

Som dette billede viser dr. Therkel Mathiassen, vil danske arkæologer kende ham bedst: iagttagende ude i marken, vurderende, dybt interesseret, med de talløse godheds- og intelligensrynker spillende i fuld funktion. Mathiassen den allestedsnærværende, den utrætteligt slidende, den aldrig sig selv sparende, altid mest af sig selv krævende, den ligevægtigt stilfærdige men hurtige arbejder, – saadan er han jo, saadan har man vænnet sig til at have ham for øje. Hvad dansk arkæologisk forskning og fredningsvirke egentlig skylder denne mand, bør vi besinde os paa. Lad mig understrege blot følgende to punkter.

Dansk stenalderforskning vil til sene tider huske Therkel Mathiassen som den store indsamler og bearbejder af nyt stof, primært materiale. Vor viden om Danmarks lange mesolitiske tid bygger i udstrakt grad paa de af Mathiassen i terrænet paaviste og i litteraturen fremlagte mængder af bopladser og »stationer«. Tænk paa hans arbejde med Aamosen eller med Gudenaapladserne. For ikke at tale om hans indsats i Yngre Stenalder-området eller paa det systematisk-bebyggelsehistoriske felt.

Det andet hovedpunkt er fredningsarbejdet. Ingen har, siden vor fredningslov kom i 1937, præsteret blot i tilnærmet grad et arbejde som Mathiassen med at forklare, praktisere og tillempe lovens bestemmelser. Samt ikke mindst med at slaas for vore oldtidsminder, at ikke efterverdenen skal se fredningen leve sit skyggeliv paa papiret uden kraft i marken. Denne strid er standende, og findes der engang en løsning paa det problem, der hedder: et effektivt værnende tilsyn med danske oldtidsminder, vil Mathiassen have sin store andel deri.

I den internationale eskimoforskning er dr. Mathiassen, som vel bekendt, i kraft af sin ungdoms og første manddoms arbejder, en stor skikkelse. Men de sidste tyve aar af sit arbejdsfyldte liv har han anvendt væsentligt paa at gennemgrave og med sit kloge blik nøje granske den fædrelandske jord. I sin afdeling paa Nationalmuseet, det gamle Oldnordiske Museum, er dr. Mathiassen en højt respekteret, elsket chef. Og hvor kunde det vel være andet.

Gunstige læser, lad disse linier og billedet dertil belyse for Dem baggrunden og foliet for denne kendsgerning.

JOHANNES BRØNDSTED.



Ulla Poulsen Skou fot. 1951.

Thorkil Mathiasen

This photograph shows Dr. Therkel Mathiassen as we Danish archeologists best know him: out in the field, observant, critical, deeply interested, with wrinkles innumerable telling their tale of good humour and intelligence. Mathiassen the omnipresent, the untiring toiler, never sparing himself but always expecting a little more of himself than of others, the quiet, balanced, unhurried worker who nevertheless works at such a phenomenal speed; this is the Mathiassen we know, as we are accustomed to seeing him. What archeological research and the preservation of ancient monuments in Denmark in actual fact owe to him we shall not forget. Let me stress the following two points.

In the sphere of research into Denmark's Stone Age Therkel Mathiassen will long be remembered as the great collector and systematizer of new and primary material. Our knowledge of the millenia of Denmark's Mesolithic Period is based to a considerable extent upon the numerous settlement sites and "stations" discovered by Mathiassen in the field and published by him in the literature of the subject. Think only of his work in Aamose or with the Gudena sites – not to mention his contributions in the sphere of the New Stone Age or of systematic research into the history of ancient settlement.

The other main point is that of preservation of ancient monuments. Since the law protecting these monuments was passed in 1937 no one has laboured remotely comparably with Mathiassen to explain, practise and adapt the provisions of the statute, and in no less degree to fight for actual literal preservation, lest posterity should see the preservation statutes confined to the obscurity of paper, an imaginary life ignored in practice. This battle is still going on, and if a solution is ever found to the problem of an effective watch and ward over Denmark's ancient monuments a large share of the praise for this will be owed to Mathiassen.

In the field of Eskimo research Dr. Mathiassen is, as is well known, a figure of international repute, by reason of the work of his youth and early manhood. But the past twenty years of his everactive life he has devoted to a preponderant degree to the excavation of his native soil and to the shrewd and accurate assessment of its fruits. In his department of the National Museum, the former "Oldnordisk Museum", Dr. Mathiassen is a highly respected and beloved chief. Nor could one expect it to be otherwise

Gentle reader, let these lines and the photograph which accompanies them illuminate for you the background and the reason why.

JOHANNES BRØNDSTED.