, who had also served him during his time in the Faroes. His two eldest daughters came to live with him again.



Pløyen: the photograph was probably taken shortly after his return to Denmark in 1848.

'The only man on Zetland who does not entirely blot me out of his memory'

After arriving at Holbæk Pløyen kept up the contact with one of the acquaintances, he had made in Shetland a decade earlier – Captain William Cameron Mouat of Gardie House. This is reflected in two letters

preserved in the Gardie House Archive. The first, dated 16 August 1849, is as follows:

'My dear & highly esteemed friend!

'It is impossible to express with what joy I, some days ago, received your friendly letter. You are the only man on Zetland who does not intirely blot me out of his memory, the connecting link between those islands & myself, & I scarcely need affirm you how very grateful I feel towards you on that account. Hoping that the summer has neutralized all the influenza, wherewith your esteemed family & you have been tested, I will fancy that the whole amiable family at Belmont is doing well & so with friendly feelings reserving true congratulations & news from a sincere, tho' defiant friend.

'Like my dear & revered friend Mr Hamilton, I have, this year, closed the eyes of my venerable father; like him I had the blessing to be at his bedside in his last moments. Without any disease, the old man was just sinking during winter, & on the 8th of Februarii last, he died in my embrace, indeed so quietly that I was not fully aware of, that he was removed to a better existence. Nobody can go out of this world in a more blessed way than did my dear father, having lived to his 85th year, having seen his children well married & provided for; it is a great blessing indeed to die without sickness, surrounded by children & grandchildren & praised by to God for it. Of course I felt & feel a blank in my existence by the loss of my father, but I certainly could not wish if possible, to recall him to that [illegible] existence in which according to the laws of nature he lived during some of his last months.

'As to myself I have now got a good situation in Denmark, having been appointed governor of Holbek Amt, the north westerly quarter of the island Zeeland; my abode is Holbek, the capital town in my Amt or shire. My two eldest daughters are now here with me, the two younger ones remain in Copenhagen at my sister, because the schools are better there, than in as pretty town as Holbek. During winter I had the honor to be a member of the first Danish general assembly where the conflitation [sic] of the land was debated & laid. Now, my dear Sir! I have got a lively notion of the interest you & your countrymen take in the speeches of your parliament; I never in life have felt such a thrill long through my whole frame, as



The first page of Pløyen's letter of 16 August 1849 to Cameron Mouat. Courtesy: John and Wendy Scott

when a question of the highest interest was to be carried by my party, & I never was more afraid than when, for the first time, I heard my own voice in the house; but that terror is rather transitory. We too are now a free people & that is a very gratifying thought, but every transition is a trial, & it cannot be denied that some of the common people believe insolence & freedom to be synonymous. It is no easy task, to be a magistrate in Denmark just now, & besides a very great deal of business, I must very often hear verbal complaints of the lower peasantry, complaints which are generally unfounded & cannot be helped, but must be heard & delivered patiently & civilly. As there are 73,000 souls in my present Amt, & as I am new in the [illegible], consequently not know the character of individuals, I must steer my bark cautiously, but on the whole I am very happy & grateful to God & my king, who has given me a good & agreeable situation.

'Whatever may be the result of the new armistice we have forced into with our [illegible] foes, I thank my God, who gave us our opportunity, 4 days before the treaty was contended, to beat them as capitally as any one has been beaten. My brave countrymen prefer

fighting to peace & in a civil war there is no remedy but to cast away the scabbard & slay so long until one of the contending parties annihilated. But the weak must go to the wall, & I fear that the misplaced radical meditated some treason, God only knows, & if it is his will that we must fall, at least we do not do so with dishonour.

'You will excuse my speaking almost entirely of myself & my land, it is because I consider you are a friend who will receive my news with interest. If you do not write me earlier, be kind enough to do so when you dear sir returns; give me a sketch of that happy meeting, I can, I assure you, partake in it, heart & soul

'Recommending myself to the kind remembrance of Mrs Cameron Mouat, Miss Anne Cameron & my dear Mr Hamilton & his lady, I am always my dear & very esteemed friend, wholly yours,

'Ploien.'

Pløyen is dealing with the recent death of his father, Frederik Adeler Pløyen, who was born in Kristiansand in Norway on 2 July 1764, and died in Copenhagen on 8 February 1849. The father's fate had been a hard one, which may be reflected in Pløyen's moving account to Cameron Mouat. He had been a trusted diplomat, and in 1815 been appointed to the commission which was dealing with the financial solution with his native land Norway as a result of the Napoleonic Wars had been ceded to Sweden. He later became involved with negotiations about establishing a government loan with an English financial house. The unsuccessful result of this effort, however, seems to have annoyed the Danish king Frederik VI, and he was held responsible. Therefore Pløyen senior in 1825 had to give up his career, though with 'dignity and pension'. On top of this, he allegedly also made a rash statement, possibly about the loss of his native Norway, which annoyed the king. Although it was never clearly established what he did wrong, Frederik Adeler Pløyen never came to terms with his fate, and died a grieving man.

Surely the father's fate must have been hard for Pløyen too. Did Cameron Mouat know of this story, and is that why Pløyen seems to seek some comfort in telling him about his father's death?

In connection with the father's death Pløyen also refers to Rev. Zachary Macaulay Hamilton (1805-1876), an Orcadian whom he had met during his visit to Shetland in 1839, and whom in 1841, together with others, he had recommended to Rafn for membership of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries.

Hamilton was by now son-in-law to Cameron Mouat, whose daughter Elizabeth Cameron he had married in 1845.

Furthermore, Pløyen describes his new job as amtmand in Holbæk County, and, more interestingly, comments on the political situation in Denmark, which was characterised by two major developments: the final farewell to absolutism, with the establishment of a democratic constitution; and, since 1848, a state of civil war within the Danish realm, triggered off by a rebellion in the Duchies of Slesvig and Holsten, who wanted independence or affiliation with Germany. The battle Pløyen refers to was the Danish forces' successful sortie from the town of Fredericia in Southeastern Jutland on 6 July 1849. The battle ended with the Danish forces sending the German forces completely on the run. An important consequence of this victory was that Prussia pulled out of the war.

At the time of Pløyen's letter the conflict had been brought to a halt by a truce on 10 July, in which London was heavily involved. From his comments it can be derived that Pløyen was very unsure about what would be the final result of the events. Pløyen, who could be described as an open-minded conservative, obviously found the situation complex. Referring to 'the misplaced radical', who must be the Prince of Nør, Frederik Emil August (1800-1865), a member of the provisional government of the duchies, and commander-in-chief of their forces, he says 'I fear.... treason'.

Pløyen seems to have been in line with the general policy of the Danish government at the time, which aimed at leaving Holsten for Germany, but keeping Slesvig as a full part of Denmark. At the first general election under the new democratic constitution, Pløyen was a candidate for the urban-based party in Holbæk. On election day, 4 December 1849, Pløyen gave a public speech, which according to the local newspaper, was well received: 'our handsome and popular amtmand was greeted with lively acclamation', especially when he stated, that 'not an inch should be yielded to the German in the case of Slesvig'. However, Pløyen lost the election to the candidate of the rural-based party, and this brought an end to his political career. And furthermore, before his days were over, Pløyen had to witness the traumatic defeat of the Danish by the Germans in the second war in 1864.

Cameron Mouat and Pløyen maintained a correspondence over the following years, although it does not seem to have been so intense. The only other letter on record, though only partly preserved, is one sent from Cameron Mouat to Pløyen from Gardie House on 30 April 1855, in reply to one sent by Pløyen on 29 August 1852, more than 2½ years earlier:

'My Dear & highly esteemed friend Sir Christian Ployen,

'I had the pleasure to receive on the 24th September 1852 your very kind letter of the 25th August 1852 when I was in Edinburgh, and having left it on the following day it was not in my power to comply with your kind wish to send you a Dagueratype [sic] of my family, for as we had previously made our arrangements to leave Edinburgh on the day after I received your kind letter we were under the necessity of proceeding to Aberdeen in order to overtake the last trip of the steamer to Lerwick, indeed it was well we did so, for a few days longer stay in Edinburgh would have given us a very rough passage from Aberdeen to Lerwick, which in my wife's very delicate state of health would have distressed her not a little.

'Since our return from Edinburgh I have been much confined to the house by "chronic gout", 'tis a very painful and harassing disorder, but at my advanced time of life (going 75) I am not likely to suffer many years longer. My wife has been suffering this spring not a little from influenza – but is now recovering. I am happy to say my dear daughter Anne (whose life you were the means of preserving when you were riding in the neighbourhood of Belmont) enjoys good health – she & all of us will never forget our obligations to you.

'I had a letter lately from my dear son – he has been stationed with his Regiment (the 55th Native Infantry) at Mooltan, & tho' it is among the hottest stations in India he fortunately enjoys good health; his wife & infant son (now 6 months old) enjoy good health & I hope will continue to do so. We hear from them regularly every month, & tho' Mooltan is so very remote their letters arrive here generally within 8 weeks after their date – so much for the regularity & dispatch of our steam conveyance.

'Your old acquaintance Mrs Chas Ogilvy, for whom you so kindly enquire, has been residing in Edinburgh for the last 3 or 4 years – her oldest & 2nd son are at Melbourne, the capital of the "Gold Digging Country"; the 3rd son is I believe a midshipman in the East India Company's navy, & her youngest son is a clerk to an accountant in Edinburgh.

'Mr Chas G Duncan has been Procurator Fiscal of the Sheriff Court of Lerwick for the last 3 years, and criminal prosecutions have become so frequent in this country that his income is now very considerable – he is very

active as "Public Prosecutor" & gives great satisfaction except to the criminals he has to prosecute.' (The letter ends suddenly here.)

Cameron Mouat was right in his prediction to Pløyen about his longevity. William Cameron Mouat, who was born in Dingwall on 8 November 1780, died a few months later, on 7 July 1855 in Edinburgh. He was buried at the beautiful medieval ruined kirk of St. Olaf at Lund in Unst. His wife Margaret (1779-1871) died sixteen years later, and was buried next to her husband.



William Cameron Mouat's gravestone.

Photograph: Les Smith

Death of Pløyen

Christian Pløyen died in Holbæk on 9 June 1867. He was survived by his four daughters. The two eldest, Johanne Frederikke, born 6 October 1831 in Tórshavn, and Emilie Jacobine, born 2 May 1833 in Tórshavn, both died unmarried in Copenhagen, on 13 May 1908 and 24 July 1906 respectively. The third daughter, Elisabeth Margrethe Svanhilde, born

on 4 December 1834 in Tórshavn, married in 1870 Frode Otto Julius Holstein of the Eriksholm Manor in Holbæk County, landowner and of royal descent. They had two children. Elisabeth died on 2 November 1927. Pløyen's youngest daughter, Claudine Henriette, born 23 March 1837 in Tórshavn, married the catechist Julius Christoffer Vilhelm Schousboe on 27 May 1867, only thirteen days before Pløyen's death. They were married by special licence from the King, a procedure typical when the marriage for some reason was urgent: no doubt on this occasion Pløyen's deteriorating health. She died a widow in Copenhagen on 23 March 1905. Pløyen never had the pleasure of seeing his grandchildren.

As in the Faroes, Pløyen seems to have been a well-liked and respected amtmand in Holbæk. On 12 June 1867 the local newspaper announced his death: 'Regrettably we have to bring our readers a piece of sad news; our dear amtmand, Chamberlain Pløyen, Commander of the Dannebroge and of the Cross of Honour of the Order of the Dannebroge, is no more! - He passed away on Sunday after some time of infirmity, 64½ years of age. During the 18 years he was in charge of his task of great responsibility, we came to know him as a well-informed and competent civil servant, who by his zeal in conducting his job. by his strong sense of justice and kind obligingness, has erected himself a lasting memory. Gifted, as he was, by the hands of the Maker, it was his pleasure to help every one to the justice he was entitled to, and everybody will with love remember the positive kindness, which high or low was sure to find with this man of honour.'

The same newspaper also reported on his funeral: 'Numerous mourners, including all the chief constables and revenue officers of the district ... several landowners and peasants were present in the chapel of rest, where the body was brought to Wednesday evening. The speech was delivered by Reverend Galskjøt, who described the meritorious work of the deceased, whereafter rural dean Magnussen of Føllesløv bade the deceased a last farewell. In the chapel of rest as well as at the graveside, the singing was conducted by the Holbæk Choral Society.'

Christian Pløyen lies buried in the old graveyard at St. Nikolai Church in Holbæk. His grave is unmarked, and its exact location unknown.

Epilogue: Pløyen and Worsaae

The fine collections of Shetland archaeological objects, which Pløyen through his efforts procured for the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries, are preserved intact today in the National Museum of Denmark. They now represent material and substantial



The probable location of Pløyen's grave at St Nikolai's cemetery in Holbæk.

Photograph: S. Stummann Hansen 2007

evidence of strong antiquarian links between Shetland and Denmark, established more than a hundred and fifty years ago. They also brought evidence about the prehistory of Shetland to a Scandinavian audience.

Pløyen's efforts concerning Shetland's antiquities complemented another Danish effort a few years later, when the great Danish archaeologist and antiquarian Jens Jacob Asmussen Worsaae (1821-85) travelled Britain and Ireland in order to study the Scandinavian impact on the Viking age there. Virtually the only place Worsaae did not visit on his journey was Shetland, and thus he had no first-hand knowledge of the antiquities here. In the book which Worsaae subsequently published about his journey, *An Account of the Danes and Norwegians in England, Scotland and Ireland* (1852, original Danish version 1851), he interestingly refers to the work of Samuel Hibbert (1782-1848), *A Description of the Shetland Islands* (1822) and to Pløyen's observations and recordings, as his sources.

But was there any personal connection between Worsaae and Pløyen?

Pløyen's contribution to antiquarianism and the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries seems to have been confined to his years in Faroe, and especially in connection with his visit to Scotland in 1839. That was the time when Worsaae, 18 years younger, was a rising star. When Pløyen was leaving Denmark for Faroe in 1829, Worsaae was just a small boy of eight years. At the time of publication of his book, Worsaae had never, at least in his adult life, met the man to whom he gave credit for his description of Shetland.

We have no evidence that Pløyen was involved in anything antiquarian after his return to Denmark from Faroe. He may have maintained an interest, and he was still a member of the society. However, the fact that he now was based in Holbæk, west of Copenhagen, probably prevented him from joining its regular meetings. It is, however, interesting to note that there is a hitherto unnoticed link between the two families.

As stated above, Pløyen's youngest daughter Claudine Henriette married the catechist Julius Christoffer Vilhelm Schousboe in 1867. Julius had been born in 1836 at the Ringgive vicarage near the town of Veile in Eastern Jutland. His father, Peter Sølling Schousboe (1807-77), himself a catechist, came to Vejle and took up work as a private teacher for J. J. A. Worsaae during the period 1832-5. He is mentioned by name in Worsaae's memoirs, written down in 1878-1879, but only published by Hermansen in 1934. Worsaae describes how he once overheard a teacher telling his father 'that there was something unique about me, and he should be very mistaken, if I didn't become a great man'. Worsaae further states: 'My teacher's prediction evoked a hitherto slumbering ambition'. He named three teachers from his childhood,



Christian Pløyen in his older days. The school-teacher Frederik Christian Maximilianussen, who for many years worked next to Pløyen's office and home, gave the following character sketch of him: 'He was a tall, rather lean man with clear-cut features. ... Pløyen had his strength in telling obscene anecdotes and indelicate stories in a witty and spicy language of the kind which could entertain men, and he was hardly himself a morality model, but probably a very competent civil servant.'

but unfortunately he does not tell us which of them made this prophecy. But it is most likely that it was the father of Pløyen's future son-in-law who helped to trigger Worsaae's carreer.

Furthermore, Julius Christoffer Vilhelm Schousboe seems to have been born in the vicarage of Ringgive, where his father's brother, Jens Christian Schousboe (1805-1881), was priest. The latter seems to have had an interest in matters antiquarian, and was appointed a member of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries in 1842.

There can hardly be any doubt that a rather strong relationship must have existed between the Worsaae and Schousboe families. It is therefore not surprising that Worsaae's father, Jens Worsaae (1780-1840), the district revenue officer of Vejle County (Danish: *amtsforvalter*), became godfather to the Schouboe son, who in 1867 married Pløyen's youngest daughter.

Did Cameron Mouat have any connection with Worsaae? On 29 September 1846 Worsaae described in a letter to his mother how, on his way from Dunrobin Castle, he had just had met a British naval officer who turned out to be a member of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries. Worsaae does not mention the name of the officer, and it has been suggested by Peter Rowley-Conwy in his book From Genesis to Prehistory. The archaeological Three Age System and its contested reception in Denmark, Britain and Ireland (Oxford University Press 2007) that Cameron Mouat may be a candidate. However, as Worsaae specifically states that it was a naval officer he met, it is unlikely that it was Cameron Mouat.

Almost a hundred years was to pass after Pløyen's visit in 1839, before another Dane with interest in matters antiquarian visited Shetland. This was the architect Aage Roussell (1901-72) who visited the islands in 1931 and again in 1939, both times on behalf of the National Museum of Denmark. This fascinating story has already been told in the *New Shetlander* by the present author (nos. 202, 1997, 203, 1998 and 235, 2006).

Notes

Shetland archivist Brian Smith directed me to the two letters between Cameron Mouat and Pløyen. Wendy Scott of the Gardie House Archive put the letters and the print of Belmont at my disposal. The Holbæk Museum gave me the photograph of Pløyen's membership certificate, while the Holbæk Archive helped with information on Pløyen's time in Holbæk. I owe them all my sincere thanks.

A more detailed presentation of Pløyen's contribution to antiquarianism can be found in my paper 'Governor on antiquarian mission: Christian Pløyen – a Faroese link between Copenhagen and Shetland' in Ballin-Smith, Taylor and Williams, eds., West over Sea: studies in Scandinavian sea-borne expansion and settlement before 1300, Leiden 2007, pp.431-42.

William Cameron Mouat is dealt with in Wendy Scott's Gardie, a Shetland house and its people, Lerwick 2007

Pløyen's general contribution to Faroe is covered in John F. West *Faroe*, the emergence of a nation, London-New York, 1972. Details from his time in Holbæk are mentioned in Albert Thomsen's Holbæk Købstads Historie (Holbæk 1936-1942), and F. C. Maximilianussen's memoires Erindringer af mit Liv og om min Familie (Vejle 1909).

Poul Joensen of Eiði is described in H. M. Debes, *Søgur úr* gomlum døgum, Tórshavn 1977, 12-23.