

Foreword

On October 1st and 2nd 2015 the International Commission for the History of Universities organized its yearly conference in Copenhagen. The theme of the conference was the development of Universities in early modern Europe and the US with a specific view to the creation of the role of Universities in creating an elite and being institutions for an elite.

The ten lectures given are published in this volume. The conference was held at the Royal Danish Academy of Letters and Science and the organizers wish to thank the Academy for hospitality and for opening its series for this volume.

The University of Copenhagen was founded in 1479. The Academy was founded in 1742. Both institutions have undergone several changes since their founding. However, the academy stays as an institution for only a small group of those who are considered the most outstanding academics and the number of members does not exceed 300. The University of Copenhagen started as a very small institution, after the Reformation for at least two centuries the Theologian faculty responsible for the education of Protestant ministers was the most important. Later also Law grew as a subject, and since the 19th a series of subject making this university a full university with all faculties and around 40.000 students.

The question, for whom the universities are there, is a question of growing concern and the question how to balance quality and mass education is an issue of utmost importance. The lectures in the volume show how these questions have been posed in various European countries and the US and taken together can be seen as an input in an ongoing discussion. In today's discussion it is sometimes forgotten that universities have a long history and that experiences of the past may shed light over and help us understand today's situation.

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