

Notes on the translation

In translation, you always deal with a shift between languages and cultural environments, and in the translation of text from a different time, the shift is deepened. Also, however faithfully one tries to translate, it will always involve an aspect of interpretation. In the translation of *the Fireburn files*, the aim has been to keep the historical and cultural tone of the original text. The sentence structure in the original documents is generally complex, consisting of many very long sentences with subordinate clauses within subordinate clauses. Some sentences have been shortened when the length makes the meaning decidedly unclear. In some instances, the sentences in the original Danish somewhat lose their 'chain of thought'. In these instances, they have been straightened out as faithfully as possible. In a few instances, it has been impossible to straighten out the sentences accurately, and in these cases, a note has been added. In order to create a sentence structure which makes sense in English, structural rearrangements have been necessary. Mostly, this has resulted in the moving of adverbial phrases, which are typically situated in the beginning or end of English sentences, whilst they, in Danish, are placed in different places. Also, the relative placement of verbs in Danish has made it necessary to rearrange the sentence structure somewhat.

Regarding the term *Fireburn*

The term "Fireburn" might be a direct (though distorted) translation of the Danish "Ildebrand" (fire). In the instances where the Danish word "Ildebrand" is used, it is translated "Fireburn".

Regarding 'plantation people' and people participating in the uprising (gang/mob/crowd, swarm)

The Danish word 'Bande' translates to 'gang', and the same word ('gang') denotes a 'labor group' on the plantations (there were different types of (labor-)'gangs'. There was typically a "little gang" and a "big gang". Laborers' placement in plantation 'gangs' depended on ability and strength¹. Notes are applied when 'gang' denotes the plantation (labor-)'gangs'. When 'gang' is used (without a note stating otherwise), it denotes what could be called the 'fireburn gangs', ie. the groups of people who moved from plantation to plantation during the uprising. In some instances, these included (labor-)'gangs'.

Most frequently, the Danish text refers to the groups of people participating actively in the uprising as 'Bander' (translated 'gangs'), but other terms are used: The Danish 'Hob' is translated 'mob', 'Flok' and 'masse' are translated 'crowd' and 'Sværme' is translated 'swarm'.

The Danish word 'Folk' has several meanings. It denotes 'people', but also, particularly in the 19th and early 20th century, 'servants' or 'staff'. When the text mentions "Folk", belonging to a particular plantation, without specifying that were part of a 'gang', the term 'staff' is used.

¹ Robert S. Brown: *Sukkerdyrkning i Dansk Vestindien*, Handels- og Søfartsmuseets Årbog 1973)

In the Danish text, there is some variation in the spelling of names. For instance, the detainee Joseph Parris' name is spelled 'Paris' (in the court-martial document) and 'Parris' (in the final report and sentences). James de Silva's name is spelled both James de Silva and James da Silva.

Danish – English

Arbejdsforseelser: labor-related offences

Arrestant: detainee

Assistant-værelset i Toldboden: the assistant's room in the Customs House

Det frivillige planter corps: The volunteer planter corps

Forvalter: manager²

Forvalterboligen: the manager's house

Justitsraad: the legal council

Kogehus: boiling house

Magashus: Magass house

Magasstakke: Magass stacks

Overdommer: supreme judge

Overkrigskommissionær: General war commissioner

Politimesteren: the police chief

Politiassistenten: the police assistant

Politibetjente: police officers

Præsidentskabet for St Croix's Segl: the seal of the presidency of St Croix

Standret: court-martial

St Croix Arresthuus: St. Croix arrest house

² In Brown, Robert S.: *Sukkerdyrkning i Dansk Vestindien*, Handels- og Søfartsmuseets Årbog 1973, "Forvalter" is translated "attorney", but the Danish National Archives (Rigsarkivet) suggests "manager", which is used in this translation)

Toldboden: the Customs House

Underforvalter: overseer

Vaaningshus: greathouse

Vagt: guard³

Værker: factories

English – Danish

Assistant's room in the Customs House: Assistant-værelset i Toldboden

Boiling house: kogehus

Court martial: Standret

Detainee: Arrestant

Factories: Værker

General War Commissioner: Overkrigskommissionær

Greathouse: Vaaningshus

Guard: Vagt⁴

Justitsraad: the legal council

Labor-related offences: Arbejdsforseelser

Magashus: Magass house

Magasstakke: magass stacks

Manager: Forvalter⁵

Overdommer: Upper Court Judge

³ On one occasion, however: sub-attendant, namely in “Slutrapport og domme” at: 26 The detainee Henry Barker of Pl: Høgensborg: “*He has stated, in accord with what is confirmed elsewhere, that he was a guard and sometimes a kind of sub-attendant [Vagtmand] at Høgensborg*”.

⁴ On one occasion, however: sub-attendant, namely in “Slutrapport og domme” at: 26 The detainee Henry Barker of Pl: Høgensborg: “*He has stated, in accord with what is confirmed elsewhere, that he was a guard and sometimes a kind of sub-attendant [Vagtmand] at Høgensborg*”.

⁵ In Brown, Robert S.: *Sukkerdyrkning i Dansk Vestindien*, Handels- og Søfartsmuseets Årbog 1973, “forvalter” is translated “attorney”, but the Danish National Archives (Rigsarkivet) suggests “manager”, which is used in this translation.

Police Assistant: Politiassistent

Police Chief: Politimester

Police Officers: Politibetjente

St. Croix prison: St. Croix Arresthuus

The manager's house: Forvalterboligen

The volunteer planter corps: Det frivillige planter corps:

The seal of the presidency of St Croix: Præsidentskabet for St Croix's Segl

The Customs House: Toldboden

Overseer: Underforvalter