

# P.O. Brøndsted, a revolutionary?

by Jacob Isager

“We used to tipple punch and talk politics...”  
(Byron on Brøndsted, 1811)<sup>1</sup>

## Brøndsted in politics

Most biographical articles on Brøndsted (fig. 1) focus on his contribution to Classical Archaeology in Denmark and Europe and the deplorable fact that he never finished his grandiose plan of publishing all the results of his investigations in Greece. In his book on Danish intellectual history in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Vilhelm Andersen devotes thirty pages to Brøndsted, pointing out the important role played by him in the so-called Greek Renaissance in Denmark in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup> As an example of his moral courage Andersen mentions briefly that Brøndsted praised the revolution in Naples in 1820, demonstrating a spirit of liberty typical of this century and thereby risking his post as a Royal Agent.<sup>3</sup> But what interests Andersen is Brøndsted as a humanist.

In the *Festskrift* to Andersen, K.F. Plesner too describes Brøndsted as a prominent intellectual and a man of the world. In this connection he demonstrates how Brøndsted liked his role as royal diplomat and political amateur.<sup>4</sup> Brøndsted had a talent for being in the right places at the right moments. Involuntarily he ran into the battle of Jena when visiting Weimar in 1806. In Greece in 1812 he met with Ali Pacha (fig. 2) and

many Greeks who later took part in the Greek War of Independence. He had just arrived at Palermo when an uprising broke out in 1820, and shortly afterwards he came to Naples finding the city celebrating a new constitution. He was in Paris during the revolution in 1830 and followed the electoral reforms in England in 1832. Finally, he returned more permanently to Denmark at a crucial political moment but he did not live to witness the new constitution. Plesner concludes that Brøndsted had liberal views but that he was not a republican.<sup>5</sup>

Brøndsted was a keen observer of political events and he confides his many reactions and reflections to his diaries and in letters to his friends. In dealing with these matters he often expands his thoughts into longer digressions on different peoples' right to instigate revolution, and their qualifications for and their worthiness of a new constitution. To judge from the published diaries and letters it seems that his more remarkable thoughts and reflections on revolution date from the years 1820 to 1824, and they are evidently an outcome of the period of the above-mentioned major events with which Brøndsted felt personally connected.

As I shall try to show, we should on the basis of this

1. Letter to John Cam Hobhouse Broughton, dated Athens, the 5<sup>th</sup> of March 1811, cf. Brøndsted 1999, 10.

2. Andersen 1907-1916, II, 1, 134-165.

3. Andersen 1907-1916, II, 1, 149. Cf. the article by Otto Schepelern in this publication.

4. Plesner 1934, 60-75.

5. Plesner 1934, 71-73.

material be able to put together a picture – maybe not a revolutionary one – of a person deeply engaged in politics.

The excellent biography of Brøndsted written by his friend J.P. Mynster and other contemporary testimonies will help to diversify the picture.<sup>6</sup>

### Brøndsted and Napoleon

Brøndsted's biographer J.P. Mynster gives this description of the young Brøndsted: "As usual for young people his political views were totally different from what they later became. He was a great admirer of Napoleon, especially after his return from Egypt and the battle of Marengo. Correspondingly he hated the English. He later arrived at a totally opposite opinion".<sup>7</sup> It is a summary statement, and I prefer to regard Brøndsted's standpoint in another perspective than that of the foolishness of a young man. In 1801, Denmark had been defeated in a sea-battle by an English fleet. In the following years it became most difficult for the country to find a safe position in the conflict between the great powers, and after the English bombardment of Copenhagen in 1807 Denmark was forced to choose sides and had to follow Napoleon. It is difficult to say to what extent this disposition was shared by Danish intellectuals who like Brøndsted, in a broader perspective, had welcomed the French revolution, which had created new liberal ideas and the success of Napoleon.<sup>8</sup>

One has to bear in mind that Brøndsted actually lived and studied in Paris from 1806 to 1809 and witnessed the events from there. When Brøndsted on his way to Paris stopped in Weimar to visit Goethe in 1806, the battle of Jena took place close by, and he was

excited by the presence of Napoleon and his triumphal troops in the streets of Weimar. In his diary of the 15<sup>th</sup> of October, the day after the battle, Brøndsted gives an account of a city filled with conquerors and captives and he inserts his considerations: "The truth is that N[apoleon] is a product not only of the French Revolution, but of this whole age, and of the whole Eighteenth Century ... in short: The vices and the madness of the whole of this miserable century had to be mixed together, before its most perfect flower could burst into bloom."<sup>9</sup>

As late as 1815 a similar view is found in a publication entitled "Europe, France and Napoleon" in which its author, the Danish theologian N.F.S. Grundtvig, prophesies Napoleon's return as a common European and Christian ruler and Prince of Peace to arouse a lethargic and dormant Europe.<sup>10</sup> To Grundtvig the spirit of Napoleon and the spirit of the time converge in total harmony, and he declares Napoleon a wonderful instrument of God, the redeemer that was promised by the revolution.<sup>11</sup> In this connection Grundtvig expresses an extremely negative view of the English, a people that, according to Grundtvig, originated from a mixture of immigrated Celts and of Roman soldiers of low rank with later additions of pirates, brigands and criminal elements from Scandinavia, Northern Germany and France. This book of Grundtvig met its Waterloo together with Napoleon, and Grundtvig later changed his view of England completely.

Nine years later, in 1824, Brøndsted had witnessed the rise and fall of Napoleon. Together with the rest of Europe and along with many other former admirers of Napoleon he has learned his lesson and again he confides his conclusions to his diary: "... later, when the nations with extraordinary effort had helped their lea-

6. Brøndsted 1844b, I, 3-86.

7. Brøndsted 1844b, I, 10.

8. The attitude to Napoleon among the Danish intellectuals is a topic, which until now has not been thoroughly investigated, cf. Tamm 2005, 13ff.

9. Brøndsted 1850, 3.

10. Grundtvig 1815, 23, 26 and 175-176. Cf. Michelsen 1955 and Feldbæk 1991-1992, III, 20-22.

11. Grundtvig, 1815, 113.



Fig. 1. Drawing of P.O. Brøndsted, probably c. 1810, drawn by H.H. Ploetz, Copenhagen. (Mikala Brøndsted, cat. No. 4)



Fig. 2. Portrait of Ali Pacha from around 1814, painted by Spyridon Ventouras. Private collection, Athens.

ders out of the humiliating Bonapartian slavery, which the leaders themselves through all kinds of baseness had prepared for themselves, then most of the promises which had been given to the nations in time of distress were not kept, at that point the same strings were plucked again, either to create an illusion of hope among the people or to return to despotism again.” And Brøndsted goes on: “... I think that society’s dependence on one or a few persons’ talent and goodwill, namely absolute monarchy, is a patriarchal form, which is not at all suited for the difficult and complicated conditions which modern European culture has created.”<sup>12</sup> From these remarks it is clear that Brøndsted does not recall (or want to admit to) his former enthusiasm for Napoleon and he seems to present himself as a representative of revolutionary people and blames the kings and leaders in Europe for their humiliating Bonapartian slavery.

### The Greek Revolution and War of Independence

As a young student Brøndsted had dreamt of visiting Greece and his dream was fulfilled. He stayed there from 1810 to 1812 and he was well prepared for Greece and the Greeks. He was, as has already been said, a keen observer and he spoke modern Greek, which enabled him to make immediate and personal contact with the Greeks. He preferred to travel without a guard of soldiers, and he saw this as a prerequisite for making contacts. His journey coincided with crucial political events in Europe. Napoleon had conquered a large part of continental Europe, and in Athens the political situation in Europe was on the agenda when Brøndsted arrived there and agents from the belligerent countries played their political games with each

other. As Lord Byron states in a letter, his friend Brøndsted liked to tiddle punch and talk politics.<sup>13</sup>

When he finally decided to leave Greece and return to Denmark, he made a stop in North-western Greece, in Epirus, where he met with the Turkish governor Ali Pacha. He passed the winter 1812-1813 in Ioannina, where Ali held court. Brøndsted has given a very lively and accurate account of his interviews with Ali Pacha. This account was written in English, German and French and was meant to be published, we assume, in Brøndsted’s lifetime, but the manuscript had to wait for publication until 1999.<sup>14</sup> What gives the account a special value is the fact that it was written after 1822, when Ali was assassinated by order of the sultan and his head sent to the Sublime Porte. In his account Brøndsted relates his conversations with and impressions of Ali Pacha in 1812 which are important in themselves, but more important is Brøndsted’s evaluation of Ali’s political and cultural contributions to the Greek War of Independence seen in the light of what had happened in the years that elapsed between Brøndsted’s visit to the court of Ali in 1812 and the death of Ali in 1822.

Brøndsted reflects on the phenomenon of Ali and the phenomenon of power and he is at once fascinated and repelled by him. He admires the way Ali initially established himself as a head of the traditionally rival clans of Albania, and how later, when the Sultan made him governor of Northern Greece, he brought unity and peaceful conditions to his province. Brøndsted sees the figure of Ali as a solution to the problem of Balkanization and he presents him in this way: “Ali of Tepeleni, a man who by his extraordinary qualities, as well as by his crimes, exercised during more than half a century, an unbounded influence over the finest provinces of Greece, and upon the recent events which have changed the face of those countries, once so

12. Brøndsted 1850, 146-148.

13. Cf. note 1.

14. Brøndsted 1999.

beautiful, and even still so interesting – was, unquestionably, one of the most remarkable personages in the vast Ottoman Empire, the downfall of which has only been delayed to our days by the reciprocal jealousy, and the want of energy and moral dignity in the rulers of Europe. This man, whom history will, doubtless, distinguish as a kind of physiological phenomenon, descended from a Musselman family of Albania, if not of obscure at least of middling rank. Notwithstanding innumerable obstacles, he established himself as the absolute despot over the finest European provinces of the Turkish Empire, and a population of two millions of inhabitants. Daring, and fertile in resources, he knew how to support his usurpations, and his crimes, by an army of about thirty five thousand men – excellent troops, at least for carrying on war in those regions, and against the Turks ... Ali Pacha, the most consummate Albanian of his time, alone knew how to solve a problem extremely difficult – that of uniting under his banners a people the most savage and the most marauding in Europe, divided before his days into a thousand distinct and independent tribes, who plundered and murdered each other without ceasing. He alone was the first who knew how to overawe them all, to terminate their particular feuds, and to subjugate them all beneath his sceptre of iron, so that it would be strictly true to say – that Ali Pacha, for the last twenty years of his long career, was the sole robber in his states, and that there was more personal security in travelling there than in most of the southern countries of Europe. After all, it appears to me that a single privileged plunderer is better than a multitude of subaltern tyrants, not only for travellers, but also for the inhabitants of any country whatever; at least some arrangement can be made with one only, but there is no stipulating with a host of petty plunderers.”<sup>15</sup> Brøndsted concludes here that despotism, though in its nature

monstrous and sterile, still occasionally produces something good, whilst anarchy, the pest of all social order, never brings forth anything profitable whatsoever. He adds: “This truth, I fear, must serve as a consolation, not only beyond the Adriatic, but even elsewhere.”<sup>16</sup>

Brøndsted’s interviews are delightful reading and he depicts Ali as a foresighted, clever though rude politician who manoeuvres rather elegantly between the diplomats of France and England – a source of annoyance to Napoleon, as Brøndsted remarks.<sup>17</sup> I will only quote Brøndsted’s concluding remarks of the figure of Ali: “I own that this extraordinary man made a great impression upon me. Others have seen him under a point of view wholly different; I saw him, absolutely, as I have presented him here. The difference is in the nature of things. Ali is one of those volcanos of a hundred aspects, which providence makes use of in its moral administration as in the physical world, to execute its designs. But these volcanos do not always throw out torrents of fire, and I know of delightful gardens on the sides of Etna, and of Vesuvius, which each year put on the finest verdure, close to those horrible heaps, which have borne on their burning waves death and destruction.”<sup>18</sup>

The figure of Ali as a typical, cruel Oriental despot is found in the many travelling accounts of Greece from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, even in the accounts of the French and British agents staying at the court of Ali. But to their governments they gave more sober reports without oriental colouring. Brøndsted stands out by choosing a middle course. He relates the well-known anecdotes to his readers but he gives a more balanced picture of Ali. This picture has been confirmed by a recent book by K.E. Fleming entitled *The Muslim Bonaparte. Diplomacy and Orientalism in Ali Pasha’s Greece*, 1999. On the basis of diplomatic correspon-

15. Brøndsted 1999, 34-35.

16. Brøndsted 1999, 35.

17. Brøndsted 1999, 49.

18. Brøndsted 1999, 76-77.

dence, and with the intention of unmasking and explaining the orientalist view<sup>19</sup> of Ali Pacha, Fleming reaches conclusions that explain and support many of the components that created Brøndsted's great interest in Ali as a political figure. She does not refer to Brøndsted, probably because her volume was published in the same year as Brøndsted's account came out.

Fleming demonstrates Ali's conscious abandonment of the Ottoman imperial ideology and the adoption of a more modernist, European-influenced understanding of statecraft and of politics.<sup>20</sup> As Fleming puts it: "He found his role only through the French revolution and the new ideological and political possibilities it brought in its wake."<sup>21</sup> He even promised his Greek subjects a new constitution and wrote to Metternich (of all people!) requesting him to prepare one.<sup>22</sup> He sought in many ways to emulate the figure of Napoleon – with no small success. Lord Byron tells us that the Turks named him the Muslim Bonaparte.<sup>23</sup>

In fact, the Napoleonic wars brought Western Europe to the borders of Ali's reign and it seemed natural for Ali to maintain close and direct contacts with the governmental representatives of the Western countries, in particular Britain and France, which both saw the pasha as a sovereign political entity and a major factor in the geopolitics of the day.<sup>24</sup>

Fleming seems to agree with Brøndsted regarding the political importance of Ali as an organizer of his own state in accordance with western models and, further, in his making Ioannina an economic and cultural centre. Thus Ali prepared the way for the Greek War of Independence. Ioannina became a centre of the Greek movement for independence. As the major centres of

learning in Greece the schools of Ioannina became the feeding institutions for many members of the *Philiki Etairia*, which played an important role in the early steps of the war of Liberation.

Ali was aware of the fact that his Greek secretaries as well as his personal physician were members of the *Etairia*, and he attempted to use it to his advantage when he saw that the Greek insurrection might support his efforts to separate himself from the Sublime Porte. To gain some Greek support against the Sultan's troops in 1819, Ali even claimed to be a member of the *Etairia* himself, and through his *Etairist* secretaries he tried to forge an alliance with the Greek revolutionaries against the Ottomans.<sup>25</sup> But what became most important for the Greek uprising was the fact that Ali's conflict with the Porte and the following battle with the Ottoman government tied up a huge number of the imperial troops.

Brøndsted refers again to the subject of Ali Pacha in a letter written in Paris the 11<sup>th</sup> of May 1824 to Mrs. Kamma Rahbek. With the letter are enclosed two prints, one depicting the young pianist Liszt, "created by the Lord as an inspiration and refreshment for many a noble heart," the other showing "an old man, a genius, but at the same time a callous devil, created by the Lord in his wrath as a scourge for degenerate races, Ali Pascha of Ioannina. He has had his day. The Lord broke his heart of stone, when its destiny was fulfilled which was to arouse the dormant Hellas from its long-lasting lethargy ..."<sup>26</sup> As late as 1834 Ali Pacha constituted the theme for a lecture delivered by Brøndsted.<sup>27</sup>

A diary entrance of April 6, 1822, the year of Ali

19. For many travellers the Orient began when they arrived in Greece. The so-called Orientalist discourse as presented by Edward Said has as its backdrop western colonialism and imperialism, but in her book Fleming sees travels to *classical* Greece as a different form of colonialism, where the travellers' account of Ali is coloured by their orientalist view and even fed by Ali himself.

20. Fleming 1999, 77.

21. Fleming 1999, 81.

22. Fleming 1999, 118. Cf. Dakin 1972, 34-35.

23. "the Mahometan Buonaparte", Byron to his Mother, Prevesa the 12<sup>th</sup> of November 1809. Byron 1898-1904, I, 252.

24. Fleming 1999, 7.

25. Fleming 1999, 29 and Dakin 1972, 34-35.

26. Brøndsted 1850, 138.

27. Diary entrance of the 4<sup>th</sup> of March 1834, cf. the article by Gorm Schou-Rode in this publication.

Pacha's death, shows him full of dismay: "The Greek war of emancipation, which seems to promise something good for this extremely intelligent people, dissolves itself into party loyalty and it has been defiled by horrible cruelty and unprecedented misdeeds from both sides especially because of the usual unhappy consequences of a long tyranny: "The ruin of true patriotism and its dissolution into the most hollow egoism and nothing but private interests, and, until now, the need of a genius, highly gifted intellectually and physically, who is able to impress the masses and coerce the divided forces into noble unity for a great endeavour. The Greeks everywhere were always even in the most beautiful epoch of this nation, the most difficult people on earth to bring into unity. They were never brought into it, unless submitted to two conditions: An overwhelming danger at their doorstep and the existence of a personally and physically impressive person to lead them."<sup>28</sup>

Brøndsted looks for a personally and physically impressing person to lead the Greeks. He alludes to the character of Pericles and surely has in mind ideal leaders such as those mentioned by his favourite classical authors Plato and Xenophon. Even a figure like that of Ali Pacha might have crossed his mind.

In his correspondence with the Danish Prince Christian Frederik, who clearly demonstrated his Philhellenic sentiments, Brøndsted relates events from the revolt in Greece, and this shows that he maintains contact with friends in Greece. We hear also about his meeting with Count Capodistrias in 1823 in Geneva, with whom he could share his affection for Greece and its fight for freedom. In the preface to the second volume of his *Voyages dans la Grèce*, which came out in 1830, he expressed his joy of the victory over the Turks at Navarino in 1827.

## The revolution in Naples and the following uprising in Palermo in 1820

About the revolution in Naples Brøndsted's biographer Mynster relates: "The revolution in Spain in 1820 seems to have inspired the same movements in Italy. In Naples the military made an uprising in July supported by the people, and the 6<sup>th</sup> of July the King had to promise a new constitution. He transferred the government to the Prince of Calabria. After the Spanish constitution was proclaimed the 7<sup>th</sup> of July, the King and the Prince confirmed with their oath the new constitution of Naples. All this came about without much disturbance."<sup>29</sup>

The monarch and the people seemed to go hand in hand.<sup>30</sup> At that time Brøndsted was staying in Palermo, and when the news from Naples reached Palermo the inhabitants wanted to go further than the Neapolitans. They wanted independence and their own parliament. It came to streetfighting between troops and the mob and much blood was shed in this uprising. Brøndsted was stuck in the middle and did not approve of this uncontrolled revolution. He considered it a disgusting expression of the egoism of the Sicilians and of their lack of solidarity with the Neapolitans, which might have given them a better future. Brøndsted wanted to go to Naples and he finally got a passport and reached Naples the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August, where he stayed the rest of the year.

Mynster comments upon Brøndsted's rather naïve enthusiasm and his very optimistic view of the ability of the Neapolitans to cope with a constitution, which, eventually, was short-lived. A wise and experienced statesman would have foreseen that deeds do not always follow big words.<sup>31</sup>

But Brøndsted sent a very outspoken report back to Denmark. As the Danish court was afraid that Brøndsted would speak out as freely to everybody else, he was told, that his way of evaluating the situation was

28. Brøndsted 1850, 130. Written in Rome.

29. Brøndsted 1844b, I, 38.

30. Brøndsted 1844b, I, 41.

31. Brøndsted 1844b, I, 41.



not in agreement with Danish foreign policy. In his reply to the Danish Minister Niels Rosenkrantz Brøndsted spoke with frankness and with great dignity.<sup>32</sup> He had made his report according to his instructions, which told him to relate honestly what happened. He felt obliged to give his own opinion, not that of his government: "... If I tried to figure out the opinion of your Excellencies or the members of the government about the situation, I would not only feel a coward, but as far as I can see, I would be of no use and doing a lot of damage – of no use because it is unfruitful to relate to somebody his own opinion about something, damaging because my government would miss information about distant matters and events."<sup>33</sup>

Brøndsted clearly utters his astonishment that the government expected to get from him only what they wanted to hear, whereas he assumes that it is his duty to report what actually happened. He made no secret of the fact that he found that the revolutionary tendencies in many countries, especially in Greece, were sincere expressions of the wishes of an oppressed people, not the machinations of some secret societies or conjurations.

Brøndsted's outspokenness here and in the preface of an archaeological dissertation, published in Naples, made him unfit for his position as a royal agent. Yet Prince Christian Frederik, too, came to Naples and witnessed the revolution and the correspondence between him and Brøndsted demonstrates their common interest in new liberal constitutions.<sup>34</sup>

## The possibility of a revolution in Denmark and Brøndsted's general evaluation of the outcome of the Europeans' endeavours to gain new constitutions

In this short contribution I am restricted to present only some tesserae of the mosaic, which depicts the political profile of Brøndsted. Two quotations will illuminate his general evaluation of the outcome of the Europeans' endeavours to gain new constitutions and the possibility for a revolution in Denmark: "If the designation "the Middle Ages" is supposed to mean a period in which Man himself is nothing and nothing original is being created and which only constitute a period in the middle of two ages worthy of the designation real ages, then it seems to me, that our own tumultuous and revolutionary time, in which everything is boiling and fermenting and tumbling without creating anything really remarkable fully deserves this name ... Maybe our children and grandchildren will reap good, ripe fruits from the tree that we planted in bitterness and toil and watered with our tears."<sup>35</sup>

This rather pessimistic attitude is found in the next excerpt from his diary, one year later,<sup>36</sup> where Brøndsted raises the question: Do the Danes have the qualifications of being "a highspirited people", a prerequisite for creating the conditions for public and common welfare? Can we Danes sincerely connect this qualification with ourselves, and why not? The result of 160 years of despotism is a weakened national energy: "With this and many other things in mind I confess, that I, too, belong to those who maybe never shall cry out ineptly and at the wrong moment for a representative constitution, as I myself am guilty of this misfortune, but sincerely with all my heart desire and pray

32. Brøndsted 1844b, I, 42.

33. Quoted in Brøndsted 1844b, I, 42.

34. Brøndsted 1820; cf. Jørgensen & Neergaard 1903-1907, 154; cf. the articles by Christian Gottlieb and Otto Schepelem in this publication.

35. Diary, Geneve, the 29<sup>th</sup> of August 1823. Brøndsted 1850, 135-137.

36. Brøndsted 1850, 145-148.

from God that before the end of my life I may see such a constitution in my native country, by which its finest and best men without offence and in their full right point out and promote common needs, drive away hollow egoism, unite distracted and half-hearted minds in a noble endeavour, and in the future secure our good nation against the extremes of insult and derision that it has suffered in our lifetime.”<sup>37</sup>

A democratic constitution in due time is suggested here and absolute monarchy is rejected as he already states a little earlier in the same diary entry: “... I think, that society’s dependence on one or a few persons’ talent and good will, namely absolute monarchy, is a patriarchal form, which not at all is suited for the difficult and complicated conditions which modern European culture has created.”<sup>38</sup>

### The revolution in Paris 1830

During his stay in Paris in 1830 Brøndsted again became an eyewitness to a revolution and he gives in his diary a rather detailed account of the events. Following Mynster I shall confine myself to quote this comment by Brøndsted: “This revolution seems until now in every respect to be the most dignified and the most beautiful we have witnessed; this time, at least, all law and order were on the side of the people, while injustice and violence were on the side of its adversaries.”<sup>39</sup>

In a letter from Paris to his friend Jens Møller dated the 27<sup>th</sup> of October he gives a more critical and less flattering evaluation of the behaviour of the Parisian mob during this revolution, which according to Brøndsted ought to result in a combination of a noble king, an excellent constitution and all the things that con-

tribute to freedom, wealth and happiness for the citizens.<sup>40</sup>

### Conclusion: Brøndsted’s role in the revolution in Greece and the political life in Denmark

During his many stays in Rome Brøndsted kept company with many local, Danish and foreign influential people. A member of the Danish circle in Rome, Nils Bygom Krarup gives this portrait of Brøndsted in a letter written in Rome in January 1823 to his cousin N.C. Møhl. In connection with a discussion of the problems of etiquette in Rome and how to address persons, he mentions Brøndsted as an example. How is he to be addressed? The Germans call him Herr von Brøndsted. He does not like to be called Professor, because this title is too common in Rome. Agent of the Court is a title nobody but Krarup uses, because he cannot bring himself to use the title Cavaliere, like the Italians. Krarup declares that he will address Brøndsted as von Brøndsted even if it makes him blush. He proceeds: “We could not have a better person than Brøndsted here. He is very courteous. He often arranges parties and he never fails to invite all the Danes ... In all matters he is liberal and intolerant only of despotism and Grundtvigianism, which things I hate myself.”<sup>41</sup>

Krarup goes on to state his opinion of Brøndsted’s plan for the first volume of the magnificent edition of his *Voyages dans la Grèce*.<sup>42</sup> Krarup looks with critical eyes on this project. Much of the material seems to him to consist of circumstantial trivialities. Krarup refers to a long and tiresome evening, where Brøndsted had presented a chapter from the book, and his verdict is: “The problem with Brøndsted is that he wants to tell

37. Brøndsted 1850, 148.

38. Brøndsted 1850, 147.

39. Diary, the 7<sup>th</sup> of August 1830, Brøndsted 1844b, I, 62-63.

40. Brøndsted 1926, 167-169.

41. Krarup 1957, 145-146.

42. Brøndsted 1826-1830a.

all that he knows and that is a horrible thing.” In his biography of Brøndsted Mynster puts it more kindly: “Brøndsted was by nature a communicative person and he had something to say.”<sup>43</sup>

We are confronted with a many-sided person who is impulsive, passionate, perhaps sometimes tiresome and circumstantial, but generally very sociable and well-liked, with a far-reaching network of European friends and contacts with whom his numerous travels enabled him to meet and discuss the political or scholarly matters that occupied him. It is difficult to evaluate the impact of these discussions. His letters and diaries demonstrate that he was able to keep his contacts with important people in Greece and elsewhere.

In my concluding assessment of Brøndsted as possibly a revolutionary I will try to give an answer to two questions. Is Brøndsted to be considered a revolutionary? If so – did it have any effect on his contemporaries outside or inside Denmark? In this connection we have to divide his life into two periods: The years before 1820 and the years after when a series of revolutions took place in Europe. His interest in Napoleon and his discussions of Greek and European politics during his stays in Athens and Ioannina belong to the period before these revolutions. To this period we can add his public lectures in Copenhagen on ancient and modern Greece. The lectures were well received, but it is hard to tell if they contributed in any larger degree to more philhellenic attitudes in Denmark in this period. And they were not published until after his death.

When we look at the years after 1820, it becomes evident that his contacts in a Europe in revolution, filled with liberalist programs and movements, made their impact on him and there is reason to believe that during exchanges of ideas he on his part may have influenced persons in politically high positions. If I should suggest persons on whom he may have had a greater impact I will point to his Greek contacts who played important

roles in the early stages of the Greek war of liberation. In a Danish context I should point out Prince Christian Frederik, with whom Brøndsted had exchanged positive opinions concerning the revolutions in Naples and in Greece. In 1839 the prince was proclaimed king as Christian VIII. Brøndsted would have appreciated the following statement of A.D. Jørgensen in *Danmarks Riges Historie*: “At his accession Christian VIII was 53 years old; in fact, he had reached the age which Plato prefers for the ruler.”<sup>44</sup> Jørgensen implies that the monarch had the qualities of Plato’s ideal philosopher king, and he gives us a very positive view of the reign of Christian VIII, which has not been shared by later historians.<sup>45</sup>

The new king did not meet the expectations of the liberals. We must assume that Brøndsted felt a little disappointed with his royal friend with whom he for many years had shared his enthusiasm for a new Europe with liberal constitutions. But how do we grasp and define the political standpoint of Brøndsted, a liberalist, who in the most revolutionary period of his life, in 1824, wrote the following in his diary: “Every constitution has to be peculiar to the single specific country, and not to be implanted or copied from the constitution of another country... For the best constitution is the one that best helps every order and individual duly to acknowledge both their duties and their rights. As both duties and rights are different in different states and a product of peculiar and local conditions etc. the conclusion must be that no constitution of any country, even the best, can fully be copied or implanted into another country.”<sup>46</sup>

And he adds a little later: “... I am a royalist with all my heart because I believe this form suitable to promote true happiness and blessing in a state and to secure the welfare of everybody in peace and good order.”<sup>47</sup>

43. Brøndsted 1844b, I, 81.

44. Steenstrup 1896-1907, VI, 255f.

45. Cf. Skovmand 1964, 190-201 (espec. page 193); cf. Olsen 2002-2005, X, 237-246.

46. Brøndsted 1850, 138-139.

47. Cf. a diary entrance from 1817, quoted in Brøndsted 1850, 82: “... exactly because I love and praise my King, I hate and detest the extremists ... and the king’s worst enemies are the hollow, empty-hearted, and egoistic extremists.”