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Preface

The German-Danish minority model has become an internationally admired example of the feasibility of overcoming historical antagonisms and establishing generous minority regimes. It has, therefore, also brought forth an extensive literature. Much of this literature has focused on the technicalities of this political arrangement and on the Danish minority in Germany. The latter has created a flourishing scholarly infrastructure centered upon the minority’s own Danish Central Library for South Schleswig, which has attracted many competent scholars. Together with colleagues at the Provincial Archives of South Jutland and the former Danish Institute of Border Region Studies, these scholars have produced an impressive historiography of the Danish-oriented population in South Schleswig.

The German minority in North Schleswig has not been as fortunate. Its own scholarly infrastructure is more modest, and outside institutions have not paid as much attention to its history as to that of its counterpart south of the border. If it had not been for the growing interest of Danish scholars, newer works on German North Schleswigers would be exceedingly rare. The scarcity of regional scholarship, in turn, has reverberated on the international level, where comprehensive works on the German minority in Denmark are virtually non-existent.

Like Snow in the Sun? strives to fill this lacuna. It tries to present a broad picture of the German community in northern Schleswig throughout the past two centuries, with a particular focus on its experience as a national minority within the Danish nation-state. Due to the limited familiarity with this history in international scholarship, the study contains both chronological chapters that create a historical skeleton and thematic chapters that flesh out central aspects of minority life in North Schleswig. This structure also integrates contributions from relevant neighboring disciplines such as linguistics and ethnography into the historical core. By the same token, the volume relies both on updated condensations of pivotal existing research and on brand-new empirical and interpretation-al approaches. For this purpose, the project has assembled a broad selection of international scholars from not only Denmark and Germany but also Britain and the United States. It has been the editor’s explicit objective to forge the individual contributions into a unified whole.

The study has two primary audiences. On the one hand, it is directed at scholars, students, and educated general readers with an interest in German and Scandinavian history. On the other hand, it appeals to readers with an interest in questions of national minorities, borderlands, and cultural diversity. We
hope that both audiences will find this first comprehensive Anglophone study of the German minority in Denmark a welcome addition to international scholarship.