



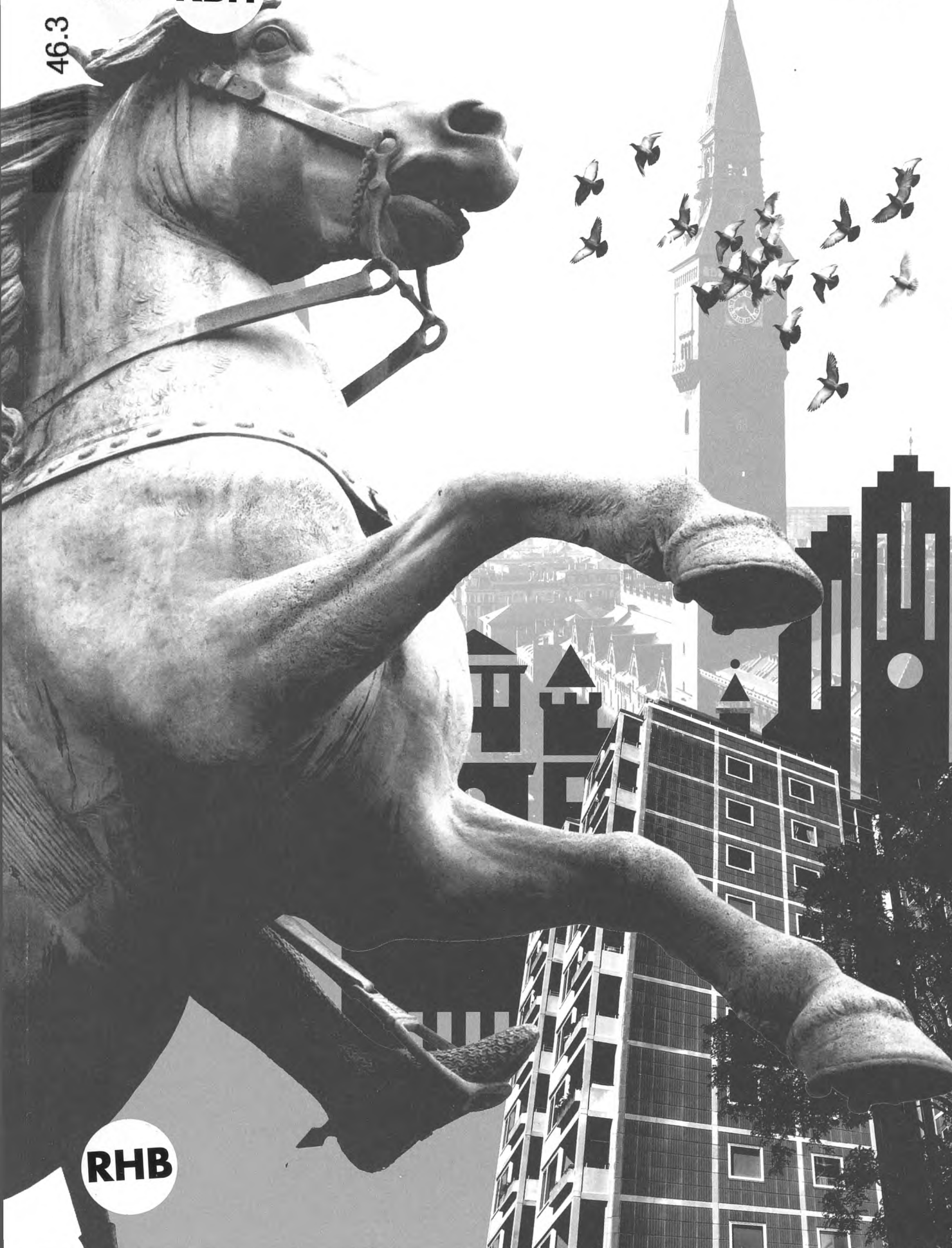
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HISTORY OF COPENHAGEN
1160-TODAY

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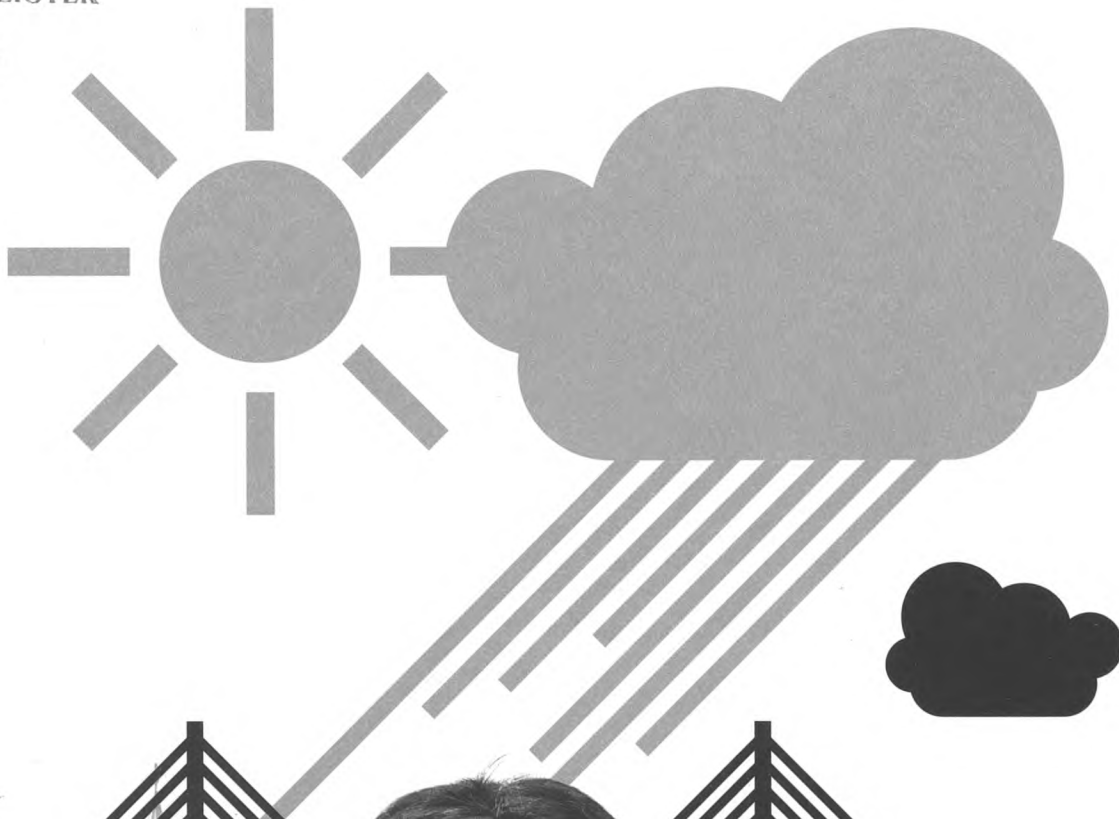


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Going back a thousand years, present-day Copenhagen is still nothing but damp salt marshes and a couple of small, low-lying islets that provide shelter for a small trading centre. Here herring is sold and crossings to Scania are operated.

THE BISHOP'S TOWN

Situated on the coast of "Øresund" (the Sound) Copenhagen has formed the setting for more than 1000 years of life and trade. The city has always been open to external influences – from foreign traders, craftsmen and artists – and has not remained untouched by wars. The city has been appropriated and ruled over by changing potentates.

The little trading town

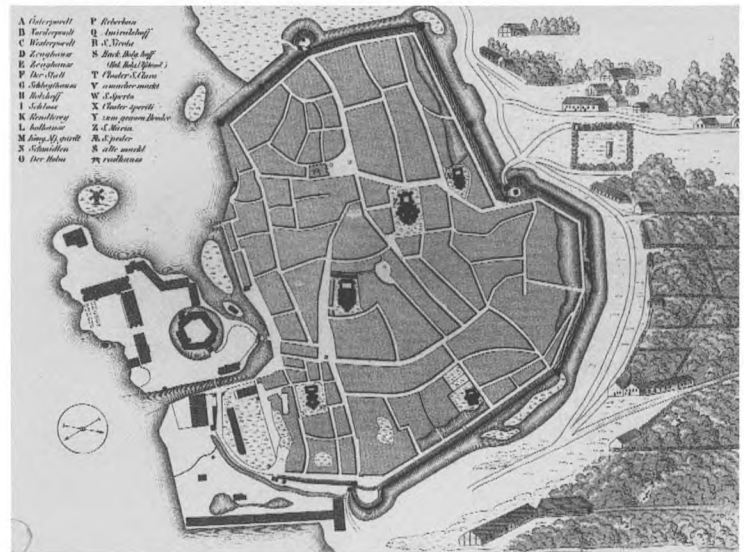
Going back a thousand years, present-day Copenhagen is still nothing but damp salt marshes and a couple of small, low-lying islets that provide shelter for a small trading centre. Here herring is sold and crossings to Scania are operated.

In the 1100s "Havn" (Harbour), as the town is called, assumes increasing importance and the town is reinforced with earthworks. The Catholic Church erects cathedrals in Roskilde and in Lund (in what is now Sweden). In this way the small commercial centre midway between the two cities is centrally located for traffic and trading.

Absalon as lord and master of the town

In around 1160 King Waldemar the Great makes over Copenhagen to Absalon, Bishop of Roskilde. Whereas other cities in the Danish realm are under the governance of the king, "Havn – or Købmannhavn" (Merchants' Town) as it comes to be known – is given the Bishop of Roskilde as its lord and master.

In the years that follow, the town grows tenfold in size. Churches and abbeys are founded. The town's economy blossoms thanks to the income from an enormous herring fishery trade, which provides large parts of Catholic Europe with salted herring for Lent.



Herring fishing
Copenhagen emerges as a small fishing village and trading centre in about the year 1000.

The oldest map
The oldest map dates from the year c.1600. It shows the town from the time just before Christian IV begins large-scale building work to extend Copenhagen.

Absalon

Bishop Absalon takes over
Copenhagen as a gift from
King Waldemar in around 1160.



Christian IV expands Copenhagen by adding two new districts: Nyboder (New Booths) for the large numbers of navy personnel and the merchants' new district, Christianshavn (Christian's Harbour), which is modelled on Amsterdam.

THE KING TAKES OVER COPENHAGEN

Copenhagen is located at the most important approach to the Baltic Sea and the rich North German trading towns of the Hanseatic League. That provides Copenhagen with power and wealth, but also threatens its very existence.

Time and again the town is besieged and laid waste by the North German traders, called the Hanseatic League. At the same time the Danish king attempts to take Copenhagen from the bishop. This he finally succeeds in doing in 1416, when King Erik of Pomerania takes over the town. Thenceforth Copenhagen belongs to the Danish Crown.

Nordic centre

Despite centuries of power struggles and warring the town grows increasingly rich. The Copenhageners do a brisk trade with friend and foe alike. Foreign merchants come to the town. Craft guilds are established and a university is founded.

By the time of Christian IV's coronation in 1596 Copenhagen has become rich and powerful. The new king decides to make the town the economic, military, religious and cultural centre for the whole of the Nordic region. The king establishes the first trading companies with sole rights to trade with lands overseas. In order to restrict imports, factories are set up so that the country can manufacture as many goods as possible itself.

The Town grows

Christian IV expands Copenhagen by adding two new districts: Nyboder (New Booths) for the large numbers of navy personnel and the merchants' new district, Christianshavn (Christian's Harbour), which is modelled on Amsterdam. A modern fortification with earthworks and bastions surrounds the whole of the extended town. Gradually, however, it trammels the town limits, and for the next 200 years or so traffic entering and leaving Copenhagen has to pass through Copenhagen's four narrow town gates.

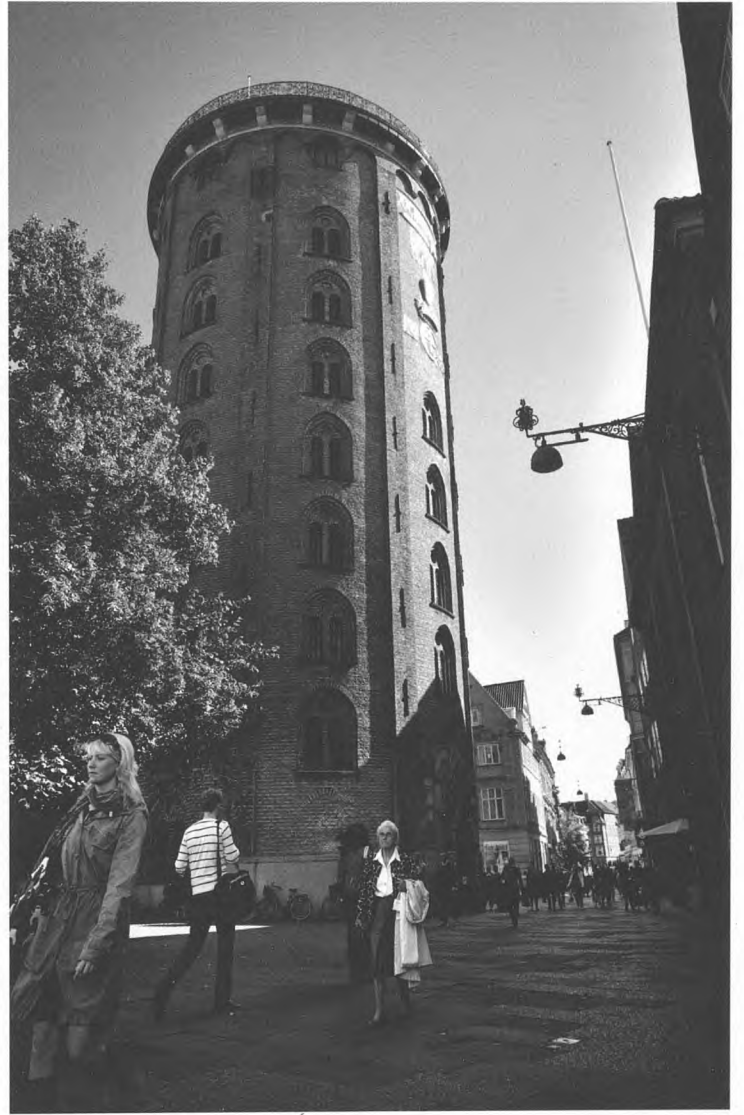
Behind the new earthworks Christian IV commissions German and Dutch architects and craftsmen to construct magnificent edifices designed to enhance his prestige. To this very day those buildings make their mark on the cityscape of Copenhagen.

By the time of Christian IV's death in 1648 Copenhagen has become Denmark's principal fortification and naval port, and the town forms a framework for the administration of the realm and a centre of trade in Northern Europe.

BEHIND THE NEW EARTHWORKS



Christian IV
The famous king



The Round Tower

In 1659 the Swedes find themselves outside Copenhagen's ramparts after having conquered most of Denmark. The king and the burghers of Copenhagen join forces to defend the city and resist the Swedish attack.

KING AND CITY

In 1657 Christian IV's successor, Frederik III, declares war on Sweden, the unfortunate outcome being that the Danes lose all land east of the Sound. Copenhagen is no longer at the heart of the realm.

Despite a peace agreement, the war continues. In 1659 the Swedes find themselves outside Copenhagen's ramparts after having conquered most of Denmark. The king and the burghers of Copenhagen join forces to defend the city and resist the Swedish attack.

The King consolidates his position

Events take on far-reaching consequences. The king consolidates his power at the expense of the nobility, and in 1660 Copenhageners are witness to a magnificent sight: Frederik III is acclaimed the first absolute monarch in the square in front of the castle.

The citizens' reward for defending the city so bravely is very modest. Too much liberty and power goes against the grain of the king's sovereign despotism. But a council of 32 citizens is created, which is nevertheless subject to the royally appointed City Fathers, consisting of mayors and aldermen.

Administrative buildings are erected to cope with mounting bureaucracy, and the townsmen's life becomes more and more regulated. A corps of nightwatchmen is set up, and the offices of police constable and fire chief are introduced as well as common standards for weights and measures. Building regulations are drawn up together with countless rules governing city life.



Amalienborg

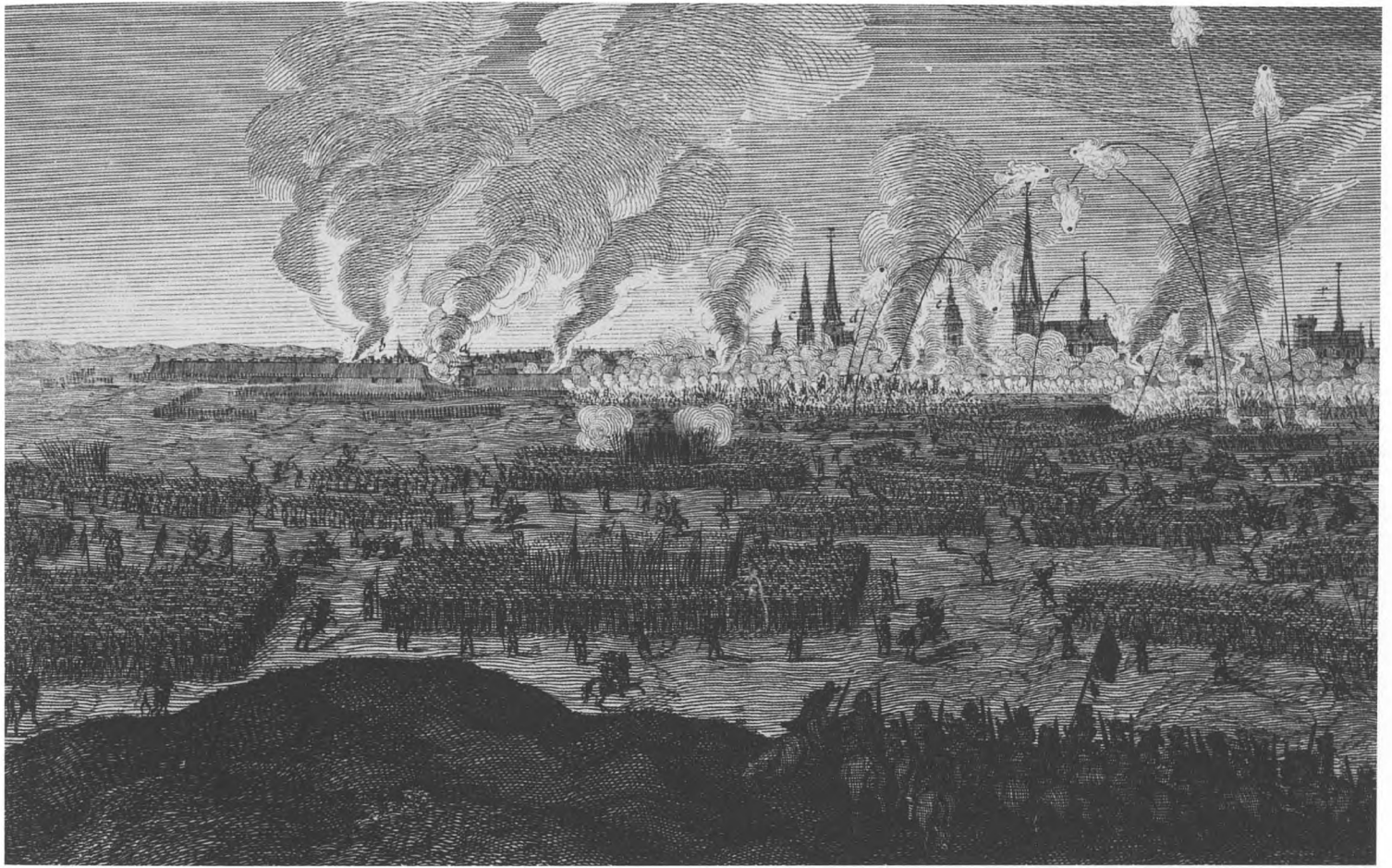
French Court life and Stately Palaces

Large parts of the old medieval town burn down in 1728, and the reconstructed city is made into a veritable Copenhagen of the king and central regime. The new houses have to comply with strict rules regarding height, choice of materials and architecture. The new castle, Christiansborg, rises into a magnificent edifice, emphasizing the prestige of the crown, and court life flourishes here along the lines of the French model.

In 1749 the king bestows a site for building an entirely new district, Frederiksstad, which is laid out with straight streets and stately palaces.

This is also the site for the construction of the four palaces which make up the present residence of the royal family, Amalienborg.

FROM WAR TO ABSOLUTISM AND SPLENDOUR



At war with the Swedes

During an attack on Copenhagen in 1659 the army and citizens of the town barely manage to drive back the Swedes. After the war the defence works are improved, one of the results being the quarter of Frederiksholm, which is built on backfilled land between Frederiksholm Canal and present-day Vester Voldgade.

Tribute to Frederik III

Frederik III is paid tribute at the castle square in 1660 after becoming hereditary king and following the introduction of an absolute monarchy.

The bombardement by the English in 1807 claims many victims, and large number of buildings are burned down or damaged.



Copenhagen's burning

During the disastrous fire of 1795, Copenhagen's town hall burns together with large parts of the city.

THE USEFUL MIDDLE CLASSES

At the end of the 1700s Denmark is keeping well out of the wars raging in Europe and America. The country is one of the world's largest naval powers and is able to protect its trade. Exotic items from all over the world and from Denmark's small colonies in India, Africa, the West Indies and the North Atlantic swell the many new warehouses along the port. The economy blooms. A banking system is founded in order to serve the rich new commercial houses whose owners build large mansions in the city and country houses in North Zealand.

The balance of power in the city slowly changes. The newly well-to-do citizens want their share of the political power. They regard themselves as more 'useful' citizens than the old nobility. Newspapers are now published, and scientific and scholarly societies, cultural associations and coffee shops are formed, where the topics of discussion for the new bourgeoisie include the unfairness of the present social order. The state considers the new meeting places highly seditious. The French revolution in 1789 has no immediate consequences in Denmark, however. On the contrary, the bourgeoisie rallies loyally around the crown prince, later to become Frederik VI.

A Calamitous period

Conversely, Copenhagen is struck by new catastrophes. Christiansborg burns in 1794, followed by large parts of the rest of the city the year after that. The city is rebuilt in a classicist style, "clipping" the corners of buildings to allow fire engines and other traffic to pass more easily.

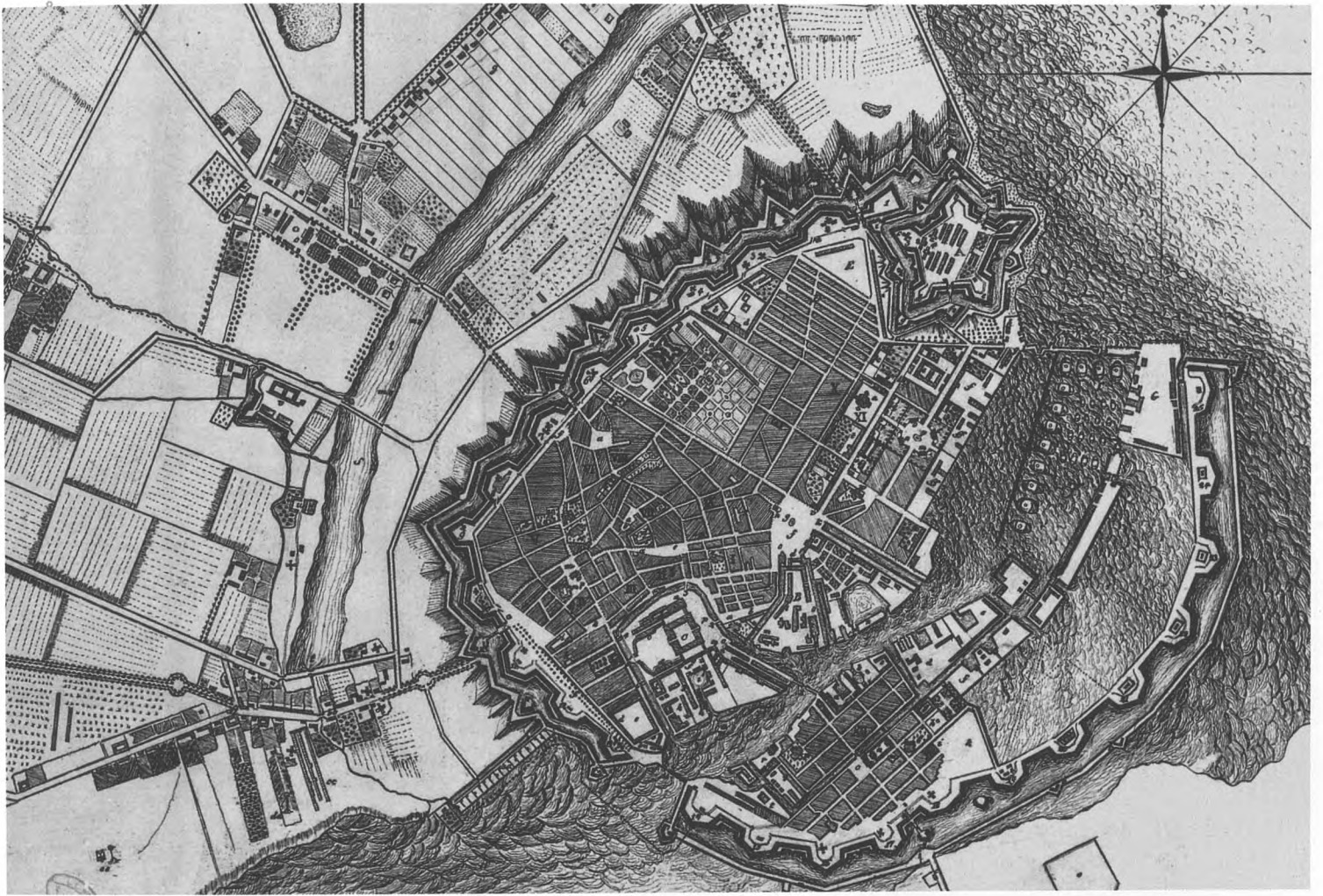
During the Napoleonic Wars the English see the large navy of neutral Denmark as a threat and launch a twofold attack on Copenhagen: the first time in 1801 the Battle of Copenhagen; the next time in 1807, when Copenhagen is subjected to the first terrorist bombing in history against a civilian population. The English carry off the Danish fleet, securing absolute mastery of the high seas in the process.

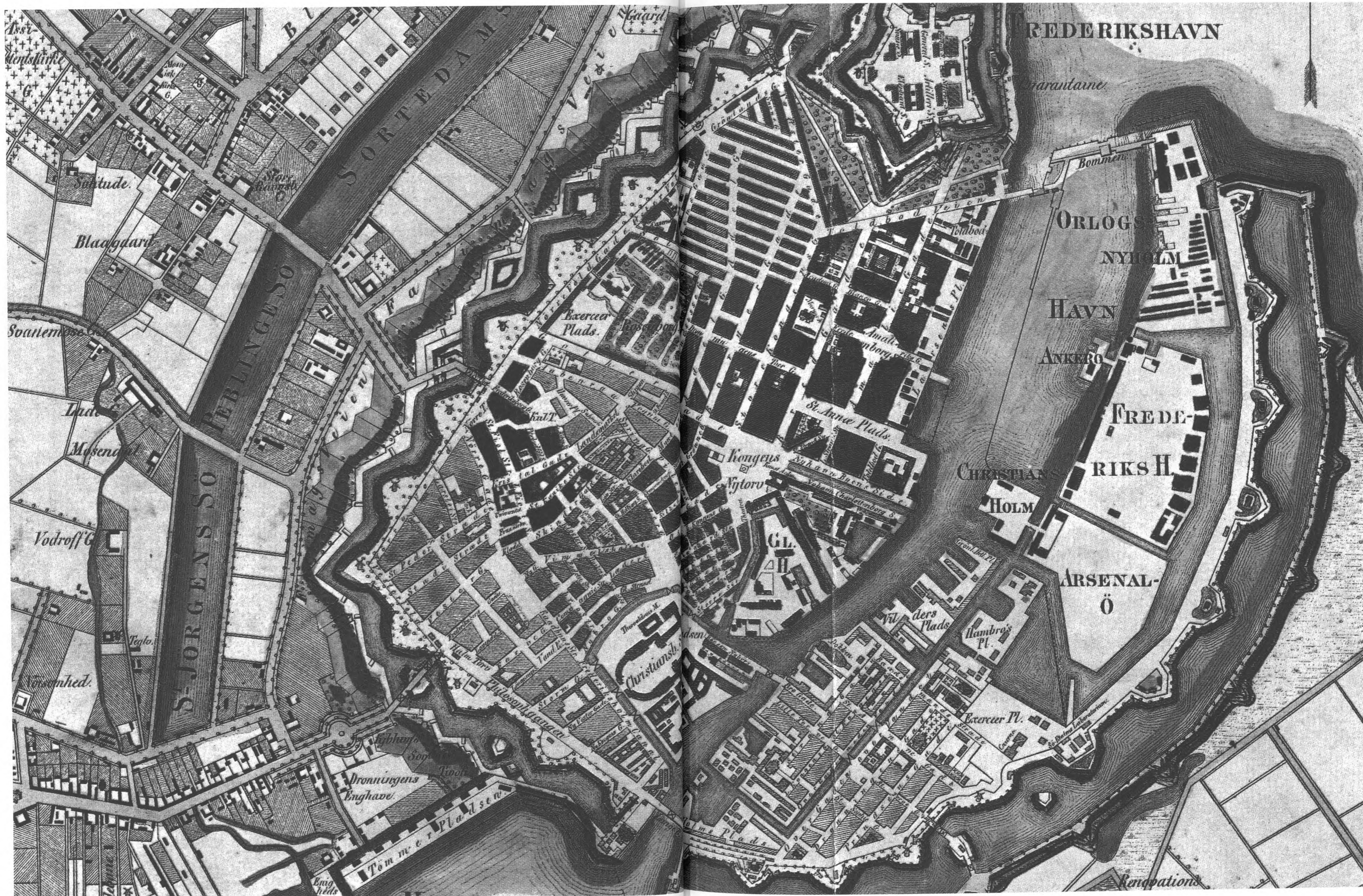
Copenhagen and environs, 1786

The map shows the seaward approaches to Copenhagen and the scanty development beyond the earthworks. In the immediate environs of the city, only wooden houses are built, which can quickly be removed if an enemy approaches.

The bombardement of Copenhagen

The bombardement by the English in 1807 claims many victims, and large number of buildings are burned down or damaged.





REDERIKSHAVN

Quarantaine

Bommen

ORLOGS

NYHOLM

HAVN

ANKERS

FREDE-

RIKS H.

CHRISTIAN

HOLM

ARSENAL-

Ö

Requartiers

Asst

Mentstirke

Moss

St. Nikolaj

Subtude

Blaggaard

Svartem

Inde

Mosend

Vodroff G.

S-JORGENS SØ

Vorsamhed

Teglo

Dronningens

Enghave

Tømmerpladsen

Eng

Skærd

Exercer

Plads

Kant

Plads

CHRISTIAN

CHRISTIAN

Kongens

Nytorv

St. Anne

Plads

Vil ders

Plads

Ilambro's

Pl.

Exercer Pl.

Plads

In the streets and alleys of Copenhagen such personalities are encountered as Hans Christian Andersen, Søren Kierkegaard, August Bournonville, C.W. Eckersberg, H.C. Ørsted and Bertel Thorvaldsen.



H. C. Andersen

THE GOLDEN AGE

After the war with the English the economy is so strained that the state goes bankrupt in 1813. Social distress in the narrow streets behind the ramparts mounts. Restoration work makes slow progress, and houses are built higher and closer together on the small plots of land available. The stench of rubbish and night-soil is insufferable.

At the same time, however, art and culture enjoy a heyday. In the streets and alleys of Copenhagen such personalities are encountered as the fairy-tale writer Hans Christian Andersen, the philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, the ballet master August Bournonville, the painter C.W. Eckersberg, the natural scientist H.C. Ørsted, who discovers electromagnetism, and the sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen, who acquires his own museum after many years' stay in Rome.

City Council elected

The students and citizens, who wish to see changes in the way the state is administered, have gradually become the leading lights of the city. With the Local Authorities Act of 1840, more tasks are assigned to the municipality, and a City Council is set up at the Town Hall, elected by and among the city's burghers.

Finally, in 1848, the citizens force the king to introduce a free constitution in Denmark. A bloodless revolution has been accomplished and, like the other revolutions in the history of Denmark, it assumes great importance for Copenhagen.

As an almost symbolic gesture, the 1840s see the construction of the Tivoli pleasure gardens and the first railway station on the old military earthworks. The enclosure of the city behind ramparts and fortifications by the absolute royal power ceases in the 1850s. Copenhagen's gates are flung open and the city grows at an explosive rate.



Thorvaldsens Museum

On 18. September 1848, Thorvaldsens Museum opened as the first museum building in Denmark. The collections of Thorvaldsens Museum comprise Thorvaldsen's sculptures and his sketch models for these.

The economy is back on its feet again. Beyond the ramparts large enterprises are founded, organized in the form of joint stock companies.



Copenhagen Waterworks

The staff at the Copenhagen Waterworks provide Copenhageners with fresh, clean drinking water, avoiding new epidemics. The waterworks, constructed in Studiestræde in 1859, is still there.

THE COPENHAGEN OF ENTREPRENEURS

The economy is back on its feet again. Freedom to trade and exercise crafts is introduced, and enterprising new capitalists take up the initiative in Copenhagen. Beyond the ramparts large enterprises are founded, organized in the form of joint stock companies. The first water and gas works are built, and banks and institutions are created to promote trade and industry. The expansion of Copenhagen has begun.

The model is Paris, with wide boulevards and residential properties inspired by French architecture. The financier C.F. Tietgen completes the Marble Church, and the brewer Carl Jacobsen takes the initiative to beautify the city with new art. Large industrial fairs showcase all that is new and highlight progress.

Trade-union Movement established

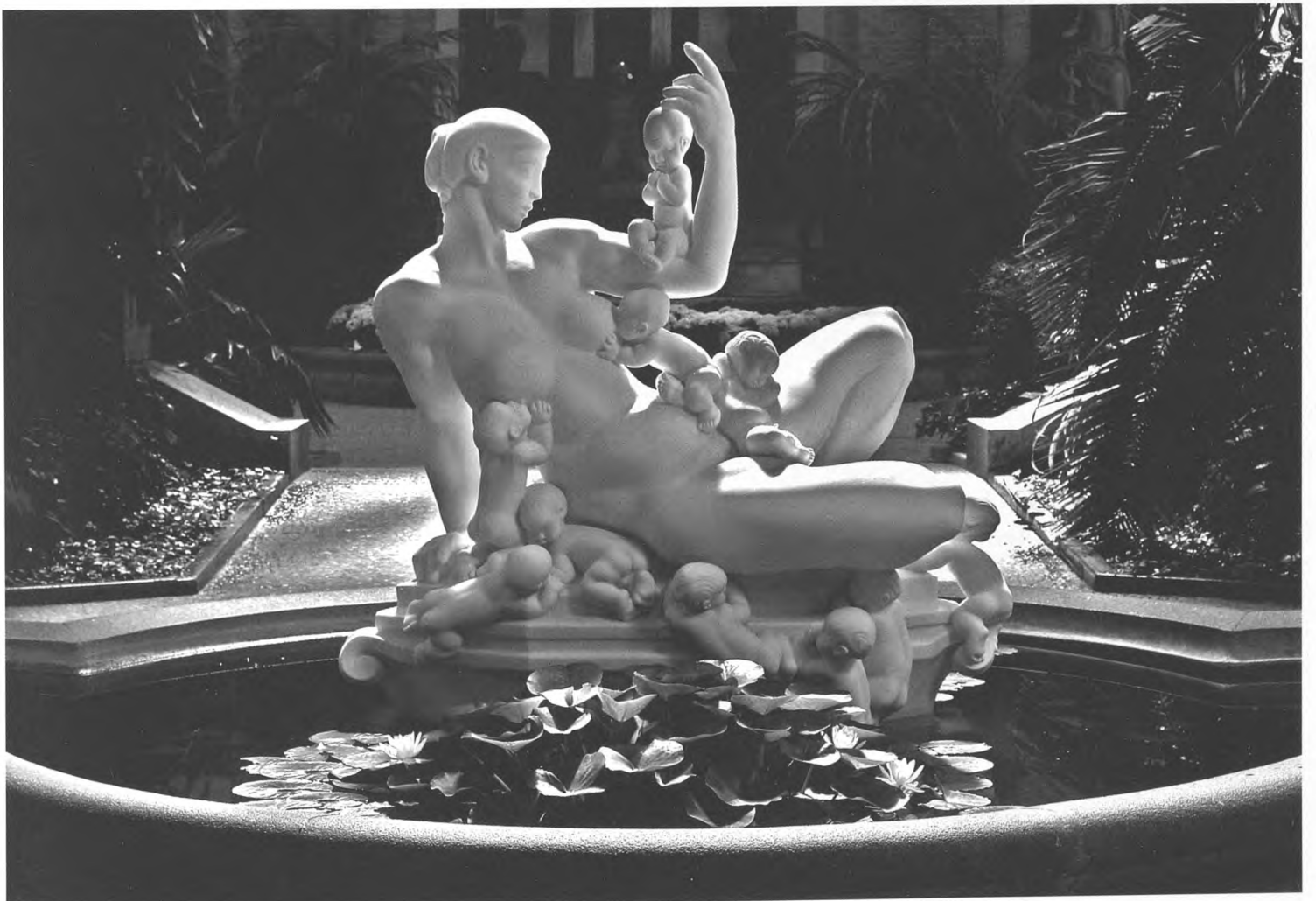
Behind the international facade of elegant department stores and amusements, industrial and working men's quarters mushroom more or less haphazardly, often in the form of unrestrained jerry-building on sites with crowded construction. But the new population of labourers that has immigrated from the country to the new industry in the city begins to unionize in the 1870s and demand better living and working conditions.

Carlsberg

As early as 1847 brewer I.C. Jacobsen moves out of the city to Valby, where there is clean water and ample room for the fast-growing Carlsberg Brewery. Many enterprising industrialists soon follow his example.

The Glyptothek

The brewer Carl Jacobsen donates his art collection to the public in 1888. It is housed at the Glyptothek, which opens its doors to the public in 1897.



At the same time the present-day town hall is built to serve the large new municipality. Everywhere, institutions and schools are built for the rapidly growing population.



Copenhagen Town Hall

Copenhagen's new town hall is completed in 1905. The Town Hall and Town Hall square, designed by the architect Martin Nyrop, quickly become the city's new midpoint. Hotels and large modern buildings envelope the square in the years ahead, bringing out its international flavour.

THE COPENHAGENERS' CITY

In 1901 the Municipality of Copenhagen is extended by large tracts of land to the north, south and west of the city. The Sundby villages, Valby, Vanløse, Husum, Brønshøj and Emdrup make room to accommodate the city's growth. At the same time the present-day town hall is built to serve the large new municipality. Everywhere, institutions and schools are built for the rapidly growing population.

Suffrage and Social Awareness

In 1908 also women are given the right to vote in municipal elections. And by a constitutional amendment of 1915, universal suffrage is introduced for everyone, irrespective of income. After the Social Democrats gain a majority in the municipal council, the municipality takes over more and more social tasks. Modern, subsidized council housing is built in outlying areas, together with parks and sporting amenities. Public health is enhanced by improved light and air. In the 1920s and 1930s entertainments and amusements flourish, but at the same time the economic crisis of the 1930s puts a damper on the city. Unemployment rises to alarming heights.

The City is Occupied

During World War II Denmark, and hence Copenhagen, is occupied by troops from Nazi Germany. Yet not till 1943–45 is the city seriously war-scared by sabotage operations and isolated bombings. Compared to other European cities, Copenhagen gets through World War II virtually unscathed.



Copenhagen Town Hall



Unemployment

The 1930s see numerous demonstrations against unemployment. The demonstrations are held outside Christiansborg and the Town Hall, often spearheaded by the uniformed corps known as "The Red Veterans".

New housing estates with single-family homes and council housing proliferate in the suburbs. Central and local government creates a cradle-to-grave security net for its citizens that has never been seen before.



Christiania

The Free City, Christiania, comes to symbolize the youth revolution. Many activities evoke scandal and outrage among the rest society.

POST-WAR DEVELOPMENT

Just a few years after World War II, slum clearance and urban development begin as part of the fight against the widespread housing shortage. The so-called 'Finger Plan' from 1948 becomes a pioneer of modern urban planning. The idea is to create a city with housing and commerce positioned along radial roads and railways, retaining large green wedge areas right in towards the centre of the city.

The Swinging Sixties

As the older generation is enjoying increasing material welfare, unrest is smouldering among the young. There are numerous demonstrations against nuclear weapons, NATO and the Vietnam War. In 1968 the students protest against the professorial powers-that-be at the University. Other groups, the squatters, occupy condemnable properties. They demand influence over redevelopment, housing policy, working conditions – and better playground areas. It all culminates in 1971 with the occupation of the former military area of Bådsmandsstræde Barracks in Christianshavn, where the Free City of Christiania is established in a protest against current social norms.

Restoration and Preservation in the Nineties

The city of recent decades has been characterized by large-scale restoration work in the historic districts and by the demolition and clearance of the old working men's quarters from the end of the 1800s. The 1990s urban renewal is forging ahead at full steam in areas including Vesterbro, where the work is being carried out with consideration for the environment. In contrast to earlier times, more properties are being preserved and modern dwellings fitted out with up-to-date installations behind the old facades.

The oldest inner city area has now become a shopping and entertainment centre that attracts people from the outskirts. There is a thriving cultural life, most recently exemplified in the large-scale commitment to Copenhagen as Cultural Capital of Europe 1996.

A leading region

With the dawn of a new millenium Copenhagen has seen the recent opening of the Sound Bridge, the building of a metro and the realisation of an ambitious project leading to the creation of a new urban district on Amager, "Ørestad". Christian IV's ambition to transform the Sound Region into northern Europe's leading economic and cultural region is thus becoming a reality – but in a modern guise.

THE DAWN OF A NEW MILLENIUM – A NORTH EUROPEAN POWER CENTRE



Bellahøj

The Finger Plan

The Finger Plan from 1948 represents innovative thinking in urban planning, making room for cities, farming, recreational areas and an efficient traffic network, rendering distances as short as possible throughout the urban area.

The City of Copenhagen

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Find out more about the history
of Copenhagen from:

Copenhagen City Museum

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Monday to Sunday 10.00–17.00

Copenhagen City Hall

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Opening hours:
Monday–Friday 8.00–17.00
Saturday 9.30–13.00

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Fax +45 33 66 70 39
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Thursday 10.00–17.00
Every second Saturday 9.30 -12.30 (January to April)

Thorvaldsens Museum

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Closed on Mondays
(Closed 01/01, 24–25/12, 31/12)

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