

P.O. Brøndsted as Keeper of The Royal Cabinet of Coins and Medals

by Jørgen Steen Jensen

When P.O. Brøndsted in 1832 returned to Copenhagen from his prolonged stay abroad he was planning to resume his activities as a professor of Greek language at the University of Copenhagen (fig.1). But then Christian Ramus, who since the early years of the 19th century had been Keeper of The Royal Cabinet of Coins and Medals, suddenly died during a vacation, the 8th of July 1832. A fortnight afterwards, the 23rd of July, Brøndsted applied to the King for the position, delicately indicating that the Cabinet, “even if it was beautiful and rich, perhaps was not sufficiently used for more general dissemination of important historical knowledge”.¹ In many ways Brøndsted set out to bring the Cabinet to a standard, which he knew from other contemporary European cabinets, first and foremost London and Paris.

In 1832 the Cabinet had only one permanent position, that of the Keeper, but since 1820 an assistant, Ole Devegge, was temporarily employed by Ramus for preparing a new catalogue of Danish medieval coins. Devegge, who as assistant for the new publication was preparing the drawings, also applied for the position as Keeper (the 6th of August), and finally on the 20th of August Christian Jürgensen Thomsen, also applied. Thomsen had been a secretary of the Royal

Commission for Antiquities since 1817, and he was also a very keen numismatist, specializing in the Middle Ages. His private collection was considerable, and he had a network of correspondents all over Europe.

In this situation Brøndsted was actively working for his own candidature, submitting two versions of his ideas about a plan for the Cabinet. It should be open once a week for two hours (except in four or five winter months), the Keeper should be expected to give one or two numismatic courses a year, free of charge, and an annual journal in Danish or French should be published. The idea of establishing a collection of casts in plaster or sulphur was also brought forward.

No doubt Prince Christian Frederik, to whom Brøndsted had rather close relations², was actively supporting the candidature of Brøndsted, support that was as much the more important, because in the previous year, 1831, the Prince had been officially proclaimed the Crown Prince and consequently was now a member of the Council of State.

But diplomacy had its chance, because Ramus had had a considerable salary, which included the means for the payment of Ole Devegge. Consequently the director, the old, but very influential and highly intelligent Lord Chamberlain, A.W. Hauch suggested to the

1. Archives of the Lord Chamberlain, the chief of The Royal Collection of Coins and Medals, The Danish National Archives (Rigsarkivet), Copenhagen, cf. W. von Rosen (ed.), I, 1, 1983, 136 seq. Thanks to the late Senior Archivist Frank Jørgensen photocopies of this important series are kept at The Royal Collection of Coins and Medals, The National Museum of Denmark. Unless otherwise indicated all references to letters are from this series.

“... Cabinettet ... som vist nok er meget skjønt og anseeligt, men maaskee endnu ikke tilstrækkeligen benyttet til almindeligere Udbredelse af mange vigtige og frugtbare historiske Indsigter...”, Brøndsted to the King, the 23rd of July 1832.

2. Cf. the articles by Jan Zahle and Christian Gottlieb in this publication.



Fig. 1: Portrait medallion of Peter Oluf Brøndsted by David d'Angers, Paris 1831, one-sided, diameter 14,5 cm, cast in bronze, The Royal Collection of Coins and Medals, inv. KP 1842. Acquired 1935 from a Russian émigré in Paris. The artist, David d'Angers is known for his great productivity, creating all sorts of sculpture including 477 medallions. (Mikala Brøndsted, cat. no.8)

King that Brøndsted should be the keeper (with 600 rigsbankdaler (rbd.) a year), while Devegge and Thomsen should be assistant-keepers (each with 500 rbd. a year). In this connection it is worth the while to mention that Brøndsted also kept his normal salary as a university professor, while Devegge had a job as a li-

brarian besides. Thomsen, who still was taking care of his family business, had no salary in his job as a secretary to the Commission of Antiquities, but now he got his first job with a salary paid by public money. The king, Frederik VI accordingly issued a Royal resolution, the 23rd of September 1832.

The scene was set for a great project for the modernisation and development of The Royal Cabinet of Coins and Medals. In this paper the part played by Brøndsted in particular will be discussed, while Michael Märcher will deal with other aspects from the same period in a forthcoming study.³ The following aspects of The Royal Cabinet of Coins and Medals will especially be discussed:

1. *The establishing of a separate cabinet of sulphur casts of Greek coins from great European collections*
2. *The development of the Classic collection by way of acquisitions of Greek coins*
3. *The ways and means of financing the new acquisitions*
4. *The opening of the Cabinet to the public and the development of the exhibition of Danish Royal gold medals*
5. *The development of the personal and scientific resources of the Cabinet*
6. *The general administration of the Cabinet*
7. *Brøndsted as seen by Thomsen*

1. *The establishing of a separate cabinet of sulphur casts of Greek coins from great European collections*

Thanks to his international experience, especially at the coin cabinets of London and Paris, Brøndsted was well acquainted with the new technique of making coin copies by means of sulphur paste. A prerequisite was, however, that impressions should be available. The impressions could be used several times, but gradually they lost the precision of the imprint, so that in time the quality of the sulphur copies would suffer.

3. Märcher forthcoming.

4. Brøndsted to Hauch, the 19th of June 1837. "... det fuldstændigste og mindst bekostelige Repertorium for den hele videnskab om de antikke folkefærds numismatiske forraad og dermed forbundne historiske monumenter ..."; it was expressed in another way two years later in a letter by Brøndsted to Hauch's successor, O.C. Haxthausen the 17th of September 1839..."Copiekameret bliver det samme efter den af Chefen approberede Plan bør og kan vorde, nemlig det fuldstændigste og tillige ubekosteligste Re-

Brøndsted more than once expressed his personal views about the importance of sulphur copies as such, ... "they form the most complete and less costly repertory for the knowledge of the numismatic materials of antiquity, and the historical monuments connected to them ..."⁴ As a Keeper of the Cabinet Brøndsted travelled to procure sulphur casts. It appears from the documents available that he covered his travel expenses himself. This is never mentioned explicitly, but we may suppose it to be the case. The Cabinet, of course, covered other costs. This meant usually that the King had to approve both the travel itself and the consequent acquisitions.

During nearly ten years in office, Brøndsted made no less than three trips to procure casts from Paris and London, in 1832-33, 1836 and 1839-40. He set out on his first trip in 1832, just two months after having been appointed, reporting to Hauch from London before Christmas.⁵ It appears that he, at least in London, personally selected a considerable number of the coins he wished to have copied, while in Paris in 1833 he simply acquired the complete set of available copies. The Paris acquisition amounted to 3,414 sulphur copies; it was the complete holdings of a widow of a former employee, who used to keep the first imprint for himself. Brøndsted bought the copies at the price of 400 francs, the widow first asking for 700 francs, while the normal price would amount to 1,024 francs. It was the 'best sound business practice' Brøndsted ever made.⁶ Evidently Brøndsted had the capacities of a merchant, which he would have many occasions to use in his career at the Coin Cabinet.

Back home Brøndsted realized - or perhaps only at that time did he communicate his knowledge to Hauch - that copies of sulphur are in need of their own cabi-

pertorium, som kan haves, for Videnskabens Materiale gennem alle de Fag, til hvis Studium Numismatiken kan afgive Bidrag..."

5. Brøndsted to Hauch, London the 17th of December 1832, see Brøndsted 1980. 89 seq.

6. "det bedste Kjøbmandskab jeg nogen Sinde har gjort". Brøndsted to Hauch, London the 17th December of 1832, see Brøndsted 1980. 89 seq.

7. Brøndsted to Hauch, the 29th of July 1833.

nets, as they cannot – for obvious reasons of conservation – be kept together with coins of silver.⁷

The acquisition of copies from the British Museum on Brøndsted's second journey in 1836 was to the amount of 4,544 Greek coins – from Etruria to Lesbos. He suggested that Asiatic and African copies had better to wait until the British Museum had acquired and incorporated the important Thomas Burgon collection. Brøndsted had an agreement with John Doubleday, the Museum's technical expert in making casts that he should have a 25% discount off the normal price that is that each copy should cost 3 d instead of the normal price 4 d. He was very proud of having gained permission to get copies from the Collection of the Bank of England (in which the collection of H.P. Borrel, Smyrna, was incorporated), but for various reasons he wanted to defer the preparations for copying in this collection.⁸

In 1837 the collection of sulphur copies amounted to more than 10,000 pieces (fig. 2), they were held in special cabinets, of which three were already in use, while the fourth was in preparation.⁹ The cabinets still exist, they grew to a total of five, but their state of preservation is, unfortunately, not very good.¹⁰

The early 17th century castle of Rosenborg has only a limited number of rooms, but Brøndsted succeeded at intervals to add one or two new rooms to the cabinet, one of them in connection with the first great acquisition of sulphur casts.

Before setting out for his third and final journey as a Keeper in late 1839, Brøndsted mentioned that he needed another 5,000 sulphur copies from London. From the papers now available it is not quite clear how many were actually made. In 1841 the Cabinet still was lacking c. 2,000 which had been ordered and already paid for,¹¹ but in 1845 the total number of copies of Greek coins from the British Museum amounted to

10,020 in addition to the several thousand acquired elsewhere.¹²

It is quite possible that Brøndsted contemplated shortening this third journey, because the old king, Frederik VI passed away, rather unexpectedly, the 3rd of December 1839, only some weeks after Brøndsted had left the capital. His successor, Christian VIII, was Prince Christian Frederik, who had personal numismatic interests. Perhaps Brøndsted was eager to pay his respect to the new king, but he also had to consider the fact that he had taken with him to London Ludvig Læssøe, a copy-writer and technical assistant of the Cabinet, in order that he could learn to make impressions and copies of coins and medals. Læssøe learnt his job, and one year after the return to Copenhagen he got a Royal appointment as a copy-writer and producer of casts from coins and medals at the Cabinet. The salary was 300 rbd. (half of the Director's salary) with permission to earn 125 rbd extra a year.¹³ Now, Brøndsted had a technical expert in casts at his side, actually a pupil of Doubleday in London.

2. The development of the Classic collection by way of acquisitions of Greek coins

At the same time as Brøndsted developed the collection of casts, he also acquired substantial numbers of Greek coins. To judge from the lists of coins, submitted to Hauch and his successor O.C. Haxthausen, Brøndsted tried to get all-round acquisitions for the Greek section of the Cabinet. Most of the coins acquired from abroad were bought from Charles-Louis Rollin, Paris, a most important dealer in those days, with whom Brøndsted probably was well acquainted from previous stays in Paris. Brøndsted had excellent relations with Rollin, he used to get a discount of 33% from the prices of Mionnet¹⁴, and in the end he even got considerable amounts of coins for approval and/or

8. Brøndsted to Hauch, the 8th of August 1836

9. Brøndsted to Hauch, the 19th of June 1837

10. One of the best-preserved cabinets is illustrated in Gelfer-Jørgensen 1988, 240, fig. 222.

11. Brøndsted to Haxthausen, the 27th of May 1841. Receipt for advance payment by Doubleday, the 2nd of April 1840.

12. Manuscript source indicated in Brøndsted 1980, 94, ref. 19.

13. Resolution by Christian VIII, the 6th of April 1841.

14. Mionnet 1806-13; Mionnet 1819-37. The six volumes with nine supplements were acquired by Brøndsted from Rollin while in Paris 1836, the price being 700 frcs., see report from Brøndsted to Hauch, the 8th of August 1836.



Fig. 3: Portrait by L. Dupré, 1833, dedicated by Dupré to his friend (*à son ami*); lithograph by Lemercier. The portrait was made during Brøndsted's first visit to Paris after having been appointed as Keeper of the Royal Cabinet of Coins and Medals 1832 (Mikala Brøndsted, cat.no. 10)

selection. Brøndsted on his part was also attentive to Rollin. When the latter indicated that he wanted to have the two important folios of the Cabinet, the 'de-

scription' of Danish coins and medals with coppers from 1791 and the Latin Greek and Roman catalogue from 1816, Brøndsted elicited Royal permission to present them as a gift to Rollin.¹⁵ The business relationship continued after Brøndsted's death, while the practice of dealers sending coins for approval/selection appears to have continued for generations.

During his stay in Paris 1833 (fig. 3) Brøndsted bought from Rollin 16 Attic tetradrachms,¹⁶ but next time he was able to buy more. In 1836 Brøndsted bought at Paris from the Durand auction¹⁷ 121 Greek silver and bronze coins representing 104 Greek poleis and princes,¹⁸ to which should be added 122 Greek coins from Rollin. But he refrained from buying in London because the prices at this market were too high.¹⁹ Brøndsted also made use of his presence at the Durand auction to perform important commissions for the British Museum, being permitted to use £ 3,000 for buying Greek vases.²⁰ Although, as already mentioned, he did not want to buy at the expensive London market, he nonetheless made a small purchase there, six 'very good' Greek coins from the art dealer Castellar.²¹

Copenhagen, too, offered possibilities for the enlargement of the Greek collection. When the famous coin collection of bishop Münter²² was sold – the Latin auction catalogues being prepared by C.J. Thomsen and O. Devegge – King Frederik VI permitted 600 rbd. to be used from the resources of the cabinet to buy antique coins at the first auction in 1836.²³ In the event 155 coins were bought, at a total price of some 590 rbd.²⁴ In the following year the second part of the collection, containing the Roman coins, was put up, and Brøndsted

15. Brøndsted with Thomsen and Devegge to Hauch, the 27th of September 1837.

16. Brøndsted 1980, 94, ref. 7. The Attic tetradrachms, which were from the last centuries B.C., can still be identified in the trays of the Cabinet, *SNG Cop.fasc.* 14, 1944, 128-30, 141, 145, 152, 176, 183, 220, 224, 230, 232, 237, 254, 260f.

17. Cf. the articles by Bodil Bundgaard Rasmussen and Ian Jenkins in this publication.

18. 4,915 francs. Detailed invoice, the 28th of May 1836.

19. Cf. Brøndsted to Hauch, the 30th of May 1836; Brøndsted 1980, 91.

20. Brøndsted 1980, 91 seq.; B.B. Rasmussen and I. Jenkins in this book.

21. This acquisition is mentioned in a report from Brøndsted to Hauch, the 8th of August 1836.

22. Münterianum 1836-39.

23. Royal resolution, the 19th of March 1836.

24. Invoice submitted by C.J. Thomsen, the 31st of August 1836.

asked for permission to buy to the amount of 350-400 rbd.²⁵ His acquisitions at the third auction, in 1839, were rather moderate, to the amount of 235 rbd.²⁶

Another important collector was living in Copenhagen, Christian Tuxen Falbe, a former naval officer, who had succeeded Brøndsted as an assistant in cataloguing the numismatic collection of Christian Frederik.²⁷ In due time he was to be the director of the 'archaeological cabinet' of Christian VIII. Now Falbe offered his collection to the coin cabinet, writing directly to Hauch, mentioning that it contained (no fewer than!) 1,800 Greek, 2,100 Roman and 300 Byzantine coins, as well as some Cufic and other Oriental coins. A third of the whole were in gold or silver, including 110 coins of gold.²⁸

From the letter it is not very clear what Falbe's intention was, but from later developments we see that he, no doubt, wanted to sell it. The staff of the cabinet wanted to buy 266 of his coins at a price of 8,357 frcs., insisting on the normal discount from Mionnet's price.²⁹ Somehow one feels a certain irritation from the staff, a few days later Brøndsted himself offers to present 84 antique Greek coins and coin copies as a gift to the Cabinet!³⁰ These must have been remnants of his Greek collection, the other part of which he had pawned to the sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen many years earlier (or as Thorvaldsen maintained: sold!)³¹ After some months the staff of the Cabinet reduced its interest in the Falbe collection to 139 coins, offering 75% of the Mionnet price, i.e. 2,715 frcs or 987 rbd., to be paid the following year. Frederik VI confirmed this transaction!³²

25. Brøndsted to Hauch, the 30th of October 1837. Actually the invoice was to the amount of 287 rbd., but the Cabinet acquired several coins of a better quality; then it was the intention to sell the replaced coins at a planned auction, Brøndsted and Thomsen to Hauch, the 3rd of February 1838.

26. Brøndsted with Thomsen and Devegge to Haxthausen, the 7th of September 1839

27. Lund 2000, 119-41; J.S. Jensen 2000, 50-53

28. Falbe to Hauch, the 29th of September 1836.

29. Brøndsted with Thomsen and Devegge to Hauch, the 6th of February 1837.

30. Brøndsted to Hauch, the 15th of February 1837.

31. Mørkholm 1982, 7-26.

The question of the acquisition of the Falbe collection appeared again in one of the earliest years of Christian VIII. The collection was valued at 3,400 rbd., and it was to be examined by the staff of the Cabinet before any final decision. The Italic, Sicilian and North African coins, which would be of interest for the King's own collection, were destined for this collection. Following Falbe's own wish, casts of rare Punic coins from The Hague, London, Paris and Vienna should be included for the Coin Cabinet.³³

When in 1839 Brøndsted was preparing his third trip to the great Western European capitals, he was permitted by Frederik VI to use 2,000 rbd. for the acquisition of coins and sulphur casts in London and Paris, and he obtained additional permission to use 4,000 frcs at Rollin to buy coins from the Greek collection of the Comte de Wiczay. Brøndsted had coins from this famous Hungarian collection to the amount of 21,000 francs at his hand from Rollin.³⁴ 4,000 frcs was quite an impressive amount, but we may suppose that a visit to the Cabinet at the castle of Rosenborg of the ageing King Frederik VI (fig. 4) and his Queen, Marie Sophie Frederike, on the 10th of September, a month before, was a reasonable success. The staff was called at very short notice to attend the 'most gracious inspection' of the Majesties.³⁵

3. *The ways and means of financing the new acquisitions*

This part of the numismatic activities of Brøndsted at the Cabinet will illustrate his very developed sense of making money by selling (or other ways of disposing

32. Brøndsted with Thomsen and Devegge to Falbe, the 28th of June 1837, copy in the archive; Royal resolution the 19th of August 1837.

33. Royal resolution, the 25th of January 1841. The coin collection of the King ("vor particuliere Samling") was transferred to The Royal Cabinet of Coins and Medals in 1851 after the death of the King in 1848.

34. Royal resolution, the 8th of October 1839. Supplementary information, Brøndsted to Haxthausen, the 17th of September 1839. Cf. Wiczay 1814; Mørkholm 1982a, 11.

35. Brøndsted to Haxthausen, the 10th of September 1839, at 8 o'clock in the morning. The King and the Queen were expected to "tage Mynt- og Medaille Cabinettet i allernaadigst Øjesyn."



Fig. 4: Full length portrait of Frederik VI in an advanced age. Since the 1930'es and for at least half a century the portrait was on loan to The National Museum of Denmark, where it was placed in the room of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries. It belongs, however, to The Museum of National History at the Castle of Frederiksborg, Hillerød. Photo: Lennart Larsen, 1975.

of) assets, which were considered unnecessary for the Cabinet. He focused his attention particularly on gold, which of course also was bound to produce the largest profit, at least when counted in current currency.

Some years before, in 1828-29 Russia and Persia had been at war. The result was a Persian defeat and Persia had to pay a big indemnity. This was paid mostly in gold, some of it in ingots stamped as coins. Subsequently Tsar Nicholas distributed sets of these coins to his friends, relatives, allies etc., and the Danish king, Frederik VI realized, probably to his surprise, that he had received three sets.³⁶ This gift, which had a considerable material value, was probably somewhat cumbersome, and the court rather quickly disposed of the sets in favour of The Royal Cabinet of Coins and Medals. On his way through offices and corridors, C.J. Thomsen saw the sets, and he put the question, which probably was on everyone's lips, 'but why three sets of all of them?'³⁷

No one in Copenhagen would probably object to disposing of them discreetly, and Brøndsted proposed to do so. The Cabinet should keep only one set selected from among the best specimens – which are in the permanent exhibition of the Collection to day. The income from the sales was estimated to be the amount of 1,087 plus 1,087 rbd., i.e. a total of 2,174 rbd., and the King soon agreed.³⁸ The second set was sold a few years later.

Brøndsted's next move was to have an auction of duplicates from among the Roman collection prepared. In principle it was a good idea, as the formation of the early 19th century Roman collection in Copenhagen, being an amalgamation of the age old 'Kunstammer'

collection with some Roman collections acquired through the good efforts of George Zoëga,³⁹ had generated several duplicates. The first segregation from the Copenhagen collections forms the backbone of the Roman collection at the recently established University of Oslo, but Brøndsted may have seen more possibilities. He asked Hauch for permission to sell more duplicates,⁴⁰ but the preparatory work was more time consuming than Brøndsted had supposed, and it was only in the spring of 1838 the Latin (!) catalogue⁴¹ could be sent to the printers. Just 200 copies of the catalogue were printed. We may suppose that C.J. Thomsen, who was a very experienced organizer of auctions, took care of most of the distribution, both national and international. The auction, which comprised some four thousand coins, took place at Rosenborg castle in a hall just outside the premises of the Coin Cabinet. It provided the cabinet with a net return of 1,600 rbd. (after deduction of cost (printing etc.) of 330 rbd.).⁴² It was not exactly a fortune – no one mentioned the cost of the hours consumed in preparation, but Brøndsted pretended (or believed?) that it would be followed by a second auction.

Brøndsted made a further move to acquire funds. He realized that the Cabinet had a certain number of 'useless' modern gold medals, which ought to be exchanged for the corresponding strikes in silver. He consequently acquired an estimate of the value of a number of silver medals from Franz Streber, the keeper of the Bavarian cabinet in Munich, which came to c. 120 rbd. Hence, if the gold medals could be sold at a price of c. 1,200 rbd., the Cabinet would have a net

36. J.S. Jensen 1981.

37. C.J. Thomsen to J. Reichel, the 22nd of January 1831, "P. S. Die dem König als Present gesandte neue persische M: sind in meine Hande gewesen, aber warum 3 exemplar von alle. NB". J.S. Jensen 2002, 452.

38. Brøndsted to Hauch, the 24th of September 1833; Royal resolution to permit the sale of one set of Persian gold and silver coins, the 2nd of November 1833.

39. J.S. Jensen 1980a; J.S. Jensen 1984.

40. Brøndsted, Thomsen and Devegge to Hauch, the 10th of Septem-

ber 1836; the King allows that part of the income from the auction of duplicates may cover the cost of acquiring Falbe's coins, the 19th of August 1837.

41. Brøndsted 1838. The catalogue in the library of The Royal Collection of Coins and Medals, which has 3,696 nos., is inscribed by Brøndsted the 26th of October 1838, and buyers as well as prices are indicated

42. Brøndsted and Thomsen to Haxthausen, the 24th of November 1838.

return of c. 1,080 rbd.⁴³ Brøndsted, of course, knew the cautious and economic disposition of the old king, who in an eloquent Royal resolution permitted the sale.⁴⁴ According to Georg Galster, 31 German gold medals were sold.⁴⁵ Apparently Brøndsted never left any details, but it is a tempting suspicion that Brøndsted actually took the toll from the old Royal collection of gold coins and medals (first inventory from 1681). That part of the collection is suspiciously empty in exactly the field of German popular medals in gold from the 16th and 17th centuries, of which a not inconsiderable amount was inventoried in the late 17th century. Recently I had the occasion to check this part of the collection. Closer research will probably reveal whether the gold medals disappeared on this or on another comparable occasion.

4. The opening of the Cabinet to the public and the development of the exhibition of Danish Royal gold medals

It was the goal of Brøndsted to open the Cabinet to the public, not only in the literal sense, some hours a week, but also by way of establishing an exhibition and producing a hand catalogue. The exhibition was planned to comprise c. 2,000 items, Greek, Roman and Oriental coins as well as Danish coins and medals. Brøndsted made a special point of the Danish Royal gold medals, which in many ways could be said to illustrate the history of the Oldenburg dynasty. But he discovered that medals, especially gold medals, were lacking

in the series, even if the dies after c. 1660 quite often still were (and are) available.⁴⁶

First he tried (through the good offices of Hauch) to appeal to the Board of Finances hoping for some good will towards having additional gold medals made. But gold medals were expensive, and Brøndsted was promised only extra specimens in silver. Thereafter medals struck at Royal expenses would be given to the Cabinet, two specimens in silver of each medal.⁴⁷ As the reign of Frederik VI was very poorly represented the Board of Finances soon promised some of the more important gold medals, too - the Coronation medal, The Reformation jubilee and both marriages (probably the first marriage of the son of Christian Frederik, called Frederik (VII) and that of the brother of Christian Frederik, called Ferdinand; they were both married to daughters of Frederik VI). Other medals could be provided in silver, if the Cabinet submitted a list.⁴⁸ And half a year afterwards, the Cabinet actually received a number of medals in silver, so that both sides of the medals could be put on display.⁴⁹

We need not doubt that Brøndsted made use of all his charm and all his direct or indirect contacts in social life in Copenhagen to attain his goal, and actually towards the end of the year 1836 the Board of Finances presented both a silver specimen and a gold specimen of the two medals, which were struck on occasion of the jubilee of the Danish church reformation of 1536.⁵⁰ Some months afterwards the same authority presented another gold medal, struck at the Mint of Copenhagen,

43. Brøndsted, Thomsen and Devegge to Haxthausen, the 10th of October 1838.

44. Royal resolution, the 22nd of January 1839. The king agrees that it is not in accordance with good economy in general or to the purpose of the Cabinet to keep common modern suites of medals in gold, as long as specimens of the same medals in silver would suffice (... Det er ikke overensstemmende "hverken med Oeconomi i det Heele eller med Mynt Cabinetts Reglement og Hensigt i Særdeleshed at lade ganske almindelige moderne Medaille Suits henligge i Guld, meden Sølv-Exemplarer af deslige Skuepenge kunne være fuldkommen tilstrækkelige ...").

45. Thomsen 1939, 94, ref. 27.

46. J.S. Jensen 2005.

47. Undated list of medals, which the Cabinet ought to have in gold,

probably 1835 (Brøndsted's handwriting). Frederik IV, Reformation jubilee 1717; Christian VI (1730-46), five medals; Frederik V (1746-66), no medals lacking; Christian VII (1766-1808), seven medals; Frederik VI (1808-), 13 medals lacking, to the which should be added eleven medals of merit. The Board of Finances ('De deputerede for Finanserne') to Hauch, the 10th of July 1835.

48. Board of Finances ('De deputerede for Finanserne') to Hauch, the 18th of September 1835.

49. Board of Finances ('De deputerede for Finanserne') to Hauch, the 18th of March 1836.

50. Board of Finances ('De deputerede for Finanserne') to Hauch, the 9th of December 1836.

a medal to which His Majesty more than twenty years earlier had 'brought the die home from Vienna.'⁵¹

Gradually, step-by-step, Brøndsted proceeded to acquire more gold medals for the permanent exhibition. When rumours had it that two rare gold medals were found in the personal belongings of the (by then) deceased King Frederik VI, Brøndsted succeeded in getting funds to buy them from the heirs. It was the family medal of Frederik III by Jeremias Hercules (Herclius) from the 1660's and the medal by Johan Bagge commemorating the construction of the first palace of Christiansborg 1740.⁵²

Finally, Brøndsted succeeded in acquiring gold specimens in both sizes both of the Coronation medal as well as the medal commemorating the silver wedding of the Royal couple (1840).

The exhibition of gold medals today⁵³ is in some ways the successor of Brøndsted's exhibition, the principal difference being that Brøndsted wanted to show both sides, using silver specimens to illustrate the reverse.⁵⁴ The present day exhibition limits itself, however, only to specimens in gold.

The small hand catalogue (fig. 5), which Brøndsted and his colleagues published in the year of the opening of the Cabinet was an important help in propagating the riches of the Cabinet, and as far as the present writer knows it was the first hand catalogue published for a Danish museum.⁵⁵ It was intended by Brøndsted to be both 'instructing and pleasurable' to the public.⁵⁶ After a short introduction about the history of the Cabinet since Frederik III (c. 1655),⁵⁷ it describes in more detail the Roman coins and medallions exhibited in the Roman Cabinet.⁵⁸ Then follow descriptions of the

Danish coins and medals – the medals in particular are described – and foreign coins and medals both medieval and early modern. Finally, medals struck by the Dukes of Slesvig, Holstein and Lauenburg, which were parts of the Danish monarchy at that time.⁵⁹ The last fifteen pages of the Catalogue describe the Greek cabinet, but actually mostly the Spanish and Gallic coins.⁶⁰ At this time Brøndsted no doubt had planned to have built a special new cabinet with showcases for the main Greek collection, which then would be described in a planned continuation of the catalogue. Brøndsted had the cabinet built a few years later (*v.infra*), but did not live to see the next edition of the hand catalogue, which was published only in 1858.

The principles of Brøndsted's exhibition of the Royal gold medals survive today, after 175 years, even if the social and political landscape is very far away from the late and in some ways illuminated absolutism of Frederik VI and Christian VIII. From time to time my colleagues and I myself have been tempted to change the principles of the exhibition with medals lying in line on black velvet. However the furniture, with its showcases and inbuilt security, has prevented any alteration, and consequently Brøndsted's idea of a chronological exhibition of the Danish Royal gold medals still survives.

5. The development of the personal and scientific resources of the Cabinet

Brøndsted started with a staff of two assistant-keepers. But during his tenure he managed to develop the permanent staff considerably. Already in his first plans, written before he actually was employed (*v. supra*), he

51. Board of Finances ('De deputerede for Finanserne') to Hauch, the 17th of February 1837, "et paa den herværende Mynt udpræget Exemplar i Guld af den Medaille, hvortil Hans Majestæt i sin Tid har medbragt Stemplet fra Wien." The dies were cut by J. Harnisch, Bergsøe 1893, no. 72.

52. Resolution by Christian VIII, the 28th of March 1841, permitting the purchase of the two medals from the estate of the late King at a price of 392 rbd. ('from the interests of the regal foundation') ("af Regaliefondens Rente").

53. Rasmussen 1992, 8-26, showcases 1-6.

54. Thomsen to Reichel, the 4th of October 1834, J.S. Jensen 2002, 463.

55. Brøndsted 1835a.

56. ... "en kort, summarisk Fortegnelse, som vil blive Publicum til baade Belæring og Fornøjelse"... Brøndsted to Hauch, the 20th of April 1835.

57. Brøndsted 1835a, 4-12.

58. Brøndsted 1835a, 12-29.

59. Brøndsted 1835a, 29-76.

60. Brøndsted 1835a, 76-80.

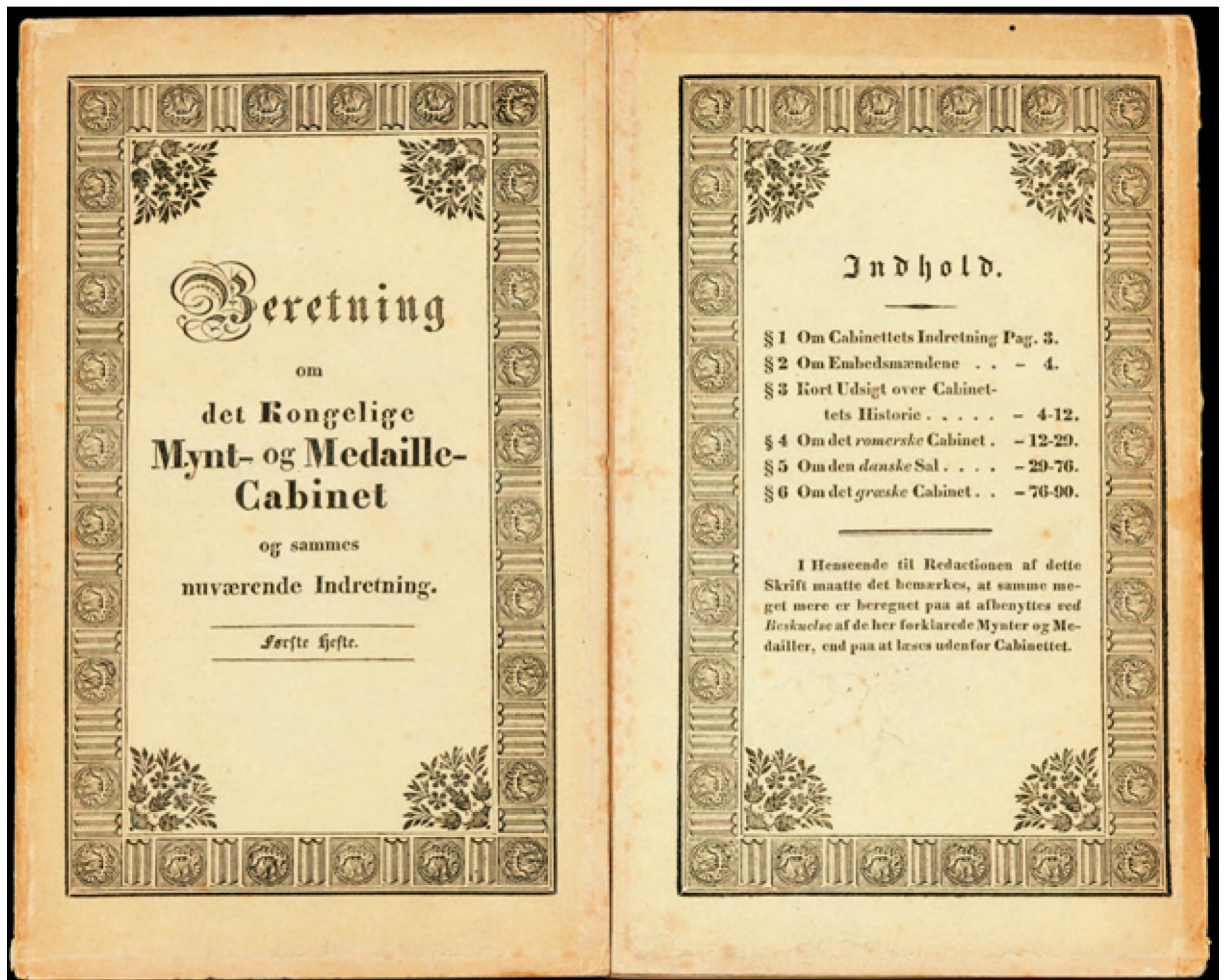


Fig. 5: Front and back of the hand catalogue of The Royal Cabinet of Coins and Medals, 1835. It was meant to be used during visits to the Cabinet rather than for studies at home. Presentation copy to Prince Christian Frederik.

mentioned the possibility of having a technical assistant, and actually he managed to create such a job for Ludvig Læssøe (1841),⁶¹ who probably lived up to his expectations. Besides, in certain periods Læssøe was a very helpful purveyor of coins, both modern and old, to interested parties outside Copenhagen, representing

them at public auctions (e.g. the University Coin Cabinet of Christiania/Oslo)⁶² or taking care of getting new Danish coins and medals (to J.J. Reichel in St. Petersburg).⁶³

Jacob Christian Lindberg was a very gifted person, but also somewhat difficult.⁶⁴ Already some years before (1980'es).

61. Royal resolution, the 6th of April 1841, cf. supra.

62. Letters from L. Læssøe to C.A. Holmboe, Archives of the University Coin Cabinet, Oslo (read during visits to Oslo in the

63. Letters from L. Læssøe to J.J. Reichel (Central Archive of the State Hermitage, St.Petersburg. The letters were only formally

fore Brøndsted was appointed as keeper, he had published a hoard of Cufic coins.⁶⁵ He catalogued most of the Cufic coins of the Cabinet in a manuscript, which is often used even today, and in 1835 Brøndsted was permitted to pay him a fee.⁶⁶ The Cufic coins from four hoards, found in the period 1835-40, were published by Lindberg in the *Annals of The Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries*, to which was added a survey of the Buyid coinage, which Lindberg published in French in the *Mémoires of the Society*.⁶⁷ The young lic. theol. Carl Ludvig Müller was another promising Orientalist, who in 1841 was integrated in the work of the Cabinet, but without receiving any fee nor other payment; he was, one might say, a coadjutor assistant-keeper.⁶⁸ The appointment had probably been prepared by oral communications beforehand, the many qualities of the young Müller no doubt having been discovered by Brøndsted, Falbe and the King himself. But after Brøndsted's sudden death in 1842, Müller got a real appointment, and in the following decades he was to be one of the leading classical numismatists of Europe, finishing his career as a Keeper of The Royal Collection of Coins and Medals (as well as of The Collection of Antiques) from 1865 till his death 1891.

That Brøndsted made sure to acquire a gifted successor in the field of Greek numismatics is one of the factors, which count heavily in the positive judgment of Brøndsted's decade as a Keeper of The Royal Cabinet of Coins and Medals.

Brøndsted also took great care in developing the library. He saw to it that both numismatic journals and important books were acquired, sometimes as gifts, sometimes as purchases. It is not possible to provide a detailed survey within the scope of this paper, but the importance attached to good numismatic literature by

both Brøndsted and his colleagues was often emphasized. The fact that the Collection possesses most (or nearly all!) the relevant numismatic literature from this period is evidence to this. Brøndsted's own original plans⁶⁹ of publishing a numismatic journal never materialized, however. It appeared that for the time being the publications of The Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries (founded 1825) sufficed for the purposes of the Cabinet.⁷⁰

The collection of sulphur casts was, of course, an important element in the development of the scientific resources of the Cabinet (*v.supra*).

6. *The general administration of the Cabinet*

No doubt, Brøndsted left most of the details of the administration of hoards to the experienced medievalist C.J. Thomsen, but the activity by Thomsen in registering the hoards in the Register of Finds (FP) was, of course, approved and endorsed by Brøndsted. He saw to it that two other registers were established, both in 1835, the register of Donations (GP) and the register of Exchanges (BP). Although both were extremely important, the register of Exchanges for all practical purposes has not been used for twenty or twenty five years, as modern Danish law bars such business. The last of the Registers, the Register of Purchases (KP) was established only in 1846, a few years after the death of Brøndsted.

In connection with acquisitions, Brøndsted also saw to it that regular announcements of donations were inserted in the semi-official newspaper, the "Berlingske Tidende". He forwarded the first announcement of this sort to Hauch in September 1835,⁷¹ asking him for help in having it published free of charge. The announcement, which included 12 donations, was published a

registered after I saw them in the early years of this century).

64. Kromann & Jensen 1983, cf. Nadia Haupt in this book.

65. Lindberg, 1830; cf. the article by Nadia Haupt in this publication.

66. Royal resolution, the 12th of December 1835.

67. Lindberg 1842-43; Lindberg 1840-44.

68. Application from Ludvig Müller, the 23rd of December 1840;

Recommendation from Brøndsted, the 28th of December 1840; Royal resolution, the 10th of January 1841.

69. *Vide supra*, 249.

70. Cf. numismatic bibliography of C.J. Thomsen in Kromann & Jensen 1988, 110 seq.

71. See illustration in the article by Ivan Boserup in this publication.

few days afterwards.⁷² This custom continued through most of the 19th century.⁷³

To conclude this part of the survey the acquisition of two minor objects should be mentioned. Both of them are preserved today, and one of them is in daily use. The first is a briefcase in leather, which could be locked by a key. One key was to be held by the general director (Haxthausen), the other by Brøndsted. In this way all confidential letters, coins and medals could be sent to and from Rosenborg castle, where the cabinet was, and the castle of Christiansborg, where Haxthausen probably had his office.⁷⁴

The other acquisition was a pendulum clock, which the Copenhagen clockmaker Kühl sold for 25 rbd. to be used in the offices. He was paid 2 rbd. for the installation. The availability of a clock is one of the essentials of modern life in all its aspects, and it testifies to the organizing sense of Brøndsted that a clock was acquired. It is still an important element of the routine of the Cabinet today.⁷⁵

7. *Brøndsted as seen by Thomsen*

To all appearances daily life and routine in the Royal Cabinet of Coins and Medals went smoothly during the ten years of Brøndsted's tenure (he died after an accident with his horse in June 1842).⁷⁶ Everything indicates this, both Thomsen's quiet observations in his letters to Reichel, his fellow numismatist and (later on) friend in St. Petersburg,⁷⁷ and also the fact that Brøndsted often had letters to Thomsen sent together with his more official letters to his superior, Hauch. Thomsen realized that Brøndsted had personal qualities, which he did not possess himself. Brøndsted was, as Thom-

sen observed at his death, 'just as much a courtier as a man of science'.⁷⁸ It was only to a very close friend that Thomsen admitted one of the weak sides in the character of Brøndsted, the fact that he has 'a quite unusual vanity'.⁷⁹

In April 1865, only a month before his death, in May, Thomsen wrote about the life and activities of his late colleague and friend, Ole Devegge. It was meant to be an introduction to the final volume of the auction catalogue of Ole Devegge, although it was published only later.⁸⁰ In it Thomsen also described the activities of Brøndsted, and we may look upon his text as some sort of summary to the above. Thomsen mentions that Prince Christian (Christian VIII) took an interest in Brøndsted, who was renowned abroad and who was a connoisseur and collector of antique coins, although he did not know much about the Nordic ones. The arrangement after the death of Ramus he says was done in a way, which was the best one for the cabinet and 'all of us'. During Hauch's too-economical leadership, Thomsen could hardly (or only with difficulty) accomplish what Brøndsted actually managed to do, thanks to his special energy and influence. The Cabinet got more room, it was made accessible to the public, a great collection of copies was established, an excellent reference library was obtained, a register of Donations was initiated, duplicates and other redundancies were deployed. In short Brøndsted achieved so much that 'we' later on only had to continue and extend what he started.

Brøndsted was benevolent to his colleagues and was prepared to support reasonable proposals. Thus, he admitted that he never had had anything to do with Ori-

72. The announcement is quoted in Märcher forthcoming.

73. Brøndsted to Hauch, the 23rd of September 1835; "Berlingske Tidende", no.234/1835; J.S. Jensen 1982.

74. Brøndsted to Haxthausen, the 29th of May and the 13th of June, 1838, explaining the use of the briefcase and the keys.

75. Invoices from Kühl, the 2nd of February 1839 and the 3rd of January 1840.

76. Cf. details in the article by Niels Henrik Holmqvist-Larsen in this publication.

77. Cf. C.J. Thomsen to Reichel, the 14th of October 1835, J.S. Jensen 2002, 469.

78. C.J. Thomsen to his friend the Swedish state antiquarian, B.E. Hildebrand, the 5th of July 1842, as quoted by J. Jensen, 1992, 202 seq.

79. C.J. Thomsen to B.E. Hildebrand, the 3rd of June 1840, as quoted by J. Jensen 1992, 400, ref. 136.

80. Thomsen 1939, especially 94 seq.

ental numismatics, but he was willing, if his colleagues had a proposal, saying 'no field should be a stepchild in the Cabinet.'

It was a pleasure to work in the Cabinet, and Brøndsted, who concentrated his official business in the Cabinet, used to say that some of the most agreeable hours, he had had in Copenhagen, were spent in the Cabinet. He had both interest in and a sense of beautiful and suit-

able arrangements, and he added new cabinets to the old ones. The new ones had the same external appearance, but their interiors were much more convenient.

It seems proper to let this eulogy by C.J. Thomsen, Brøndsted's colleague and later successor, sum up the chapter about Brøndsted and The Royal Cabinet of Coins and Medals.