Concepts of national and cultural identity were not prominent in Enlightenment debate until late in the century—and even then more often represented a romantic ideal rather than any specific set of values. In most parts of Europe there was a poor fit between state jurisdictions on the one hand, and cultural, linguistic, or regional allegiances on the other. The Danish-Norwegian kingdom was no exception, and, as in other conglomerate states (such as the Habsburg lands), the government understandably either ignored or played down tendencies that might undermine cohesiveness within the whole state. Yet questions of identity, loyalty, and collective allegiance were important in all early modern societies, and indispensable for the maintenance of civil society. They had surfaced with particular insistence in central and northern Europe from the time of the Reformation onwards. In Denmark the creation of a new absolute monarchy from 1660 required a deliberate reinforcement of loyalty to the ruling family and to the Lutheran faith which it upheld—an imposed consensus which seems to have fulfilled its purpose remarkably successfully for at least a century. From the 1760s onwards, however, challenges emerged, not just from the new empirical study of the fabric of human society and institutions which was one of the common aspects of Enlightenment all over Europe and in the American colonies, but also because...

of features unique to the northern periphery. In contrast to Sweden (to which we shall return), Denmark was situated precariously at the intersection of two distinct and in some respects divergent worlds: that of the increasingly dynamic north German culture on the one hand, and, on the other, the more traditional and predominantly community-based culture of much of the rest of Scandinavia.

Two major components of collective identity were clearly visible in early modern Scandinavia, over and above the obvious ones of the physical environment (family and household, parish community, religion, landscape, social position, and gender). One of these was the long-standing rivalry between the strong personalized monarchies which had split Scandinavia into two from 1523, with competing focal points in Copenhagen and Stockholm. In effect two composite states had been created, with the Swedish-Finnish one constricted first by the Danish-Norwegian state (which until 1660 controlled all access from the Baltic to the international maritime trading network), then increasingly by the emergent power of Russia to the east. It is important to note, for the purposes of this discussion, that the southern perimeters of both monarchies remained relatively open and permeable: a strong shared religious consensus, coupled with significant family links amongst the elite in both monarchies, reinforced the physical links provided by those north German territories which were both part of the Holy Roman Empire and subject to the sovereignty of either the Danish or the Swedish monarchy. Despite a shared past history and close cultural links, however, the two Scandinavian monarchies were nearly invariably hostile towards each other—particularly so after the disasters of the early half of the seventeenth century. Christian IV and Gustav Adolph in the 1620s in effect locked the two monarchies into perpetual rivalry, where all the tools of early modern political propaganda were used: artistic patronage, state-sponsored creation of historical myth, and full exploitation of all diplomatic channels to emphasize the tension.2 Although the chosen grounds for conflict changed under different monarchs (especially after the end of the Thirty Years War, and again in

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