

Niebuhr - UK  
DVT/TG/KH

Carsten Niebuhr succeeded in  
executing a true scientific expedition.

I am Ingolf Thuesen,  
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- of Cross-cultural and Regional  
Studies at Copenhagen University.

We work with the world that exists  
outside Western culture:

Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe,  
Southeast Europe -

- and parts of the Arctic area.  
We work with religion, language -

- and cultural heritage, which brings  
Carsten Niebuhr into focus -

- as he was one of the first  
to work with the phenomenon of -

- how to understand foreign cultures,  
and how to co-exist with them.

We will name a new centre after him:

The Carsten Niebuhr Centre  
for Multicultural Understanding.

It will work  
with our cultural heritage -

- i.e. our background, the history  
and culture that precede us -

- focusing on how we use it  
in the present day.

Carsten Niebuhr's attitude was  
cosmopolitan and not colonial.

So not only have we learned from  
what he found on his journeys -

- we've also learned what to do  
to help each other across cultures.

He explores the world  
with an approach that ...

... from an angle that we should all embrace today as well.

Carsten Niebuhr was a trained mathematician and surveyor -

- and the Danish king chose him to participate in the expedition -

- to the so-called 'Arabia Felix' He was gone for 6,5 years -

- from 1761 to 1767, and he was the only survivor of the 7 participants.

One of the major results from the expedition -

- is that he ties Europe together with Asia, as he does get to India.

He discovers that the Middle East is a sort of intermediate station -

- between Europe and Asia.

They traded in all directions: The Silk Road, The Pearl Road.

It's been there for 5,000 years. It used to be one huge continent.

He amassed an amazing collection of data -

- on the foreign cultures there as well as the nature.

It wasn't just about how people lived but also about their habitat.

He sent home items from Egypt like stone fragments with hieroglyphs.

He copied remarkable inscriptions in Persepolis in Iran -

- which enabled us to decipher the cuneiform writing for the first time.

It was immensely important documentation -

- on the conditions there in the 18th century and on that part of the world.

On a journey through  
the East Mediterranean and to Jerusalem -

- Cyprus is an important stop,  
as it's a vital trading island.

He'd heard that there were some  
interesting Phoenician inscriptions -

- and he wanted to see them  
and copy them.

He describes the island and its  
resources etc. and travels on.