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In Paris and France
1664–1665

3.1 On to Paris

With the appointment of Matthias Jakobsen at the University of Copenhagen on August 29/September 8, Stensen’s hope for a position suitable for him in his country disappeared. Since on the next day, the heirs of Anna Stichman (Jakob Kitzerow and Niels Stensen), were paid 300 rigsdaler,¹ Niels might have decided to again

¹ Anna S. Johan Stichmans hinterlassene Erben Nicolaus Steensen Jacob Kitzerow. Anno 1664 den 30 Augustj betalt her paa – drei Hunderde Rixdr. esp. II, p. IX.
take up his study travels in the first days of that autumn, if not earlier, to ensure the possibility of a life as a researcher abroad. Fr. Sylvius, the Leiden anatomist, convinced him of how much benevolence and consideration, based on his performance so far, he could count on by doing so. He found his reasons not to go back to Leiden compelling. Sylvius advised Stensen to go to Paris and undertook to procure him the degree of medical doctor in Leiden *in absentia*. As he was announced, on December 4, the Senate, on the recommendation of the faculty of medicine and of other professors, agreed and based its decision above all on the disputations already delivered by Stensen and on his published books.\(^2\) The diploma was sent to him in Paris.

Sylvius had certainly recommended Stensen to his friends in Paris. Jan Swammerdam had also been France since 1663. He first lodged in Saumur in the house of Tanaquil Faber, where there was a Protestant academy and, on June 28, 1664, he had sent Stensen a report on his research on insects. However, he soon went to Paris where Thévenot received him in his home and also Stensen soon after.\(^3\) Further Ole Borch had landed in Dieppe on August 26, 1663 after a visit in England with his protégés. He soon came to Paris. Thus Stensen could count on the wide circle of friends of his teacher.\(^4\)

The route that Stensen chose from Copenhagen went through Cologne, which he wanted to visit.\(^5\) To Hamburg he followed the route already mentioned through Ringsted, Korsør, crossing the Great Belt, through Funen and South Jutland. Stensen was able to spend more time to see the small towns of his country than on the likely hurried journey back home in the winter. First there was Roskilde with some 2000 inhabitants and a cathedral with tombs of Danish kings, surrounded by other old churches and a cathedral school tracing back to the Middle Ages commemorating the deeds of Bishop Absalon. There was Ringsted also with royal tombs and bright names like Knud Lavard and Queen Dagmar, which were known by everybody. Slagelse, too, goes back to ancient times of Denmark; a nephew of Stensen, the son of his sister Anna, would soon be dismissed from its Latin school. In Odense the name brought recollections of heathen prehistory and the God Odin. St. Knud’s cathedral, named after the Danish martyr king, is located here. Stensen had relatives on his mother’s side here; his grandmother was Karen Lethsdatter, the daughter of the burgomaster; and his uncle Niels Bruun was a dean.\(^6\) Further on the route, Schleswig–Holstein also was part of the realm even if its dukes led many a feud against Danish authority.

From Hamburg to Cologne, Lehmann may have been his guide. He went via Celle, the residence town of one of the Braunschweig dukes to which Stensen was to be invited many years later for a discussion on religion. The small town had good relations with Hannover, where just a half year later the convert Johann Friedrich,

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\(^3\) Schierbeek, 9 f, compare Nordström, *Swammerdamiana*, 28 f, 39, 43 ff, 56 (note 42). Swammerdam is mentioned in Borch’s diary as being in Paris from September 10, 1664. BOD IV, 121.
\(^4\) BOD III, 75 ff.
\(^5\) OTH I, 190. Also Reisen, 41 f.
\(^6\) EP II, 901 f.