

# Chapters of the Academy's history

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The Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters was established on November 13<sup>th</sup> 1742. Although both society and scholarship have changed dramatically over the course of the 275 years which have elapsed since then, the Academy is still relevant as a source of scholarly exchange and reflection. This chapter traces some of the central themes and events in the founding and development of the Academy. The intention is to provide the reader with a sense of the Academy as a living institution which has always been strongly anchored in the history of Danish society. To mark the occasion of the Academy's anniversary, the chapter begins by revisiting the origins of the Academy under royal protection, which still informs its self-perception, even if the nature of royal power has also undergone major changes in the course of so many years. The largest of these changes was the abolition of absolute monarchy in 1848. But there have been many lesser changes, as monarch has succeeded monarch, which have been related both to the changing state of the realm and to their different personal interests.

The Academy has also celebrated a number of anniversaries in rather different ways which are worthy of mention here, because they remind us of the Academy's shifting historical framework. In 1842, the Academy's centennial was celebrated by the publication of Christian Molbech's book on the activities of the Academy in the period 1742-1842. The book was dedicated to the reigning king, Christian VIII, who played a major role in the Academy, even serving as its president for a ten-year period, from 1838 to 1848, and Molbech praises King Christian VI, our "first royal protector, the true and benevolent friend and benefactor of the Academy and the true sciences". Some medals were also forged which could be awarded to deserving recipients. In 1892, the Academy celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, which was marked by the publication of a survey of the scientific and scholarly works published by the Academy since 1742. This was distributed at a meeting of members on November 18<sup>th</sup> in which Christian IX participated, but which in all other respects "proceeded as an ordinary meeting", that is to say without any particular pomp other than the presence of the king, which after all was not inconsiderable. In 1917, the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Academy occasioned a meeting held on November 16<sup>th</sup>, again with the participation of the king, now Christian X, and 48 members. Vilhelm Thomsen, the president of the Academy, gave a speech in which he downplayed the significance of the occasion: "Partly because these are certainly not festive times, and partly because, while 175 years is a considerable age, it is not such a round figure as to necessitate the celebration of an anniversary... It must be left to the members 25 years hence to decide whether and how to commemorate that more solemn anniversary, the 200<sup>th</sup>." Thomsen concluded his speech with these words:

As I thank Your Majesty once again for the honor of your presence, which has lent its lustre to this special occasion, I sincerely hope that Your Majesty and the Danish people may continue to keep our nation out of the terrible war, which has haunted the world for four years now, and that in light of the peace which we all hope for and which must come some day our Academy may be



FIGURE 1. King Christian VI. The first patron and protector of the Academy. Probably painted by J. S. Wahl (around 1730). Property of the Academy.

granted the opportunity to work steadily towards our two hundredth year and continue our peaceful work far into the future thereafter, for the advancement of knowledge and the honor of our nation.

It was World War I which darkened the atmosphere of this occasion and prompted Thomsen to emphasise the Academy's duty towards the nation. The anniversary also led to a decision that all current and future members were to be photographed, with a view to making a complete collection of portraits. Up to this point, members had only been photographed rather sporadically, which was understandable in light of the relative novelty of photography at the time. Now all newly elected members are photographed for the yearbook as a matter of course.

The next anniversary was the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary, which sadly also took place in the shadow of war, in this case World War II. The German occupation made it impossible to stage a proper celebration with invited guests; one problem was that it would have been necessary to invite representatives of the occupying power. Furthermore, the Academy's protector King Christian X was ill in bed after falling off his horse. It was therefore decided to hold a meeting exclusively for domestic members, of whom there were 66 at the time. Niels Bohr was president, and he read a congratulatory telegram from the King aloud, and while the meeting was perhaps more festive than an ordinary meeting, it was marked by the gravity of war. In September 1943, Niels Bohr and his family were forced to flee the country. The most tangible trace left by this anniversary is Asger Lomholt's *Samlinger til Selskabets Historie* (Collections for the history of the Academy) in five volumes, of which the first volume was presented at the anniversary meeting, and the last was published in 1973. This work is an extremely important collection of sources relevant to the history of the Academy, a source on which this chapter draws heavily.

In connection with the Academy's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1992, Lomholt's *Samlinger* was extended with an account of the development of the Academy after 1942, written by Mogens Blegvad and partially based on unpublished 'new collections' from Lomholt's hand, covering the period 1943-1973. In addition, a celebratory meeting was held at the Copenhagen City Hall with the participation of Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II, along with a gala performance at the Royal Theatre of Denmark. While Blegvad does refer to a certain inertia in the structures and procedures of the Academy, he

also emphasizes the sense of solidarity which conjoins researchers from widely disparate subject areas and of widely disparate temperaments, and which is expressed by their loyalty and their large contribution to society. He concludes his preface as follows:

Virtually all members have found the experience of hearing about other members' research at meetings and getting to know them personally to be a great enrichment. And despite inhibiting factors and the major transformations in the conditions under which the Academy works, its primary objective has been maintained: to contribute to the advancement of basic research. The Academy has also succeeded in carrying out reforms which have enabled it to continue to contribute to this objective under changed circumstances.

This observation still holds true today. The past 25 years have seen major transformations, both in society in general and in the university sector in particular, which have naturally affected the Academy. Now more than ever, the Academy stands out as an oasis of freedom of thought and the free exchange of knowledge.

Another change which has taken place since the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary is that the Academy has opened its doors to women. The first ordinary domestic female member was elected in 1968. Yet in fact, an amendment to the by-laws in 1919 had already opened up for this possibility, in that members were no longer referred to as "men", but as "researchers". The year after, in 1920, Marie Curie was elected as a foreign member. Forty-eight more years would pass before the next female member - the first domestic one - would be elected. By the Academy's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1992, a total of twelve women had achieved that distinction. Twenty-five years later, there are now 53 women members out of about 250 living domestic members. This reflects the general development in the world of research, which means that female professors are no longer a rarity in academia in Denmark, constituting approximately the same minority as in the Academy - about 20 percent. Although 275 years is not a particularly round number, it is worth celebrating; the Academy is not only part of the history of science and of society, but also an extremely contemporary source of intellectual inspiration and gratification.

The history to be presented in this chapter consists only of fragments of the larger history of the Academy, which the anniversary publications referred to above



FIGURE 2. Hans Gram, philologist and historian; appointed historiographer royal and Christian VI's advisor on the coin and medal collection. On this background, he took the initiative to propose the founding of the Academy as a kind of extension of the coin and medal commission charged with organizing the collection. Painting by Johan Salomon du Wahl. The National History Museum of Denmark at Frederiksborg Castle. Photo: Hans Petersen.

treat in rich detail. In addition, the chapter will also describe more recent initiatives among the Academy's activities. Short or long, an anniversary publication must begin at the beginning.

### The absolute monarchy: The Academy's first 100 years

Since 1737, a small group of learned men had been working to establish a coin cabinet at the request of King Christian VI. There was a desire to organize the royal coin collection, which had been established in 1696 under Frederik III as part of the royal Art Chamber, in a more systematic way. The collection contained material from far and near, and its stewards were to continue adding to it and in time supervise the

coining of new medals to commemorate special events in the history of the country. The interpretation of the inscriptions on both old and new coins and medals required specialized language skills, and the King consulted the country's scholars, inspired by the French *Académie des Médailles*, which had been established in 1663. When the first overseer of the collection passed away in 1737, the reigning king, Christian VI, decided to take this opportunity to introduce a more systematic approach. He selected Hans Gram as his advisor, who, as new collections were added, realized that a higher degree of genuine knowledge was necessary. To handle a project of this scope, which would involve a considerable amount of identification and cataloguing, a Coin and Medal Commission was appointed which functioned under the Danish chancery, of which Johan Ludvig Holstein was chief secretary.

On the recommendation of Hans Gram, who was historiographer royal at the time, the first discussions of the establishment of a learned society like the Swedish academy of antiquities took place in connection with the work of this commission. Holstein addressed the question to the King, who replied in a letter of July 16<sup>th</sup> 1742:

Er hat gantz recht darin, dasz es einem Lande Ehre und Hochachtung bey den Fremden macht, wen man gleich wie in Schweden die Antiquiteten, so sich im Lande befinden, bekant macht, und da Er Aufseher der Academie zu gleich mit ist, auch hierzu selber scheinet Lust zu haben, so gehet es gahr wohl an, dasz man es hier so macht wie in Schweden, und wünschen wir, dasz Er diesen künftigen Winter dieses so nützliche Werck im Gange bringen möge.

[He is quite correct in that it brings a country honor and high esteem among foreigners when the antiquities to be found in the country are made known, just as it is done in Sweden. And as he also has the superintendence of the university and what is more, appears to wish to do so, it is surely befitting that it be done here as in Sweden, and we desire that he may initiate this so useful work in the coming winter.]

This royal encouragement of the establishment of a learned society was an important factor in the Academy's realization; the remark about the Swedish academy demonstrates that Christian VI did not intend to be second to anyone, his neighbors least of all. Before the formal establishment of the Academy later the

FIGURE 3. Johan Ludvig Holstein, count and chief secretary of the Danish chancery (equivalent to prime minister). Holstein was a member of the coin and medal commission which served under the chancery, and he was the intermediary between the commission and the King, a role he would also play in relation to the King and the Academy. Portrait by U.F. Beenfeldt. Property of the Academy.

same year, Holstein had looked further afield, and with reference to such precedent as the establishment of a Collegium Historicum by the Portuguese king, the Academy's sphere of interest was expanded to include not only antiquities, but history in a wider sense. While this is not the place for a more detailed exploration of the further development of the idea to its realization, it is worth mentioning that Holstein considered it decisive for the advancement of such a society that it should receive "the exalted and most gracious approbation and protection of Your Royal Highness". This was granted, and the Academy took shape.

At founding meeting of the Academy on November 13<sup>th</sup> 1742, significant changes were already introduced into the original proposal. Among the most substantial of these was the redefinition of the Acad-



emy as a more universal academy for the advancement of science and letters in general, rather than a college for the advancement of the study of antiquities and

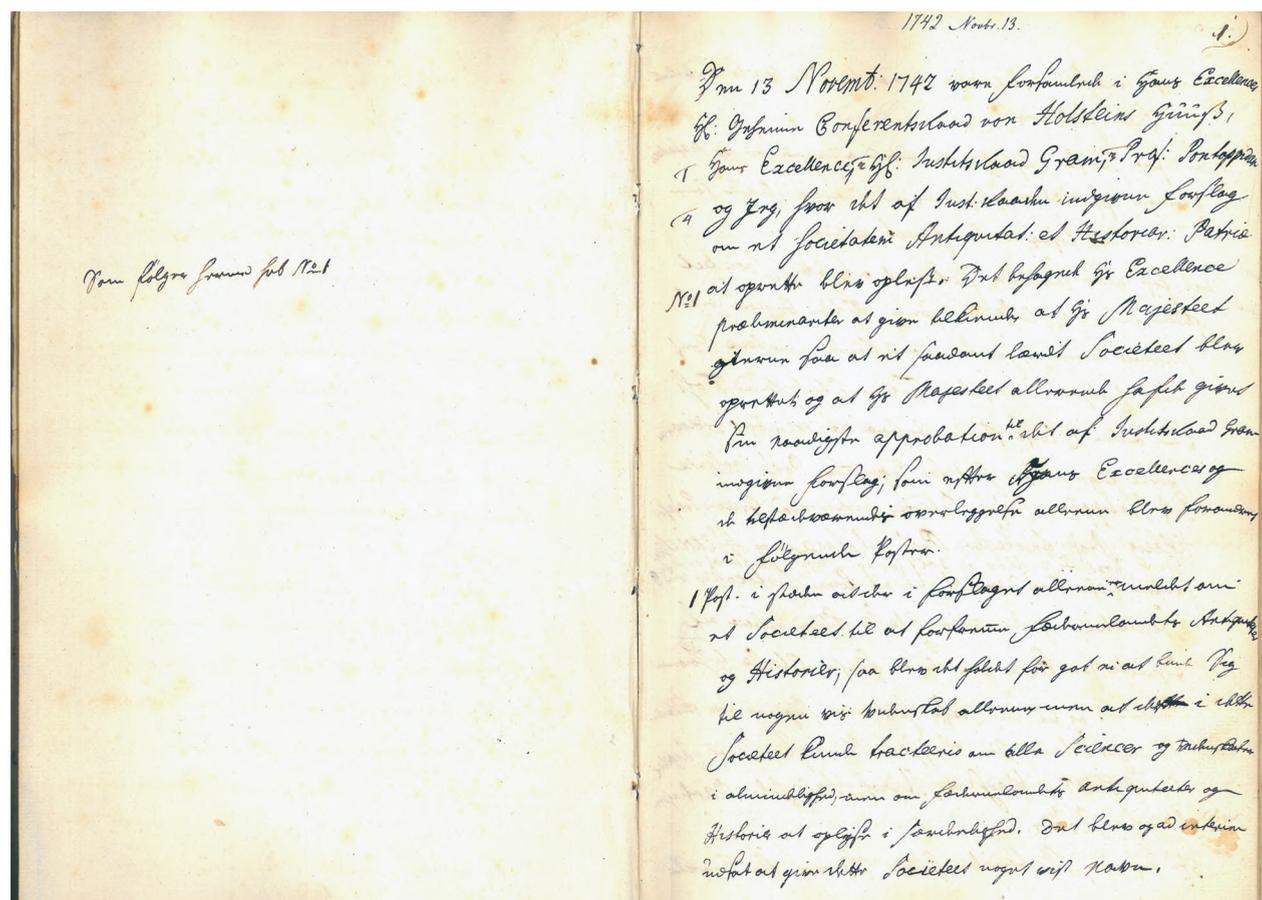
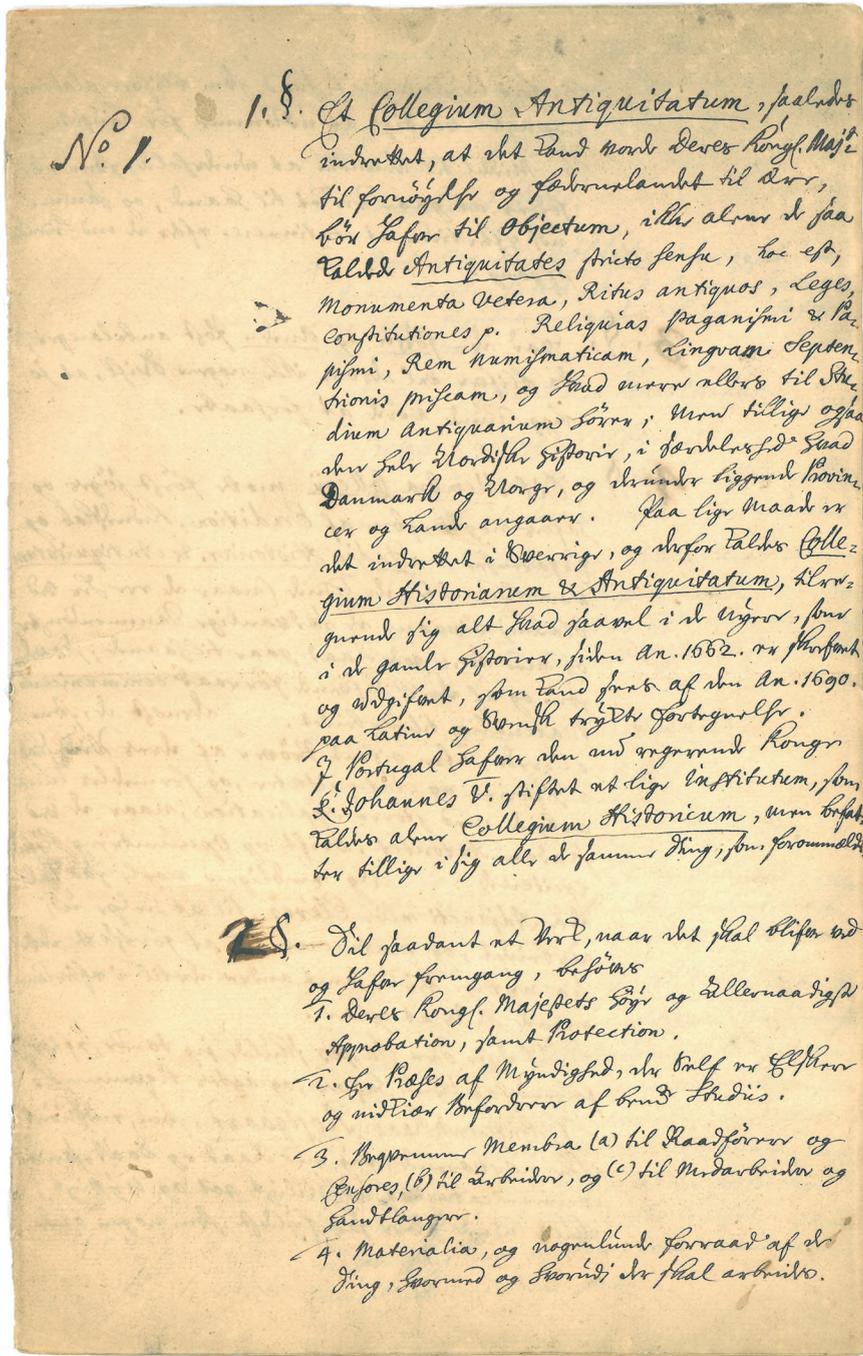


FIGURE 4. Excerpt of minutes from the founding meeting of the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters on November 13<sup>th</sup> 1742 by Henrik Hielmstjerne (born Henrichsen). The Academy's archive.

FIGURE 7. The royal rescript on the establishment of the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters of January 11<sup>th</sup> 1743. The Academy's archive.



history. The Academy was to be divided into three classes: firstly, the honorary members, in other words noble patrons and leading figures in society; secondly, ordinary members, including eminent professors; and thirdly, a class of adjuncts and promising students. However, this proposal turned out to be the first of many; in fact more than 30 years would pass before the Academy would adopt proper statutes with associated rules of procedure. The Academy's first president, its initiator Holstein, had a close relationship to the King, with whom he had discussed all matters pertaining to the Academy directly, and whom he occasionally accompanied on his travels, forcing Holstein to cancel

meetings of the Academy. In return, the Academy benefitted from this close connection, and Holstein saw to it that the coin and medal collection was not forgotten.

The participants in the founding meeting consisted of a small group of men gathered in the home of His Excellency, Privy Counsellor von Holstein. They decided to adopt the proposal to establish a *Societas Antiquitatum et Historiarum Patriae*, which was read aloud. In addition to Holstein, Hans Gram, Professor Erik Pontoppidan, and secretary of the Danish chancery Henrik Henrichsen (later Hielmstjerne) participated; the latter was selected to keep the minutes for the new society. In this sense, he was the first secretary of the Academy. Asger Lomholt, who commenced the publication of his multi-volume history of the Academy in 1942 on the occasion of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding, explains that the Academy was founded by these four men mainly because they were all already involved in the coin commission, where they had become acquainted with each other and with the European precedents. At the meeting of November 13<sup>th</sup> 1742, Hans Gram put forth a proposal to establish a Collegium Antiquitatum with the following objective:

A Collegium Antiquitatum organized in such a way as to please Your Royal Majesty and to honor the fatherland, should have as its object, not alone the so-called *Antiquitates stricto sensu*, hoc est, *Monumenta vetera, Ritus antiquos, Leges, Constitutiones p. Reliquias paganismi & Papismi, Rem numismaticam, Lingvam Septentrionis priscam* [antiquities in the narrow sense, that is to say ancient monuments, ancient customs, laws, provisions, in addition to the relics of paganism and papistry, numismatic objects, the ancient Norse language], and what otherwise belongs to the study of antiquities; but in addition also the entire history of the Nordic countries, in particular with regard to Denmark and Norway and their dependent provinces and countries. In the same manner is such a college organized in Sweden, which is therefore called *Collegium Historiarum & Antiquitatum*, since 1662 acquiring everything which has been written and published on both modern and ancient histories, which can be seen in the catalogue printed in Latin and Swedish in 1690. In Portugal, the reigning King John V has established a similar institute, which is alone called *Collegium Historicum*, but which comprises all of the same things mentioned above.



FIGURE 6. Erik Pontoppidan, theologian and professor, bishop of Bergen. In addition to his theological works, Pontoppidan published historical and topographical works about both Denmark and Norway. He was one of the founding members of the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters. Painting by unknown artist. The National History Museum of Denmark at Frederiksborg Castle. Photo: Hans Petersen.

The Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters, as it was not yet named, was established in this manner in 1742, in the middle of the European Enlightenment, which stimulated the sciences and the mapping of the entire world. This should be understood quite literally: the historical agenda was accompanied by a cartographic effort aimed at mapping not only geographical coordinates, but natural phenomena of all kinds, including cultural and linguistic matters. The extensive knowledge collected during the Enlightenment gave rise to universal systems of classification, organizing both nature and culture into species and classes. The most advanced scientific methods were to bring order to the world. In light of this development, it is understandable that the Academy became involved in a far-reaching campaign of enlightenment from its inception, which lent the antiquarian and historical program a highly contemporary relevance.

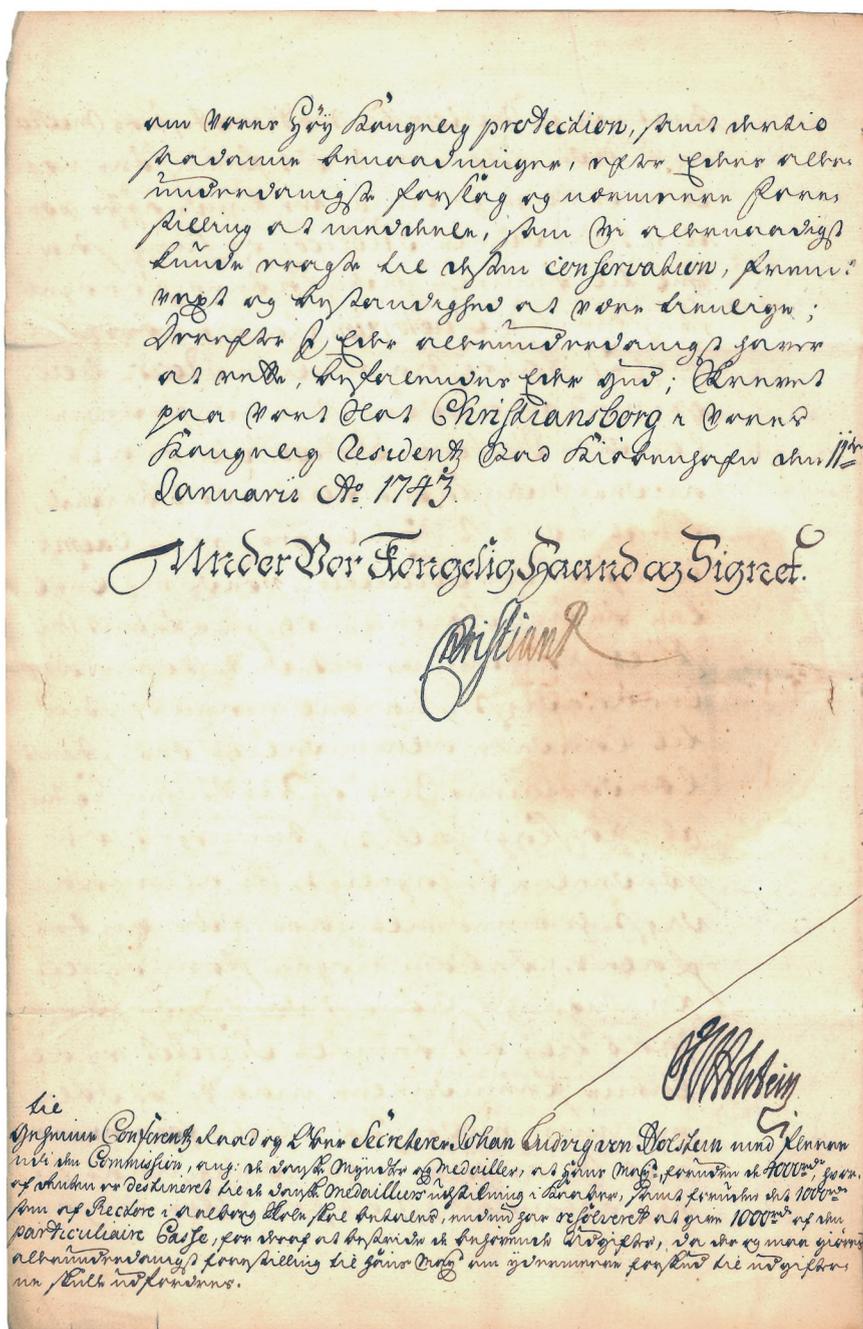
King Christian VI, the first protector of the Academy, in name as well in deed, granted 1000 *rigsdaler*

from his private coffers to finance the production of medals, which were still highly prized. But the perspective had already been broadened, as attested by the royal rescript of January 11<sup>th</sup> 1743 which accompanied the money. The rescript both confirms the Academy's royal protection and financial support and adds some of the King's own views on the future activities of the Academy, initially under Holstein's presidency:

In addition, we would appreciate it if you, apart from the already mentioned business, would also most loyally and on the same occasion proceed to pursue further activities of the same kind, especially concerning such learned and useful matters that you believe to be pleasurable to us, and which may contribute to the honor of the fatherland and the nation, and be instructive and beneficial to the sciences. Among these you may first and foremost take interest in everything belonging to the histories of our kingdom and country, both in general and in particular, as well as to its geography, its languages, and everything concerning ancient as well as more recent matters, whether it be matters that may be known to you already, or which may be discovered through closer examination, application and study - and that you then all such matters, time after time in your frequently held meetings under the direction of your Privy Counsellor von Holstein's presidency and direction, present and hereafter discuss with one another, what might be useful as well as appropriate to publish into the light.

To publish into the light - a fine description of the purpose of scholarship during the Enlightenment. The King went on to say that the Academy was naturally free to take an interest in other disciplines. However, Holstein took the King's formulation of the Academy's task very seriously, and his program for the Academy's activities was diligently pursued; the distance between Holstein and the King was very short. Initially, the Academy functioned virtually without defined guidelines, relying instead on the sense for formalia of its as yet relatively few members and Holstein's presidency. The original description of the work of the Academy, which was adopted by the four founding members, said very little about the internal organization of the Academy or the formal framework of its activities.

However, as mentioned above, criteria for membership had been discussed at the founding meeting,



FIGUR 7. FIGURE 7. The royal rescript on the establishment of the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters of January 11<sup>th</sup> 1743. The Academy's archive.

and on Gram's recommendation, a list of eminent scholars who were possible candidates for membership was presented. In Lomholt's account:

Likewise a plan for the categorization of the members was presented "into (a) advisers and critics, (b) practitioners, and (c) co-practitioners and assistants", or as they are named in the minutes of the meeting respectively: a first class consisting of *Membris honorariis*, a second class of *Membris ordinariis* and a third class of *Adjunctis*. Of

these three categories of members, the first, the honorary members, with a single exception belonged to the first century of the Academy, while the proposal to create the third class, the adjuncts or students...was never realized. The second class, the ordinary members, comprised the larger group of researchers.

Among the honorary members, there were originally quite a few noblemen who were interested in the project and whose support could help advance the Academy's case. In the by-laws of 1839, this category was removed; membership was now described in these simple terms: "The Academy admits as members such men whose learning and scientific spirit give reasonable cause to expect that they will work to further the aims of the Academy."

The first version of something resembling rules of procedure exists in manuscript form in the Royal Library; it is evident that the text was submitted to Holstein for consideration, and that he edited and shortened it considerably. The possibility of dividing the Academy's members into classes of an entirely different sort than first proposed is formulated here: 1. *literaria* (including philology, history, and the study of antiquities), 2. *physica* (including medicine) and 3. *mathematica*. On admission to the Academy, each member was to declare which class he wished to join, and members were to be permitted to skip lectures by members from the other classes if they took no pleasure in hearing them. This applied even though the importance of expressing oneself with brevity was to be impressed on the lecturers. Now, 275 years later, the selfsame interdisciplinary conversation is at the core of the Academy's activities. There are now two classes, mathematics-natural sciences and humanities-social sciences, and every single meeting includes a communication from both classes. Now as then, substantial articles and other writings by the members may be published by the Academy.

The same draft rules of procedure also contain plans for the number of ordinary members, and considerations as to whether all of the professors at the University of Copenhagen, of whom there were fourteen at the time, should be admitted in addition to the *officii* who had already been appointed - Holstein, Gram, Pontoppidan and Hielmstjerne. If each of these professors gave a lecture every year, this would produce enough material for an annual publication (in Latin), which would strengthen the kingdom's reputation abroad.

These lectures, or *specimina*, were to be given to the rest of the Academy, so the “other members could say whether they knew something with which they could *improve* the invention and observation of the Autoris”. The idea behind the Academy’s scientific meetings is still to encourage the subjects to learn from one another. Naturally, these are different times in all respects with regard to knowledge exchange and publication, but the fundamental notion of engaging in honest intellectual discussion across specializations and perspectives still applies. In our day, there are between 65 and 85 members present, not four or fourteen; and discussions are correspondingly lively. This confirms the shared ambition: to engage in scholarly dialogue across disciplinary boundaries and interests.

In the 1740s, a major question was whether the Academy should publish its proceedings in Latin, as Gram had first suggested and eagerly defended. He was forced to yield to the argument that the intention had always been for the Academy’s work to benefit the country and its inhabitants, and Danish became the official language of publication. In more recent times other languages have gained ground, not least English.

Protocols and guidelines remained sparse until 1759, when a new proposal for the organization of the Academy developed by Christian Hee was presented. He believed that the Academy should have its own funds, but if this proved not to be possible, then the university’s successive rectors and professors might be charged with actively promoting the Academy. At the same time, he proposed giving theology the same status as the other sciences and making it possible to admit clergymen and other theologians. “If moral philosophy is treated as a science and admitted in the academies, why not then theology, whose motives uplift morality to the highest degree?” At greater or lesser intervals, this has been a subject of discussion in the Academy ever since. Naturally, theologians are eligible for membership on the basis of their scholarly or scientific efforts, but not with reference to a clerical position or moral stance. On the whole, Hee’s proposal to formalize the Academy’s activities to a higher degree provoked considerable discussion, and the Academy would remain without proper by-laws for quite some time yet.

When Holstein died in 1763, Count Otto Thott was elected as his successor. He continued to work in the same quiet way, allowing the Academy to continue to function peaceably “with no other by-laws than the unwritten law of tradition”, until he was stripped of

all of his public offices in 1770 for political reasons. Struensee had taken power on account of the illness of King Christian VII, and numerous formerly well-respected and loyal officials fell more or less out of favor. Among them were the foreign minister (Bernstorff), and as already mentioned the president of the Academy, in addition to the university’s rector. Thott moved to his estate on the island of Gavnø immediately. It is noteworthy that Struensee was at all interested in academic institutions, such as the university and the Academy. In both cases, it was declared in the name of the King that the two institutions would no longer be permitted to appoint a leader, but that they should continue their work in other respects.

This attests to the peculiar situation of the Academy (and the rest of the country!) under absolutism. The Academy was strongly under the influence of the Crown, which not only had ensured its establishment, but also had a major influence on the choice of president, and also had the authority to remove him, even if by proxy in this case. Naturally enough, the events of 1770 generated considerable unrest in the Academy, and provoked yet another discussion of its internal organization. On January 7<sup>th</sup> 1771, the Academy’s secretary Hielmstjerne wrote the following to its members, who at the time numbered around 45:

As his Majesty, in the attached governmental order to the Academy, has commanded that a plan to encourage the flourishing and spread of the sciences should be completed and submitted for final decision as soon as possible; so would it please the highly esteemed members to consider this carefully and each member submit his thoughts in writing, in order that we may consider how best to compose the plan in its entirety at a meeting afterwards.

At a subsequent meeting of the Academy, the proposals were discussed enthusiastically, and a good number of these proposals are extant, if not in the original, then in later versions on which votes were taken. At a meeting in March 1771, a final document was adopted for Hielmstjerne to submit to King Christian VII. In the first paragraph, his Majesty was asked if he would honor the Academy by being its protector, and whether he would provide the necessary rooms at one of his castles, where members could meet and store books and other things, as none of the members had such spacious rooms. Hielmstjerne also requested some furniture or a small amount of money to finance its purchase.



FIGURE 8. Henrik Hielmstierne, Danish-Icelandic privy councillor and historian. He was born Henrichsen, but was elevated to the nobility in 1747, after which he took the name Hielmstierne. He was one of the founding members of the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters and its first secretary. In 1776, he became its president. Portrait by C.A. Jensen after a portrait by Jens Juel. Property of the Academy.

In the next paragraph, he asked for permission to select as many members as the Academy found useful, and to divide them into the classes previously described, when enough members had been elected. In the following paragraphs, Hielmstierne stated that he did not wish to tire his Majesty by presenting concrete proposals for statutes, but since his Majesty no longer wanted a permanent president, he was requested to permit the Academy to appoint a director from among its members each year, whose primary role would be to act as spokesman. Next, Hielmstierne requested a renewal of the financial agreements, and not least to be granted an annual stipend himself of first 200 and later 300 rigsdaler for his service as secretary.

The interesting manoeuver here is that the Academy is still addressing itself to its King, as if his position were unchanged. In any case, the answer did not come until a royal rescript of October 5<sup>th</sup> 1774 was received, three and a half years later; by then, Struensee had been executed, and the state had begun to return to a more normal condition. In this rescript to the Academy, all of the requests Hielmstierne had submit-

ted were granted, so it was worth waiting for. The King promised to act as protector, and despite the previous order forbidding the Academy to have a president, it was now apparent to him that this was a necessity. With regard to the president, the king writes that not only should he possess scientific insight, he should also, by virtue of his office and his person, be “particularly distinguished, giving him access to Us” – that is, the King himself, who had been actively involved in the Academy from the beginning. The King also stated that he would make rooms, furniture, and firewood available to the Academy. It was left to the members themselves to draw up their statutes and to select members within the classes described in the Academy’s proposal. The Academy’s financial situation was also settled.

The royal rescript was of decisive significance for the Academy, which was no longer to be directly subordinate to the King, or to an autocratic president for that matter. In February 1775, the Academy resumed its meetings after years of more or less complete inactivity, and in 1776, formal statutes were finally proposed, consisting of seven articles which covered a description of the election procedure, rules of order, minute-taking, and lectures. They were adopted at a meeting of April 12<sup>th</sup> 1776.

The statutes were subsequently discussed, amended, and expanded many times, but this very important step towards an organization governed by by-laws had now been taken. One supplement to the first statutes is worth mentioning here. In 1780, a Section 8 was adopted to supplement the first seven:

The Academy must acquire an iron-bound chest with two locks, the key to one of which is to be kept by the president, the other by the secretary. In this chest are to be kept: a) the Academy’s bonds. b) cash. c) medals. d) inventories. e) royal orders, copies of which are to be entered into a book which is to be maintained by the secretary hereafter. f) other important documents. g) revised and approved accounts, which may be removed every tenth year and preserved in the archive under seal.

In fact, this money chest was given to the Academy by King Christian VII himself, and the iron-bound chest is still in the possession of the Academy, where the thought of being transported back to a world in which the entire business of the Academy could be contained in a single chest protected by two locks still occasionally sounds tempting.



*Paa Grund og i Følge af Hans Kongelige Majestæts allernaadigste Befalinger af 5. Oktober 1774. og 18. Januar 1776. bleve følgende Artikler den 12. April 1776. i det Kongelige Videnskabers Selskab vedtagne.*

§. 1.

**O**rdentlig Votering skal skee ved en Kugle, som lægges i en liden Kasse, indeelt i tvende Rom, hvoraf det eene betyder

(2)

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IV

tyder Ja, og det andet Ney. Kassen er oventil bedækket, saa det ikke sees, enten den Voterende lægger Kuglen i den høire eller venstre Afdeeling.

§. 2.

Forinden nogen til Medlem antages; maae han først bringes i Forslag i eet Möde og i det næstfølgende Möde bliver det besluttet, og, om ordentlig Votering giøres fornöden, ved Stemme - Kassen afgjort, om han skal antages eller ei. De Medlemmer, som ikke bivaanede det Möde, hvori Forlaget skeede, bör Sekreteren give Efterretning om det forestaaende Val, og kunde nogen ikke selv indfinde sig dertil, staaer det ham frit for at indsende sin Stemme skriftlig til Sekreteren. Naar en tredie Deel af de Voterende er imod Antagelsen, hindres den, og kan

The majority of the Academy's first presidents were more or less directly appointed by the monarch; they were prominent officials, either by virtue of aristocratic birth or in some other respect, but were not necessarily prominent intellectuals. Under the given circumstances, they were first-rate presidents who negotiated directly with the King and communicated the royal resolutions to be accepted by the members. At the culmination of this period, Prince Christian Frederik, later King Christian VIII, served as the president of the Academy himself in the period 1838-1848. He received 21 of the 23 votes cast. At the first meeting in

which the Prince participated, he made a speech to the Academy in which he stated the following:

This wish: That the Academy may continue to bring great honor to the nation and contribute to the flourishing of the sciences, I share with you, gentlemen, as I for the first time assume the presidency which your trust has awarded me; yes, I address this wish to you, gentlemen, as those most able to ensure its fulfilment, and whose achievements in science guarantee that our expectations will not be disappointed. However, above all al-

FIGURE 9. The Academy's first proper statutes or by-laws from 1776; printed in 1780. These were the first written rules for the Academy's elections, meetings, and minute-taking.



FIGURE 10. The money chest given to the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters by Christian VII in 1780 to safeguard the Academy's money and accounts. There were only two keys; one was in the president's keeping, the other in the secretary's. The chest still stands in the hallway of the Academy's administrative offices.

low me to thank you for the honor of my election...Although I must leave responsibility for the reputation of the Academy to the enthusiasm and learned work of the scientists, I will assuredly grant the Academy's wishes willingly, attempt to remove any hindrances which might stand in the way of its undertakings, and thus contribute to the best of my ability to the Academy's fulfilment of its objective - to pursue the advancement of the sciences and to accomplish more than the individual is capable of through the harmonious co-operation of scholars in different, although in spirit related, fields.

The Prince goes on to describe how the members of the Academy can test new ideas by presenting them to one another, and how he looks forward to taking part in this rich work. Finally, he conveys the reigning monarch's approbation of the election of himself, the Crown Prince, as president. The royal adjective in the Academy's name was never more appropriate than in this period. While Christian was still Crown Prince, he

participated in 21 out of 24 meetings during the first two years; after acceding to the throne, Christian VIII invariably participated in the Academy's annual meeting in March, where the budget was adopted - a meeting which was held at the royal palace for this reason.

The Academy has remained under royal protection, just as it began; absolutism has been abolished, but the Academy's current protector, Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II, nonetheless plays an important role in the Academy's self-understanding.

### The Enlightenment: Mapping the kingdom

When the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters was founded, Europe was in the midst of the Enlightenment; this is part of the explanation for the establishment of learned academies in many countries, whose objective was precisely the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge. This was the age of the great overseas expeditions, which had taken a new direction and increased their tempo after Columbus' discovery

of the New World; these expeditions also contributed to an accelerating thirst for knowledge. While the coin collection might have been the first concern of the Danish King, as the royal rescript quoted above attests, the King also considered it extremely important to shed light on “the histories of our kingdom and country, both in general and in particular, as well as to its geography, languages, and everything concerning ancient as well as more recent matters”.

King Christian VI himself began by requesting assistance with the account of his Norwegian travels of 1733. The account had made slow progress, even though engravers and other contributors had been working on it for quite some time. Holstein induced the Academy to take on the project, but it gradually lost steam and fizzled out, and after the death of the King in 1746, it was abandoned after many fruitless attempts and much wasted energy. In his centennial publication, Christian Molbech refers to the bankruptcy of this project in polite terms: “When we examine the times and the conditions under which it must have been performed, it must surely be admitted that this enterprise would not have yielded any real benefit either to the King or to history”. The scientific advances resulting from this particular journey were small, and Molbech cites both misplaced thrift and an inappropriate choice of writers and draughtsman as contributing factors. On the other hand, he praises the Academy’s willingness to make the attempt:

However, this does not make it less evident that the manner in which the Academy handled this project, which at least at an earlier time closer to the performance of the journey, had surely interested the King to no small degree, is certainly worthy of praise, even given that the Academy was still in its infancy and lacked sufficient resources. It is known that Christian VI was one of the very few Danish Kings, accompanied by his Queen no less, who made the journey over land across Norway, from Christiania to Trondhiem, and from there the voyage to Bergen, as further onward to Christiansand.

The journey was difficult, and was most certainly worthy of any number of accounts; an entire court “in the excessive manner of that time” had to be moved over mountain roads and between rocky reefs. The absence of scientific results in the form of a general account including pictorial representations is not the most significant aspect in this context; what is worth noting here is the King’s personal engagement in the pro-



FIGURE 11. King Christian VIII. As Crown Prince, he was elected president of the Academy (in 1838), and continued until his death in 1848. Painted between 1806 and 1809. On long-term loan-out to the Academy by the National History Museum of Denmark at Frederiksborg Castle.

gram he envisioned for the activities of the Academy. The King wanted to know his entire kingdom: the Enlightenment had taken root along with absolutism.

The successor of Christian VI, Frederik V, continued along the founder’s lines in relation to the Academy, which was now in a position to begin work on a major cartographical project in earnest, a project which would primarily focus on Denmark. Cartography was developing explosively at the time, and new methods were being invented. As early as 1579, Tycho Brahe had performed the first triangulation in Scandinavia, which determined the geographical coordinates of the Øresund region with the island of Hven as the point of reference. In his history of the mapping of Denmark, N.E. Nørlund describes Tycho Brahe’s work as unprecedented in precision and scope, and adds: “He thus became one of the founders of modern science, as based on the principle of consulting with nature rather than settling for theoretical speculation”. An early survey of the duchies of Denmark took place in 1638-1648, and the copperplate maps were published in 1652. That was quite some time ago, and now the King desired the Academy to take on the task of mapping Denmark as a whole according to the best scientific principles. Nørlund, a former president, places this survey in historical perspective, and his book on the mapping of Denmark was published in connection with the celebration of the Academy’s 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The agenda of this complex survey was helped along its way by a young student who submitted a pro-

posal, addressed to the King, to the Academy in 1757. The young man's name was Peter Koefoed, and he offered to produce complete maps of the entire country; he did not request any remuneration for his work, other than an appointment as professor of mathematics in Odense. Koefoed made a good case for his qualifications, and in addition to describing his studies, inventions, and experience in surveying, he also refers to his descent from "the aristocratic Koefoeds of Bornholm, who in 1658 had demonstrated their most humble and dutiful loyalty as leaders on the occasion of the conquest of Bornholm", and who ostensibly had induced Frederik III, who was King at that time, to promise their relatives and descendants suitable offices.

The Academy's members discussed how the maps were to be designed, but without arriving at a final plan; this was uncertain ground. However, it was decided to allow young Koefoed to start with the County of Copenhagen, and when that was finished, to examine the result and decide if the maps he produced were accurate. The proposal was considered on February 7<sup>th</sup> 1757, and the Academy received a rescript containing a very positive answer from Frederik V (through Holstein) soon after, on February 25<sup>th</sup>. The King refers both to the unreliability of all of the existing maps of his dominions, and to the fact that almost all European nations were endeavoring to produce exact maps of their territories, and on that background he warmly (and long-windedly) recommends young Koefoed's project. Again, it was a question of not lagging behind other countries.

The issue was raised again at the Academy's meeting of March 7<sup>th</sup> 1757, and Peter Koefoed could begin his work. The available surveying instruments were not adequate to realize his ambitions, so he first had to commission the production of a "horizontal/vertical-angle instrument of his own invention and design". A description of this instrument was presented to the Academy on November 13<sup>th</sup> 1758, along with the finished map of the County of Copenhagen. The work was found satisfactory, and Koefoed continued surveying the counties of Roskilde and Frederiksborg. However, he died in 1760 before these maps were finished, and the entire surveying project had to be reconsidered, not least with regard to the question of its expense.

In 1761, the Academy presented a new plan for a topographical survey of the country to the King, and the King replied in a resolution of June 26<sup>th</sup>, in which he applauds the Academy's recommendations. In the

first paragraph, which consists of one long sentence, he writes:

That here it is not a question of the geometric or special survey, but of the geographical and general alone, through which it will be measured, how much land and water are found in a kingdom, how each of these lies in relation to the other for general use and utility, and which shows the relative situation and distances of all market towns, churches, castles, public buildings, factories, and manors, the number and size of lakes and seas, in addition to their spits and bays, the approximate circumference and size of the forests, the course of country roads as well as of rivers and streams with their most significant bends, but especially the country's beaches and sea coasts, including the reefs and cliffs, which aforesaid survey has a large influence on the defence of a country, either to cover its coasts or in regard to regulating the operations of war, but in particular in trade and navigation, in that the coasts are charted in their correct length and breadth, for the information of seafarers, just as it will also become a guideline for whatever special operations might be undertaken in a country, in addition to providing capable surveyors and the nation a taste for the mathematical sciences to the advancement of arts and new discoveries.

The King goes on to assert the necessity of the development of geometry and astronomy, and in connection with the latter, he states that the Round Tower Observatory must be refurbished to meet the standard of the best European observatories, so that persons with an interest in surveying have a place to practice astronomical observation. In short, the King's answer was extremely constructive, and placed the topographical survey under the direction of the Academy, which appointed a 'Surveying Commission' consisting of Bolle Willum Luxdorph, Henrik Hielmstjerne, Christian Horrebøw, Christian Hee, and Jørgen Nicolai Holm.

There was a certain discrepancy between Frederik V's extremely practical expectations of the result and the desire for scientific development, which was naturally in the interest of the Academy, but the work was started nonetheless, and the following winter Christian Hee held practical exercises for two newly appointed surveyors and four assistants. However, more assistants in the field were required in order to continue the survey itself, to begin with in Northern

FIGURE 12. Tinted map of northern Zealand from 1771. One of the geographical maps from the comprehensive topographical survey of Denmark and the duchies which was undertaken by the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters at the request of Frederik V. The Danish Geodata Agency.

Zealand. The King concurred with this, and commanded farmers and to be of assistance by providing shelter, horses and carriages, and so on, whenever required. It was not always easy to convince the farmers of the necessity of this assistance, and one of the first surveyors to be appointed, P. Wilster, resigned in the same year as he was employed, citing theft and the negligence and bad behavior of disobedient farmers.

The survey continued after the royal resolution, with Thomas Bugge as the surveyor capable of performing the new technique of triangulation. In addition to him, there were the many alternating participants in the field who ensured that region after region was surveyed over the next many years, including the Duchy of Schleswig. Bugge, who had become professor of astronomy at the university in 1777, published a book on the surveying method in 1779. It was prefaced by the following solemn remarks:

Among the praiseworthy works which the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters has effected to the benefit of the sciences, the general good and the honor of the country, the geographical maps of Denmark are not the most insignificant. Apart from the improvement which mathematical and political geography can harvest thereof, this wisely planned and well-executed enterprise provides the statesman and the farmer with the occasion for many calculations, in themselves important, but previously impossible; because they presupposed a precise knowledge of the size of the country.

In 1765, Bugge had been appointed head of the new surveying office under the Exchequer, which was to undertake an economic survey of the country. Meanwhile, others continued working on the practical side of the geographical survey. In the period 1780 to 1815, Bugge also directed the Academy's surveying project, working through the regions of the country and concluding with the duchies. When they came to the Duchy of Holstein, the survey was performed with a newer method, developed by Caspar Hagedorn and concluded in 1820. The technologies were developing rapidly.





**DEN NORD-ØSTLIGE  
FIERDEDEEL  
AF  
SIAELAND**  
under  
det Kongl. Videnskabs Societets Direction  
ved rigtig Landmaaling optaget  
og  
ved trigonometriske  
samt astronomiske  
Operationer prøvet.  
reduceret og tegnet af Casper Weasel  
Aar 1768.

Analytisk fra 2. udgave af Danmarks Atlas, 1800. Alen

Martin Schjøtt 1768

After the conclusion of the geographical survey of Holstein, the Academy's involvement in the surveying and mapping of Denmark and the duchies ended. The final step was the publication of all of the maps in order to make them available to the public. Prints had circulated, but in many cases, it had been necessary to lend the original maps to various national institutions with either civil or military functions. This was untenable in the long run. In addition, the Academy wanted to transfer responsibility for the survey to the general staff, which was done in 1843. And with that, the Academy's surveying commission could be disbanded. The history of the mapping of Denmark is interesting here because it demonstrates the short distance between the Academy and the Crown under absolutism, while also serving as an example of how the Academy worked to serve the nation in practice during the first century of its existence.

Concurrently with the topographical survey, an economic survey was to be performed; it was to show what proportion of the country was covered in farmland, meadows, forests, moors, and so on, and it was intended for use in connection with the valuation of the property of individual holdings, which in turn was to be used to determine the *hartkorn*, a unit of land valuation, on which taxation was based. This survey was in principle independent of the Academy's, but in practice they were deeply intertwined, because the economic survey was strongly inspired by the geographical: Thomas Bugge was engaged as head surveyor for the economic survey, and the same surveying methods were used as for the geographical survey. It is also important to note that both took place at a time when a significant transformation of farming was taking place, which entailed radical agricultural and land distribution reforms implemented over a long period. To ensure an enlightened, well-founded process which could develop Danish agriculture, the Royal Danish Agricultural Society was established in 1769, and the Royal Danish School of Veterinary Medicine in Christianshavn in 1773. Later, the agricultural commissions of 1784 and 1786 were appointed to carry out the reforms, and in 1789, laws on the legal rights of peasants were issued.

The land reforms in particular placed high demands on the education of surveyors, not least in mathematics and other theoretical disciplines, and a degree program in surveying was established. Naturally, good teachers were a prerequisite, and relationships with the learned members of the Academy were developed in connection with the economic survey,

which in addition to mathematics required skills in soil analysis and law, among other subjects, in order to ensure that plots of land were divided up correctly. This program was transferred to the newly established Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University in 1858. The same applied to the veterinary degree program, which had previously had its own school; in a sense, the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University was the jewel in the crown of this accumulation of scientific knowledge about agriculture in the widest sense, a kind of applied biology, which was initiated in connection with the land reforms of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In other words, political and scientific development were closely linked in the different forms of surveying which took place in this period. The distance between the Academy and society was correspondingly short.

Under King Frederik V, the spotlight fell on Iceland as well; the topography of this country was primarily known from second-hand accounts, which were either extremely vague or rather fanciful. All in all, Iceland was a rather neglected corner of the kingdom in the 18<sup>th</sup> century; the country had been hard struck by the long period of cold which is now referred to as the Little Ice Age (approx. 1350-1800), and which was particularly brutal in the northern reaches of the realm. When in 1796 the Icelandic bishop Hannes Finsen published a book on population decline in the lean years of the period 1400-1800, as they were described in the extensive annals, he identified one-fourth of these as plagued by famine. Even though a generally turbulent weather had made ship traffic difficult, news from Iceland nonetheless reached Denmark at regular intervals, and the Danish king was forced to confront the fact that an effort was necessary. In order to intervene rationally, it was again essential to map the country, both geographically and economically, and it was necessary to seek the aid of enlightened, well-educated Icelanders who studied and lived in Copenhagen.

In a rescript of April 23<sup>rd</sup> 1751, the King commanded two Icelandic students, the philologist Eggert Ólafsson and the physician Bjarni Pálsson, to journey to Iceland in the same year in order to map the country – scientifically, politically, and economically. At the same time, the Academy was commanded to instruct the two students, as well as to receive the journals they sent back and to keep the King informed of their contents. The Academy arranged for the two students to spend a year preparing themselves under skilled instruction in the topics they were to explore. Over the course of the five years it then took to travel and map the country on foot and by horseback, together and



FIGURE 13. Niels Horrebow's map of Iceland from 1752. Horrebow had studied mathematics, astronomy, and law. In 1749, he requested permission to travel to Iceland to perform observations, and was asked to study local conditions in connection with the Academy's ongoing topographical survey of the realm. His map was a significant improvement over the map from 1590, which had been in use until then.

individually, they faithfully sent their reports home, and Hielmstjerne, the secretary of the Academy, became an intermediary between them and the King. It was also Hielmstjerne who read their reports aloud at meetings of the Academy and dealt with the various specimens and herbariums they sent down.

The students returned to Copenhagen in 1757, but the work lay more or less untouched until 1767. In the meantime, the two surveyors had returned to Iceland, where Eggert Ólafsson became deputy law-speaker and Bjarni Pálsson became Iceland's national physician. Tragically, Eggert Ólafsson drowned in 1768, but he had completed the first edit of the large body of material. The final version was edited by Gerhard Schøning, professor at Sorø Academy, who was an active member of the Academy. After Struensee's rescript of 1770, Hielmstjerne had his hands full with other matters, as we have seen. Schiønning wrote a preface to the publication in which he provides a summary of the

sprawling manuscript, which presents region after region in a wealth of detail. A short excerpt is worth reproducing here:

In each section, particularly with regard to natural history, which always constitutes the most important part, the disposition or order is the same, as follows. 1) A description of the location, extent, size, division, and other natural characteristics of every district, with regard to inhabited and uninhabited regions, mounts, streams, lakes, hills, valleys, islands, air and weather, cold and hot springs, glaciers, mountains which spew fire and water, as well as other remarkable places. 2) The characteristics of the terrain, types of earth, soil, clay and stone, minerals, fossils, and so on. 3) The fertility of the various places, meadows, the different characteristics of fodder, common and rare useful plants, as well as their care and



FIGURE 14. Tinted drawing from Eggert Ólafsson's and Bjarni Pálsson's travels through Iceland, 1752-1757. Their expedition was much more systematic than Horrebow's, and their survey also included the political and economic conditions in every single district. The illustration shows a large, well-run farm. Previously in the Academy's archive, but donated to the National Museum of Iceland in 1975.

benefits. 4) The inhabitants, including their mental and physical characteristics, their illnesses, way of life and occupation, traditions, knowledge, and skills, etc. 5) The animals, first the domesticated, with their care and uses, next the others, both terrestrial and aquatic. 6) Various ancient and modern curiosities, both in regard to nature and to the inhabitants, certain arrangements, with their defects as well as their assets and improvements, as well as the harbors and trade.

In other words, the result of the five-year project was a unique document describing the state of the country in rich detail, region by region, both with regard to the exploitation of natural resources and the health of the population. Ploughs had fallen out of use, the fields closest to the farms were no longer fenced in, iron was scarce, fishing was under-exploited, hunger was common, infant mortality was horrifying, and so on. The

King promised to provide aid, for example for new iron tools, and Bjarni Pálsson returned to Iceland as national physician and worked tirelessly to enlighten the population and improve public health. In another equally significant development, a number of well-educated Icelanders began to work to revitalize both agriculture and fishing, as well as a general improvement in the population's level of knowledge. One of these reformers was Skúli Magnússon, who not only produced new manuals aimed at improving the fisheries, which had long been overshadowed by a drastically weakened agricultural sector, but also attempted to combat the Danish trade monopoly which absolutism had imposed on Iceland, and which was finally abolished in 1787. Along with the mapping of Iceland with the aid of the Academy, the Enlightenment began to take a strong hold in this part of the kingdom.

One last small absolutist gesture in relation to the Academy came in 1845, when the members were sum-

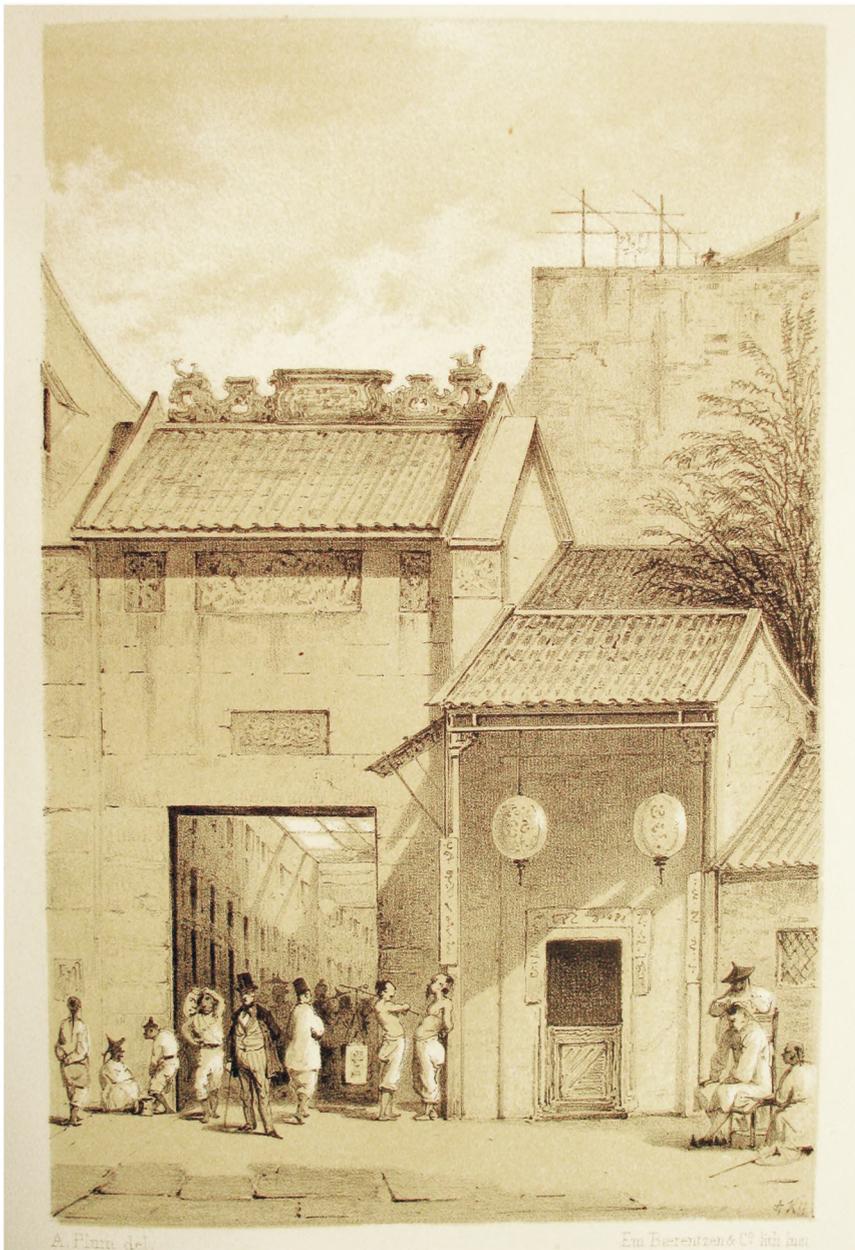


FIGURE 15. Plate from Captain Steen Bille's account of the great Galathea expedition: "Indgang til Gamle Chinagade - Canton" (Entrance to old China street - Canton). The illustration raises the question of who the foreigners actually are in distant parts of the world. Steen Bille: *Beretning om Corvetten Galathea's Reise omkring Jorden 1845, 46 og 47, 2. Deel* (1850) (Account of the corvette Galathea's journey around the world 1845, 46 and 47, part 2), after p. 252.

moned by its secretary, H.C. Ørsted, to an extraordinary meeting on May 1<sup>st</sup>. The occasion was the reception of a letter from President-King Christian VIII, who commanded the Academy to submit a proposal for an expedition to be carried out with the corvette *Galathea*. As the king's letter states:

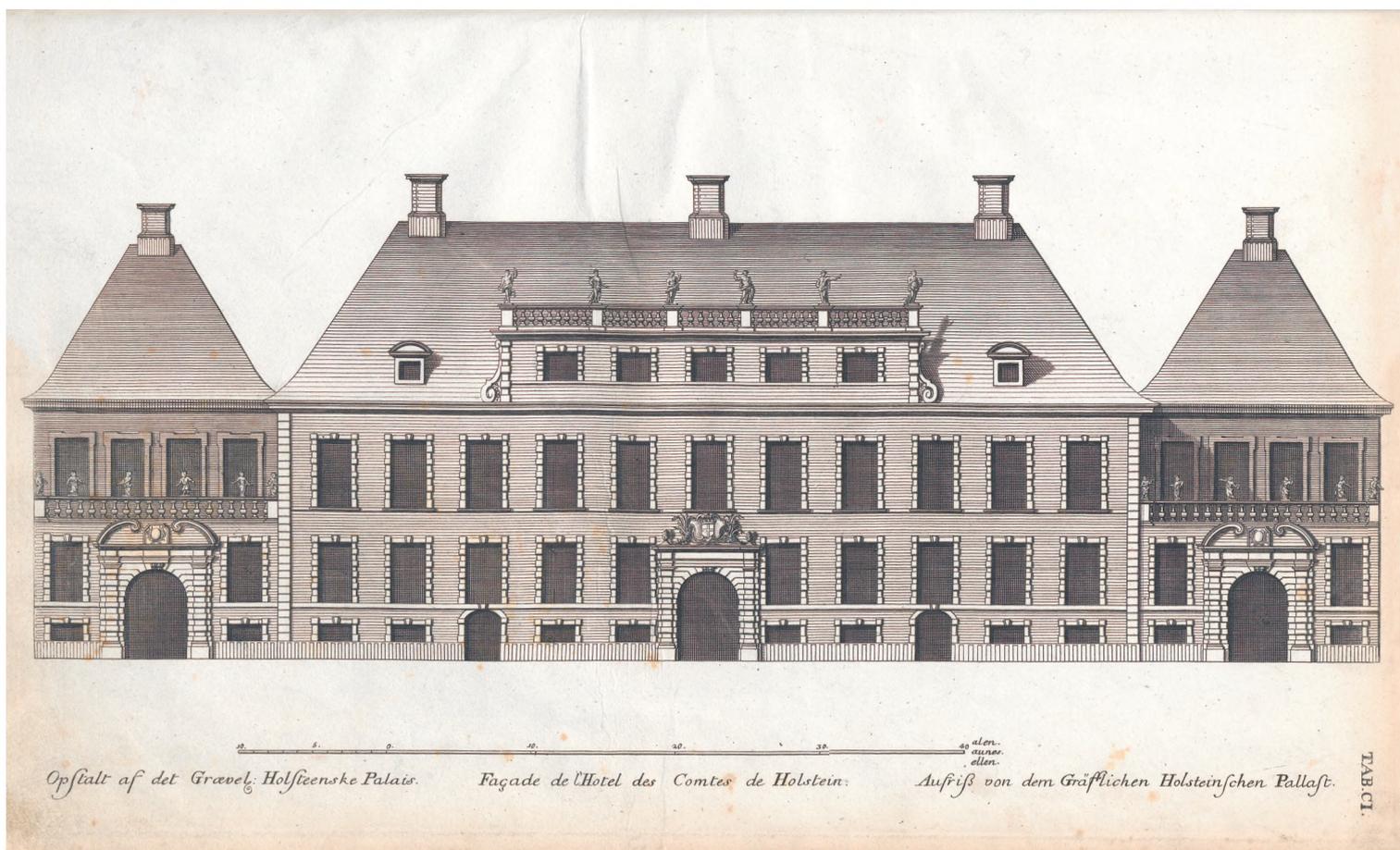
We have decided to send the corvette *Galathea* to East Indian waters, particularly to the Nicobar Islands, over which We exercise sovereignty, in order to undertake a scientific investigation of the

natural products of this archipelago and their uses for cultivation and trade, and in relation to which a particularly careful consideration should be given to the climatic conditions of the individual islands on which it might be possible to establish a colony. It is also Our intention that the corvette, after having performed the tasks which the captain may be directed to carry out in Tranquebar and Serampore, should call at Bali, Batavia, Singapore, the Chinese harbors which have been opened to European ships, and Manila, and from here to continue on through the Pacific Ocean in order to visit New Holland, New Zealand, and other archipelagos which due to their location for trade and whaling, as well as scientifically, may be considered most interesting and important.

The ship was to continue onward to circumnavigate the globe. The ambitious expedition proposed would simultaneously serve the interests of the kingdom and of science - which were still virtually synonymous under absolutism. Although the Academy held several meetings in order to select the accompanying scientists, there was every indication that the King wanted to put together his own team, and there was considerable discussion regarding clarification of the objectives to be pursued and the selection of candidates for the trip - some of whom refused. However, in 1845, *Galathea* set off on a journey around the world which lasted for two years, with Captain Steen Bille at her helm.

After the expedition's return in 1847, the intention was to publish everything in a major work at the King's expense. But this was not as straightforward as it sounded. The King himself died in January 1848, and the First Schleswig War began. The appointed authors of the work were drafted into military service, and a conflict arose regarding who was to store the effects brought back by the expedition, and where. Two principal actors in the conflict were the universities of Copenhagen and Kiel; a certain Professor Behn, who had been appointed to participate in the expedition by the King himself, had collected numerous objects for the university museum in Kiel. The conflict was finally resolved: Kiel kept its share, and after the merger of the warring natural history museums in Copenhagen, the rest of the collection was transferred to the new zoological museum on Krystalgade in 1868; it opened its doors to the public in 1870.

Absolutism ended in 1848. In the meantime, the



Academy's history continued to unfold in Copenhagen, where new buds continually appeared on the branches of the sciences, while the Academy constantly struggled to find permanent premises, a somewhat less exalted challenge.

### The physical framework: The Academy's premises over 275 years

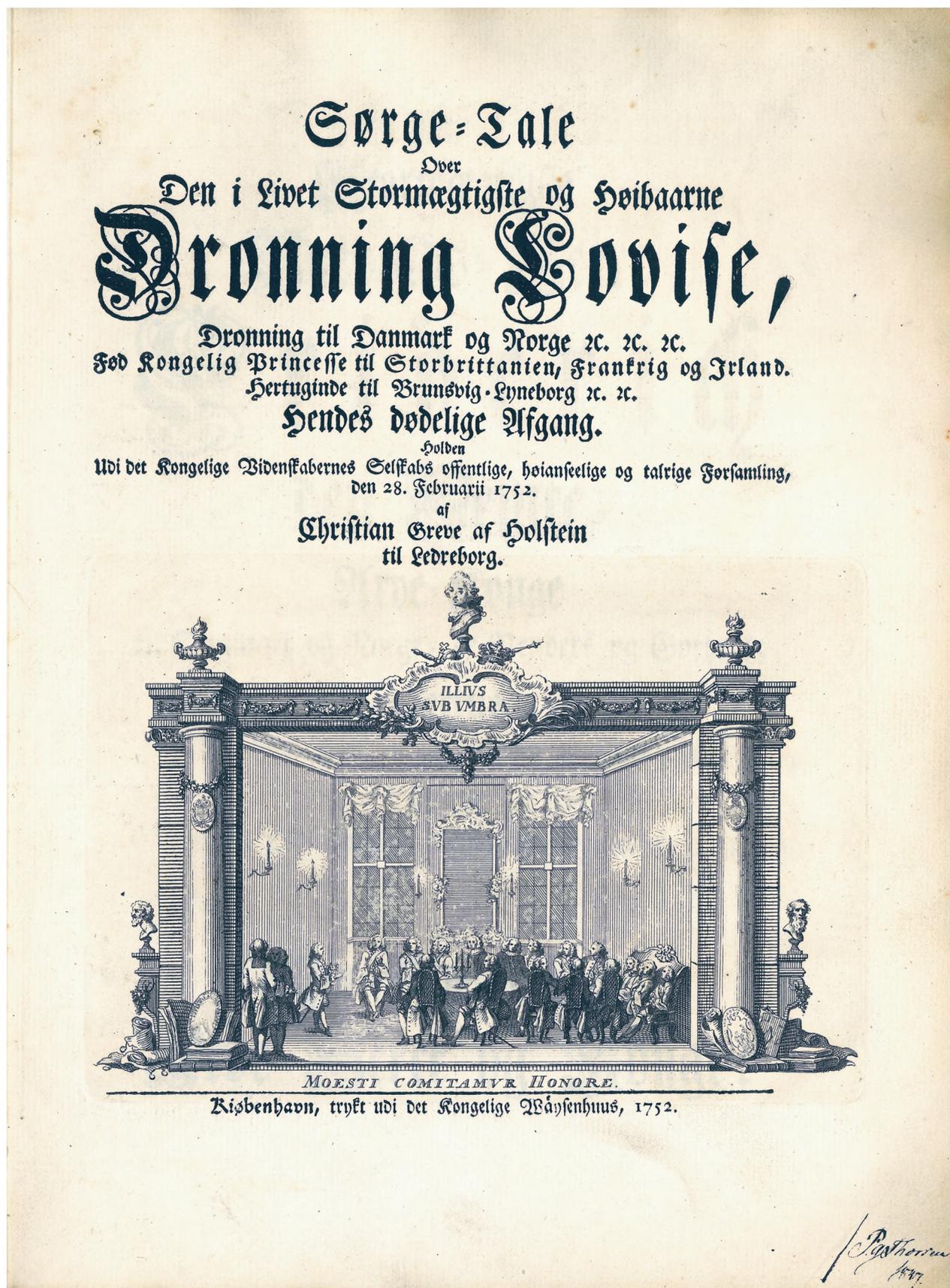
In many European countries, the new learned academies emerging in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries were given impressive mansions or properties by the governments of their countries at the time of their founding. After all, their task was of national character: their mission was to cultivate new knowledge to the benefit of enlightened monarchs and other leading figures in their countries, often aristocrats. In Denmark, no mansion was considered in connection with the Academy's founding, and as this article's introductory description of the Academy's inception suggests, the Danish king's interest in the project was perhaps in reality more personal than national. Of course, the distance between the two was short under absolutism.

In any case, the Academy met in private homes for the first many years of its existence. To begin with, not

surprisingly, at Holstein's residence on Stormgade (title no. 261, at the time no. 10), where the Coin and Medal Commission had met under his chairmanship. When Holstein also became the first president of the Academy, it was natural to continue meeting in the same place - which continued until Holstein's death in 1763. The Holstein Mansion was built in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century by Lord Lieutenant Henning Ulrik Lützov, later county governor. After his death in 1722, the mansion passed to Holstein's father, Johan Georg von Holstein, whose son inherited it on his death in 1730. One interesting detail is that according to a contemporary register from 1728, 30 persons lived in the mansion, of whom 24 were servants. From this we may infer that the conditions under which the Academy met were not humble, even though they were private. If meetings were scheduled during the summer, when Holstein resided at Ledreborg Castle, they were held at Otto Thott's townhouse on Studiestræde. Holstein's Mansion has been renovated several times, and as Lomholt writes, it is not known in precisely which room the Academy held its meetings, but it is thought to have been the 'middle chamber', a large room on the second floor which spans the length of the building. The minutes of these early meetings contain little informa-

FIGURE 16. Holstein's Mansion on Stormgade, where the Academy held its meetings from 1742 to 1763, that is until Holstein's death. Laurids de Thura: *Den danske Vitruvius*, 1746-1749 (The Danish Vitruvius, 1746-1749), plate CI. The Royal Library.

FIGURE 17. Meeting of the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters 1751, after an engraving of O. H. de Lode. While the picture is hardly an accurate rendering, it is interesting on account of its theatrical composition, in which learned men in high-backed chairs listen to a speaker striking a stiff pose. Printed on the title page of Christian Holstein: *Sørge-Tale Over... Dronning Lovise* (Eulogy for Queen Louise), published by the Academy in 1752.



tion of this kind. A 1751 engraving by O. H. de Lode, the first known picture of a meeting of the Academy, portrays a rather freely invented architectural framework around the elegantly dressed members, who are

seated in high-backed chairs in frock coats and turned towards the standing speaker.

Detailed information about the subsequent meeting location, which was at the home of the new presi-

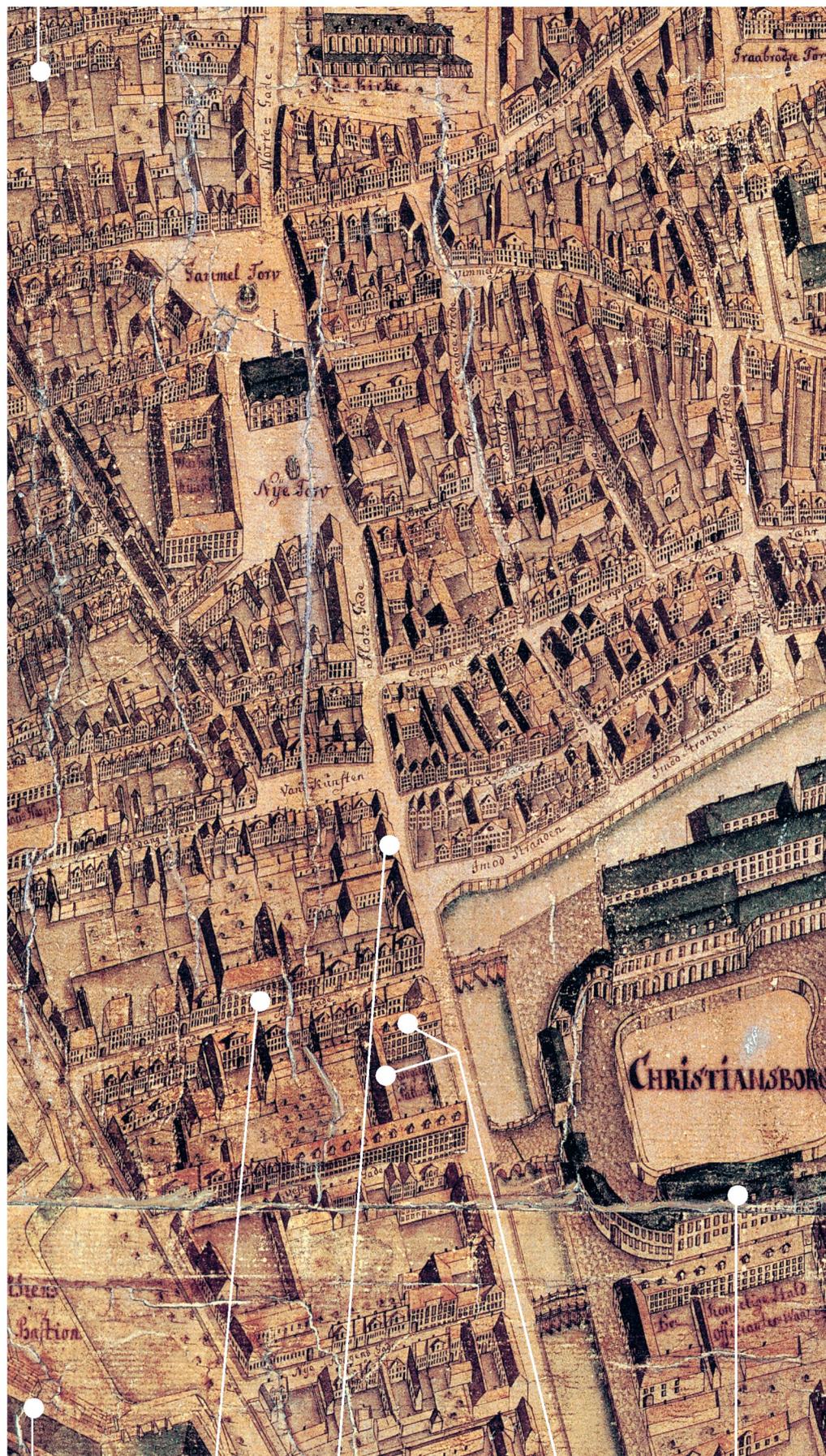
FIGURE 18. Detail of Christian Gedde's elevation map of Copenhagen, 1761. The original measured 2.5 × 2.5 meters and was hung in the City Hall on Gammel Torv in 1771. This map unified Gedde's 12 new maps of the districts of Copenhagen from 1758 in a new city map, which covered about 50 km<sup>2</sup>. The city was mapped at the request of the Crown. All of the Academy's addresses are included on this map.

dent Otto Thott after the death of Holstein, is just as sparse. The first meeting at Thott's home took place on February 18<sup>th</sup> 1763. Thott had acquired a mansion on the square known as 'Hallands Aasen' and had erected a large new building to house his library. The mansion itself had been built in the 1680s for Admiral Niels Juel, who had previously acquired the lots at the corner of Kongens Nye Torv and Norgesgade (now Bredgade). It was on grounds that had belonged to a fortress, and here Juel built his main building, the Juel Mansion, facing the square, and an L-shaped building farther along Norgesgade. The gardens extended all the way to Nye Kongensgade (now Store Kongensgade). There was no shortage of space in those days. The mansion had a rather chaotic history after Niels Juel's day, which finally ended with Thott's purchase of the property in 1761, two years before he became president of the Academy. He undertook a major renovation of the property, making room for his personal library of around 120,000 titles, as well as for a new and larger banqueting room facing Norgesgade, which was probably where the Academy met in his day. Today, the Thott Mansion houses the French embassy; it was purchased for this purpose by the French government in 1930.

As previously mentioned, Thott lost all of his offices in December 1770, including the office of president of the Academy. This meant that the Academy lacked both a president and premises. Hielmstjerne, who was secretary, stepped in and attempted to keep the partially dissolved Academy together by holding its meetings at his own residence on the few occasions on which it met in those years, for example to announce prize treatise contests. There are no minutes from this period, so we know very little about the few meetings which might have been held.

Hielmstjerne lived in Frederiksholms Kanal, between Stormgade and Vandkunsten and directly across from Nybrogade (Now Frederiksholms Kanal 2 and 4). It was a large two-storey townhouse with numerous outbuildings, and it was not particularly well suited to the purpose; on behalf of the Academy, Hielmstjerne had already submitted a petition to the

Otto Thott's townhouse



The Carlsberg Foundation

Holstein's Mansion

Hielmstjerne's townhouse

Prince's Mansion

The Court Theatre Wing



King in 1771 for new premises and financial support. But the King was not able to answer until after the death of Struensee, at which time he offered his continued support, including royal premises and the necessary firewood, etc. The meeting at which the King's answer (in the rescript mentioned before) was read aloud (February 10<sup>th</sup> 1775) was held in Hielmstierne's house, and the first meeting at the royal mansion was held a year later.

In 1776, the Academy moved into the Prince's Mansion, which it had come to be called after a renovation ordered by Christian VI for Crown Prince Frederik on the occasion of his marriage to Princess Louise of England in 1743. It was located at the corner of Frederiksholms Kanal and Ny Vestergade, on reclaimed land between Kalveboderne and Frederiksholms Kanal. Today, it forms part of the National Museum of Denmark's building complex. It is presumed that the Academy held its meetings in one of the rooms adjacent to the banquetting hall in the middle of the main building. This building is sited away from the street, with a low building on the street front closing off the courtyard. When the Academy moved in, the mansion was more or less empty; Crown Prince Frederik had become King in 1746 and had moved into Christiansborg Palace, so the Prince's Mansion was available, and the Academy seems to have flourished there after moving in 1776. But as Lomholt notes, there are no references to the premises in the surviving minutes.

But soon after, in 1794, it became necessary to vacate the rooms in the Prince's Mansion, which again put a check on the Academy's activities. On February 26<sup>th</sup> 1794, Christiansborg Castle burned down, and only the side buildings with their characteristic arcades remained standing. The Supreme Court, which had its premises in one of the wings of the castle, became homeless, and new premises had to be assigned immediately. The Academy received the letter which sealed its fate from the Lord High Steward, Count Ferdinand A.C. Ahlefeldt, on March 13<sup>th</sup>:

As the rooms in the Royal Mansion which have been at the disposal of the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters are required of necessity, both for the use of the Supreme Court and other purposes, I have the honor of informing the aforementioned Academy of this, in addition to informing you of the following: that the assembly hall and the adjacent library at Charlottenborg Palace may be spared for the use of the Academy, in relation to which, however, I must remark that

these premises must be entered through the school classes, which are held from 5 to 7 o'clock each evening, and the Academy of Art's meetings are to be held on the first and last Monday of the month.

This was inconvenient. The Academy's secretary at the time, Christian Frederik Jacobi, immediately went to the mansion to find out when they would have to move out, and was informed that while a meeting scheduled for that evening could be held, it was expected that they would move the next day. Next, Jacobi went to Charlottenborg to inspect the premises, which were already partially occupied, and while the Academy's cabinets and materials were relocated there, no meetings were held at Charlottenborg. In June of 1794, in an attempt to get a better offer, Jacobi contacted Andreas Peter Bernstorff, who was both president of the Academy and the prime minister of the country. Jacobi writes:

The Academy's hope in regard to being assigned rooms next fall is only, to Your Excellence as our president and protector, that the Academy shall have its own rooms, as justified by a royal rescript; and fewer than three cannot serve our purposes, namely a meeting room, an antechamber, and a library. The first of these should be reasonably large and appropriate to such a society, whose members could hardly be decently placed in the meeting room we previously had.

The appeal worked. The Academy was assigned premises at Christiansborg, consisting of two rooms with an antechamber on the second floor of the southern riding ground wing (the so-called Court Theatre Wing). The Academy held its first meeting here on January 2<sup>nd</sup> 1795, and some degree of calm settled over the organization, which remained in these relatively cramped rooms until 1854.

Towards the end of this period, a new attempt was made to have the Academy assigned more spacious new rooms. The famous physicist Hans Christian Ørsted, who was secretary of the Academy in the period 1815-1851, again referred to the royal rescript of 1774, which had promised the Academy suitable premises. In 1849, he had an opportunity to present further arguments in the matter, when the minister of the interior requested a report on the Academy's right to its premises in the Court Theatre Wing of the castle. In his answer, Ørsted writes that while he does not doubt that the minister will recognize the Academy's right,

FIGURE 19. The entrance to the Academy's premises at Christianborg's Court Theatre Wing. Among other disadvantages of this location, H. C. Ørsted found this 'approach' to the meeting room unsuitable for the Academy.



he would actually prefer to ask for better rooms more appropriate to the Academy's dignity. He writes:

The meeting room itself is fairly satisfactory, although somewhat small; but the adjacent rooms are too few and too cramped. In addition to the front room and the back room, the Academy needs a storage room for its archives, and one or two rooms for meetings of the commissions and classes. In addition, as an inconvenience in connection with the Academy's current premises, it should be noted that both the staircase and the rest of the approach to the meeting room are inappropriate, and stand in highly unfavorable contrast to the handsome and impressive rooms which have been assigned to the academies in Paris, London, Berlin, Stockholm, and in virtually every capital city. In this connection, we are embarrassed every time we have an occasion to bring foreign scientists and scholars into our rooms. For a long time, preceding kings and government officials have given the Academy sustained hope of an expansion of its present premises or of granting us new and better ones; only circumstances have delayed its realization. Now that such considerable changes in the functions of many castles and public buildings are taking place, this matter ought to be easier to settle than at any time before.

Ørsted's apt comparison to the learned societies of other countries, which he knew so well from his extensive travels, in addition to the fact that absolutism had been abolished and the royal castles were under new administration did not help, however; there was still something provincial about Denmark. The Academy was not assigned new rooms - on the contrary, the Academy was ordered to vacate the current premises in 1854, which had been assigned to another purpose. The decision was non-negotiable. Although there were rooms at Amalienborg which might be made available, the Academy renewed its interest in the Prince's Mansion, which in the meantime had been transferred to some museum collections under the Ministry of Culture, and where in fact Johan Nicolai Madvig, who was both minister of culture and an active member of the Academy, had already reserved rooms for that purpose. Anders Sandøe Ørsted, who was now the president of the Academy (and who later became minister of culture), joined the cause, and after lengthy discussion and extensive renovation, the matter was finally settled in late 1854. The Royal Danish Agricultural Society, which had been established by royal decree in 1769, was already a tenant of the mansion, and put up a certain amount of resistance to the Academy's arrival; the mansion was by no means spacious, but it was sufficient.

The first meeting in the northern side wing of the Prince's Mansion, which would be the Academy's second-to-last address, took place on March 9<sup>th</sup> 1855. Here the Academy had impressive premises on the second floor at its disposal, in addition to offices and an archive on the third floor. When the Academy vacated these premises in 1899, Julius Thomsen, who was president at the time and who had been an active member of the Academy since 1860, reflected on the Academy's time at the Prince's Mansion:

On March 9<sup>th</sup> 1855, the Academy could hold its first meeting in the new assembly room; it was furnished in the style of the previous century, modest in regard to size, with a cozy and comfortable ambiance. The subdued lighting with its play of light and shadow; the heavy, dark tapestries which covered the walls: the old Venetian mirrors, whose many facets shone against the dark background: the venerable chairs, of which many had been in service for over a century, and the great table, around which the members gathered to hear the newest results of science and scholarship - all of this gave the room a sense of ceremonial gravity. And its location facing the

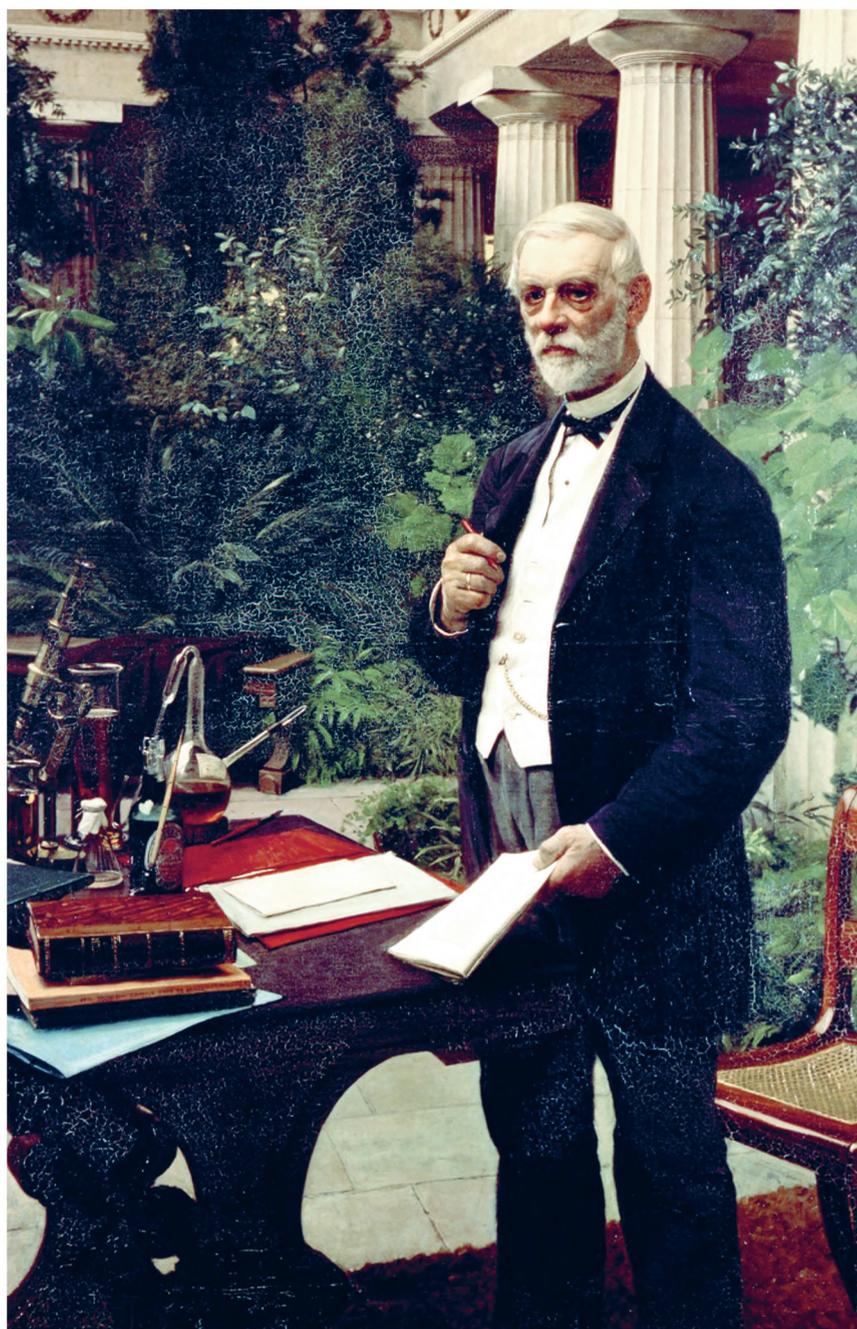
courtyard of the mansion, far from the noise and bustle of the world, allowed the assembly to forget the busy day and imagine themselves transported to the inner sanctum of science and scholarship. It was in these stimulating surroundings that the Academy worked in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Without a doubt, the Academy flourished in these rooms, with the newly relocated museum collections as good neighbors. The Ethnographic Museum had moved from Rosenborg Castle to the side wing of the mansion facing Ny Vestergade in 1846-1847, and in 1855, the antiquities collection (Antikkabinettet) and the coin collection were also moved to the mansion from Rosenborg. Finally, the Museum of Northern Antiquities was moved from Christiansborg Palace to the main wing of the mansion in 1854-1855. The Academy became more active once it had moved into these premises, and Japetus Steenstrup, who had become the Academy's secretary at the beginning of 1866, established a proper secretariat with a trained staff. Previously, the successive secretaries had been left to themselves and their own devices when it came to handling the daily business of the Academy. In short, a new day dawned in the Prince's Mansion, where there were tables and shelves for records and other material used by the secretary. But the question of the Academy's right to occupy the premises was still not truly settled; there was talk of fire hazard, of continued government funding, for which pleas were still being made with reference to the rescript of 1774, and of the poor lighting, relying exclusively on candles, which did not permit scientific demonstrations.

In the early 1890s, the minister let the Academy know that it could not count on remaining at the Prince's Mansion, which the growing museums needed desperately. At this point, the Carlsberg Foundation stepped in, and in 1893, it offered the Academy premises in the building the foundation had decided to erect for its own use. Before we enter this building, which has housed the Academy since 1899, let us examine the relationship between the two institutions as it developed after 1876.

### The deed of gift: The Carlsberg Foundation and the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters

Occasionally, in between its many ordinary scholarly meetings, where scientific discoveries and business



matters were discussed by the members, so-called 'extraordinary meetings' were held when a special occasion required a quick decision. Such a meeting was held in September 1876, before the season had actually begun. It was described in the Academy's minutes by the secretary at the time, Japetus Steenstrup:

On Friday September 29<sup>th</sup> 1876, all of the members of the Academy were summoned to an *extraordinary meeting*, having been notified about it in a printed memorandum of September 25<sup>th</sup> [appendix a.]. The reason for this was the establishment on the same day of a substantial foundation for the advancement of scientific inquiry, funded

FIGURE 20. Brewer J. C. Jacobsen in a portrait by August Jern-doff, 1886.

by Captain Brewer *Jacobsen of Carlsberg*, and requesting the Academy to supervise, now and in the future, by electing a board of five members from among its members for this purpose. – The founder’s written communication to the Academy of September 25<sup>th</sup> [appendix c.] together with the ‘Draft Statutes of the Carlsberg Foundation’ [appendix e.] accompanied the letter of summons as printed appendices. In his letter, the brewer asked the members to consider the communication as a whole “*as confidential in the highest degree*” until a decision thereon had been taken by the Academy. The subject of the meeting was described as being: to take the matter under consideration, and to the extent that further negotiation was not found necessary, to reach a decision thereon.

This was the beginning of a new era for the Academy, which has since been closely connected to the Carlsberg Foundation. Twenty-seven members participated in the extraordinary meeting, in addition to the Academy’s president, Johan Nicolai Madvig. Madvig opened the meeting by reading out the letter to the Academy that brewer Jacobsen had written to accompany the ‘Letter of Charter and Deed,’ which Madvig had received on September 25<sup>th</sup>. The brewer wrote that he had decided to associate the creation of the foundation with the day on which the monument memorializing H.C. Ørsted was unveiled “in living acknowledgement of how much he owes to the learning and inspiring influence of H.C. Ørsted and as testament to a grateful appreciation of his efforts to spread the light of knowledge in wider circles”. This letter had been delivered personally to the private addresses of all of the Academy’s members along with the letter of charter and deed at the very hour in which the monument was revealed. The good brewer took this matter and his own word extremely seriously.

This meant that the members had already been informed before the extraordinary meeting of the Academy, and Madvig could more or less confine himself to communicating his own remarks on the matter. He emphasized the generosity of the gift, its patriotism and its open acknowledgement of the link between science and practical application – and not least his faith in the Academy. However, he also shared certain reservations which were worthy of consideration, including not least the magnitude of the responsibility to the founder and the nation the gift would require the Academy to assume, and the “disturbance of equilibrium” which might arise in the Academy if individual

members were to gain such a large influence on the advancement of particular scientific and scholarly aims. However, he concluded his remarks by stating that he felt that such reservations were put to rest by the clearly formulated statutes stating that although the Academy would elect “the members of the Board of Directors of the Foundation, the Board itself would lie outside the Academy”. Finally, he presented his own opinion, that “the Academy, trusting its own abilities and their honest application, should have the courage to assume the task the founder had desired to place in its hands, and should take the granted foundation into its keeping with delight and gratitude, for the advancement of knowledge and the honor of the nation.”

One member expressed his full support for this position, and recommended that others do the same; when asked whether there were dissenting opinions, no one spoke. The president then invited everyone who wished to vote in favor of the proposal to rise from their seats. Everyone present rose and the proposal was thus adopted unanimously. A written reply was delivered to the Brewer the following day by the Academy’s president (Madvig), its secretary (Steenstrup), and the most senior members of the natural sciences and the humanities class respectively. The following Monday, the Academy’s protector, King Christian IX, was informed. At the first ordinary meeting of the season, on October 13<sup>th</sup>, Madvig described both the delivery of the reply to brewer Jacobsen and the audience with the King and announced that members of the Carlsberg Foundation’s board of directors were to be elected at the following meeting on October 27<sup>th</sup>, in accordance with the statutes of the foundation which had been circulated. At this meeting, Christen Thomsen Barfoed, Peter Ludvig Panum, Steenstrup, Edvard Holm, and Madvig were elected. The latter was elected chair at the first meeting of the board, a position he held until his death in 1886.

This was the beginning of the long story of the close relations between the Carlsberg Brewery, the Carlsberg Foundation, and the Academy. This is not the place for a detailed discussion of the successive boards of directors and amendments to the statutes; we shall concentrate on the major outlines of the development. The most important provision in the Carlsberg Foundation’s objectives was, apart from the continuation and expansion of the work at the chemical-physiological Carlsberg Laboratory, “to advance the various natural sciences as well as mathematics, philosophy, history and linguistics”. This meant that the board of directors was to include members from a



FIGURE 21. A meeting of the Carlsberg Foundation's board of directors. Painted by Herman Vedel, 1926.

wide range of subjects, and at the very beginning, a practice of electing three members from the natural sciences and two from the humanities was established. A special amendment to the statutes was presented to the Academy in 1902, when the board of directors wished to present a proposal to establish a new subdivision of the Carlsberg Foundation called the New Carlsberg Foundation, whose task would be the advancement of the arts in the country. It was established by Carl Jacobsen, son of the old brewer, whose own brewery, Ny Carlsberg, had enabled him to amass a considerable collection of antiquities and art treasures. The foundational letter from 1902, which was signed both by Carl and his wife Ottilia Jacobsen, states that the purpose of the foundation is to work for the benefit of art in Denmark. Among other things, this involves making art accessible for the citizens of the country; this would eventually benefit the Academy itself.

In the 1890s, the Academy was still having housing problems, as related above, but in 1893, the Carlsberg Foundation made the Academy an offer which would solve these problems once and for all. In a letter of October 26<sup>th</sup> 1893, the Foundation presented the following offer, which clearly reflects the fact that the Foundation's board of directors was constituted by members who venerated the Academy highly:

The close relationship to the Academy in which the Carlsberg Foundation has been placed has made it natural for the board of directors of the Foundation to show how much it values that relationship, when the occasion to do so offers itself. While the Foundation's Charter so far has imposed certain limits for the forms in which it can dispose of its funds for the advancement of knowledge, a favorable occasion for taking a different step, which can presumably have some value for the Academy, has presented itself to the board of directors. All of its members share the impression that the Academy is not particularly fortunate with respect to its premises. Just a few years ago, the Academy was threatened with losing its current assembly rooms altogether, and although this storm cloud passed, no one can be certain when a similar danger will show itself again. Apart from the fact that larger rooms in which to meet would be desirable, our considerable publications and the secretary's office are located elsewhere in the city in an unfortunate manner, and the risk of fire in the building in which they are located is extremely high. That a fire would be a true disaster for the Academy, no one can doubt. As the board of directors of the Carlsberg Foundation has decided to relocate its premises and



FIGURE 22. The shared premises of the Carlsberg Foundation and the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters since 1899, on Vestre Boulevard (now H. C. Andersens Boulevard), just outside the city's fortifications (now Vester Voldgade).

the Copenhagen office of the G. Carlsberg brewery in its own building, it believes that this should be done in such a way as to create an appropriate residence for the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters at the same time, and the board is the more pleased with this idea, as it knows it to concur with what the founder of the foundation had hoped could be achieved some day. For this reason, the board of directors has purchased a lot with the most fortunate location it was possible to find under the difficult housing situation in the capital, just across from Glyptoteket museum, between the extensions of Ny Vestergade and Ny Kongensgade, and facing Vestre Boulevard. In the monumental building the board of directors intends to erect, it plans to furnish the second and third floors for the use of the Academy. It will presumably be possible to gather and arrange everything in a manner which will promote the welfare of the Academy, and the board of directors wants to do its utmost to ensure that the Academy can obtain a beautiful, comfortable home which it can keep forever.

The letter ends with a remark that the Foundation trusts that the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters will keep its housing allowance from the state,

and that this can be included in the calculations. In addition to this, the board of directors will make provision for heat and lighting, the latter in the form of electric light. Apart from replying to the letter, the Academy is invited to provide an overview of what rooms would be necessary in terms of meeting rooms, classrooms, office and archive space, toilets and wash rooms. On this background, the task of planning the construction of the building, which has been the domicile of both the Foundation and the Academy ever since, was transferred to the royal building inspector, Vilhelm Petersen. The royal rescript of 1776, in which the Academy was graciously promised rooms and firewood, was definitively overshadowed by the brewer's gift in that respect.

It is perhaps worth noting here that Vestre Boulevard, which has become the busy thoroughfare H.C. Andersens Boulevard, was a quiet street at the time, running somewhat indirectly in the general direction of the narrow wooden bridge, the former Langebro bridge, connecting Vester Voldgade with Christianshavn. This meant that the area between the National Museum of Denmark, including the Prince's Mansion, on the one side, and the Glyptoteket museum on the other side, was almost park-like, only traversed by a promenade down which horse-drawn carriages could drive to the open beach, Kalvebod Strand - before the area which later became the Islands Brygge wharf was built up, and where the later version of Langebro, an iron bridge, was connected with the island of Amager.

The building and the deliberations about its ornamentation and function have been described by Kjeld de Fine Licht. It was designed by Vilhelm Petersen, whose proposals were regularly discussed by the future inhabitants of the building. This was also true of the decoration of the building, and the result was and is an extremely significant and still functional building in which the Academy has resided since 1899 with irrevocable tenure.

When the Academy vacated the Prince's Mansion in 1899, where it had been housed since 1855, the president Julius Thomsen, who had been an active member since 1860, looked back and described the unique atmosphere of the meetings in that room; his speech on the occasion of the move (quoted above) was infused with nostalgia, even though new and more modern and appropriate premises were calling. The atmosphere that Thomsen's speech evokes was also captured by P.S. Krøyer, whose large painting *Et Møde i Videnskabernes Selskab* (A Meeting of the Academy of Sciences and Letters) now hangs on the back wall of the



FIGURE 23. *A Meeting of the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters*. Painted by P.S. Krøyer, 1897. It was transferred to the Academy and hung in the new premises in 1899. The speaker to the right of the picture is the biologist Japetus Steenstrup. The audience includes the Crown Prince, later King Frederik VIII, on the other side of the table.

meeting room in which the Academy has held its meetings since 1899.

The painting was commissioned by the Carlsberg Foundation in 1895 for the new building, and it is monumental in more than one sense. It is not only the artist's largest work in a literal sense, "but is also considered in certain circles to be one of Krøyer's most important works, on account of its natural and accurate portraiture, its impressive and unforced composition, and its beautiful lighting effects". It is obvious that Krøyer produced his studies for the painting at the Prince's Mansion, and in the Carlsberg Foundation's application to the Academy requesting consent to have its members' portraits painted, reference is made to the beautiful, cherished memories associated with the old rooms, and the importance of preserving the memory of the Academy's time there. The letter continues:

Just as a painting of this kind will have significance for us, the now living members of the Academy as a preservation of the memory of a closed chapter in the life of the Academy, thus one dares to believe that apart from the artistic value it presumably will acquire, it will also have historical interest for a later time, as a remembrance of the Academy at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century here in Denmark, in the same way that the great Dutch paintings of shooting parties in the 17<sup>th</sup> century have had a monumental, historical value for later generations. Therefore, we permit ourselves to request the consent of the Academy to carry out the plan referred to above, as hoping both that you will applaud the idea and that you will not find the inconvenience it may cause the individual members of the Academy to sit for the artist prohibitive.



The Academy accepted the offer, and gave Krøyer permission to attend the meetings in the winter of 1895-1896. He began work on the first studies and sketches immediately, spending quite a lot of time in the meeting room, even when it was empty. As it appears from the Academy's accounts, there was a considerable consumption of candles in this connection; every time Krøyer worked in the empty room, it was necessary to buy 2.50 kroner's worth of new candles in the darkest months, February and March, while the price in April in May was just 1.75 kroner per session. But it added up; Krøyer was an industrious man, and his sketches were ready to be shown after a short time. A nearly complete study was shown at the open exhibition in 1897. In 1899, the Carlsberg Foundation presented the finished painting to the Academy as a gift when it moved in to its new premises; the accompanying note states that "the board of directors dares to assume that the Academy agrees that this painting should never leave its possession". That assumption was - and remains - extremely well-founded.

From 1899 to 1953, the painting hung in one of the side rooms, the so-called humanistic classroom, which did not do it justice: it was impossible to get enough distance to it, and the lighting was poor. The painting did not take its final place in the meeting room itself until 1951, which required the removal of two pilasters in the middle of the wall (across from the large windows facing H.C. Andersens Boulevard). They had originally been intended to frame a door opening directly into the meeting room from the marble staircase leading from the ground to the first floor. However, the door had been removed from the plans before the house was built because it disrupted the design of the meeting room. Since 1951, the painting has been mounted on this wall where it can be seen by all participants in the meetings - reminding them that they are but the most recent link in the long chain of history forged by those who came before them.

In the 1970s, as a step in the continued development of the Academy's activities, a more efficient use of available space in the building came under consideration. The most important element in this was to renovate the third story of the building, which previously had been used for storage: it was proposed to refurbish this floor as an auditorium where public lectures could be held to give the public greater insight into basic research. The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Carlsberg Foundation was approaching, and in making this addition to the Academy's premises, the foundation, which was headed by Franz Blatt at the time, wanted

the Academy to "set the agenda" for the celebration. This plan met with a certain amount of scepticism in the Academy, where some members thought that the Carlsberg Foundation's millions ought to be spent on scholarships for junior researchers, who had never faced such difficult conditions before as they did at the time, instead of building a mausoleum. As one can imagine, the debate was quite heated and prolonged.

The proposed addition, in other words the anniversary gift, was ultimately accepted with "varying degrees of enthusiasm", as Blatt put it, while simultaneously expressing the hope that the improved physical framework would contribute to "changing the Academy's image, both internally and externally". A committee responsible for planning new activities in the new rooms was appointed, and plans for offering public lectures gradually took form. This is still an extremely vital and well-attended aspect of the Academy's activities, which semester after semester fills the building with an audience interested in news from the world of research. The third floor is also used as a meeting room in other situations, for light meals after Academy meetings as well as for festive occasions. In other words, enthusiasm is now total.

One recent festive occasion worth mentioning here was the celebration of brewer Jacobsen's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2011. On this occasion, the Carlsberg Foundation established the Carlsberg Foundation Research Prize, the recipients of which are selected by the Academy's presidium on the basis of external nominations. At the same time, the Academy received a gift from the New Carlsberg Foundation: a glass mosaic designed by the artist Erik A. Frandsen and executed by Venetian glass mosaic artists who mounted the work on one of the large walls in the room. In its choice of subject, the mosaic is very different from Krøyer's painting; it portrays so-called 'ordinary' people waiting for a parade (more specifically, a Fourth of July parade in the American Midwest). The copper roof and dormer windows had been replaced a few years previously, so there is a lively play of light on the glass mosaic. Again, there were (and are) mixed opinions about the gift, although no one contests the fact that the craftsmanship is masterful.

Where Krøyer's painting turns inward towards science and the Academy itself, Frandsen's mosaic gestures towards the general global public who are the ultimate intended benefactors of scientific and scholarly work. This idea is not as new as it might sound, if one recalls the Enlightenment project as a whole. Since the end of the Second World War, the general expectation



of openness and social responsibility has exercised a strong influence on the development of the Academy.

### Openness: Modern society and science

The Academy's move towards openness actually began much earlier, at the end of the First World War, albeit with a different emphasis. Denmark had remained outside the war, and the country's neutrality had paved the way for it to become one of the founding member states of the League of Nations together with the allied powers in 1919. The objective of the alliance was to resolve international conflicts peaceably,

and although the League of Nations never became a major player on the international political stage, partly because major countries like the United States never joined, the International Court of Justice was established in The Hague, and other social and humanitarian issues were addressed. The League of Nations was dissolved in 1946 after the establishment of the United Nations in 1945.

This early exercise in peaceful coexistence contributed to the emergence of new scientific and scholarly associations in which neutral Denmark could play a constructive role. Up to that point, the Academy had participated in a widespread network of publication

FIGURE 24. Glass mosaic by Erik A. Frandsen, 2011. Gift to the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters from the New Carlsberg Foundation on the occasion of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of brewer J.C. Jacobsen.



exchange which connected the European learned academies with one another through their publications. An international union of academies had been formalized in 1900, and its first general meeting was held in 1901. It was divided into sections more or less corresponding to the Academy's own classes, and although the union guaranteed a certain degree of internationalism in the activities of the individual academies, it does not appear to have left a significant mark on them. At the outbreak of the First World War, the union lost its bearings entirely. At the same time, all forms of peaceful international collaboration appeared even more important than before, and the neutral countries could play an important role in this connection.

In the summer of 1917, the secretary of the Academy, Martin Knudsen, participated in a meeting of inter-parliamentary delegates at which the former Norwegian prime minister, Frederik Stang, gave a speech in which he emphasized Scandinavia's role as a neutral meeting ground for international scientific and scholarly work. The Danish minister of defence, Peter Munch, was given a seat on a 'committee for the preparation of cooperation between the scientists and scholars of the various nations after the war' aimed at investigating how Scandinavia could contribute to realizing the vision of international cooperation. The Danish ministry of education appointed a commission headed by Munch, and already at this early stage, the establishment of an institute for linguistics, an H.C. Ørsted institute for physics research, and perhaps a comparable institute for biology research were under consideration to attract international scholars. Knudsen wanted the Academy to play a role in this process, and at a meeting in October 1917, he reported:

A seed has been sown; we do not yet know if it will sprout, but let us do what we can to help it take root, and if something does grow forth, we cannot yet know what it will be come. Let us work to ensure that it will benefit Danish science and scholarship, and that it also can benefit international research. Let us formulate a concrete proposal without worrying excessively about whether it can be realized in the form which the proposal initially takes. Under any circumstance, a concrete proposal is a necessary basis for negotiation, and the earlier it can be produced, the better. I will not deny that I strongly advocate the participation of the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters in this matter.

A committee was tasked with developing concrete proposals for the establishment of new institutes which could function as international research centers. The assumption was that if Denmark made it through the war years unscathed, there was a good chance that the grant-making authorities would do something for science and scholarship.

At a later meeting on February 8<sup>th</sup> 1918, the matter came up, and Martin Knudsen explained that a plan for the projected H.C. Ørsted Institute had been submitted to the relevant institutions for consideration. The accompanying statement, which Martin Knudsen had composed at Munch's request and submitted along with the proposal, elaborates:

There has been general agreement on all sides that just as the neutral states have a duty to heal the wounds of war to the highest extent possible here in wartime, it will also be the duty of these states after the war to contribute to resurrecting the international cooperation which had borne rich fruit in so many ways in the years immediately preceding the war. We must strive to build bridges between the peoples who are currently at war with one another. The gulfs which the hate and bitterness of war have opened up will be a fateful hindrance to the cultural development of the immediate future, and it is certain that a long time will pass before the intellectual connections on which the peaceful progress of culture depends to such a high degree will be fully restored.

The privileged position which our nation has had during the war imposes a strong obligation on our people to contribute to the reconstruction of European civilization. And indeed, there is considerable evidence of the fact that the people of the warring nations expect us to take on this work, energetically and with an understanding of the demands of the time.

In addition to an H.C. Ørsted institute for physics and related disciplines, the committee proposed the establishment of a Rask-Madvig institute for linguistics and philology. Both were to be research institutions which were to finance stipends for junior foreign researchers, in addition to full-time professors. The proposal to create these two institutes was supplemented by a proposal to establish an institute for marine research, a field in which Denmark had already established a strong position. When these proposals were presented to the Academy's members in March 1918, opinions on

the entire matter were extremely mixed, and only the proposed marine research institute was met with a certain degree of sympathy.

In October 1918, however, events took an unexpected turn: the Academy received a memorandum from the ministerial committee stating that the plans to establish both the H.C. Ørsted institute and the Rask-Madvig institute had been abandoned. Instead, the committee proposed that the Danish state establish a Rask-Ørsted foundation to support Danish research – primarily research with international relevance. The foundation was to supplement the Carlsberg Foundation, which up to this point had undertaken this function alone, and the government would allocate DKK 5 million to its establishment. In addition, the establishment of a marine research institute was recommended. The well-intentioned proposal to establish international research centers in the shadow of the First World War had come to this. While the Rask-Ørsted Foundation was a very important result, it was not quite what had originally been envisioned.

At the same time, it was also becoming increasingly clear that the vision of a strong scientific and scholarly cooperation in Europe immediately after the war would be difficult to sustain. The existing, relatively new unions and councils were at a loss, and the Central Powers were barred from participation; there was great insecurity and debate on the extent to which science and politics could be separated. There was a particularly heated discussion about the question of Germany's participation in Conseil International des Recherches; Denmark and especially Norway were strong advocates of removing the barriers to Germany's admission. The Academy in Oslo announced that unless the barriers preventing the admission of previously excluded states were immediately removed, it would resign from the Conseil and seek other forms of fully and purely scientific and scholarly cooperation. The result was the establishment of two international unions: scientists and scholars from the Allied powers founded the Conseil International des Recherches Scientifiques, which excluded Germans, while the humanistic Union Académique Internationale permitted all academies to apply for admission – which then had to be approved by a two-thirds vote. After some hesitation, the Danish Academy ended up applying for admission to the Conseil International, but reserved the right to resume and develop its own relationships with all countries, including those which had lost the war. The situation remained tense for a long time afterwards. The intention of this short ac-

count of the influence of the First World War on international scientific and scholarly collaboration has been to show how both academia in general and the Danish Academy in particular became implicated in a more general political uncertainty. This was not the last time a war would provoke academic soul-searching.

The interwar years were calmer, and Danish science and scholarship prospered, producing internationally recognized results. The Academy was involved in major lexicographical projects, overseas expeditions, archaeological digs, and biological and physical laboratory research. Although the ministry of education had rejected the proposals to establish new internationally oriented research institutions, the research facilities at Danish universities improved markedly in the interwar period, not least when it came to physics. Niels Bohr had become professor of theoretical physics in 1917, and relatively quickly he facilitated the establishment of a new, well-equipped university department as a setting for research. In 1921, the University of Copenhagen's new Department of Theoretical Physics opened, which would have incalculable significance for the international cooperation which the Academy had previously sought to promote. In this case, it was all due to one individual, and not least to his 1922 Nobel Prize. The story of Niels Bohr's significance for physics has been told many times; in this context, we shall focus on those aspects of his work which had a direct influence on the Academy.

Niels Bohr was elected president of the Academy in 1939; but in 1942, shortly after the Academy's 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary, he was forced to leave the country on account of the war, and the Academy was without a president until the war ended. At the first meeting after the war, on September 21<sup>st</sup> 1945, the chair of the natural sciences-mathematics class announced that the president had returned to Denmark, and that the Academy ought to hold the presidential election which should have taken place in 1944. After a week of consideration, Bohr agreed to stand for re-election, and he was elected unanimously. On the occasion of his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday on October 7<sup>th</sup> 1945, it was announced by Johannes Pedersen, chair of the Carlsberg Foundation Board of Directors, that “as a permanent expression of the deep respect and gratitude which Danish science owes to Professor Niels Bohr for his outstanding contributions to scientific research”, the board had decided to allocate DKK 100,000 to the creation of a Foundation which would bear his name and be administered by the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and

FIGURE 25. The young Niels Bohr (1917). On his way to the pinnacle of scientific achievement, but not yet entirely aware of the fact. Photo by Julie Laurberg and [Franciska] Gad. The Academy's archive.



Letters. Other foundations contributed as well, and the total endowment reached DKK 400,000. Additional funds were contributed in connection with Bohr's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, and Niels Bohr scholarships are still awarded for research and study travel abroad.

Niels Bohr was re-elected president in 1949, and he remained in office until his death in 1962. This was an exception to the rule, but so was Bohr himself. He had received the Order of the Elephant from King Frederik IX after his accession to the throne in 1947. His Majesty was present at a meeting of the Academy on October 17<sup>th</sup> that same year which was dedicated to the memory of his father, King Christian X, and on this occasion, King Frederik announced that he had bestowed the Order of the Elephant on the Academy's president the same day, and his intention had not only been to honor Niels Bohr, but "to honor Danish science and scholarship as well, of which Niels Bohr was such an exceptional representative". This is still something to be proud of. Beyond any doubt, Niels Bohr was exceptional, yet his position helped strengthen the reputation of Danish science and scholarship at home and abroad.

After the war, international scientific and scholarly exchange was revived, including with other learned academies, and the Danish Academy resumed its international connections, which had lain dormant during this war as well. In particular, the Academy's connection with the Royal Society in London came to

play a major role. Visits between the two societies took place in 1945, and a meeting in London in 1946 on the occasion of Isaac Newton's 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary provided an occasion to discuss the reconstruction of international cooperation after the war. This was not only a question of re-establishing the old unions; it was now a much more general question of principle: the principle of scientific openness. After atomic bombs had been launched on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, the question of the nature of science's responsibility for technological development became urgent. This naturally led to considerable debate within the Academy and in larger circles.

Niels Bohr, who had contributed to the development of the bomb, argued publicly for an "open world" - a world in which scientific results were not kept secret from others. In November 1945, the Conseil International des Unions Scientifiques held a meeting to attempt to create a consensus on the need for openness, but it was a divisive issue. Despite the difficulty of the topic, after inserting a paragraph stating that "nuclear energy is not unique among scientific advances in its possible effects for good or evil", a consensus was ultimately reached: "The General Assembly is convinced that international security and welfare will be impossible if in any country for the future military secrecy is allowed to dominate scientific discovery or to prevent the frank discussion and open publication of scientific results." Niels Bohr supported this formulation; but this did not mean that the question of scientific freedom had been resolved. In 1950, Bohr published a letter to the United Nations in which he presented his own considerations in the hope of influencing international opinion. But a new war was already in progress, in Korea, and Bohr's long text had little impact.

Science and high politics were not the only topics which occupied the Academy in those years. There was also the question of the election of members and of the Academy's role in society. August Krogh, who like Bohr was a Nobel Prize recipient, believed that relatively radical changes were necessary if the Academy was to preserve any significant role in society. In February 1947, Krogh wrote a letter to the president (Bohr), in which he predicted a development whereby society would ask science for guidance and aid in addressing its problems to a much higher degree than in the past. He also wanted the Academy to elect more and especially younger members, and to express greater willingness to assume the functions to which it was naturally suited: "to be the government's advi-

sor in scientific matters, to participate in the administration of the funds which will be put at the disposal of research, and in general to promote an understanding of the significance of independent basic research for society”.

This provoked intense discussion at the meeting of December 12<sup>th</sup> 1947; concern was expressed that increasing membership risked breaking the Academy into pieces, and the president believed that it was a matter of preserving historical tradition and viewing the Academy as a group with limited membership. There were long discussions, and Krogh stated that he would not insist on his proposal, and that other methods of bringing younger members into the Academy could be found; but the battle was lost.

In a letter to the Academy of January 14<sup>th</sup> 1948, which was simultaneously published in the national newspapers, Krogh announced his immediate resignation from the Academy on the grounds that the Academy refused to face up to its task – to advance the conditions for research – a task which entailed a major effort to secure sources of research funding for junior researchers, and in which the Academy ought to engage itself. The Academy replied that there were no major differences in members’ perspectives on the Academy’s task, and that it was only because “Professor Krogh demands that the Academy should change its approach to its work completely and strive to assume leadership in these areas as an organization, and because he describes this as the Academy’s ‘natural obligation’ that his point of view has failed to convince”.

In practice, this conflict meant that discussion of possible new roles for the Academy continued. Niels Bohr conveyed a proposal to the government regarding the necessity of increasing research funding. Apart from the Rask-Ørsted Foundation, which was established in 1919 in order to support Danish participation in international research collaboration, Danish research had only received support from private foundations, not least the Carlsberg Foundation. Bohr communicated the Academy’s position that a national contribution to research funding equivalent to that of the Carlsberg Foundation was necessary. The time was ripe, and as a result, the National Science Foundation was established in 1952, and the Academy was represented on the board of the foundation. August Krogh had passed away in 1950, so he never experienced the tangible results of the discussion he had initiated, by inducing the Academy to assume a more active role in helping to determine the national framework for research.

Another form of social engagement was the public lectures which the Academy began to host after the renovation of the building on H.C. Andersens Boulevard in 1976, which was described above. The lectures were administered by a Committee for Outwardly-directed Activities (Udvalg for Udadrettet Virksomhed), now known as the Research Communication Committee (Forskningsformidlingsudvalget) (see p. 88-91). Also, over the past twenty years or so, the Academy’s Research Policy Committee (Forskningspolitisk Udvalg) has organized annual research policy meetings with the participation of the minister for the area and representatives from the entire spectrum of Danish research (see p. 79-80). At each meeting, a white paper is presented as a basis for discussion of selected topics the Academy considers of urgent relevance to both the research community and society. The white papers are published on the Academy’s website. Thanks also to the technological development, the world is much more open than in Niels Bohr’s and August Krogh’s day, and the Academy is extremely conscious of its role as advisor and driver of the development of science and scholarship and their framework.

A form of rejuvenation, while not exactly in the form in which Krogh had envisioned it, came with the establishment of the Young Academy under the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters in 2011. This innovation was inspired by similar initiatives in other European countries – Germany, Holland, and Sweden. However, in the proposal presented to the Academy’s members by the presidium, the relationship between the Academy and the Young Academy in Denmark would be closer than in its precedents. According to the proposal, the Young Academy would be established in order to support the Academy’s objectives, as stated in the first clause of the statutes, that the Academy must contribute both to basic research and interdisciplinary collaboration.

The Young Academy was established to provide outstanding junior researchers comparable opportunities to meet and engage in interdisciplinary debate from the standpoint of their own field of expertise. The young researchers were to be encouraged to take their own initiatives to build bridges between science and society. The aim of the Young Academy was thus to ensure Denmark’s junior researchers their own voice in society. The Young Academy would have 40 members when fully established. After a written and oral presentation, the proposal was adopted.

The Young Academy is now a notable semi-inde-

pendent organization under the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters. The Academy is financially responsible for the junior organization, and is responsible for overseeing its activities, in addition to providing a venue and administrative support for the Young Academy's events, publications, and so on. On the other hand, the young members themselves are responsible for designing their own internal set-up, and for taking the initiative to organize symposiums, debates, career workshops, research communication initiatives, leadership training, and other activities which can contribute to strengthening the profiles of individual researchers and the Academy as a whole. They are also responsible for deciding how and when meetings should take place, within the framework of a few minimum requirements.

Membership in the Young Academy is limited to a term of five years, and is granted on the basis of an application followed by an interview with the election committee. Candidates must account for their motivation for joining and for their specific interest in the Young Academy. In the first year, the election committee was selected by the Academy's presidium, and since then they have been selected by members of the presidium in collaboration with the board of directors of the Young Academy. Applications are evaluated in terms of research quality, motivation and commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration. It is not possible to be a member of both academies, and membership in the Young Academy does not automatically lead to membership in the senior one. However, the presidium's vision of exchange between the two groups has been realized to the full. The annual joint meeting of the Academy and the Young Academy, which focusses on scientific and scholarly issues of current interest, has shown itself to be just as interesting and well-attended as had been hoped; in addition, the two academies work together on initiatives such as the annual Danish Science Festival and public meetings. In a cer-

tain sense, the members of the Young Academy are the 'adjuncts' imagined in 1742 which never materialized – although they are much more independent than their historical prototype, which in any case played no role at all in the creation of the Young Academy.

Openness, renewal, internationalism and research policy initiatives have been at the forefront of the Academy's activities over the past twenty-five years. With the development of digital forms of communication, the international unions are losing ground, however. The majority of researchers now meet one another by email or online, and all of them have international contacts. No one can be a researcher at home alone. The universities provide the institutional framework for research, but in practice, the work itself breaks through all boundaries.

## Concluding remarks

Looking back over the Academy's 275-year history, its development appears to have accelerated dramatically over time. Naturally, this is related to the major transformations in social structures, political systems, and forms of communication which have driven this development. However, the Academy remains itself, as if by magic; altered, but still its own in the desire to contribute to improving the quality of scientific and scholarly knowledge and to ensuring the continuation of scientific and scholarly dialogue, in a literal sense.

On the occasion of this 275<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it is fulfilling to contemplate how the Academy is still managing to keep the ideals of science and scholarship alive by offering a framework for a generous exchange of knowledge across the ever-increasing diversity of academic specializations and the country's many universities. Much has already happened, but the Academy's story continues.

FIGURE 26. The emblem of the Young Academy; the griffin is borrowed from the Academy's seal but plays the leading role here. The emblem was designed by Og Jensen.



FIGURE 27. The seal of the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters. Redesigned in 2011 by Troels Faber.

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