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Holger Weiss

The Cultural Heritage of Slavery in the Nordic Countries

1 Introduction

The demand of the Caribbean Commission (CARICOM) for a formal apology from all nations involved in the Atlantic slave trade and its request for financing its ten-point Reparatory Justice Program in 2014 triggered a public debate in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden about the engagement and involvement of these countries in the transatlantic slave trade and their participation in promoting and benefitting from Atlantic plantation slavery.¹ The CARICOM claim and the global Black Lives Matter Movement have generated a wide range of public activities debating, displaying, visualizing, and commemorating the Nordic involvement in Atlantic slavery and the slave trade. This chapter will provide a thematic outline to illuminate the similarities and differences of inventing and identifying slavery heritages in the four Nordic countries. Starting in the first part with comparing public debates and academic research on the history of slavery and the slave trade, the second part then scrutinizes existing and projected slavery memorial sites, followed by elaborating on slave walks and ending with a discussion on the memorialization of slavery and its politicization in the Nordic countries.

The cultural heritage of slavery had first to be invented, as it did not exist in the four Nordic countries some twenty years ago. Moreover, what is to be included in the list of slavery heritage sites is still open for debate. A narrow definition identifies mansions and warehouses built by slave owners, slave plantation owners, the owners of slave ships, and companies engaged in the trade of enslaved individuals, as well as statues and busts erected to commemorate their societal impact in their home countries. A broad definition, on the other hand, follows the logic of ‘slavery hinterlands’ and commodity chains,² and includes the locations where slave-produced goods like

1 “Sweden May Consider Slave Trade Reparations,” 14.12.2013, https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2013/12/14/Sweden-may-consider-slave-trade-reparations/55641387051631/; Thomas Thorén, “Sverige krävs på pengar för slavhandel,” 10.03.2014, <https://sverigesradio.se/artikel/5805724>; “Sverige måste erkänna sin inblandning i slavhandeln,” 31.03.2014, <https://afrope.se/2014/03/31/sverige-maste-erkanna-sin-inblandning-i-slavhandeln/>; Björn Lingner, “Danmark og det caribiske krav om reparationer og forsoning,” 20.12.2014, <https://baggrund.com/2014/12/20/danmark-og-det-caribiske-krav/>; “Norge kan bli saksøkt for slavehandel,” 11.03.2014, <https://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/i/GkJbQ/norge-kan-bli-sak-soekt-for-slavehandel/>; Magnus Aamo Holte, Per Christian Magnus, Riyas Babu, “Truer Norge med rettsak for slavehandel,” 01.05.2014, <https://www.nrk.no/urix/truer-norge-med-slave-rettsak-1.11694958> [all accessed 03.04.2022].

2 See further Felix Brahm and Eve Rosenhaft, eds., *Slavery Hinterlands: Transatlantic Slavery and Continental Europe, 1680–1850* (Rochester: Boydell & Brewer, 2016).

coffee, cotton, sugar, and tobacco were refined and transformed into consumer goods. Obviously, sugar refineries and rum distilleries rank high and existed in all Nordic countries: Nordic textile mills used cotton and Nordic urban and rural consumers drank coffee and smoked tobacco. Moreover, iron, copper, Danish guns, salted herring, and tar produced in the Nordic countries were integral parts in the Atlantic slave economy.³ Finally, discussions on slavery zones and global slaveries challenge the contemporary narrow focus on Atlantic slavery and open up opportunities for identifying the cultural heritage of parallel forms of enslavement and slave trade in the Nordic countries.⁴

The call of the CARICOM Reparations Committee to the three Scandinavian countries was not surprising.⁵ Denmark's colonial history was at this point no mystery for the general populace: nor was the connection between slavery, Danish Atlantic history, and the Danish colonies in the Caribbean, today the US Virgin Islands of St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix. Starting effectively in 1672, slavery formed the backbone of the colonial plantation economy; the numbers of enslaved people peaked at the end of the eighteenth century, counting about 32,000 in 1797. Norway was until 1814 part of the Danish realm, officially an independent kingdom but ruled by the Danish king, with Copenhagen deciding and directing its politics and economy. Sometimes referred to as the composite kingdom of Denmark-Norway or the Oldenburg Monarchy, some of its inhabitants, be they Danish, Norwegian, or German (as the Danish realm also included the Duchy of Schleswig and the Duchy of Holstein), were either directly or indirectly engaged in the Atlantic trade.⁶ This involvement ranged from being slave plantation owners on the Danish Caribbean islands, traders in slave-

3 See, e.g., Kristine Bruland and Keith Smith, "The Global Context of the Scandinavian Copper Industry," in *Skandinavisk kobber: Lokale forhold og globale sammenhenger i det lange 1700-tallet*, ed. Kristin Ranestad and Kristine Bruland (Oslo: Cappelen Damm, 2020): 210–24.

4 Jeff Fynn-Paul and Damian Alan Pargas, eds., *Slavery Zones: Cultural Identities, Ideologies, and Institutions in the Evolution of Global Slavery* (Leiden: Brill, 2018). On global slaveries, see Michael Zeuske, "Historiography and Research Problems of Slavery and the Slave Trade in a Global-Historical Perspective," *International Review of Social History* 57 (2012): 87–111; Matthias van Rossum, "Slavery and Its Transformations: Prolegomena for a Global and Comparative Research Agenda," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 63, no. 3 (2021): 566–98.

5 The Scandinavian countries include Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, while the Nordic countries include Finland and Iceland. I will not dwell on Iceland as its link to Atlantic slavery has not been up for discussion, although the effects of slavery and slave raids feature in early modern Icelandic history. See Karl Smári Hreinsson and Adam Nichols, eds. and trans., *The Travels of Revered Ólafur Egilsson: The Story of the Barbary Corsair Raid on Iceland in 1627* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2008), and Colleen Morgan, "The Curious Case of Mr. Hans Jonathan: Iceland, the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and Genetics in Archaeology," 12.09.2013, <https://colleen-morgan.com/2013/09/12/the-curious-case-of-mr-hans-jonatan-iceland-the-transatlantic-slave-trade-and-genetics-in-archaeology/> [accessed 08.04.2022].

6 Christian Degn, *Die Schimmelmanns im atlantischen Dreieckshandel. Gewinn und Gewissen* (Neumünster: Karl Wachholtz Verlag, 1974).

produced raw material, or the producers of goods from slave-produced raw materials, most notably sugar or rum. Copenhagen's development into the largest metropole in Northern Europe during *Den florissante periode*, the trade boom during the last quarter of the eighteenth century when Denmark-Norway applied strict neutrality in the various wars between the European major powers, was to a large extent the outcome of the city being the center of the Danish colonial empire and the center of the Danish early modern sugar industry. The merchant houses in Copenhagen had exclusive rights on the colonial trade until the 1760s; after this, embargoes were adjusted and Flensburg in Schleswig and Bergen in Norway were opened to Atlantic trade.⁷ Danish-Norwegian slave ships transported about 100,000 enslaved Africans from the West African littoral to the Caribbean islands, many of them from Danish forts on the Gold Coast (Ghana). The legal transatlantic slave trade ended in 1803 following an edict of the Danish king in 1792. Slavery was officially abolished in the Danish West Indies and in the Danish possessions on the Gold Coast in 1848. CARICOM's call to both Denmark and Norway therefore seems logical.⁸

Sweden, in turn, received the Caribbean island of St. Barthélemy from France in 1784. The kingdom was the last European power to acquire a Caribbean possession, and was the first to close its colonial chapter when it sold the island back to France in 1878. Denmark, in turn, passed its three Caribbean islands to the USA in 1917. About one hundred years earlier, the Danish king lost Norway to the Swedish king in 1814; the Swedish-Norwegian union lasted until 1905. During this period, Norwegian shipping expanded tremendously and propelled Norwegian commercial interests in Africa and Oceania.⁹ While Denmark-Norway ranks among the dominant 'lesser' European Atlantic powers, Sweden ranked among the minor powers. Nevertheless, slavery and the slave trade constituted an integral part of the colonial economy on the Swedish island. At its peak during the first decade of the nineteenth century, about 3,000 peo-

7 On the cultural heritage of colonialism and slavery in Schleswig, see further Marco L. Petersen, ed., *Sønderjylland-Schleswig Kolonial. Kolonialismens kulturelle arv i regionen mellem Kongeån og Ejderen* (Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag, 2018).

8 Niklas Thode Jensen and Gunvor Simonsen, "Introduction: The Historiography of Slavery in the Danish-Norwegian West Indies, c. 1950–2016," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 41, no. 4–5 (2016): 475–94; Niels Brimnes, "The Colonialism of Denmark-Norway and Its Legacies," 07.01.2021, <https://nordics.info/show/artikel/the-colonialism-of-denmark-norway-and-its-legacies> [accessed 03.04.2022]. On Scandinavian colonialism, see further Niels Brimnes, Pernille Ipsen and Gunvor Simonsen, eds., *Scandinavian Colonialism* [= *Itinerario* 33, no. 2 (2009)]; Magdalena Naum and Jonas Monie Nordin, eds., *Scandinavian Colonialism and the Rise of Modernity: Small Time Agents in a Global Arena* (New York: Springer, 2013); Holger Weiss, ed., *Ports of Globalisation, Places of Creolisation: Nordic Possessions in the Atlantic World during the Era of the Slave Trade* (Leiden: Brill, 2015); Magdalena Naum and Jonas Monie Nordin, eds., *Colonial Entanglements: Crossroads, Contact Zones, and Flows in Scandinavian Global History* [= *Itinerario* 43, no. 2 (2019)].

9 Kirsten Alsaker Kjerland and Bjørn Enge Bertelsen, eds., *Navigating Colonial Orders: Norwegian Entrepreneurship in Africa and Oceania* (New York: Berghahn, 2014).

ple, or half of the island's inhabitants, were enslaved individuals. The majority worked in households, on construction sites, and in the harbor of Gustavia, with about 500 laboring on cotton plantations in the countryside. Swedish engagement in the transatlantic and intra-Caribbean slave trade is only rudimentarily known. Due to the British abolition of the slave trade in 1807 and the British occupation of all Danish, Dutch, and French islands in the Caribbean, Gustavia was the only open port for the import of new slaves from Africa between 1807 and 1815, when Sweden signed the Vienna declaration to ban transatlantic slave trade. In total, the slave trade under the Swedish flag is estimated to have involved about 10,000 enslaved individuals. This includes the circa 2,000 slaves carried by the Swedish Africa Company in the mid-seventeenth century.¹⁰

2 Part One: Debating Slavery Heritage

Denmark and Sweden are obvious cases for the CARICOM claims. However, the inclusion of Norway, but not Finland, raises critical questions of the politicization of colonial heritage and, by extension, slavery. Finland was an integral part of the Swedish kingdom before it became a grand duchy within the Russian Empire in 1809. The inhabitants of Finland were subjects of the Swedish king, sent representatives to the Swedish diets, and enjoyed the same rights and obligations as those living in the western part of the kingdom. Neither Finland nor Norway were Atlantic colonial powers, although both Finns and Norwegians as subjects of the Swedish and Danish realms, respectively, engaged in colonial administration, control, production, and trade in Caribbean colonies and beyond or making use of slave-produced raw material at home. In recent decades, the cultural heritage of slavery has made headlines in Norway, especially the Norwegian link to Atlantic/Caribbean slavery and the slave trade. The inclusion of Finland in outlining discourses and presentations of the cultural heritage of slavery in the Nordic countries opens up the Eurasian dimension of the politicization and memorialization of slavery.

2.1 Denmark: From Colonial Oblivion to Critically Addressing the Colonial Past

Astrid Nonbo Andersen critically noted in 2013 that the Danish colonial past has been a contested arena since the 1940s. On the one hand, she highlighted, there was a pro-

¹⁰ See further Holger Weiss, *Slavhandel och slaveri under svensk flagg: Koloniala drömmar och verklighet i Afrika och Karibien 1770–1847* (Helsingfors: Svenska litteratursällskapet/Stockholm: Atlantis, 2016).

gressive narrative of Danish colonialism presented by two general overviews in Danish, *Danmarks gamle Tropekolonier* (*Denmark's Old Tropical Colonies*, 1946) and *Vore gamle Tropekolonier* (*Our Old Tropical Colonies*, 1952–1953). Although not marginalized as a topic, the progressive narrative of Danish imperialism presented slavery on the Danish islands as ‘mild’ in comparison to the ‘harsh’ conditions on other plantation islands.¹¹

Among the first to challenge the progressive discourse was Danish author Thor-kild Hansen in the late 1960s, whose trilogy (*Slavernes kyst*, 1967; *Slavernes skibe*, 1968; *Slavernes øer*, 1970) addressed Danish involvement in the transatlantic slave trade and slavery in the Danish West Indies. Sparked by international quantitative investigations on the transatlantic slave trade, Svend E. Green-Pedersen produced the first critical assessments on the Danish transatlantic slave trade in the 1970s,¹² followed by Per Hernæs’ investigations on its volume and its effects in West Africa,¹³ as well as Erik Gøbel’s studies on Danish involvement in the triangular trade and the abolition of the Danish transatlantic slave trade in 1792.¹⁴ In addition, historians Ole Feldbaek, Ole Justesen, and Ove Hornby produced a new overview of Danish colonial history in India, Africa, and the West Indies, focusing on the political and economic activities, administrative issues, institutions, legislation, and commerce in the Danish colonies and possessions.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the Danish perspective predominated, while the impact and experiences of the slave trade and slavery received little attention and

11 Astrid Nonbo Andersen, “‘We Have Reconquered the Islands’: Figurations in Public Memories of Slavery and Colonialism in Denmark 1948–2012,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 26, no. 1 (2013): 57–76.

12 Svend E. Green-Pedersen, “The Scope and Structure of the Danish Negro Slave Trade,” *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 19, no. 2 (1971): 149–97; Svend E. Green-Pedersen, “The History of the Danish Negro Slave Trade, 1733–1807. An Interim Survey Relating in Particular to Its Volume, Structure, Profitability and Abolition,” *Revue française d’histoire d’outre-mer* 226–227 (1975): 196–220.

13 Per Hernæs, *Slaves, Danes and African Coast Society* (Trondheim: Historisk institutt, NTNU, 1998); Per Hernæs, “‘Fort Slavery’ at Christiansborg on the Gold Coast: Wage Labour in the Making?” in *Slavery Across Time and Space: Studies in Slavery in Medieval Europe and Africa*, ed. Per O. Hernæs and Tore Iversen (Trondheim: Department of History, NTNU, 2002): 197–229; Per Hernæs, “Slave Trade, Slave Plantations and Danish Colonialism,” in *Ports of Globalisation, Places of Creolisation: Nordic Possessions in the Atlantic World during the Era of the Slave Trade*, ed. Holger Weiss (Leiden: Brill, 2015): 101–39.

14 Erik Gøbel, “Dansk sejlads på Vestindien og Guinea 1671–1807,” *Handels- og Søfartsmuseets Årbog* 41 (1982): 5–53; Erik Gøbel, “Danish Trade to the West Indies and Guinea 1671–1754,” *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 31 (1983): 21–49; Erik Gøbel, “Volume and Structure of Danish Shipping to the Caribbean and Guinea, 1671–1838,” *International Journal of Maritime History* 2 (1990): 103–31; Erik Gøbel, *Det danske slavehandelsforbud 1792. Studier og kilder til forhistorien, forordningen og følgerne* (Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag, 2008); Erik Gøbel, “Danish Shipping along the Triangular Route, 1671–1802: Voyages and Conditions on Board,” *Scandinavian Journal of History* 36 (2011): 136–56; Erik Gøbel, *The Danish Slave Trade and Its Abolition* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

15 Ole Feldbaek and Ole Justesen, *Kolonierne i Asien og Afrika* (Copenhagen: Politikens forlag, 1980); Ove Hornby, *Kolonierne i Vestindien* (Copenhagen: Politikens forlag, 1980).

enslaved people and free Afro-Caribbeans appear as passive victims of European oppression.¹⁶ Astrid Nonbo Andersen therefore concludes that slavery and the slave trade at best were only marginally included in the national narrative in Denmark until the late 1990s.¹⁷

In contrast to the procolonial narrative of a benign form of slavery under the Danish flag, Caribbean historian Neville Hall produced the first critical account on the development, conditions, and destruction of slavery in the Danish West Indies. His research opened up areas hitherto untouched upon or omitted by the Danish imperial perspective, among others the social control of the enslaved, the culture of the enslaved, and their resistance to the colonial regime.¹⁸ In similar ways, Danish historian Karen Fog Olwig focused on the agency of enslaved people,¹⁹ paving the way for a new generation of Danish researchers who started to investigate the racial, segregated, and violent past of Danish colonial rule in the West Indies,²⁰ alongside the consumption of slave-produced luxuries in Denmark.²¹ Together with new critical research on colonization from the point of the colonized,²² Danish and Norwegian historians produced a new five-volume book series on the Danish colonial past. For the first time, Danish colonial history in Africa, India, the West Indies, and Greenland was written “from below,” acknowledging non-Danish/non-white agency: this included a volume on the effects, legacies, and remnants of colonialism and slavery in Denmark.²³ Despite these efforts, the

16 See further the extensive overview on research in Denmark on slavery the Danish West Indies by Jensen and Simonsen, “Introduction.”

17 Nonbo Andersen, “‘We Have Reconquered the Islands’.”

18 Neville A.T. Hall, *Slave Society in the Danish West Indies: St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix* (Mona: University of the West Indies Press, 1992).

19 Karen Fog Olsen, *Cultural Adaptation and Resistance on St. John. Three Centuries of Afro-Caribbean Life* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1985).

20 Niklas Thode Jensen, “For slavernes sundhed: Sygdom, sundhed og kolonialadministrationens sundhedspolitik blandt plantageslaverne på St. Croix, Dansk Vestindien, 1803–1848” (PhD diss., University of Copenhagen, 2006); expanded as Niklas Thode Jensen, *For the Health of the Enslaved. Slaves, Medicine and Power in the Danish West Indies, 1803–1848* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2012); Gunvor Simonsen, “Slave Stories: Gender, Representation, and the Court in the Danish West Indies, 1780s–1820s” (PhD diss., European University Institute, 2007); expanded as Gunvor Simonsen, *Slave Stories. Law, Representation, and Gender in the Danish West Indies* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2017); Louise Sebros, “Mellem Afrikaner og kreol: Etnisk identitet og social navigation i Dansk Vestindien, 1730–1770” (PhD diss., University of Lund, 2010).

21 Mikkel Venborg Pedersen, *Luksus – forbrug og kolonier i Danmark i det 18. århundrede* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2013).

22 See further the contributions in Niklas Thode Jensen and Gunvor Simonsen, eds., *Slavery, Servitude and Freedom: New Perspectives on Life in the Danish-Norwegian West Indies, 1672–1848* [= *Scandinavian Journal of History* 41, no. 4–5 (2016)].

23 Niels Brimnes, Hans Christian Gulløv, Erik Gøbel, Per Oluf Hernæs, Poul Erik Olsen and Mikkel Venborg Pedersen, eds., *Danmark og kolonierne*, 5 vols. (Copenhagen: Gads forlag, 2017), includes volumes on Danish colonialism in Greenland (*Grønland. Den arktiske koloni*), India (*Indien. Tranquebar, Serampore og Nicobarerne*), West Africa (*Vestafrika. Forterne på Guldkysten*), and the Danish West In-

attention of the public for Danish colonial history remains uneven, claims Niklas Thode Jensen and Gunvor Simonsen: nor are there an institutional framework or centers and departments specializing on Danish colonial history and the Danish colonial past.²⁴

Nevertheless, slavery and the slave trade under the Danish flag have been a public and even political issue in Denmark since the late 1990s. Claims for reparations for slavery and colonialism brought forward by the African Caribbean Reparations and Resettlement Association (ACRRA), a local NGO on St. Croix, in 1998 challenged the existing notions of the colonial past in Denmark. Although the Danish government rejected the demands for an official apology for the Danish participation in the transatlantic slave trade, it decided to come up with some form of compensation and allocated funding to establish archival collaboration between the US Virgin Islands and Denmark. As an outcome, the Danish National Archives recataloged, repacked, and refurbished the so-called West Indian Local Archives,²⁵ initiating new research on the enslaved population in the Danish West Indies, alongside a demographic database of all Afro-Caribbean inhabitants on St Croix during the era of Danish rule, the St. Croix African Roots Project (SCARP), launched by the Virgin Islands Social History Associates in 2002.²⁶

However, it was hardly the output of researchers but rather the Danish TV documentary *Slavernes Slægt* (*The Descendants of Slaves*) that made the cultural heritage of slavery a public concern in Denmark. Broadcast in 2005, the documentary presented descendants of enslaved Africans and thus challenged the dominant national canon of a homogenous nation-state.²⁷ A few years later, two special exhibitions at the Danish National Museum, *Farlige Forter* about the Danish possessions in West Africa in 2010 and *Dansk Vestindien – en koloni bliver til* about the Danish West Indies in 2011, critically engaged with Denmark's colonial past, and the accompanying video *Vestindiske stemmer* (Voices from the Virgin Islands) gave voices to the descendants of enslaved people.²⁸ The exhibitions and video, in turn, sparked local initiatives to unearth the hidden history of slavery and the slave trade in Denmark, resulting in 'Slave Walks' in Copenhagen in 2011 (see below).²⁹ Parallel to the exhibitions in Copenhagen, ACRRA

dies (*Vestindien. St. Croix, St. Thomas og St. Jan*), alongside a volume on the impact of colonialism and its heritage in Denmark (*Danmark. En kolonimagt*).

24 Thode Jensen and Simonsen, "Introduction": 478.

25 See further Erik Gøbel, *A Guide to Sources for the History of the Danish West Indies (U.S. Virgin Islands), 1671–1917* (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2002).

26 Nonbo Andersen, "'We have Reconquered the Islands'"; Thode Jensen and Simonsen, "Introduction": 481. On SCARP, see <https://www.ft.dk/samling/20091/almdel/kuu/bilag/27/747359.pdf> [accessed 28.02.2023].

27 Randi Marselis, "Descendants of Slaves: The Articulation of Mixed Racial Ancestry in a Danish Television Documentary Series," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 11, no. 4 (2008): 447–69.

28 The video is available at <http://den-vestindiske-arv.dk/outro/vestindiske-stemmer/> [accessed 23.03.2022].

29 Anders Boyer Nielsen, Camilla Nørholm Edens and Sophie Lund-Hansen, "Trekantshandelen i København – en osyelig historie?" (bachelor's thesis, University of Copenhagen, 2011).

repeated its demand for an official apology and for repatriations from Denmark in a video published on YouTube in 2010.³⁰ Two years later, Astrid Nonbo Andersen and Lars Jensen brought the debate to Denmark and raised questions about Danish colonialism, postcolonial legacies, and the heritage of slavery and the slave trade.³¹ Kåre Lauring's presentation of the Danish transatlantic slave trade highlighted its human costs and consequences,³² generating a critical debate about him neglecting its complexities and downplaying the underlying causes of the mortality of enslaved Africans and European seamen onboard Danish slave ships.³³

The public debate in Denmark heated up again during the centennial of the sale of the Danish West Indies to the United States in 2017. At this point, the question of an official apology for Denmark's engagement in the transatlantic slave trade and slavery in the Caribbean had been on the table for almost two decades: however, similar to the negative response to the CARICOM in 2013, Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen refrained from apologizing when visiting St. Croix in 2017.³⁴ Astrid Nonbo Andersen, in turn, reminded the general public in Denmark about the demands of ACRRA and CARICOM.³⁵ Her postcolonial critique of Danish exceptionalism, Lars Jensen highlights, made a strong plea for a critical engagement with slavery heritage and colonial memory in Denmark.³⁶

2.2 Sweden: A Mere Footnote in Swedish History?

The Swedish debate on colonial memory and slavery heritage resembles the Danish one. Similar to the Danish case, the colonial past remained a non-issue in the historiography of modern Sweden for a long time. St. Barthélemy figured at best as a footnote, and the slave trade and slavery hardly at all, in presentations of the national history of Sweden. In contrast to the Danish West Indies, there exists no material evidence of for-

30 "Denmark, the Virgin Islands, and Reparations for Slavery," 22.06.2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFscsMbWhU> [accessed 23.03.2022].

31 Maj Bach Madsen, "Denmark Cannot Apologise for Slave Trade," 27.08.2012, <https://scienordic.com/criminality-denmark-ethics/denmark-cannot-apologise-for-slave-trade/1375831> [accessed 23.03.2022]; Lars Jensen, *Danmark – rigsfællesskab, tropekolonier og den postkoloniale arv* (Copenhagen: Hans Reitzels Forla, 2012).

32 Kåre Lauring, *Slaverne dansede of holdt sig lystige – en fortælling om den danske slavehandel* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2014).

33 See Gunvor Simonsen's discussion in *Historisk tidsskrift* 114, no. 2 (2014): 605–9.

34 Anita Brask Rasmussen, "Der er en grund til, at min bog hedder 'Ingen undskyldning'," 31.03.2017, <https://www.information.dk/kultur/2017/03/grund-bog-hedder-ingen-undskyldning> [accessed 28.03.2022].

35 Astrid Nonbo Andersen, *Ingen Undskyldning. Erindringer om Dansk Vestindien og kravet om erstatninger for slaveriet* (Copenhagen: Gyldendals, 2017).

36 Lars Jensen, "Commemoration, Nation Narration, and Colonial Historiography in Postcolonial Denmark," *Scandinavian Studies* 91, no. 1–2 (2019): 13–30.

mer slave markets and slave plantations on the “Swedish” Caribbean island.³⁷ There were a few studies on the Swedish West Indian colony, all of them focusing on political, administrative, and economic aspects from a Eurocentric perspective.³⁸ Swedish colonialism was treated as an exceptional case, as was Swedish colonial past in North America, Africa, and the Caribbean.³⁹ Sweden’s role as a ‘humanitarian super power’ during the era of decolonisation and the Non-Alignment Movement dominated the historiography and public political discourse.⁴⁰ Swedish colonial amnesia was almost total for a century when Swedish author Göran Skytte made headlines with his attack on ‘royal slavery’ on St Barthélemy in 1986, one of the first publications that critically engaged with slavery and slave trade under the Swedish flag.⁴¹ Interestingly, both previous and Skytte’s presentations rested on empirical material from the 1780s and 1790s in the national archives in Stockholm for discussing slavery and the slave trade on the island.⁴² Empirical investigations had to wait to the 2010s, when two historians at Åbo Akademi University in Finland, Holger Weiss and Victor Wilson, together with the Swedish historians Fredrik Thomasson and Ale Pålsson, started their respective empirical research projects, resulting in a series of monographs and PhD theses from 2015.⁴³ Prior to this,

37 Lill-Ann Körber, “Travelling to ‘Caribbean Sweden’ – St. Barthélemy as Tourist and Tax Paradise,” *Rethinking Scandinavia* 2 (2018): 1–21; Lill-Ann Körber, “Sweden and St. Barthélemy: Exceptionalisms, Whiteness, and the Disappearance of Slavery from Colonial History,” *Scandinavian Studies* 91, no. 1–2 (2019): 87.

38 E.O.E. Högström, *S. Barthelemy under svenskt välde* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1888); Ingegerd Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin S:t Barthélemy och Västindiska kompaniet fram till 1796* (Lund: A.-B. Ph. Lindstedts bokhandel, 1951).

39 Gunlög Fur, “Colonialism and Swedish History: Unthinkable Connections?” *Scandinavian Colonialism and the Rise of Modernity: Small Time Agents in a Global Arena*, ed. Magdalena Naum and Jonas Monie Nordin (New York: Springer, 2013): 17–36.

40 Gunlög Fur and John L. Hennessey, “Svensk colonialism, Sverige och colonialism eller svenskar och kolonialism?” *Historisk tidskrift* 140, no. 3 (2020): 375–84.

41 Göran Skytte, *Det kungliga svenska slaveriet* (Stockholm: Askelin & Hägglund, 1986).

42 Early presentations include Ernst Ekman, “Sweden, the Slave Trade and Slavery, 1784–1847,” *Revue française d’histoire d’outre-mer* 226–227 (1975): 221–31; Yolande Lavoie, Carolyn Fick and Francine M. Mayer, “A Particular Study of Slavery in the Caribbean Island of Saint Barthélemy, 1648–1846,” *Caribbean Studies* 28, no. 2 (1995): 369–403.

43 Holger Weiss, “A Divided Space: Subjects and Objects in the Swedish West Indies during the Late-Eighteenth Century,” in *Sweden in the Eighteenth-Century World: Provincial Cosmopolitans*, ed. Göran Rydén (London: Ashgate, 2013): 275–300; Fredrik Thomasson, “Thirty-Two Lashes at Quatre Piquets. Slave Laws and Justice in the Swedish Colony of St. Barthélemy ca. 1800,” in *Ports of Globalisation, Places of Creolisation: Nordic Possessions in the Atlantic World During the Era of the Slave Trade*, ed. Holger Weiss (Leiden: Brill, 2015): 280–305; Victor Wilson, “Commerce in Disguise: War and Trade in the Caribbean Free Port of Gustavia, 1793–1815” (PhD diss., Åbo Akademi University, 2015); Weiss, *Slavhandel och slaveri under svensk flagg*; Ale Pålsson, “Our Side of the Water: Political Culture in the Swedish Colony of St Barthélemy 1800–1825” (PhD diss., University of Stockholm, 2017); Fredrik Thomasson, *Svarta S:t Barthélemy: Människoöden i en svensk koloni 1785–1847* (Stockholm: Natur och kultur, 2022).

there was György Novaky's groundwork on the seventeenth-century Swedish Africa Company and its ambitions to engage in the transatlantic slave trade, published in 1990.⁴⁴

Postcolonial studies on Sweden's colonial past started in the late 1990s and introduced a postcolonial perspective on Swedish society.⁴⁵ A critical debate about Sweden's colonial past in the Caribbean thus already existed when the Swedish government announced its plan to participate in the official commemorations of the bicentennial of the abolition of the British transatlantic slave trade. In July 2007, the Swedish government outlined in supplementary directives to the government authority Delegation for Human Rights (*Delegationen för mänskliga rättigheter*) to increase awareness among the general public, and especially among school children, about Swedish involvement in the transatlantic slave trade. A special day of commemoration was held on October 9, 2007, in Stockholm, the day when the last slave received his freedom on St. Barthélemy in 1847. However, although acknowledging Sweden's active participation in the slave trade, even claiming that Swedish iron was used for slave shackles, the government never apologized for Sweden's involvement in the slave trade. However, instead of initiating empirical research to gather information about slavery and the slave trade under the Swedish flag, the Delegation for Human Rights chose to cooperate with civil society organizations, such as Afrosvenskarnas riksförbund (Afro-Swedish National Association), Centrum mot rasism (Centre Against Racism), ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes), Kvinna till Kvinna (Women to Women), and Amnesty Business Group, and published a short booklet on the topic, *Slaveriet då och nu – Rätten till frihet (Slavery Now and Then – The Right to Freedom)*, distributing 15,000 copies to all Swedish high schools.⁴⁶

The activities of the delegation and civil society organizations in highlighting Swedish engagement in slavery and the slave trade resulted in the politicization of the debate in Sweden. Afrosvenskarnas riksförbund and several members of parliament have since lobbied for declaring October 9 as a national day of remembrance for Sweden's participation in Atlantic slavery.⁴⁷ Civil society activists criticized the

44 György Nováky, *Handelskompanier och kompanihandel: Svenska Afrikakompaiet 1649–1663, en studie i feodal handel* (Uppsala: Acta Upsaliensis, 1990).

45 Raoul Granqvist, ed., *Svenska överord: En bok om gränslöshet och begränsningar* (Eslöv: B. Östlings bokförlag Symposion, 1999); Michael McEachrane and Louis Faye, eds., *Sverige och de Andra: Postkoloniala perspektiv* (Stockholm: Natur och kultur, 2001); Gunlög Fur, *Colonialism in the Margins: Cultural Encounters in New Sweden and Lapland* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

46 Holger Weiss, "Slaveriet under svensk flagg och dess minneskultur," in *Från Afrikakompaniet till Tokyo: En vänbok till György Novaky*, ed. Marie Lennersand (Stockholm: Bokförlaget Exkurs, 2017): 12–36.

47 Michael Echrane and Madubuko Diakité, "Report on the Universal Human Rights People of African Decent in Sweden (29th March 2018): Alternative Report to Sweden's 22nd and 23rd periodical reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination," https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/SWE/INT_CERD_NGO_SWE_30863_E.pdf [accessed 03.04.2022].

lack of knowledge of Sweden's colonial past and the exclusion of people of color in presentations on Swedish history.⁴⁸ In 2014, Tobias Hübinette underscored the need for a national day of commemoration and called for an identification of slavery heritage sites in Sweden in his investigation on Afrophobia, racism, and the lack of knowledge of Sweden's non-white past and the means to counteract it.⁴⁹ Interestingly, the voices of historians were more or less lacking, apart from Fredrik Thomasson, who addressed in a TV interview in 2013 the 'double forgetting' in Sweden, where neither the colonial past nor slavery was erased from the national historical canon.⁵⁰

2.3 Norway and Finland: Not Part of 'our' History?

Postcolonial perspectives on the past also allowed for critical assessments on Norwegian and Finnish involvement in Atlantic slavery. For a long time, the theme did not exist in the national histories of the two countries and was at best regarded as belonging to Danish or Swedish history. However, historians in both countries have time and again underscored the unified and intertwined histories of these countries. In Norway, the discovery of the wreck of the Fredensborg slave ship by Norwegian divers outside Arendal in 1974 was front-page news, but it took two decades before a critical examination about Norwegian involvement in slavery and slave trade took off.⁵¹ In Finland, some historians highlighted the role of Ostrobothnia as Europe's main producer of tar in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, of key importance in enabling British and Dutch Atlantic shipping,⁵² and the attempt by impoverished peasants during the famine of 1784 to emigrate to St. Barthélemy.⁵³ However, in both countries a critical debate about slavery and the slave trade only took off during the 2010s.

48 Cecilia Sylvan Henriksson and Patrick Gibson, *Svart i Sverige: Om svart kulturhistoriskt inflytande i Sverige* (Stockholm: Bladh By Bladh, 2012).

49 Tobias Hübinette, Samson Beshir and Victoria Kawesa, *Afrofobi. En kunskapsöversikt över afrosvenskarnas situation i dagens Sverige* (Botkyrka: Mångkulturellt centrum, 2014).

50 Fredrik Thomasson, "Sveriges slavhistoria avslöjad," 15.10.2013, <http://www.svt.se/nyheter/vetenskap/sveriges-slavhistoria-avslöjad> [accessed 17.01.2023].

51 Leif Svalesen, *Slaveskibet Fredensborg og dansk-norsk slavehandel i 1700-tallet* (Oslo: Cappelen, 1996); Leif Svalesen, *Slave Ship Fredensborg* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000). See further Johan Kloster, "Nordisk triangelfart med slaver, elfenben og råsukker i lasten. Et formidlingsprosjekt," *Norsk Maritimt Museum Årboka* (2017): 77–94, <https://dms-cf-10.dimu.org/file/0136Jw78EgRH> [accessed 28.02.2023].

52 E.E. Kaila, *Pohjanmaa ja meri 1600- ja 1700-luvuilla. Talousmaantieteellis-historiallinen tutkimus* (Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1931); Markku Kuisma, *Metsäteollisuuden maa. Suomi, metsät ja kansainvälinen järjestelmä 1620–1920* (Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1993).

53 Pekka Masonen, "Kustavilainen siirtomaapolitiikka ja Saint-Barthélemy'n kuume. Historiografisia anekdootteja," *Historiallinen aikakauskirja* 105, no. 3 (2007): 330–45.

The CARICOM claim for slavery reparations in 2013 sparked a debate in the Norwegian media about the country's participation in the transatlantic slave trade and its (non-)visibility in Norway.⁵⁴ Two young Norwegian historians, Maria Lavik and Fredrik Hyrum Svensli, featured prominently in the debate, addressing Norwegian involvement in the transatlantic slave trade by staffing slave forts on the African coast, sailing on slave ships, and carrying goods produced by slaves back to Norway and the rest of Europe.⁵⁵ A few years later, Hanne Østhus published her research on slaves and non-European servants living in Denmark-Norway during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.⁵⁶ The debate intensified when the Norwegian author Fartein Horgar started to publish his West India quintet, *Paradisets elendige* (2016), *I slaktemåned* (2017), *Frihedens kjørtere* (2018), *Benjamins reise* (2019), and *Svart Babel* (2021), on the slave trade and slavery in the Danish-Norwegian West Indies. Horgar has been among the most visible activists since then, contesting the collective memory about the 'marginal' Danish-Norwegian involvement in the transatlantic slave trade and the 'benign' form of slavery in the Danish-Norwegian West Indies.⁵⁷ However, the positions of activists have been countered by some commentators, arguing that while some Norwegians did participate, Norway as a nation cannot be held responsible.⁵⁸

In comparison to the three Scandinavian countries, the debate about slavery and the slave trade took a different direction in Finland. The commemorations of the bicentennial of the abolition of (British) transatlantic slave trade in 2007 were hardly noted in Finland and generated little public interest. In national historiography, the Swedish Caribbean colony was not even a footnote, despite the fact that Finland was part of the kingdom of Sweden until 1809; among the Swedish vessels arriving at Gustavia in 1787 was the *Express* from Åbo (Turku).⁵⁹ One year earlier, another vessel

54 John Olav Egeland, "Slavenasjonen Norge," *Dagbladet*, 28.12.2013, <https://www.dagbladet.no/kultur/slavenasjonen-norge/60215495> [accessed 29.03.2022].

55 Maria Lavik, "Kolonimakta Noreg og slavane," 15.12.2013, <https://www.nrk.no/ytring/olonimaktanoreg-1.11355212>; Fredrik Hyrum Svensli, "Slik levde nordmennene som deltok i slavehandelen i Afrika," *Dagbladet*, 02.06.2014, <https://www.aftenposten.no/viten/i/oR2xm/slik-levde-nordmennene-som-deltok-i-slavehandelen-i-afrika> [both accessed 29.03.2022].

56 Hanne Østhus, "Slaver og ikke-europeiske tjenstefolk i Danmark-Norge på 1700- og i begynnelsen av 1800-tallet," *Arbeiderhistorie* 22, no. 1 (2018): 33–47.

57 "Sukker og slaveri – fakta og fiksjon om vår slavehandel," 31.01.2018, <https://litteraturhusetitrondeheim.no/arrangement/sukker-slaveri-fakta-fiksjon-slavehandel/>; "Fartein Horgar: Norsk koloni- og slavehistorie," 17.08.2018, <https://litteraturhusetitrondeheim.no/arrangement/boklansering-fartein-horgar-2/>; Bernt Erik Pedersen, "Forteller om norsk slavehandel: Vårt regime var hardere," 17.02.2021, <https://www.dagsavisen.no/kultur/2021/02/17/forteller-om-norsk-slavehandel-var-regime-var-hardere/> [all accessed 29.03.2022].

58 Øyvind Andersen, "Norge dreiv ikke med slavehandel," 12.07.2020, <https://www.argumentagder.no/post/norge-drev-ikke-med-slavehandel> [accessed 29.03.2022].

59 In contrast to the three monolingual Scandinavian countries, Finland has two official languages, Finnish and Swedish, alongside the Sami language, which has official status in the northernmost part of Finland. Academic and popular debates are conducted in Finnish and Swedish; as my mother

from Åbo carried raw sugar directly from St. Domingue (Haiti) to Åbo. Although merchants in Åbo did not invest in the Swedish West India Company (founded in 1786), some of them founded a sugar refinery in Åbo in 1756. Other sugar refineries were established in Borgå (Porvoo) in 1784 and in Helsingfors (Helsinki) in 1806. When treated in historical accounts, these establishments were linked to national economic development and the consumption of luxuries.⁶⁰ Raw cane sugar, it was noted, was carried by Finnish vessels from Bordeaux, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, and London and was not linked to the wider Atlantic.⁶¹ On the other hand, presentations for the general public such as K.G. Olin's *Våra första Västindienfarare*, claimed that St. Barthélemy was "our" colony, and noted that Finns (being Swedish subjects) played a role in the establishment and administration of Swedish colonial rule; slavery and the slave trade were addressed but did not take center stage in the account.⁶²

However, it took almost thirty years before the first presentation in Finnish appeared on the topic. Earlier research was published in Swedish and did not generate any debate in the Finnish-speaking press.⁶³ This changed in 2019, when Jouko Aaltonen and Seppo Sivonen published their account on "Swedish-Finnish" (*ruotsalais-suomalainen*) colonialism in the Caribbean.⁶⁴ "We do not rank among the major offenders but neither were we mere bystanders," they underscored in an interview.⁶⁵ The book made headlines on the national TV news: Finns participated in the transatlantic slave trade and sugar refineries in early modern Finland used slave-grown raw

tongue is Swedish, I use the Swedish names for Finnish towns and locations (the Finnish names are given in bracelets).

60 "Kun Ruotsi orjia kauppassi," *Yliopistolehti*, 27.11.2014, <https://www2.helsinki.fi/fi/uutiset/talous-yhteiskunta/kun-ruotsi-orjia-kauppassi> [accessed 02.04.2022].

61 Weiss, "Slaveriet under svensk flagg och dess minneskultur"; also Elli-Alina Hiilamo, "Åbo Akademin professori: Suomellakin on kolonialistinen historia – teollisuus nousi Turussa ja Tampereella orjakaupan voimalla," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 24.10.2018, <https://www.hs.fi/kulttuuri/art-2000005875299.html> [accessed 02.04.2022].

62 K-G. Olin, *Våra första Västindienfarare* (Jakobstad: Olimex, 1990).

63 Weiss, *Slavhandel och slaveri under svensk flagg*. However, the book was discussed in the Swedish-speaking media in Finland: Fredrik Sonck, "Slaveriets historia är också svensk och finländsk," *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 19.06.2016, <https://www.hbl.fi/artikel/slaveriets-historia-ar-ocksa-svensk-och-finlandsk-2/>; Emma Strömberg, "Forskning om slaveriet ger bränsle åt politisk debatt," *Tidskriften Ikaros* 1 (2017): 26–28, http://www.tidskriftenikaros.fi/wp-content/uploads/arkiv/2017_1/weiss.pdf. It also made headlines in the major newspapers in Sweden: Dick Harrison, "Sanningen om det svenska slaveriet," *Svenska Dagbladet*, 24.09.2016, <https://www.svd.se/a/2lVBv/sanningen-om-det-svenska-slaveriet>; "När Sverige var en global slavnation," *Dagens Nyheter*, 18.12.2016, <https://www.dn.se/kultur-noje/nar-sverige-var-en-global-slavnation/> [all accessed 02.04.2022].

64 Jouko Aaltonen and Seppo Sivonen, *Orjia ja isäntä – ruotsalais-suomalainen siirtomaaherruus Karibiassa* (Helsinki: Into, 2019).

65 Nina Oisalo, "Ruotsalaisten ja suomalaisten osuus orjakaupan historiassa on lakaistu maton alle – 'Emme ehkä olleet suurimpia syyllisiä, mutta emme myöskään sivullisia,' sanoivat suomalaistutkijat," 22.04.2020, <https://www.maaailma.net/uutiset/ruotsi-suomen-osuus-orjakaupan-historiassa-on-lakaistumaton-alle-emme-ehka-olleet> [accessed 29.03.2022].

sugar!⁶⁶ Some commentators were astonished about Finnish involvement in Swedish colonial rule in the Caribbean (some even claimed it to be Swedish-Finnish [*ruotsalais-suomalainen*] colonial rule).⁶⁷ As Finns had also been engaged in the slave trade and owned slaves,⁶⁸ some commentators even suspected that CARICOM would also send a claim for reparations to Finland.⁶⁹

The debate about whether Atlantic slavery and the slave trade should become part and parcel of Finnish collective memory was soon challenged by an equally forgotten narrative about the exposure of Finns and Karelians to enslavement and the Eurasian slave trade. The topic hardly figured in Finnish historiography until Finnish historian Jukka Korpela published his seminal work on Finland and Karelia as a slaving zone during the medieval period in 2014.⁷⁰ Although Korpela's investigation received attention in the media and among researchers,⁷¹ his argument that Finns were victims of the "white slave trade" has not (as of yet) made it into the national canon.⁷² Instead, the counter-narrative of enslaved Finns made national headlines when Finnish historian Teemu Keskisarja claimed in 2015 that Finland had suffered more from enslavement than any African country. Referring to Kustaa H.J. Vilkkunen's seminal research on the suffering of the Finnish people during the *isoviha* or 'great wrath'

66 "Suomalaisilla synkkä rooli maailman orjakaupassa – tällä paratiisisaarella tapahtui kamalia asioita," 23.08.2021, <https://www.mtvuutiset.fi/artikkeli/suomalaisillakin-synkka-rooli-maailman-orja-kaupassa-talla-paratiisisaarella-tapahtui-kamalia-asioita/8215276> [accessed 29.03.2022].

67 Päivi Puukka, "Suomalaiset käyttivät orjien kasvattamaa sokeriruokoa – ruotsalais-suomalainen siirtomaaherruus huipentui orjakauppatamaan Karibiassa," 20.10.2019, <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-11017023> [accessed 02.04.2022].

68 Päivi Puukka, "Suomalaistehtaat käyttivät orjien kasvattamaa sokeriruokoa – ruotsalais-suomalainen siirtomaaherruus huipentui orjakauppatamaan Karibiassa," 20.10.2019, <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-11017023>; Risto Korhonen, "Suomalaiset olivat mukana orjakaupassa," [NEWSPAPER NAME], 06.01.2020, <https://www.kansanuutiset.fi/artikkeli/4194466-suomalaiset-olivat-mukana-orjakaupassa>; Pia Lämsä, "Orjakauppa maailmassa ja meillä," 24.10.2020, <https://humanpath.net/orjakaupaa-maailmassa-ja-meilla/> [all accessed 29.03.2022].

69 Seppo Huhta, "Suomalaisille tulossa miljardeja korvauksia orjuudesta!" 09.07.2021, <https://www.extrauutiset.com/suomalaisille-tulossa-miljardeja-korvauksia-orjuudesta/> [accessed 02.04.2022].

70 Jukka Korpela, *Idän orjakauppa keskiajalla: ihmisryöstöt Suomesta ja Karjalasta* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen kirjallisuuden seura, 2014); Jukka Korpela, *Slaves from the North: Finns and Karelians in the East European Slave Trade, 900–1600* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

71 Hilka Karonen, "Tutkimus suomalaisesta orjuudesta: Nainen oli jopa 20 hevosen arvoinen," 07.01.2015, <https://www.iltalehti.fi/uutiset/a/2015010718982884>; Markku Jokipii, "Ihminen oli keskiajan kauppatavara ja vaati huolellisen kuljetuksen," 07.05.2016, <https://www.verkkouutiset.fi/ihminen-oli-keskiajan-kauppatavara-ja-vaati-huolellisen-kuljetuksen-50117/#3457169d> [both accessed 29.03.2022]; Antti Ruotsala, "Aluevaltaus idän orjakaupan tutkimuksessa," *Tieteessä tapahtuu* 2 (2016): 65–66.

72 "Suomesta ryöstettiin keskiajalla naisia ja lapsia orjiksi idän orjamarkkinoille," 07.01.2015, <https://www.epressi.com/tiedotteet/kotimaa/suomesta-ryostettiin-keskiajalla-naisia-ja-lapsia-orjiksi-idan-orja-markkinoille.html> [accessed 29.03.2022].

(when Russia invaded and occupied Finland during the Great Northern War from 1714 to 1721),⁷³ Keskiarja claimed that about ten percent of the population of Finland, or about 20–30,000 inhabitants, the majority of them in Finnish-speaking Ostrobothnia and eastern Finland, were enslaved and taken to Russia, some of them being sold to Persian slave traders.⁷⁴ The collective memory of Finns must commemorate the sufferings of Finns during Russian occupation rather than alleged Finnish participation in Swedish colonialism, the counter-narrative to Finnish involvement in the transatlantic slave trade therefore claims. The most militant activists even push for a monument to Finnish suffering from enslavement and genocide to be erected on the island of Karlö (Hailuoto), where Russian Cossacks killed 800 civilians.⁷⁵

3 Part Two: Displaying, Visualizing, and Commemorating Slavery Heritage

Parallel to the academic and popular debate about postcolonialism and the involvement and legacy of Atlantic slave trade and slavery in the Nordic countries, questions of its cultural heritage and remembrance started to arise. Museums, government authorities, and private initiatives have in various ways uncovered the impact of Nordic colonialism and the remnants of slavery in the three Scandinavian countries (but not in Finland, as will be discussed below).

Given the historiography of the debate, displaying and visualizing slavery heritage has taken different expressions in the Nordic countries. Public institutions such as national, regional, or municipal archives, libraries, and museums have started to address the involvement and impact of slavery in permanent exhibitions, albeit with some interesting differences. The National Museum of Denmark ranks among the forerunners, commissioning a new permanent exhibition on Danish colonialism, *Voi-*

73 Kustaa H.J. Vilkuna, *Viha: perikato, kateruus, ja kertomus isostavihasta* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen kirjallisuuden seura, 2005), and *Paholaisen sota* (Helsinki: Teos, 2006). Also Heikki Aittokoski, “Täystuhon jäljillä,” *Helsingin Sanomat Kuukausiliite*, 07.08.2021: 28–37.

74 “Historioitsija: Synkkyuden Suomi kärsi orjuudesta jopa enemmän kuin mikään Afrikan maa,” 23.10.2015, <https://www.uusisuomi.fi/uutiset/historioitsija-synkkyuden-suomi-karsi-orjuudesta-jopa-enemman-kuin-mikaan-afrikan-maa/6b127f6a-c9d3-387f-9cc0-8acf6a108b26>; “Pimeä historia: Viimeisellä rannalla – Hailuodon pakolaisleiriltä vietiin suomalaisia orjiksi,” 09.12.2015/03.01.2020, <https://yle.fi/aihe/artikkeli/2015/12/09/pimea-historia-viimeisella-rannalla>; Pekka Särkiö, “Orjuudesta,” 10.10.2020, <https://www.kotimaa.fi/blogit/orjuudesta/>; Risto Degerman, “Hailuodon murhaperjantai oli poikkeuksellinen verilöyly – vanhat tarinat isostavihasta elävät vielä 300 vuotta rauhan jälkeenkin,” 30.08.2021, <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-12072751> [all accessed 29.03.2022].

75 “Orjakauppa ja kansanmurha Pohjanmaalla – pysäyttävän muistopaikka isolle vihalle on Hailuoto,” 08.07.2020, <https://www.kaleva.fi/orjakauppa-ja-kansanmurha-pohjanmaalla-pysayttavin/2676325> [accessed 29.03.2022].

ces from the Colonies, in four rooms in Prinsens Palais (downtown Copenhagen) in October 2017, of which one concentrates on the transatlantic slave trade and slavery in the Danish West Indies and giving a voice to the enslaved.⁷⁶ In addition, the museum has digitalized substantial parts of its collections and made them available for the public on its homepage. The databank includes photographs on documents, items, and artefacts produced by slaves or linked to the slave trade.⁷⁷ In addition, its homepage has a section titled 'Historical Knowledge'. Texts on the Danish West Indies, including entries on slavery, the plantation system, the abolition of slavery, the Fireburn uprising of 1878, and the transfer of the islands to the USA, are found under the thematic heading 'Historical Themes' (but, interestingly, not under the header 'The Story of Denmark!').⁷⁸ In addition, the homepage provides a 36-page booklet on Danish colonialism, slavery, and the consumption of slave-produced goods in Denmark for classroom teaching.⁷⁹ The National Archives of Denmark (*Rigsarkivet*), in turn, digitalized all records relating to the Danish West Indies,⁸⁰ accessible through the homepage of the archives.⁸¹ Apart from the digital records, the portal also includes guides and topical information on Danish colonialism, slavery, and the slave trade.⁸² A similar thematic digital resource database (*særudgivelse*) is also provided by the Royal Library (*Det kongelige bibliotek*), including 6,773 images from the Danish West Indies⁸³ and the Danish Maritime Museum, with topical entries and images on Danish colonial history and colonialism.⁸⁴

In comparison to Denmark, no national institutions in Sweden have special thematic sections on Swedish colonialism or on slavery and slave trade under the Swedish flag. Documents related to the Swedish colony of St. Barthélemy in the National Archives of Sweden (*Riksarkivet*), the *S:t Barthélemysamligen*, have been digitalized and

76 <https://en.natmus.dk/museums-and-palaces/the-national-museum-of-denmark/exhibitions/voices-from-the-colonies/> [accessed 28.02.2023].

77 <https://samlinger.natmus.dk/> [accessed 28.02.2023].

78 <https://en.natmus.dk/historical-knowledge/historical-themes/danish-colonies/the-danish-west-indies/> [accessed 28.02.2023].

79 Christian Vollmond, *Sukker, slaver og skæbner* (Copenhagen: Nationalmuseet, 2007), https://natmus.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/Editor/natmus/undervisning/dokumenter/etnografisk_samling/Sukker_slaver_og_skaebner.pdf [accessed 28.02.2023].

80 "More Than One Kilometer of Archival Records from the Colonial Era Now Available to All," 01.03.2017, <https://www.sa.dk/en/news/more-than-one-kilometer-of-archival-records-from-the-colonial-era-now-available-to-all/>. See further Gunvor Simonsen, "Digital Resources: Study of Danish Activities in the Caribbean," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Latin American History*, 22.01.2021, <https://oxfordre.com/latinamericanhistory/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199366439.001.0001/acrefore-9780199366439-e-763> [both accessed 30.03.2022].

81 <https://www.virgin-islands-history.org/en/> [accessed 28.02.2023].

82 <https://www.virgin-islands-history.org/en/history/> [accessed 28.02.2023].

83 <http://www5.kb.dk/images/billed/2010/okt/billeder/subject5259/en/> [accessed 28.02.2023].

84 <http://billedarkiv.mfs.dk/fotoweb/archives/5001-Museet-for-s%C3%B8farts-billedarkiv/?25=Kolonier> [accessed 28.02.2023].

are accessible through the internet;⁸⁵ a similar project has been launched for digitalizing local administrative archives from the Swedish period in the Archives Nationales d'Outre-mer in Aix-en-Provence.⁸⁶ A few additional digitalized resources are searchable on *Stockholmskällan*, the digital resource database of Stockholm City Museum, and Digitalt Museum, the online database of the Swedish Maritime Museum.⁸⁷ Interestingly, the *Historiska museet* (Swedish History Museum) in Stockholm has a special (general) exhibition on slavery, the slave trade, and slave-produced goods, but one looks in vain here for information on Swedish colonialism and Saint Barthélemy!⁸⁸ Nevertheless, information on items related to early modern slavery are found on the knowledge database of the museum.⁸⁹ The only extensive exhibition on Swedish colonialism and St. Barthélemy is found in *Etnografiska museet* (Museum of Ethnography) in Stockholm;⁹⁰ objects/items produced by and related to slavery are also digitalized and found on Carlotta, the collections database of the museum.⁹¹ The City Museum of Gothenburg, in turn, devotes one hall of its permanent exhibition on the commercial and economic expansion of the city during the eighteenth century, highlighting not only the importance of the Swedish East India Company and the China trade but also the role of Caribbean slave-produced raw material (sugar) and the establishment of Gothenburg as the center for Swedish sugar refineries.⁹² Furthermore, the new permanent exhibition at the Maritime Museum in Gothenburg opened in fall 2022, critically displays Swedish colonialism and slavery on Saint Barthélemy as well as the consumption of slave-produced goods in Sweden.⁹³

The obvious center for displaying and problematizing the Danish-Norwegian colonial past in Norway is *Kuben*, which is part of Aust-Agder museum and archive in Arendal. *Kuben* displays a permanent exhibition titled 'Enslaved', telling the story of the Danish-Norwegian slave ship *Fredensborg*, the transatlantic slave trade, and slavery in the Danish West Indies, as well as focusing on slavery today.⁹⁴ The Norwegian website of the exhibition contains additional documentary material on the slave ship.⁹⁵ A copy

85 <https://sok.riksarkivet.se/?Sokord=S%3at+Barthelemysamlingen&page=1&postid=Arkis+a0972644-9ab7-11d5-a700-0002440207bb&tab=post&FacettState=undefined%3ac%7c&s=Balder> [accessed 28.02.2023].

86 Fredrik Thomasson, "Den karibiske skorpionen: Om digitaliseringen av det svenska Saint-Barthélemy-arkivet i Aix-en-Provence," *Historisk tidskrift* 138, no. 1 (2018): 78–90.

87 <https://stockholmskallan.stockholm.se/>; <https://www.sjohistoriska.se/samlingar/sok-i-samlingarna/digitaltmuseum> [both accessed 28.02.2023].

88 Visited March 4, 2022.

89 <https://historiska.se/upptack-historien/artikel/minnen-av-globalisering/> [accessed 28.02.2023].

90 Visited March 5, 2022.

91 <https://collections.smvk.se/carlotta-em/web> [accessed 28.02.2023].

92 Visited March 9, 2022.

93 Visited 28.3.2023.

94 <https://www.kubenarendal.no/opplev-paa-kuben/english/exhibitions/> [accessed 28.02.2023].

95 <https://www.kubenarendal.no/opplev-paa-kuben/utstillinger/slavegjort/> [accessed 28.02.2023].

of the slave ship is displayed at the Norwegian Maritime Museum.⁹⁶ The Fredensborg has since emerged as cultural heritage par excellence of the shared Danish-Norwegian involvement in the transatlantic slave trade and figures in the online resource database on Norwegian history, *Norges historie – Fra steinalderen til idag. Fortalt av fagfolk*.⁹⁷ In addition, the Fredensborg features in a recent TV documentary on the Norwegian slave trade.⁹⁸ The online resource database *Norges historie*, in turn, contains various materials and entries for classroom teaching on the Danish-Norwegian involvement in Atlantic slavery.⁹⁹

Professional online databases on the history, impact, and experiences of colonialism, slavery, and the slave trade for use in school and university classes have also been established in Denmark and Sweden. The Aarhus University web portal *danmarkshistorien.dk* includes thematic articles and documents on Danish-Norwegian colonial history and slavery,¹⁰⁰ including an entry on the debate for the demands for an official apology for Denmark's involvement in Atlantic slavery.¹⁰¹ The Danish web portal *Danmarks kolonihistorie*, produced by History Dialogues and Princeton University Global History Lab, features (archival and text) resources and research methods on Danish colonial history for school teachers.¹⁰² Further material and resources on slavery and the Danish West Indies for twelve classroom sessions, as well as guides for teachers, is provided by *Historie Lab – Nationalt Videntcenter for Historie og Kulturarvsformidling*.¹⁰³ A similar website is *Den Vestindiske Arv/The West Indian Heritage*, created by architect Ulla Lunn at Lunn & Co, providing material on Danish West Indian colonies with a focus on understanding the structure, function, and people of the colony.¹⁰⁴ Another website is *Christianshavns Sorte Fortid*, created by retired history teacher Anders Bjørn, containing texts and images on the Copenhagen neighborhood of Christianshavn as the center for Denmark's transatlantic slave trade.¹⁰⁵ *Den*

96 <https://marmuseum.no/slaveskipet-fredensborg> [accessed 28.02.2023].

97 Ingvild Velure, "Slaveskipet Fredensborg," 20.01.2020/21.10.2020, https://www.norgeshistorie.no/enevelde/1251_slaveskipet-fredensborg-.html [accessed 29.03.2022].

98 Ingrid Ciakudia, "Nordmenns involvering i slavehandel – ny norsk dokumentar om Norges mørke kolonihistorie," 27.10.2020, <https://afrika.no/artikkel/2020/10/27/nordmenns-involvering-i-slavehandel-ny-norsk-dokumentar-om-norges-m%C3%B8rke-kolonihistorie> [accessed 29.03.2022].

99 Hilde Sandvik, "Slaveri hjemme og ute," 25.11.2015, <https://www.norgeshistorie.no/grunnlov-og-ny-union/1322-Slaveri-hjemme-og-ute.html>; "Opphevelsen av den dansk-norske slavehandelen," 12.10.2018/17.09.2021, <https://www.norgeshistorie.no/undervisningsopplegg/dansketid/U1302-Opphevelsen-av-den-dansk-norske-slavehandelen.html> [both accessed 29.03.2022].

100 <https://danmarkshistorien.dk/vis/materiale/kolonihistorie-hvad-er-det/> [accessed 28.02.2023].

101 "Debatten om en officiel undskyldning for slaveriet i Dansk Vestindien, 1998–2017," <https://danmarkshistorien.dk/vis/materiale/debatten-om-en-officiel-undskyldning-for-slaveriet-i-dansk-vestindien-1998/> [accessed 28.02.2023].

102 <https://danmarkskolonihistorie.wordpress.com/> [accessed 28.02.2023].

103 <https://historielab.dk/til-undervisningen/kildebank/vestindienkildebank-2/> [accessed 28.02.2023].

104 <http://den-vestindiske-arv.dk/en/> [accessed 28.02.2023].

105 <https://sortefortid.dk/> [accessed 28.02.2023].

Vest Indiske Arv/The West Indian Heritage inspired BYLYD, a podcast on Danish urban studies and architecture, to critically examine the relationship between sugar and architecture in Denmark and the Danish West Indies.¹⁰⁶

In Sweden, the *Forum för levande historia* (The Living History Forum), a public agency operating under the Ministry of Culture initially established in 2003 to raise awareness about the Holocaust and crimes against humanity committed by communist regimes by offering and producing material for lower and upper secondary schools as well as seminars and in-service training for school staff, extended its mission to prevent and combat racism, including Afrophobia.¹⁰⁷ In October 2021, the Swedish government tasked the Living History Forum to enhance public knowledge about Sweden's involvement in the transatlantic slave trade and slavery.¹⁰⁸ The homepage of the Living History Forum now contains some material on St. Barthelemy, the transatlantic slave trade, and Afrophobia,¹⁰⁹ alongside a guide for teachers on how to use the material.¹¹⁰ Digital material for history classes, including those on slavery and slave trade under the Swedish flag, is further provided by the digital learning resource *SO-rummet*.¹¹¹ A recent initiative launched by some civil society activists is *Black Archives Sweden*. Initially a contemporary archive centered around the experiences and narratives of Afro-Swedes and Black people in Sweden, Black Archives Sweden also scrutinizes what they define as “public archives of violence and racism” as well as traces of colonialism in Sweden. Their first entry brings to attention the statue *De fem världsdelarna* (The Five Continents) at Järntorget in Gothenburg, defining it a marker of imperial memory and European colonialism.¹¹²

106 “#11 Sukker og slaver i dansk arkitektur,” <http://www.bylyd.dk/11-sukker-og-slaver-i-dansk-arkitektur> [accessed 01.04.2022].

107 Government Offices of Sweden, *A Comprehensive Approach to Combat Racism and Hate Crime: National Plan to Combat Racism, Similar Forms of Hostility and Hate Crime* (Stockholm: Government of Sweden, 2017), <https://www.government.se/492382/contentassets/e6047ff54c00452895005f07e2e2ba39/a-comprehensive-approach-to-combat-racism-and-hate-crime> [accessed 28.02.2023].

108 “Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet, Uppdrag till Forum för levande historia att öka kunskapen om Sveriges deltagande i den transatlantiska slavhandeln och slaveriet,” 07.10.2017, <https://www.regeringen.se/4a8fd3/contentassets/bf3d8ff21a8148118958c182b323e341/uppdrag-att-att-oka-kunskapen-om-sveriges-deltagande-i-den-transatlantiska-slavhandeln-och-slaveriet.pdf> [accessed 30.03.2022].

109 See further <https://www.levandehistoria.se/klassrummet/kallkritik-historiebruk-rasism/elevsida-kallkritik/st-barthelemy>; <https://www.levandehistoria.se/klassrummet/kallkritik-historiebruk-rasism/elevsida-historiebruk/st-barthelemy>; <https://www.levandehistoria.se/fakta-fordjupning/olika-former-av-intolerans/afrofobi/afrofobins-historia-i-sverige> [all accessed 28.02.2023].

110 https://www.levandehistoria.se/sites/default/files/kallkritik_historiebruk_och_rasism_-_om_klassrumsmaterialet.pdf [accessed 28.02.2023].

111 <https://www.so-rummet.se/kategorier/historia/nya-tiden/slaveri-och-triangelhandel#> [accessed 28.02.2023].

112 “Public Archives and Colonial Traces,” 27.10.2021, <https://www.blackarchivessweden.com/public-archives-and-colonial-traces/> [accessed 30.03.2022].

Spurred by the resource database on the Danish West Indies provided by the Danish National Archives, the Norwegian National Archives (*Arkivverket*) initiated a similar project in 2017 to identify Norwegian connections to Atlantic slavery. As a result, the building of the old eighteenth-century sugar refinery (*Sukkerhuset*) in Trondheim was identified as a memorial site.¹¹³ Similar buildings exist at several locations in the Nordic countries, but only a few of them have hitherto been recognized and included in the list of slavery heritage sites. Most of them are obvious targets – the residences, mansions, and warehouses in Copenhagen and Christianshavn of owners and investors in slave plantations in the Danish-Norwegian West Indies and companies engaged in the Danish-Norwegian trans-Atlantic slave trade, including Moltke’s Mansion (Christian IX’s Palæ at Amalienborg Palace), Bargum’s Mansion (Det Gule Palæ, 11 Amaliegade), Schimmelmann’s Mansion (Odd Fellow Palæ, 28 Bredgade), the MacEvoy Mansion (Dehns Palæ, 54 Bredgade), Jeppe Prætorius’ house (39 Ovengaden Neden Vandet), and the West Indian Warehouse (Vestindisk Pakhus, 40 Toldbodgade). These sites, alongside the locations of former sugar refineries (11 Nyhavn; 26 Strandgade), have figured prominently in the local slave walks that the Danish civil society organization Another Copenhagen initiated in 2011.¹¹⁴ The Copenhagen slave walks inspired local residents to identify the sites of other former sugar refineries, among others Skt. Croix Sukkerhus in Christianshavn.¹¹⁵ Hitherto, eighteenth-century sugar refineries features as part of national or local commercial and economic history, with no reference to slave-produced raw sugar from the Danish West Indies being processed in the factories. However, this changed during the critical debates in Denmark during the 2010s, informing people about the link between Roskilde Sukkerhus or Flensburg’s rum industry and local wealth generated from their direct links to Atlantic slavery.¹¹⁶ In addition, the role of *Kronborg Geværfabrik* (Kronborg Small Arms Works) in Hellebæk outside Elsinore in the transatlantic slave trade has been recognized – about one third of the 6,000 annu-

113 Jon Olav Hove, “Dei vestindiske øyane og den dansk-norske slavehandel,” 11.11.2017, <https://www.arkivverket.no/utforsk-arkivene/eldre-historie--1814/de-vestindiske-oyer-og-den-dansk-norske-slave-handel> [accessed 30.03.2022].

114 <https://www.facebook.com/AnotherCopenhagen/>; “Kender du Another Copenhagen?” <https://etan.derledeskbh.wordpress.com/tours/another-copenhagen/>; “København og Kolonierne,” <https://byvandring.nu/kolonitur/>; “Colonial Denmark and the Slave Trade,” <https://www.guideservicedanmark.dk/denmark-and-the-slave-trade/>; Rune Edberg, “10 Places in Copenhagen Linked to Colonialism,” 21.09.2020, <https://www.historyhit.com/10-places-in-copenhagen-linked-to-colonialism/> [all accessed 30.03.2022].

115 “Skt. Croix Sukkerhus,” 27.05.2014, <http://alda.dk/lokalhistorie/skt-croix-sukkerhus> [accessed 30.03.2022].

116 Daniel Tarkan Nacak Rasmussen, “Sukkerhus i Roskilde byggede på slavehandel i 1700-tallet,” *Roskilde Museum*, <https://romu.dk/blog/sukkerhus-i-roskilde-byggede-paa-slavehandel-i-1700-tallet/>; “TV: Rom & Sukker byen Flensborg,” 19.09.2017, <https://www.dcbib.dk/nyheder/nyt-fra-den-slesvigske-samling/tv-rom-sukker-byen-flensborg> (contains a link to a TV documentary by Jorgen Pedersen) [both accessed 01.04.2022].

ally produced muskets were transported to West Africa and traded there for enslaved Africans during the latter half of the eighteenth century.¹¹⁷

Identifying slavery heritage sites in Sweden started when the Afro-Swedish National Association started to contest the national narratives and to address the history of Afrophobia in Sweden by arranging slave walks in Stockholm in 2015. A key site along their route is Järntorget, where the office of the Swedish West India Company (from 1786 to 1805) and the house of its director and slave trader Lars Rejmers was located, along with the mansion of the Grill family (Grillska huset), one of the major shareholders in the company, at Stortorget. The walks also pass the De Geer Palais (nowadays the Royal Dutch embassy) in Södermalm, and the Skeppsbrokajen, where four enslaved African children disembarked and were given as presents to Louis De Geer, the director of the seventeenth-century Swedish Africa Company and “father of Swedish slave trade.” Other stops include the statue of King Gustav III (remembered for his role in initiating Swedish colonialism), the Räntmästarhuset at Slussplan for its link to Carl Linnaeus and his racial human taxonomy, and the Slussen area, the former site of Järngraven where so-called voyage iron produced at the Swedish iron works was weighed and then found its way to West Africa and the Caribbean.¹¹⁸ Louis De Geer made national headlines when a contemporary member of his family, the artist Carl Johan De Geer, exposed his forefather’s engagement in the transatlantic slave trade in his provocative exhibition *Släkten och slavarna (The Family and the Slaves)* at Norrköping Art Museum in 2019.¹¹⁹

The identification of slavery heritage sites in Sweden is concentrated in two urban locations, Stockholm and Gothenburg. In contrast to Copenhagen, where sugar refineries (*sockerbruk*) have been identified as slavery heritage sites, the Stockholm Slave Walk does not include them, although this might change as recent archaeological excavations in the Slussen area have uncovered pottery used for distilling cane sugar in the two eighteenth-century sugar refineries established on Södermalm.¹²⁰

117 “Kronborg Geværfabrik,” *Helsingør Leksikon*, https://helsingorleksikon.dk/index.php/Kronborg_Gev%C3%A6rfabrik; https://helsingorleksikon.dk/index.php/Kronborg_Gev%C3%A6rfabrik#Schimmelmann_og_Kronborg_Gev.C3.A6rfabrik [both accessed 28.02.2023].

118 “I slavhandelns fotspår,” 15.10.2015, <http://www.fria.nu/artikel/119641>; “The Little-Known Role Sweden Played in the Colonial Slave Trade,” 15.06.2020, <https://www.thelocal.se/20200615/how-can-sweden-better-face-up-to-its-colonial-past/>; “City Walk with Literary Agenda: In the Footsteps of the Slave Trade,” 20.05.2021, <https://www.hhs.se/en/about-us/calendar/art-initiative/2021/city-walk-with-literary-agenda--city-walk-in-the-footsteps-of-the-slave-trade/>. See further Faaid Ali-Nur, “De dolda berättelserna – en del av Sveriges koloniala arv,” *SO-didaktik – Interkulturell historia: Kulturmöten och världshistoria* 1 (2016): 42–45, https://issuu.com/so-didaktik/docs/so-didaktik_nr1_2016 [all accessed 01.04.2022].

119 Anna Hallgren, “Äntligen tar någon itu med Norrköpings slavhistoria,” 16.01.2019, <https://www.expressen.se/kultur/konst/antligen-tar-nagon-itu-med-norrkopings-slavhistoria/> [accessed 01.04.2022].

120 “Månadens fynd – oktober 2021,” <http://www.slussenportalen.se/index.php/pagaende-projekt/manadens-fynd/item/191-manadens-fynd-oktober-2021> [accessed 01.04.2022].

The three eighteenth-century sugar refineries in Norrköping¹²¹ and the Stenebergs sockerbruk in Gävle¹²² have not been included in the walks: no eighteenth-century Swedish iron works, which produced voyage iron, have been identified as slavery heritage sites.¹²³ In addition, one looks in vain for any information on the homepage of Klädesholmen, a Swedish herring company located on the island of Klädesholmen in Bohuslän, about salted herring caught in Bohuslän being used as staple food for enslaved plantation workers in the Caribbean during the second half of the eighteenth century.¹²⁴

The situation in Gothenburg illuminates the agency and activity of different groups in identifying slavery heritage sites. In 2014, the web portal *Det Gamla Göteborg* (Old Gothenburg), operated by a local association, already carried extensive entries on several well-known eighteenth-century Gothenburg-based families that made their fortune from investments in the transatlantic slave trade, protomodern industries that used slave-produced raw material, including cotton, sugar, and tobacco,¹²⁵ or the export of salted herring to the West Indies.¹²⁶ In 2019, the Göteborg International Biennial for Contemporary Art started to trace the legacy of colonialism, slavery, and slave trade in Gothenburg,¹²⁷ identifying the *Franska tomten* at Packhusplatsen as a possible site for a

121 “Sirap, socker och slaveri,” 17.06.2019, <https://arkeologerna.com/bloggar/arkeologi-i-norrkoping/sirap-socker-och-slaveri/>. A potential heritage site commemorating Norrköping’s involvement in Atlantic slavery could be the *Sockermästarens bostad* (the house of the sugar master), the only remaining building of the eighteenth-century sugar refineries in the town: see “Gamla Rådstugugatan 26 (Sockermästarens bostad),” <https://www.norrkopingshistoria.se/gamla-radstugugatan-26-sockermastarens-bostad/> [both accessed 01.04.2022].

122 “Stenebergs sockerbruk,” <https://www.lansstyrelsen.se/gavleborg/samhalle/kulturmiljo/byggnadsminnen/byggnadsminnen-i-gavleborg/gavle/stenebergs-sockerbruk.html> [accessed 28.02.2023].

123 On Swedish voyage iron, see further Chris Evans and Göran Rydén, *Baltic Iron in the Atlantic World in the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2007); Chris Evans and Göran Rydén, “‘Voyage Iron’: An Atlantic Slave Trade Currency, Its European Origins, and West African Impact,” *Past & Present* 239, no. 1 (2018): 41–70.

124 “Historia,” <https://kladesholmen.se/historia/> [accessed 28.02.2023]. On Swedish herring exports to the Caribbean, see Eric Schnakenbourg, “Sweden and the Atlantic: The Dynamism of Sweden’s Colonial Projects in the Eighteenth Century,” in *Scandinavian Colonialism and the Rise of Modernity: Small Time Agents in a Global Arena*, ed. Magdalena Naum and Jonas Monie Nordin (New York: Springer, 2013): 229–42.

125 Anders Svensson, “Slaveriet – något som även svenskar profiterade på,” 09.04.2014, <https://gamlagoteborg.se/2014/04/09/slaveriet-nagot-som-aven-svenskar-profiterade-pa/> [accessed 01.04.2022].

126 Anders Svensson, “Lars Kåhre – sillhandlare och slaveriprofitör,” 13.04.2014, <https://gamlagoteborg.se/2014/04/13/kahre-sillhandlare-och-slaveriprofitor/> [accessed 01.04.2022].

127 Göteborg International Biennial for Contemporary Art 2019, “Part of the Labyrinth,” <https://www.gibca.se/gibca/arkiv/gibca-2019/tematik/>; “Göteborg försöker göra kolonialismen synligare,” 12.09.2019, <https://www.expressen.se/kultur/konst/goteborg-forsoker-gora-kolonialismen-synligare/> [both accessed 01.04.2022].

memorial monument¹²⁸ and initiating a series of seminars and artistic commissions for the visual representation in public space of Sweden's colonial past and its contemporary consequences.¹²⁹ This was followed up at the eleventh Biennial in 2021, which turned the space at Packhusplatsen into a starting point for narrating the colonial past of the city.¹³⁰

Discussions and activities identifying slavery heritage sites in Norway have so far been concentrated in Trondheim, although premodern sugar refineries also existed in Bergen and Halden. In Finland, none of the potential buildings and locations that were directly or indirectly part of the 'Atlantic slavery hinterland' (either by processing slave-produced raw material – the sugar refineries in Åbo, Helsingfors, and Borgå or the tar magazines in port towns along the Ostrobothnian coast) have been identified as slavery heritage sites.¹³¹ Nevertheless, at least in Åbo, the Global History Lab at Åbo Akademi University has mapped several spots along the Aura River linked to Atlantic slavery.¹³²

What is obvious from the displaying and visualization of slavery heritage in the four Nordic countries is the heavy focus on the Northern Atlantic. Slavery heritage and hinterlands are restricted to the eighteenth century, therefore mainly focusing on plantation slavery in the Caribbean and sugar, as well as sometimes coffee, cotton, and tobacco. However, eighteenth-century cotton mills, tobacco spinning mills, and coffee houses in the Nordic countries rarely, if ever, figure in the discussions. Even more problematic is the omission of the 'Hidden Atlantic' of the nineteenth-century, especially Brazil and Cuba, from where slave-produced coffee, tobacco and sugar continued to be shipped to the Nordic countries. The concentration on the eighteenth-century legacy was lessened during the global Black Lives Movement and the de-

128 "Franska tomten som narrativ utgångspunkt," <https://www.gibca.se/gibca/gibca-2021/tematik/franska-tomten/>. *Franska tomten*, or the French block, was a lot France received as a storage place in Gothenburg in exchange for St. Barthélemy in 1784. See further Klas Rönnbäck, "Traces of Ignominy: Gothenburg's French Block and Sweden's Hunt for Colonies," 13.07.2012, <https://www.eurozine.com/traces-of-ignominy/> [both accessed 01.04.2022]; Klas Rönnbäck, "Alltid något att visa upp för nationens ögon: Franska tomten och den svenska jakten på kolonier," *Ord & Bild* (2007): 63–69; Klas Rönnbäck, "Franska tomten och den svenska jakten på kolonier," in *Göteborg utforskat: Studier av en stad i förändring*, ed. Helena Holgersson, Catharina Thörn, Håkan Thörn and Matthias Wahlström (Göteborg: Glänta, 2019): 175–82.

129 "Possible Monuments? Konstnärens roll i synliggörandet av svensk kolonialhistoria," <https://www.gibca.se/projekt/possible-monuments/>; "Possible Mounuments? The Role of Art in Making Swedish Colonial History Visible," <https://possiblemonuments.se/> [both accessed 28.02.2023]; Rebecka Katz Thor, "Minnen och monument: Förhandlingar om sårbarhet och sörjbarhet i det offentliga rummet," *Glänta* 1 (2021): 5–15.

130 Eleventh edition of Göteborg International Biennial of Contemporary Art, "The Ghost Ship and the Sea Change," http://www.rodasten.com/index.php/rs_events/view/gibca_2021_en [accessed 01.04.2022].

131 Holger Weiss, "Slavhandel, slaveri och Finland – en ickehistoria?" 24.05.2016, <https://blogs.abo.fi/historia/2016/05/24/slavhandel-slaveri-och-finland-en-ickehistoria/> [accessed 01.04.2022].

132 "Locating the Global in Turku," 18.10.2021, <https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1HfdiasWuZaBWLnNjnQX7nsQ9zhwYXjRp&ll=60.444247620919725%2C22.257668899999995&z=14> [accessed 04.01.2022].

mands to remove statues and monuments of people who had promoted or invested in the slave trade and slave plantations in Denmark (King Frederik V),¹³³ Norway (Ludvig Holberg),¹³⁴ and Sweden (King Gustav III and Louis De Geer).¹³⁵ In Bergen, local activists demanded to rename the district of Møhlenpris, named after the Norwegian slave trader Jørgen Thor Møhlen.¹³⁶ In Finland, the response to the toppling of statues and monuments was that no such items existed in the country, the nearest one being that of Gustav III in Stockholm.¹³⁷ In Copenhagen, some local politicians proposed naming new streets in Copenhagen after slave rebels and labor rights campaigners.¹³⁸

Although the cultural heritage of slavery is displayed and visualized in Copenhagen through slave walks and on homepages, the attempt by Another Copenhagen to mark some of key memorial sites with brass plaques in 2017 seems to have ended in a cul-de-sac.¹³⁹ Since 2015, the civil society organization *Foreningen for et kolonihistorisk center* (KONI) has lobbied for the establishment of a center for colonial history in the former West India Warehouse (*Vestindisk Pakhus*) in Copenhagen. The center, the as-

133 Kate Brown, “An Explosive Debate Has Roiled Denmark After a Department Head at Its Top Art Academy Was Fired for Drowning a Bust of a Former King,” 02.10.2020, <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/katrine-dirckinck-holmfeld-royal-academy-of-art-1927592>; James Day, Jonas Eika, Jakob Jakobsen, Kirstine Mose and Frida Sandström, “Making Histories, Defacing Violence. Danish Colonialism before and after the Sinking of the Bust of Frederick V,” 15.02.2021, <https://publicsquare.dk/artikel/marking-histories-defacing-violence-danish-colonialism-before-and-after-the-sinking-of-the-bust-of-frederick-v> [all accessed 03.04.2022].

134 “Ta ned rasist/slavehandler-statuerne i Norge!” https://www.opprop.net/ta_ned_slavehandler-statueene_i_norge; “Holberg og norsk slavehandel: Horgar og Herbjørnsrud svarer på usanne anklagelser,” *Senter for global og komparativ idéhistorie*, 22.06.2020, <http://www.sgoki.org/no/2020/06/22/holberg-og-norsk-slavehandel-horgar-og-herbjornsrud-svarer/> [both accessed 01.04.2022].

135 Martin Schibbye, “Vi behöver resa fler statyer,” 13.06.2020, <https://blankspot.se/vi-behoover-resa-fler-statyer/>; “Stockholms stad får krav på att ta bort statyer,” *Dagens Nyheter*, 16.06.2020, <https://www.dn.se/kultur-noje/stockholms-stad-far-krav-pa-att-ta-bort-statyer/>; Rebecca Walan, “Kulturarv under lupp,” 26.06.2020, <https://stockholmshansmuseum.se/2020/06/26/kulturarv-under-lupp/>; Per Brinkemo and Johan Lundberg, “Bör svenskarna säga förlåt för slavhandeln?” 12.08.2020, <https://kvartal.se/artiklar/bor-svenskarna-saga-forlat-for-slavhandeln/> [all accessed 01.04.2022].

136 “Krav om navnskifte på bydel i Bergen som er oppkalt etter slavehandler,” 09.06.2020, <https://re sett.no/2020/06/09/krav-om-navneskifte-pa-bydel-i-bergen-som-er-oppkalt-etter-slavehandler/?swcfpc=1> [accessed 01.04.2022]. See further Thomas Daltveit Slettebø, “Contested Legacies of Early Modern Colonialism in Norway: A Summary of the 2020 Debates on Ludvig Holberg and Jørgen Thormøhlen,” *1700-tal* (2021): 130–38.

137 Hilla Körkkö, “Selvitimme asiantuntijoilta: Onko Suomessa orjakaupan historiasta muistuttavita patsaita, jotka joutaisivat jokeen? Löysimme yhden, tavallaan,” *Helsingin Sanomat*, 12.06.2020, <https://www.hs.fi/nyt/art-2000006538547.html> [accessed 02.04.2022].

138 “Copenhagen May Name New Streets over Danish Rebels,” 12.06.2020, <https://www.thelocal.dk/20200612/copenhagen-to-name-new-roads-over-slave-rebels/> [accessed 03.04.2022].

139 “Mesingskilte skal oplyse danskerne om vores fortid som kolonimagt,” 11.05.2017, <https://politiken.dk/kultur/art5943273/Messingskilte-skal-oplyse-danskerne-om-vores-fortid-som-kolonimagt> [accessed 03.04.2022]; see further about the attempt on Another Copenhagen’s Facebook account, 07.05.017, <https://www.facebook.com/AnotherCopenhagen/> [accessed 01.04.2022].

sociation outlines, is to focus on Danish colonial history and, together with the statue *I am Queen Mary*, evolve as the focal point for remembering Danish colonialism and decolonializing Danish history.¹⁴⁰ Erected in 2018, the 7-meter tall statue modelled on Queen Mary, one of the main leaders of the labor rebellion on St. Croix in 1878, by Danish-Caribbean artist Jeannette Ehlers and St. Croix artist La Vaughn Belle in front of the West Indian Warehouse is the only monument commemorating Atlantic slavery and its legacies in the Nordic countries,¹⁴¹ alongside a replica of Ghanaian sculptor Bright Bimpong's freedom statue, permanently placed in front of Eigtveds Pakhus at the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Copenhagen.¹⁴²

4 Concluding Reflections

Nordic involvement in Atlantic slavery is a fact, although its postcolonial legacy is still contested. Academic research on the topic has unearthed its complexities, while activists and civil society associations have challenged and revised earlier colonial amnesia and eurocentric presentations of colonial history. Slavery constituted the bedrock for Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish colonialism in the Caribbean, and all Nordic countries were linked to Atlantic slavery either directly or indirectly. Nevertheless, while direct and indirect links can and have been identified in all Nordic countries, their visibility and display is uneven.

Nordic involvement in Atlantic slavery and the transatlantic slave trade is today part of public memory in the Scandinavian countries. Apart from being displayed in museums, slavery heritage sites are mainly visualized and contextualized on homepages. However, none of the buildings and places identified as cultural heritage sites of slavery in Copenhagen, Stockholm, Gothenburg, or Trondheim are marked with signposts or plaques reminding people about their links to Atlantic slavery. The cultural heritage of slavery exists in cyberspace rather than in public space in the Scandinavian countries. In Finland, the memorization of the enslavement of Finns challenges and blurs the cultural heritage of Atlantic slavery.

140 "Om etablering af et kolonihistorisk center," <http://kolonihistoriskcenter.dk/>; Lasse Marker, "Debatten raser: Skal Danmark have et kolonihistorisk museum?" 22.10.2021, <https://www.akademikerbladet.dk/debat/lasse-marker/debatten-raser-skal-danmark-have-et-kolonihistorisk-museum> [accessed 03.04.2022]. See also Cristina E. Clopot, Casper Andersen and John Oldfield, "New Diplomacy and Decolonial Heritage Practices," in *Decolonizing Colonial Heritage: New Agendas, Actors and Practices In and Beyond Europe*, ed. Britta Timm Knudsen, John Oldfield, Elizabeth Buettner and Elvan Zabunyan (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2022): 283–84.

141 Contemporary Monuments to the Slave Past, "I am Queen Mary (Copenhagen, Denmark)," <https://www.slaverymonuments.org/items/show/1157> [accessed 28.02.2023].

142 Amalie Skovmøller and Mathias Danbolt, "Ripple Effects," 04.12.2020, <https://kunstkritikk.com/ripple-effects/> [accessed 03.04.2022].

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