

Sonnesbase 2005, an e-base of Greenlandic stories – in Danish

Composition and content

Till yet 2327 stories are filed. Each file is a registration of one story with a doc number / the ID number (look at the lower beam) offering the following information:

The items

reår[] the year of recording/original registration (not to be mistaken for the year of entering an archive). In case no fixed year is had the period in question, as for instance 1919 to 1933, is given like this: 19191933

pubår[] The year of publication in case the story has been published.

sign[] Name of the archive (abbreviations below) and the archival number of the story in case the story has not been published, i.e. generally a handwritten manuscript.

(pubår and sign exclude one another. In case pub is filled in reference to the archive is often to be found below in not[])

fo[] The story-teller

foa[] The person who took down the story. **foaa[]** Some middle-person, often a local collector, or somebody who made a fair copy. **foab[]** The main collector.

indh[] (indhold = content) Title of the story (frequently constructed. Many story-tellers offer no titles)

vær[] (Værk = Publication) Title of the publication containing the story.

vært[] Tidsskrift = Periodical

omf[] (Omfang = extent) page numbers of the text.

pro[] (Proveniens = provenance) Provenance of the story-teller first, next the place of recording. If a settlement the municipality (according to the former administrative structure of 18 municipalities before 2009) follows this order: Authorized Greenlandic name/former Danish name.

not[] (Noter = Notes)

An extensive item:

References

Original manuscript (archive, number etc.), or handwritten copy like this:

Orig. håndskr. : original manuscript.

Håndskr. : either no original exists or that uncertainty prevails whether original or a copy.

Missing among archival references are those to the published stories by W. Thalbitzer and E. Holtved. The Thalbitzer originals are in the National Royal Library, Cphg, and references will be added to the base sometimes in the future. The Holtved archive is at Dpt. of Eskimology and Arctic Studies, Cphg. and the stories are at present being revised for publication by Phd Arnaq Grove and Robert Peary.

Andre publikationer/other publications

in Greenlandic, Danish, English (excluded are anthologies, stray occurrences in papers, periodicals, etc.).

Oversættelse/Translation

into Danish of an archival, not published story

Resumé/Resume

of a story published in Danish, English or French

Var.: variants inside the base (not complete).

Hist./ History

Two kinds of information:

1. References to well-known historical events, either Greenlandic or Western to be recognized in form and/or content.
2. Obvious changes in ideas about space, life, death, "Others", social relations, causal connections etc. which are typical for the pre-colonial world view.

Tolkning/Interpretation

in case the story appears cryptic.

Kommentar = commentary

if considered necessary, and utterly subjective on my part.

How to search

You can search for all kinds of words, parts of words, numbers, and letters (sometimes occur in the numbering of the texts). The words may be a personal name, a place name, file name, publication, page number, year, or any word in the text: e.g., shaman or angakkoq (V. Grl.) or åndemaner (Danish). One can search for more than one word at a time:

You can use the following signs in advanced searches:

— + (plus) before the keyword means that the keyword will be present in the result.

+ rasmussen + ostermann

— minus (-) before the keyword means that the results may not be present in the result.

+ Rasmussen - ostermann

— * acts as a truncate sign. For example: *åndemaner (shaman) also for åndemanere (plural), åndemaners, (shaman's) åndemaneren (the shaman), åndemanerne (the shamans) etc. whether the first letter is capitalized or not.

In general the sign * can be used in uncertain spellings as for example: angak* if you cannot remember whether angakkoq is spelled with one or two "k" s (angakoq or angakkoq).

Write keyword / search terms in the box next to "søg"/search. Click "søg" once. If the search yields one or more hits, the hit(s) pop up with headline, and you can choose and click into the individual stories. Here, the search term(s) is/are highlighted in yellow.

If you want to look at a document's ID number (doc. No.) mark the box to the right of the "søg" button.

In case you want to return to a story later, please note a keyword or just the ID number at the top of the result. Alternately, the text can be printed.

ANDEN BRUG AF FORTÆLLINGERNE = Other possible uses

Folk-lore, religion, social-cultural issues, etc. Lack of concept, abstract and the like will certainly be felt. Make your own search the ordinary way by means of the truncate sign: *

LITTERATURHENVISNINGER = References to literature

if abbreviated like: Kleivan 1982, search Kleivan 1982 until the complete title turns up.

FORKORTELSER = Abbreviations:

NKS: Ny Kongelig Samling (Det kgl. Bibliotek / The Royal Danish Library)

KRKB: Knud Rasmussens Arkiv (Archive of Knud Rasmussen), Det kgl. Bibliotek / The Royal Danish Library)

KRH: Knud Rasmussens Arkiv (Archive of Knud Rasmussen), Hundested Bibliotek / Hundested Library.

Meddr. Grønland: *Meddelelser om Grønland* (Publikationer fra Kommissionen for Videnskabelige Undersøgelser i Grønland).

CB el. C.B. or Chr.B. eor Chr. B.: Christian Berthelsen, translator.

AL, AL.: Apollo Lynge, translator.

K.Th.: Kirsten Thisted: translator, editor etc.

BS, BS.: Birgitte Sonne

The collections and publications registered in the base:

New translations from the Archives:

NKS (H. J. Rink's collection). See above

KRKB: see above

KRH: see above

Summaries of published stories:

Gustav Holm in Danish. No originals are had in Greenlandic.

William Thalbitzer, published bilingually in English and insufficient East Greenlandic.

Erik Holtved, published bilingually in English and the dialect of the Polar Inuit.

Paul-Émile Victor & Robert-Lamblin, published in French. No originals in East Greenlandic consulted (by BS).

Jens Rosing, published translations into Danish of personally collected stories in 1961, as also of stories and biographies received by Otto Rosing from Kaarali Andreassen and published in Greenlandic in 1957-61. (J. Rosing 1960; 1963; 1993).

Four extended shaman biographies collected, edited and published by late Otto Sandgreen.

Translated by Sandgreen (1972/1982) and Birgitte Sonne (Sandgreen 1967, I-II/1987).

Stories and sayings from the region of Upernavik, collected in the 1950ies and published by artist and writer, late Hans Lyngø, in Danish and Greenlandic. Some stories published only in Greenlandic.

Stories from the Cape Farewell area collected, translated and published by late Mâliâraq Vebæk. Vebæk 2006 (edited by Birgitte Sonne) is bilingual, in English and the Southern dialect, Qavaq, and includes the recordings on a CD-Rom.

Martêraq Nielsen's stories from the Upernavik district, published in Greenlandic in Avangnâmioq, translated by prof. Robert Petersen.

Some minor collections:

as for instance: Lytzen 1874, and English translation of the origin myths taken down by Poul Egede about 1740.

Till yet the base contains no texts in Greenlandic – and very few translated into English. Most of the Greenlandic originals can be studied either in publications or in the archives of Copenhagen and Hundested (Knud Rasmussen). Continuous updating will be done.

Some 100 archival texts were discovered too late for translation. They are included by their data only. Many single texts can be added from periodicals, journals, etc. but the present base is representative for stories taken down by Greenlanders and Danish collectors from the 1820ies to the 1930ies in West Greenland, ca. 1900 – 1950 in Avanersuaq (Polar Inuit), and 1885 – the 1960ies in East Greenland.

Noteworthy collections and publications till yet not registered in the base:

Uses made of the stories by Greenlandic and other writers.

The unpublished East Greenlandic stories collected in 1905-06 by Thalbitzer. His own registration is published in *The Ammassalik Eskimo, Second Part. Meddr. Grl.* XL, 1923: 381-383.

Several minor collections in the Archives of Arctic Institute, Strandgade 102, 1401, Copenhagen

Unpublished recordings taped at Ammassalik by Jens Rosing (early 1960'ies). The Danish Folklore Archives, The Royal Library, PO-box 2149, DK- 1016.

Thisted, Kirsten (ed.): *Grønlandske fortællere. Nulevende fortællekunst i Grønland. Materiale indsamlet af Karen Littauer*, København: Aschehoug Dansk Forlag, 2002.

Sandgreen, Otto: *Qivitoqarporôq*. Nuuk, 1986.

Ulloriaq, Inuutersuaq: Beretningen om Qillarsuaq og hans lange rejse fra Canada til Nordgrønland (Avanersuaq) i 1860erne. *Det grønlandske Selskabs Skrifter* XXVII, 1985.

Trebitsch, Rudolf: *Bei den Eskimos in Westgrönland*. Berlin, Dietrich Reimer, 1910 (a few stories)

Stories published since 1861 in *Atuagagdliutit*, from 1945: A/G, *Autagagdliutit/Grønlandsposten*.

Stories published from 1913 to 1958 in *Avangnâmioq*, (Journal of North Greenland), except stories by Martêraq Nielsen, mentioned above.

KNR: Kalaallit Nunaata Radioa, The Greenlandic Radio, owns a great number of stories of various kinds. Copies are forbiddingly expensive.

INSOLUBLE PROBLEMS

Place- and personal names: Orthography.

Orthography is at variance in a great number of the oldest documents. Some place- and personal names are recognizable and have thus been corrected into the post-1973 orthography. But the problem often remains unsolved as regards East Greenland, the dialect of which did not get an orthography until recently. Thalbitzer employs phonetics, Jens Rosing is quite consequent in his East Greenlandic way of spelling, whereas Victor is not. Prof. em. Robert Petersen has been very helpful in identifying Victor's place names, and, ex-curator at the National Museum, Nuuk, Emil Rosing with several personal names.

Diacritic marks (´, ^, ~)

In the pre-1973 orthography the sign ~ marks a prolonged vowel. The writing system of the base does only allow a ~ above o and a, õ and ã, but not above i and u. The latter two are thus marked as î and û.

Regions

Under the items of *hist./history* and *kommentar/commentary* I often prefer the name of the larger area in order to avoid speculations on the administrative divisions at the point of telling.

Grammar

Of less interest to the non-Danish users of the base, there is little consequence in the use of past and present in translations and resumes. This is due to the many, but no less charitable "cooks" employed during the years.

Myth, legend, and narrative

Several collections contain narratives close to actual events such as biographic happenings and descriptions of traditional customs. But, however valuable such stories are as a source to changes in world view, the base is not representative in that genre.

Acknowledgments

The base could impossibly have been realized without financial support. This has with gratitude been offered by

KVUG: Kommissionen for Videnskabelige Undersøgelser i Grønland (Commission for Scientific Investigations in Greenland).

SHF: Statens Humanistiske Forskningsråd (Danish Council for Research of the Humanities)

Many individuals made their indispensable contributions:

Bruno Svindborg, Librarian of research at the Royal Library, Cphg.

Christian Berthelsen, Lector em. (translations).

Apollo Lynge, Nuuk (translations).

Signe Åsblom, Phil. cand., Odense (translations).

Grethe Lindenhann, Lector emerita (a few translations in resume)

Kirsten Thisted Ph.d, Associated Prof. (several resumes and translations)

Charlotte Aagaard, clerk

Bo Albrechtsen, MA, clerk (while still a student).

Leise Johnsen, MA, clerk (while still a student)

Mette Uldall Jensen, MA, clerk (while still a student)

Valuable pieces of advice have been offered by Ph.d. Arnaq Grove, Nuuk, former associate professor, Stig Bjørnum, and by more than anybody else, Prof. emeritus, Robert Petersen, who in addition allowed me to copy his translations of the stories told by Martêraq Nielsen for free.