

The Oscar Volume

In the World of science it is the custom to celebrate the lives and works of its outstanding leaders at times of jubilees, significant birthdays or retirement by organizing a special symposium in their honour, its proceedings to follow in a commemorative volume or 'Festschrift'. Niels Henriksen, known to all his friends as 'Oscar' retired in September 2000. He had spent most of his career leading expeditions to the remotest places of Greenland, starting out in 1968 in Central East Greenland, and continuing in North and North-East Greenland to the end of the millennium.

We first met Oscar in West Greenland in 1965 as Geological Survey of Greenland (GGU) field assistants. One of us (EH) was Oscar's assistant (although Oscar still claims that it was the other way around). Oscar was ill during the first week of the field season much to the benefit of the other (FS), who spent the next few weeks on high ladders drilling holes with a huge metal drill and mounting iron doors on the helicopter hangar based on drawings Oscar made during his illness. We both took part in his first expeditions at the end of the 60s and early 70s to East Greenland, as members of a group from the University of Copenhagen working in cooperation with the GGU. Since then we have both quite a few summers' fieldwork in East and North Greenland behind us, commonly as participants in Oscar's expeditions.

Oscar worked tirelessly on the financing, logistical planning and successful execution of his continuing succession of expeditions, during which the members of his field teams enjoyed unlimited support. It was therefore a correspondingly harder job when sitting on the other side of the table, fighting over shares of the same total sum of money available, as one of us (FS) tried for a number of years as a colleague state geologist in the GGU.

Hearing of Oscar's impending retirement in 2000 therefore felt slightly unreal. He had kept up full steam during all these years and was close to his goal: the completion of systematic mapping "all the way 'round Greenland". Yet he still looked almost precisely as youthful as he did when we first met him in the mid-1960ies.

It was during fieldwork on the north coast of Hold With Hope in East Greenland in the summer of 2000 that the idea of a one-day symposium in the honour of Oscar at the occasion of his retirement gradually emerged. The idea was tried out on field companions Lars Stemmerik and Stefan Piasecki and, although Oscar's own specialty is basement geology, we came to the conclusion that the focus of such a meeting should be on the stratigraphical, sedimentological and palaeontological aspects of field geology. These were in part marginal to much of the mapping for which Oscar was himself responsible, but sedimentologists and palaeontologists participating in his expeditions always received the same strength of support as did anybody else.

Returning from the field, one of us (FS) contacted the other old alumnus from the 1965 field season in West Greenland (EH), and asked if he was interested in joining the arrangement of a one-day Oscar Symposium. He agreed enthusiastically and we subsequently received support also from the heads of the Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland, the Geological Institute and the Geological Museum of the University of Copenhagen. A program was prepared with invited, carefully selected speakers, which included two keynote speakers from abroad, Harold G. Reading and Paul Ryan.

The Oscar Symposium was held on November 24, 2000 at the Geological Institute, University of Copen-





hagen. It was marked from the beginning by a joyful atmosphere of celebration, with excellent talks covering a very broad range of subjects, most of them extremely well illustrated, highlighting the quality of outcrops in Greenland. The program included the following presentations:

- Harold G. Reading: Facies models – past, present, and future
 Svend Funder: The beginning of the Arctic: life in the northernmost land at the start of the Pleistocene
 John Peel: Life in Deep Time – the view from the North Pole
 Eckart Håkansson & Stig Schack Pedersen: A Mesozoic plate boundary in North Greenland – The Trolle Land Fault Zone
 Paul Ryan: Deep basement and the evolution of sedimentary basins – lessons from the Caledonides
 Lars Clemmensen & Farish Jenkins, Jr.: Vertebrates and steppe-lake sediments of the Late Triassic Fleming Fjord Formation, East Greenland
 Lars Stemmerik & Stefan Piasecki: Biological and geo-

chemical changes, and the Permian–Triassic mass extinction in East Greenland

Finn Surlyk & Nanna Noe-Nygaard: A giant intrusive sandstone complex, Upper Jurassic, East Greenland

Gregers Dam: Mantle plumes and sequence stratigraphy; Cretaceous–Palaeogene of West Greenland

Richard Bromley, Lars Clemmensen & Joan Fornos: Trackways of goat-like animals in Mallorca's Pleistocene: a case study in micro- and nanotectonics

Oscar: A hard rock geologist's view on soft rock geology

Subsequently it was decided to publish an Oscar Volume based mainly on the talks given at the Symposium and we succeeded in receiving manuscripts from very busy people at short notice. It seemed logical to publish the papers as a special issue of *Bulletin of the Geological Society of Denmark*, for which we acted as guest editors. All the papers were carefully and independently reviewed.

The volume is published on the first anniversary of the Symposium, not least thanks to the enthusiasm and efforts of the day-to-day editor of the *Bulletin*, Walter Kegel Christensen, and the printer, Knud A. Knudsen.

We would in addition like to thank:

Graduate and postgraduate students Peter Alsen, Anders Althoff, Morten Bjerager, Fridgeir Grimsson, Sarah Lundsryd Jakobsen, Tine Jørgensen, Tue Nygaard, Jacob Steffensen, Margret Steinthorsdottir and Jakob Walløe; reviewers John Anderson, Lars B. Clemmensen, Gregers Dam, David A. T. Harper, Lars Henrik Nielsen, Nanna Noe-Nygaard, Lars Stemmerik, Svend Stouge; and last but not least our old friend and colleague, the late Johan D. Friderichsen *alias* 'Didom', for writing the introductory chapter.

Photographs were kindly provided by Jakob Lautrup, GEUS.

Finn Surlyk

Eckart Håkansson