

# THE SCANDINAVIAN INFLUENCE IN THE MAKING OF MODERN SHETLAND

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## INTRODUCTION

The connections between Shetland and Scandinavia generally, and between Shetland and Norway in particular, have constituted the central theme in much scholarship concerned with Shetland over the past century or more. Undoubtedly early interest was spurred by the legacy of Dark Age settlement of the islands from western Norway, a legacy which included a distinctive language, Norn, descended from Old Norse, with associated place-names, folklore and material culture. Further, Shetland lay within the geographical province of the Norse sagas, although it is little mentioned in them. More recently, contacts have been maintained through the fisheries and travel, and most recently of all, through the offshore oil industry. This pre-occupation with things Norwegian in Shetland has been due in part to a natural interest in the historical roots of the 'island way of life', and no doubt owes something also to the shared circumstances of location on the periphery of Europe, possessing similar physical environments of islands, deeply indented coastlines and hilly or mountainous interiors, as well as economies based to a large extent on primary production, notably a combination of fishing and farming.

In these Scandinavian-oriented studies relatively little attention has been paid until recently to the period after the transference of the Northern Isles to Scotland in 1468–69, and particularly to the period since the beginning of the eighteenth century, when the processes of modern economic development of the islands gained momentum. These processes have led to substantial differences in development at the regional scale between Orkney and Shetland on the one hand, and the regions of the Scandinavian countries with which they are directly comparable, on the other. Notable among these differences are the forms of local government and financial institutions, for example. It is accordingly the purpose of this article to outline the Scandinavian influence in Shetland since the beginning of the eighteenth century. The method of approach is to examine important economic, social and political, and environmental themes within an historical framework. Scandinavia is taken in its wider sense to include not only the national core areas but those areas of colonisation which retained a distinctive Scandinavian culture, notably Iceland and Faroe. The making of modern Shetland referred to has both an economic and a geographical rationale. It is defined as beginning in the early eighteenth century, marked in particular by events stemming from the Union of the Parliaments of Scotland and England in 1707.

## THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN SHETLAND

There are two periods in Shetland history prior to the eighteenth century which are commonly recognised. The first is that of the Scandinavian settlement which began around 800 and the consolidation and continuation of the island-based Scandinavian culture which continued throughout the Middle Ages. This period bequeathed a distinctive culture both in the material sense — settlement pattern (Small 1967–68), economy and technology based upon farming and fishing; and socially, in the form of the Norn language, a derivative of Old Norse, with its associated place-names (Jakobsen 1928–32, 1936), and a distinctive way of life in the form of traditional customs and folklore (Marwick 1975).

The second period, sometimes referred to as the 'Scotto-Norse' period, commenced in the second half of the fifteenth century with the mortgaging of Shetland to Scotland by the Danish Crown in 1469, and lasted until the beginning of the eighteenth century. It coincided with the expansion and consolidation of the Scottish nation and Scottish influence became predominant over that of Scandinavia (Donaldson 1969). Norn was gradually replaced by Lowland Scots consequent upon the settlement of small numbers of Scots who from the end of the sixteenth century onwards became dominant in the islands. As landowners and churchmen they replaced the udal tenure system by the feudal system in the course of the seventeenth century. Meanwhile, the economy of the islands became tied to the Hanseatic sphere from the fifteenth century onwards through the trading of north German merchants, mainly from Hamburg and Bremen, who virtually monopolised the islands' export trade (Friedland 1973). From the middle of the sixteenth century the primary focus of the Dutch North Sea herring fishery was situated in Shetland waters (Krannenburg 1969), and the fishermen traded to a considerable extent with the locals for fresh provisions. The link with the old homeland in west Norway diminished very greatly as Scottish landowning interests supplanted those of Norway, and the only important remaining link consisted of the trade whereby Shetland acquired boats and other wood goods from Sunnhordland.

It is perhaps a measure of the low ebb of Scandinavian influence that the events surrounding the Union of the Parliaments of Scotland and England in 1707 should have had such a profound influence on the course of Shetland history (Smith 1975). The chief result of the Union was the effective imposition of the Navigation Laws upon the German trade, which brought it to a rapid end. The Scots and English merchants who by the seventeenth century were in competition with the Germans in a small way, backed up the action of the state, but were unable to replace the Germans. This left the initiative to be taken up by the Shetland landowners, in the absence of a local merchant class of any significance. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, these landowners, like their Scots mercantile counterparts, were even sending their sons to Hamburg for a mercantile education.

There were other important events at this time (Smith 1975). The Dutch herring fishery was greatly curtailed when over 150 busses were burnt in Bressay Sound during an attack by the French at the beginning of the War of

the Spanish Succession. Famine in the 1690s, and a severe smallpox epidemic in 1700 had an adverse effect on the economy and upon the economic position of some landowners. In short, the first decade of the eighteenth century was a turning point when the initiative for development of the island economy passed from external to predominantly internal influence. This was the decisive change from which the making of the Shetland of today can in large measure be traced.

## ECONOMIC LINKS AND MATERIAL CULTURE, 1710–1870

In the period from the 1710s until the 1780s, the landowners became the 'ruling class'. They were Scots with Scottish and other non-Scandinavian European links. Export and import trades were mainly with the north German ports, Scotland and England and, after the Seven Years War (1756–1763), with Spain also. The main means of communication of ideas was through the landowners, including especially ideas for economic improvement which emanated mainly from Scotland, although having distinctive local expression. Nonetheless there was a relatively high degree of continuity of material culture. Patterns of settlement, agricultural husbandry and fishing technology remained basically unchanged, while customs and folklore, not to mention that part of Norn vocabulary concerned with both these and with material culture, remained remarkably intact. It was the requirements of this material culture for items made from wood — especially boats — which was the chief means of maintaining contact with Norway for over a century and a half after 1710.

The trade link with western Norway was remarkable on two counts, namely, the kinds of goods imported, and the degree to which it reflected the changing patterns of the timber trade within Norway itself. Although the Shetland boat was a rather specialised item, the rest of the timber and wood goods trade can be viewed as the northern geographical extremity of the much larger timber trade between Great Britain and Norway. During the first few decades of the eighteenth century, the basic seventeenth-century pattern of buying cargoes 'at the woods' persisted. It consisted of trading with several small ports around the shores of Björnafjord, south of Bergen, especially with Godøysund on Tysnesøy, whence most of the boats seem to have come (Thowsen 1969. 150–4). After the middle of the eighteenth century, the west Norway trade became concentrated almost entirely on Bergen, where it was conducted mainly via Scots factors resident in that city. This pattern persisted until the 1780s (Smith 1972. 140–1).

As mentioned above, chief among the imports was boats (Thowsen 1969). These were open boats generally from 12 to 20 feet of keel, used in the Shetland haaf fishery. They were constructed in Norway and exported in 'knocked down' form — boats in boards — which were then rebuilt by Shetland carpenters. These boats seem to have been constructed to specified designs adapted for Shetland conditions and were somewhat different in detail from comparable Norwegian boats. The two basic types were the four-oared fourern and the six-oared sixern. After the middle of the century an increasing proportion of sixerns were imported and their size slowly increased from 18

feet to over 20 feet in keel length in many cases, as the haaf fishing expanded further out to sea under the impetus of development by the landowners. Associated with boats were imports of spars for rigging, various parts of boats, and bark for tanning lines. In addition a variety of other 'wood goods' were imported, especially for agricultural requirements. These included 'hazel cuts' for flails, spokes, harrowbills and plough timber. However, it appears that little timber for house building was brought in, as Shetland houses remained predominantly of stone and thatch.

There were basic changes in the pattern of the Norway trade from around 1790 onwards, coinciding with the transfer of initiative in island economic development from the landowners to a new and rising local merchant class (Smith 1971. 6-9). The basic change in the character of imports was the substitution of the relatively small amount of miscellaneous wood goods by relatively large quantities of timber for house-building, which coincided with the rapid rise of Lerwick under the influence of the new merchant class from the 1780s onwards. This was in turn related to a shift in emphasis away from Bergen towards the timber ports of south eastern Norway, especially Kristiansand. Boats in boards remained an important item, along with built boats, and came mainly via Bergen. Many of these were bigger than previously — 22 and 24 foot keels were common. The peak of this trade seems to have been in the 1820s and 1830s. The import of boats did not finally cease until the 1860s, by which time the haaf fishing was in decline, and Shetland-based boatbuilding had become well established.

In the late eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth centuries the Norway trade was not without incident. From the 1780s onwards, and especially during the Napoleonic Wars, there were successive steep rises in the duties upon imported timber. By the 1810s the duty was commonly 50 per cent *ad valorem*. This naturally induced much smuggling, not only by Shetland traders, but also by other vessels trading to Shetland, or even passing from Norway to Faroe, Iceland or southwards. Thus most of the timber imported between the 1790s and the 1840s, when duties were reduced, was smuggled. Shetland merchants were even involved in smuggling spirits from ships in transit from Copenhagen to Faroe, where trade was a monopoly of the Danish Crown. During the Anglo-Dutch War of 1780-82 and from 1807 until 1814, the Scandinavian ports were blockaded by the British Navy and trade virtually ceased. It may have been at about this time that boatbuilding in Shetland itself became permanently established (Thowsen 1969. 155-6). Further, during the blockade of the Mediterranean and other Iberian ports by the British prior to 1807, some Shetland fish was sent to Norway and re-exported as Norwegian fish in order to circumvent the blockade. Finally, during the whole period from the beginning of the eighteenth century until the end of the nineteenth there were numerous wrecks of vessels outward bound from the Baltic and the Norwegian coast with fish and timber, which maintained a constant if 'unscheduled' contact as well as copious supplies of wreck wood!

Insight into trade links with Bergen is afforded by James Hay's illegal voyages in 1813 and 1814, documentary accounts of which survive in the Hay papers and in Customs records (Smith 1974. 7-11). He was a leading Shetland

merchant and was typically conducting a 'multilateral' type of trade in which the trade to Norway formed one leg of trading voyages often involving half a dozen ports around the North Sea. There were many personal contacts especially with Scottish merchant houses in Bergen, but key shipping and insurance links were with Leith and London. These circumstances emphasise again the comparative insignificance of the Norway connection throughout most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the first half of the nineteenth century a distinctive new regional economy — almost 'self sufficient' for a time in terms of owning its own shipping and providing banking facilities — existed in Shetland in much the same way as in other parts of Scotland. Much modern Shetland music and literature dates from or has been inspired by this period of building of 'the Old Rock' as the islands came to be referred to by expatriate natives in the course of the nineteenth century. Indeed the regional structure of that early nineteenth century economy is reminiscent of that in parts of Scandinavia today, notably Faroe.

### THE REALITY OF THE FISHERIES AND THE INTELLECTUAL INSPIRATION, 1870–1940

The 1870s were a period of far-reaching change which witnessed the gradual disintegration of the regional economy upon which the Old Rock tradition was in large measure based, and its replacement by the fully-fledged international free trade economy which lasted until the 1930s. The haaf fishing and cod fishing were in decline; education had become compulsory; the first permanent newspaper and the telegraph were securely established; and large scale migration from the islands was well under way for the first time in recorded history. In such circumstances it is scarcely surprising that links with Scandinavia should undergo radical change also. Under the influence of the developing international economy, the traditional trade link with Norway was supplanted by fishing connections which for the first time led to widespread contact between ordinary Shetlanders and Scandinavians — mainly Faroese. Meanwhile, there was a contemporaneous and largely unrelated awakening at an intellectual level in the roots of Shetland's culture which by the end of the nineteenth century was visibly passing away, at least in the eyes of one or two of the more perspicacious intellectuals (Graham 1969). By 1880 a new economic pattern was being established in which Shetland was the chief centre of the great Scottish summer herring fishing, a pattern which endured until the 1930s. In this new order of island life, the Scandinavian connections which mattered were, at the level of everyman, in the realms of fishing — the Faroe cod fishing, Norwegian whaling, and some trade connected mainly with the herring and line fishing; and among those of intellectual aspirations, a great upsurge of interest in the Norwegian roots of Shetland culture.

The 'Faroe fishing' as it was known in Shetland was a development based upon the earlier cod fishing, which had become Shetland's second important fishery in the 1820s. The cod fishing developed in two stages (Smith 1972. 201–3). In the first, from the 1810s until the early 1840s, it was essentially a 'home' cod fishery, based upon the use of sloops around 40 feet long, fishing in

waters around Shetland. Although there had been experimental voyages to Faroese waters in the 1830s in search of new grounds, there was no distinct 'Faroe fishing'. This only got under way in the 1850s, after more exploratory voyages in the 1840s to search out new grounds. At its period of greatest development, from the mid-1850s until the mid-1870s, cod smacks of 60 to 70 feet in length prosecuted the cod fishing from spring until autumn on the Faroe and Rockall Banks, and around the coasts of Faroe and Iceland. The Faroe Bank was the principal ground, hence the application of the term 'Faroe fishing' (see Manson 1978. above).

Apart from modern travel, the Faroe fishing arguably constitutes the only widespread contact of ordinary Shetland people with contemporary Scandinavian culture in the period covered by this article. This contact involved provisioning the smacks in Faroe, during which quantities of corn brandy ('Faroe brandy') and Cavendish tobacco were invariably taken on board to be smuggled into Shetland. Around this smuggling grew many stories which constituted an oral tradition until relatively recent times. As well as seeking provisions, the smacks were wont to dredge for bait in the Faroese sounds, a practice which not infrequently led to a certain amount of friction with the local inhabitants who not unnaturally considered that they had first call on local resources of bait.

A minor development of interest which took place in the 1870s was the instigation of 'travelling shops' — vessels belonging to the Shetland smack owners which made trips to Faroe with largely speculative general cargoes and brought back ponies for feeding. Cargoes of ponies were similarly transhipped in Shetland from Iceland to mainland Britain, mainly by special voyages undertaken by the Aberdeen, Leith and Clyde Shipping Co. — which became the North of Scotland and Orkney and Shetland Steam Navigation Company Limited after 1875, more familiarly known as 'the North Company'.

By the 1870s economic factors and the changing outlook of both Shetlanders and Faroese were leading to the decline of the Faroe fishing, a decline accelerated greatly by the coming of trawling in the 1880s and 1890s, and by the rise of the home-based herring fishery in competition with the Faroe fishing. The result was that the Faroese established their own smack cod fishery, centred on the island of Suduroy, which had been the chief point of contact with the Shetlanders (Nolsöe 1963–70). Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, the Faroese acquired large numbers of smacks from Shetland and England. They sailed with Shetlanders in order to learn the techniques of fishing and curing. By the 1890s they had assumed the initiative. The last voyage by a Shetland smack to Faroe — with an all-Faroese crew — took place in 1906. The cod fishing has subsequently become an enduring traditional historical link between the two archipelagoes.

The whaling industry was established in Shetland by the Norwegians in 1903, and persisted until 1929, broken only by the First World War. Unlike the Faroe fishing, it is not viewed in retrospect with any great affection. At its peak there were four bases, including two at Ronas Voe, one at Collafirth in Northmavine, and one at Olnafirth. The stations were associated with much pollution of the water as well as unpleasant smells. So strong did local aversion

to the stations become at one point that the pollution from the stations in Ronas Voe was at the time held responsible for the failure of the important early West Side herring fishing in 1905, when a near-riot atmosphere prevailed. This pattern of failure became permanent. When whaling operations ceased in 1929, however, it was mainly due to lack of whales in sufficient quantities rather than local opposition. More important for many Shetlanders was their employment at the Antarctic whaling which was, until the 1950s, the twentieth century equivalent of the famous Greenland whaling of the previous 200 years, and in which Norwegian interests had a major stake.

Although the traditional Norway trade finally petered out in the 1860s, by which time Norwegian-owned vessels were landing speculative timber cargoes in Shetland, it was replaced to some extent by trade directly related to the new fisheries (Smith 1972. 313–15). During the beginnings of decline of the cod fishing in the 1870s, for example, enterprising Shetland merchants purchased lightly salted wet cod from Norway to augment their own supplies for curing. Of more permanent significance was the trade in fishing stock. As the fresh fish trade began to get under way, especially in the 1880s and 1890s when the spring line fishing by the herring boats was developed, ice was frequently imported from south east Norwegian ports such as Dröbak, Drammen, Kragerö, Porsgrund, Langesund and Mandal. After 1900 artificial ice was mainly employed. During this period Swedish line fishers operated from Shetland also, till competition from trawling effectively put an end both to their fishing and the Shetland spring line fishing. The herring fishery had large requirements for barrel staves, which were imported from Norway and Sweden, together with substantial quantities of building timber, used among other things for the construction of the innumerable herring stations. The role of the Norwegian and Swedish mercantile marines in the herring trade was not inconsiderable, as they were also involved in the carriage of herring from Shetland to the main markets in the Russian and German Empires before 1914, and later to Germany in the inter-war period. However, this is part of the pattern of the Scottish herring industry already alluded to.

Although at the level of 'everyman', contacts had greatly increased (with Faroe rather than with Norway), it is arguably the contemporary but largely unrelated intellectual movement which has had the greater long-term influence. There had always been a good deal of interest in Shetland's Scandinavian roots in the topographical writings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was not until the closing decades of the nineteenth century, however, that a measure of scholarly inquiry replaced the predominantly topographical or anecdotal approach to Shetland history, an approach which incidentally has continued vigorously alongside the scholastic ever since. Although detailed discussion of the literature involved is beyond the scope of this article, it is worth noting that some of the most influential writers wrote from outwith the islands. Perhaps the most notable was Gilbert Goudie, a Shetlander who was a banker in Edinburgh and whose antiquarian research, both archaeological and historiographical, laid the foundations for later work (Goudie 1904). Towering above all, however, was the Faroese philologist Jakob Jakobsen, who worked in the University of Copenhagen, and from whose

researches in the 1890s emerged that monumental work, *An Etymological Dictionary of the Norm Language in Shetland*, and its associated book on *The Place Names of Shetland*.

Reinforced by an upsurge in writing generally, aided by Shetland's two newspapers (*The Shetland Times*, first published 1872; and *The Shetland News*, first published 1885), there was something approaching a general awakening regarding the remote past. However, despite the sound scholarship of Jakobsen and others, it was in the nature of a romantic movement. Rather than concentrating on the day to day lives and times of the Scandinavian settlers and their descendants, the popular imagination tended to be caught by the image of the Vikings recorded in the sagas. The result was that the Viking era acquired the reputation of something of a golden age of freedom, symbolised by the udal system of land tenure, in contrast to the subsequent oppressions of the incoming Scots lairds, who relied upon the feudal system. The activities of the Crofters Commission designed to put an end to evictions, and the perpetuation of the truck system — indeed the necessity for local mercantile credit right up until even the 1930s — provided plenty of evidence for decline!

Among the undoubted results of this intellectual movement was the conversion in 1889 of the traditional burning of the tar barrel in Lerwick to the fully-fledged *Up-Helly-Aa* ceremony of today (Mitchell 1948), complete with burning 'galley' in the Viking funeral tradition; the recording of episodes from the Norse sagas in the beautiful stained glass windows of the new Lerwick Town Hall, built in 1890; and the adoption of the Old Icelandic motto: '*Med logum skal land byggja*' ('With laws shall the land be built') by the new Zetland County Council inaugurated by the Local Government (Scotland) Act of 1889. While arguably there was much that was good in these changes, they personified an era that was long departed, if ever it had really existed; an era certainly as much removed from contemporary Norway as Shetland then was. Shetland had rediscovered its classical past, paradoxically in part centred upon the Earldom of Orkney of which it had formerly been part! Like much nineteenth-century thought in many fields, it has had not inconsiderable influence upon subsequent thinking.

## **POLITICS, EDUCATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT, 1940–1975**

If the classical tradition had resulted in a certain unreality in attitude to things Scandinavian, unreality of a different kind was introduced by the Second World War. And yet the unrealities then and since have perhaps constituted the basis for the beginning of real awareness of what Scandinavia is like, and what the modern consequences of Scandinavian influence for Shetland have been and continue to be. For the modern influence can be ascribed to three main spheres — in the realms of politics, education and the environment respectively — and can usefully be viewed against the backdrop of the national and international 'managed' economies which have existed since the Second World War.

The new awareness began with the establishment of the 'Shetland Bus' to conduct intelligence and resistance operations in German-occupied Norway



from Shetland, and to bring out refugees (Howarth 1951; Skodvin 1969). Many hundreds of Norwegians came to know Shetland hospitality and, after the War was over, some permanent family connections remained. Later, Maløy became Lerwick's 'friendship town'. As with the case of the Faroe fishing, a tradition had become established. Nonetheless it was a very 'unreal' reality, far removed from traditional considerations of Scandinavia.

From the political point of view, over the past 15 years or so longing glances have been cast towards Scandinavia, and especially towards Faroe, for ideas on the re-organisation of Shetland's economic and political life. This has resulted in such events as the publication of the *Report on the Visit to Faroe* (the 'Faroe Report') in 1962 after a visit to the islands by Zetland County Council. Other studies have been undertaken, reinforced by increased travel to the Scandinavian countries to view conditions there. Generally there has been a tendency to produce numerous statements extolling the modern Scandinavian way of life, implicitly or explicitly at the expense of that found in Shetland.

Notwithstanding these investigations, key Scandinavian political and economic ideas, notably the small-scale regional organisation of governmental finance and private sector financial institutions, have made little real impact on the fabric of Shetland society. Despite the rightly praised economic revival which has taken place in Shetland in the late 1960s and the 1970s, there has been little investment in Shetland by Shetlanders. The risk capital has mainly been supplied from governmental sources, while local savings have piled up in the local branches of the Scottish banks. Thus there has been a note of unreality attached to the eulogizing of Scandinavian ways in this sphere. Undoubtedly some of the lack of change in attitude is due to the centralisation of the managed economy which is so much a feature of the British way of life, and yet some responsibility must also be ascribed to local attitudes.

Meanwhile, material influences have been in evidence. Zetland County Council has provided advice on the Faroese road construction programme, and Norwegian-designed ferries built in Faroe have appeared on Shetland inter-island routes. Shetland now abounds with Norwegian manufactured wooden houses, imported mainly by the local authority; and perhaps even more significantly with Norwegian knitted goods, displacing traditional Shetland knitting designs. Occasional air and sea transport links to Faroe and Norway have encouraged these trends, while the coming of the offshore oil industry has strongly reinforced them, not least because a Norwegian-owned service base near Lerwick virtually monopolises Shetland's oil service industry.

Not surprisingly, some of this penetration of modern Scandinavian influence is culturally and intellectually based, rather than the result of mere trade. In particular, education has fostered increased awareness of the classical tradition already outlined, and *Up-Helly-Aa* has risen to new heights. And yet 'men with horns', like modern Scandinavian design, and no less than the timber trade of old, are British rather than peculiarly Shetland traditions, albeit with some distinctive Shetland expression. Meanwhile, the school cruises have since 1960 brought large numbers of Shetlanders in contact with Scandinavia for the first time since the Faroe fishing, if the events of the Second

World War and the Antarctic whaling are left out of the account. Further, there is now a football league between Shetland, Orkney and Faroe, playing for the Atlantic Cup. The Scandinavia seen by the up-and-coming generations is as far removed from its origins as modern Shetland is.

The final means of widespread contact between Shetlanders and Scandinavians has, not suprisingly, been through the fisheries and, more recently, through oil also. Lerwick in particular has become a focus for Scandinavian fishermen of all nationalities who visit the town for provisions and occasionally bunkers while fishing in Shetland waters. Most of the attention of Shetlanders has hitherto tended to be absorbed by the sometimes impressive sight of many Norwegian and other foreign fishing vessels anchored in Lerwick Harbour; by the permanent stationing of a Norwegian lifeboat at Lerwick during the summer months; and by the social and trade contacts thereby promoted, giving rise to the Lerwick 'sweetie shop' tradition, as the fishermen buy enormous quantities of sweets to take home. However, attention has been increasingly focused recently on the fishing operations which lie behind the visits as the spectre of overfishing haunts those most directly concerned, the Shetland fishermen.

The period since the Second World War has seen the expansion of Scandinavian fisheries — notably those of Norway — on an enormous scale, especially in foreign waters. In Shetland waters the whalers of the early part of the century have been successively superseded by shark fishers, dog fishers, liners after cod and ling, purse seiners fishing for herring and, most recently, industrial fishers scooping up pout and other species for meal and oil. Even the meal and oil plant in Lerwick is linked with Norwegian interests. With the exception of the Russians and the British to some extent, practically all the vessels involved have been Scandinavian, especially Norwegian, with relatively small numbers of Danish, Swedish, Faroese and Icelandic vessels appearing from time to time.

The end result of practically all these fisheries has been the depletion if not decimation of stocks, the latest victim being the North Sea herring stock. The problems of overfishing cannot be readily blamed on anyone, but it cannot escape notice that again, apart from the Russians, by far the greatest fishing effort in the Shetland area has been deployed by the Norwegians. The fisheries are now in a crisis state, and at the present time are a major potentially adverse Scandinavian influence of long-term significance, despite the fact that some Shetland fishermen have adopted the purse-net technology (Goodlad 1972. 61–81), even to the extent of having boats built in Norway.

## CONCLUSION

The Scandinavian influence in the making of modern Shetland can be viewed in two phases. In the first period, from the beginning of the eighteenth century until the middle of the nineteenth, a distinctive regional economy was built in Shetland. Culturally it was distinct from the mainly Scandinavian roots it was built upon, although many of these roots remained in modified form. The main direct contacts were with western and south eastern Norway for boats

and timber.

In the second phase, occupying the last century or so, there have been two major strands of influence. One is the meeting and mingling of Scandinavians and Shetlanders on a much greater scale than formerly, mainly as a result of fishing activity, and latterly also through education and travel. The other is in the realm of intellectual development. Beginning with concentration on elucidating the Scandinavian roots of the way of life departing in the nineteenth century, it has since the Second World War been increasingly focused upon comparing political and economic frameworks of modern Scandinavia and their relevance to Shetland. In the later 1970s a new phase of increasing awareness appears to have begun in which some of these ideas, which arguably have had little practical effect, are likely to be considered more seriously, while the imperatives of environmental management in the fields of fisheries conservation and the offshore oil industry are looming large as a major challenge which must be met in the immediate future.

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