

Brøndsted and Koës

– a brief sketch of their travels in Greece

by Ida Haugsted

Peter Oluf Brøndsted (fig. 1) was a son of the vicar Christian Brøndsted and Mette Augusta Petersen. He spent his childhood in Horsens and went on to study theology at the University of Copenhagen, graduating in 1802. As a student of classical philology, he was awarded the gold medal of the University in 1804. He continued his studies afterwards in Göttingen, and took his doctorate in Copenhagen two years later with the thesis *Opusculorum philosophici et philologici argumenti*.¹

Shortly before leaving for Greece in 1806, Brøndsted became engaged to the sixteen-year-old Frederikke Koës, a sister of his close friend: Georg Heinrich Carl Koës (fig. 2).² Their father, Georg Ditlev Frederik Koës – a Schleswiger by birth – had served for a while as director of the Royal Prussian bank. In 1771, however, he obtained a Danish lottery concession for six years, which was later bought out by the state. As initiator of this highly profitable lottery,³ Koës senior earned a fortune, which enabled him in 1774 to buy at auction the former Royal castle and medieval monastery Antvorskov near Slagelse with the manor Pebringe. Using the stones of the medieval monastery, he built a new manor house named “Falkenstein” after his wife, Anna Mathea Falck, whom

he had married in 1775. The couple had three children: Georg and his twin sisters Frederikke and Marie.

Georg Koës junior began by studying philology at Halle in Germany, becoming a student at the University of Copenhagen in 1802. Like Brøndsted, he took his doctorate in 1806, with the thesis *Specimen observationum in Odysseam criticarum*, and he published a Greek-German dictionary of the Homeric poems.⁴

In April 1804, Brøndsted went to Frederiksdal, north of Copenhagen, with his dear and almost only friend Koës. He refers to him in a letter as “an interesting, good, learned and amusing young man”, who – because he was bored in Copenhagen – insisted on spending the summer in the country. Koës had rented some rooms from a peasant in the lovely Frederiksdal, and “there is lake and meadow ... and wood ... and strawberry and milk and everything nice. I am leaving tomorrow”.⁵ In another letter written in Koës’ summerhouse in May, Brøndsted describes Frederiksdal as one of the most beautiful places in Sealand, at the border of the lake of Furesøen. The friends planned to take the boat to Lyngby, and Brøndsted felt that he was in paradise.⁶

1. Brøndsted 1806.

2. Brøndsted 1926, 69.

3. DBL 3, VIII, 147 seq.

4. Koës 1806a; Koës 1806b.

5. Brøndsted 1926.

6. Brøndsted 1926, 73, the stay, letter of the 26th of May 1804.



Fig. 1: P.O. Brøndsted, 1806 (or before). Copperplate engraving by A. Flint, who also made the drawing (*del(ineavit)* & *sc(ulpsit)*) (Mikala Brøndsted, cat. No. 1).

Setting out on the Grand Tour

Two years later, Brøndsted and Koës left Denmark for Greece. They departed Copenhagen on the 1st of August 1806, having travelled through Germany, attended Goethe's wedding in Weimar, and met the already

well-known Danish poet Adam Oehlenschläger, they finally reached Paris in mid-November 1806.⁷

They stayed in Paris until the spring of 1808, studying the descriptions of Greece by ancient authors such as Homer, Strabo, Thucydides and Pausanias, and also

7. Cf. the article by Gorm Schou-Rode in this publication.



Fig. 2: Georg Koës, c. 1806. Koës, who was the off-spring of a well-off family, wears a slightly more elegant costume than his future brother-in-law. Technical details as fig. 1.

more contemporary publications such as *The Antiquities of Athens* by James Stuart and Nicolas Revett as well as Richard Chandler's descriptions of his travels in Asia Minor and Greece.⁸

When Koës returned temporarily to Denmark for more money, Brøndsted began the long journey to Rome, walking most of the way through France, as he described in his diary.⁹

Sojourn in Italy

Brøndsted found Rome quiet, although Napoleon had captured the city in May 1809, forcing Pope Pius VII to leave Italy. Koës joined him there at the beginning of 1809, and – at the request of the Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen and the Danish diplomat Herman Schubart – made a catalogue of the papers of the resident Danish antiquarian George Zoëga, who had unexpectedly died in February.¹⁰

While in Rome, Koës and Brøndsted lived in the house of the German brothers Riepenhausen. The Danes studied in the rich libraries and museums of the city, and also enjoyed visiting Thorvaldsen, the Humboldt family and the artists frequenting Café Greco. Here they became acquainted with three congenial people who had arrived in 1808: the landscape painter Jacob Linckh from Cannstatt, the artist Baron Otto Magnus von Stackelberg from Estonia, and the architect Carl Haller von Hallerstein from Nürnberg. The latter was at the time the favourite architect of Crown Prince Ludwig I of Bavaria.¹¹ The five of them decided to travel to Greece together.

In October 1809, Schubart wrote to the Danish chargé d'affaires in Constantinople, Baron Christian Hübsch, to secure a permit for Brøndsted and Koës to travel in Turkish-occupied Greece. Schubart wrote that the Danes hoped among other things to find manu-

scripts in the Greek monasteries, and that they wanted to travel for eight to ten months. But when the papers from Hübsch finally reached Brøndsted and Koës in Athens at Christmas 1810, they had already been in Greece half a year.¹²

The journey to Greece

The five fellow travellers set out from Naples to Athens in July 1810. They arrived – not without difficulties – in Corfu in the end of the month, and left in August. They came to Preveza, where they saw Ali Pasha's fortified palace, a Turkish mosque, and the ancient ruins of Nicopolis, where Brøndsted three years later conducted a small excavation at the request of Ali Pasha.¹³ The next stop was Patras, a city that at the time had a busy export of raisins; in September they continued from there by boat and disembarked at Corinth, having visiting Delphi on the way, where Brøndsted studied the famous sanctuary of Apollo. In Corinth they saw the seven remaining Doric columns of the temple of Apollo.

Brøndsted and Koës continued across the Isthmus and reached Athens by boat on the 14th of September 1810. The three others stayed longer in Corinth, joining them later in Athens.¹⁴ At the beginning of October, Brøndsted and Koës rented rooms in the house of Alexander Logotheti, agent of the Levant Company in Athens since 1799. Among other pursuits, Brøndsted visited the Temple of Hephaestus near the Agora. The well-preserved building, which at the time was known as the Temple of Theseus, had been transformed into the church Agios Georgios; Brøndsted found the building splendid. He often went there alone and wrote in his diary: "nothing in the world has surprised me as much as the temple of Theseus".¹⁵

8. Stuart & Revett 1762-1816; Chandler 1776.

9. KB (The Royal Library/Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen), NKS (New Royal Collection/Ny kongelig Samling), 2400 4°: Peter Oluf Brøndsted, diary, Br. 33; KB, NKS, 2861 V 4°: Georg H. C. Koës, Koës Tagebuch 1808-11.

10. KB, NKS, 3292 4°.

11. Haugsted 1996, 13.

12. Haugsted 1996, 13.

13. KB, NKS, 2400 4°: Peter Oluf Brøndsted, diary, Br. 33; Isager 1999.

14. Haugsted 1996, 14ff. For Athens of those days, cf. the article by Fani-Maria Tsigakou in this publication.

15. KB, NKS, 2400 4°: Peter Oluf Brøndsted, diary, Br. 33.

Visiting the Peloponnesus and the coast of Turkey

In October 1810, Koës and Brøndsted visited Hydra and the Peloponnesus in the company of their friends. They followed Chandler's *Travels in Greece*¹⁶, all of them keeping diaries, which are preserved, and Hallerstein made drawings.¹⁷ They visited Nauplia, Tiryns, Epidauros, Argos, Mycenae, Nemea and Corinth. When they returned to Athens they met with the English architects John Foster and Charles Robert Cockerell, the latter of which became a lifelong friend of Brøndsted. Brøndsted despised Foster; "he is indeed, what we Danes call a 'fusentast' and in french 'a fou'." The stories Foster told about his travels were "full of hardly credible things".¹⁸

In 1811, Brøndsted, Koës and Stackelberg, who had been severely ill for half a year, visited Boeotia, Phokis and Thessaly, where they met the British vice-consul the German Georg Christian Gropius, who lived at Trikerion on the bay of Volo. From there they sailed to Constantinople and travelled along the coast of Turkey to Smyrna, following the footsteps of Chandler. They reached Constantinople at the end of February – in Brøndsted's words: "the distinctive city with its numerous cupolas and minarets is highly interesting to us".¹⁹ They stayed in Constantinople to the end of May and then travelled to Troy, Pergamon, and – as previously mentioned – Smyrna, where the Danish consul Wilkinson received them.

In their absence from Athens, Hallerstein, Foster, Cockerell and Linckh, went to Aegina in April and May 1811, where they were lucky enough to discover the later so famous sculptures at the Temple of Aphaia, which were later restored in Rome by Thorvaldsen, and subsequently acquired for Munich by Ludwig I.

Koës' last journey

On the 21st of June 1811, Koës left his two fellow travellers in Smyrna. They wanted to visit Ephesus and from there return to Trikerion, whereas Koës wanted to go to Tripolis in Arcadia to meet the Armenian musician Armin, whom he had already encountered in Constantinople. According to Koës' diary, which is kept in the Royal Library of Denmark, he sailed to Athens where he met Hallerstein and the other comrades they had left behind. He accompanied them as they sailed to Patras with the Aegina sculptures, which were to be deposited in Zakynthos. Here, Koës stayed in the beautiful house of Countess Maria Lunzi, born Martens, the offspring of a German merchant family from Venice.

On the 13th of August, Koës and his servant departed for the Peloponnesus. He arrived at Tripolis on the 17th, but failed to meet Armin. Four days later, he reached the temple of Apollo in Phigalia and sketched its plan in the diary; but – being ill – he returned to Zakynthos, where he died of fever on the 6th of September 1811.

At the time, Brøndsted and Stackelberg were travelling in Thessaly, which Brøndsted found a most difficult region to travel in, because the population hated and feared the Turks. He was informed of Koës' death in Trikerion on the 21st of September.

Brøndsted's trip to Zakynthos – and back to Denmark

In September 1812, after having excavated in Keos and at Bassae,²⁰ Brøndsted sailed from Kalamata in the Peloponnesus to Zakynthos, where he met Maria Lunzi and spent three weeks organizing the tomb of Koës (fig. 3). Massive ashlar enclosed the grave; two cypresses and an ancient marble stele were placed

16. Chandler 1776.

17. Haugsted 1996, 22; Brøndsted 1844, II, 528ff.

18. Haugsted 1996, 24; KB, NKS, 2400 4°: Peter Oluf Brøndsted, diary; cf. note 9.

19. KB, NKS, 2400 4°: Peter Oluf Brøndsted, diary, Br. 35.

20. For Keos, cf. the article by John Lund in this publication.



Fig. 3: Ink drawing of the tomb of Georg Koës at Zakynthos, by the British traveller and artist William Gell. The drawing was formerly in P.O. Brøndsted's possession; it is now kept in the Royal Library, Copenhagen. Photo by Tom Brøndsted.

there – Brøndsted having brought the stele from Athens for this purpose. He had it inscribed in Greek “G. Koës, of Danish birth, born 1782, died 1811”, followed by four verses of the sixth book of the Iliad, which in translation read: “Even as are the generations of leaves, such are those also of men. As for the leaves, the wind scattereth some upon the earth, but the forest, as it bourgeons, putteth forth others when the season of spring is come; even so of men one generation springeth up and another passeth away.” In October, while Brøndsted was still on the island, the agent of Prince Ludwig (I) of Bavaria, Johann Martin Wagner,

arrived from Rome in order to transfer the Aegina sculptures acquired by the Prince from Zakynthos to Rome and later to his new Glyptothek in Munich.²¹

When Brøndsted left the island in the end of November 1812, the second oldest son of Countess Lunzi's five children, Nicolaos-Kourados (Nicolo) went with him. Together they visited Epirus by way of Leukas, arriving in mid-December in Preveza, where Brøndsted made a memorable visit to the palace of the mighty Ali Pasha, who had been the hated Turkish master of Epirus, Albania and Thessaly since 1803. Brøndsted found him fascinating.²² Afterwards, Brønd-

21. Glyptothek München 1980, 56.

22. Cf. the article by Jacob Isager in this publication.

sted and Lunzi travelled to Ioannina where they stayed until early January 1813. They continued to Corfu and Ancona arriving at Naples by way of Taranto at the beginning of April 1813. A month later they were in Rome, leaving at the end of June. They finally arrived in Copenhagen the 18th of September, the birthday of Brøndsted's fiancée Frederikke Koës and of Prince Christian Frederik (Christian VIII). Later this year he married Frederikke.

Count Nicolo Lunzi stayed for six years in Denmark, where he went to the Borgerdyd School, and was a regular guest of Brøndsted's friend Kamma Rahbek at the Bakkehus in Frederiksberg.²³ In 1820, while serving as a Danish agent in Rome,²⁴ Brøndsted brought him back to his family in Zakynthos. It was the last time that Brøndsted came to Greece, and it was his last opportunity to visit Koës' grave, which subsequently has been destroyed.

23. KB, NKS, 1578 2^o: P. O. Brøndsted, *Brevkopibog 1814-1825*; Haugsted 1996, 44. See the article by Niels Henrik Holmqvist-Larsen in this publication.

24. Cf. the article by Otto Schepelern in this publication.