Letter 135

Euler to Teplov
Berlin, 17/28 July 1750

Synopsis: Euler negotiates Gmelin out of a thorny issue and into a suitable contract

[...] Even though my trip to Frankfurt only lasted 20 days, I am very upset that the negotiations with Mr. Gmelin were placed on hold because he also was informed of my absence, and thought that he could not respond to me on the final articles that you were willing to send to me, and that I received a few days before my departure.

Mr. Gmelin is first of all infinitely sensible to the grace that His Excellency Monsieur le President has offered to him in these articles and particularly in the gracious declaration contained in the first article; Mr. Gmelin will not miss to fulfill the conditions with the utmost exactness and to conduct himself in the future in such a way that the Academy will not find the least subject to complain about him. Moreover he will try harder than ever to be worthy of the graces that His Excellency is willing to indulge by forgetting his faults.

For the second article, Mr. Gmelin will undertake with the greatest impatience due to the fact that his work load has considerably diminished. For if he can receive the 200 Reich thalers agreed upon for the volume with 60 plates, he will be at considerable ease so will not have to employ a greater numbers of helpers, and the 60 plates will provide him with enough material to fill the thickness of the prescribed volume. However, he flatters himself that he will be forgiven the error which he committed in relation to the article in the second volume. In view of the fact that he had written/113r/ before the statement; and due to the fact that the third volume is nearly finished and that he should have had to re-plate his work if he would have had to re-cut the plant plates of Mr. Lerche and Heinzelman. As these small plants should be seen as foreign and are only 12 in
number, he hopes that this small transgression will not be incumbent to him. However for the following volumes he will conform to the exact letter of the law, by not including anything which might be considered superfluous.

The third article is concerned with the same statement in virtue of the fact that he will compose his volumes as expressed by being neither too thick, nor too small nor filled entirely with plates.

As to what reports to the fourth article which concerns itself with the 1st volume, M. Gmelin agrees himself that it would be unfair, if he asked for any payment for the work, which he would have received as payment as his salary; and as he composed the first volume which he saw as he himself at this time, solicits nothing for this work. However, his very humble representations do not concern the preface and the rigors which he brought to the printing having dispensed with one and the other after the dissipation of his pension, in view of the fact that he had to restitute the payment which he received during this interval. Since he was truly without any wages during this time when he wrote the preface, which surpasses practically the entire 1st volume and of which he was entirely responsible for the printing, he hopes that you will see by yourself that the reason by which you have refused payment for the first volume, does not extend to the preface. The preface may be considered as a separate volume, and which has developed such a wide audience that the payment of the entire work has gotten considerably larger, and he thereby very humbly solicits His Excellency to award him in consideration of these reasons the payment of 215 Reich thalers, which he was obliged to reimburse and to consider this sum as an indemnity for the preface which he composed on order. He aspires, Monsieur that you will not find this request injudicious, since it does not include any work which he would have composed during the course of his pension.

As in regards to the payment for the other volumes that His Excellency offered so graciously as he is not in a position to deliver the works at such a quick rate, in view that they require enormous work, he requests that You remit separately a payment
for every volume that he sends, and not to wait until the work is finally executed. As this was the original method of payment proposed from the onset, he hopes that /114/ will not longer be subject to any difficulty, and he will always find as particularly benevolent to find the costs of the small expenses, which he is obligated to make, defrayed by a payment.

So here is M. Gmelin, all ready to fulfill the conditions which You have had the goodness to communicate to me in the name of His Excellency which brings the point of the 1st volume to a close. For if there were reasons why this request would appear unjustified, in view that it does not appear entirely correct as has been alleged, I will ensure in making M. Gmelin desist on this request, in such a way that this article will not proscribe our accommodation with him.

Thus there will be nothing less than the conclusion of a formal contract amongst the parties to conclude this affair, which should be nothing more than a statement on behalf of Your Excellency.

In recommending very humbly the perpetuation of your sincere affection and welfare, I have the honor to be with the absolute perfect consideration […]