

THE FAMILY CORRESPONDENCE OF FERDINAND I

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INTRODUCTION¹

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THE ARCHIVAL TRADITION

The family letters of Ferdinand I were at no time, unlike in other such cases, collected, sorted, or examined with a consistent approach. Neither were these exceedingly important sources consistently accorded the attention necessary for a complete preservation enduring to the modern day. It is particularly the letters that emerged in the initial period, in the years of the first developments (up through 1524), that have been preserved only by chance, and—as many clues indicate—chance has simultaneously deprived us of many items that may have been able to shed light on various unresolved questions. The fact however that many important writings, even from later periods, can be unexpectedly found here and there in often wholly disparate archival settings demonstrates that even the subsequent safekeeping of these correspondences leaves much to be desired as far as care and diligence are concerned. As a result, there exists a somewhat embarrassing feeling for their collector: on the one hand, for not having reached their aspiration of completeness, and on the other for never being immune to belated surprises.

The extensive research was started in Vienna itself, where the Austro-Hungarian *Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv* (a part of the Austrian State Archives) provided a wealth of letters both to and from Ferdinand scattered about in the most varied of collections. A coherent corpus of the family correspondence can nevertheless be found there, particularly in the collection designated *Belgica*, which contains 98 fascicles from Ferdinand's time alone, of which admittedly only approximately 28 contained material for our purpose.

As a general guideline for the volume at hand, only the drafts of Charles V's letters to Ferdinand I have survived, whereas the writings of Ferdinand to his brother have, excluding a few exceptions, been handed down to us in their final form. We have also had the same experience with the rich correspondences stored in Vienna between Ferdinand and Queen Mary of Hungary. There his letters are the originals and those of Mary only drafts, most likely written by her own hand.

At this point, one might assume that Ferdinand's court did not place as much importance on preserving received correspondences as has been observed in other collections, since only Ferdinand's sent letters have survived as originals. Thus, we must thank Brussels rather than Vienna for the preservation of this trove of letters, as it was in 1794 by the order of Count Franz Georg of Metternich-Winneburg – in the days of the Revolutionary Wars as Imperial Minister in the Netherlands – that the letters were first incorporated into the *Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv*. Thus, only in light of their provenience is the designation *Belgica* justified.

An important supplement to these correspondences, partially preserved in drafts, partially preserved in originals, is found in six volumes of letters, which belong to the collection of handwritings in the *Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv*.² These codices, expensively bound in leather in an average format of 21 by 31cm and adorned with emblems and arabesques, still show traces of their former gold embossment. The year 1575, which – apart from the Manuscript *Blau 596* – is embossed in gold on each of the volumes' bindings, may imply the date that the books were provided with their aforementioned binding.

¹ Translated by Tanner Kauffman Gore, Christopher F. Laferl, and Michael Doyle Ryan.

² The original signature of these volumes are 681, 682/1, 682/2, 683/1, 683/2, 683/3.

The first three volumes, *Blau 595*, *596/1* and *596/2*, contain transcripts of letters from Charles V to Ferdinand I from the years 1524 until 1556. As the annotations indicate, *595* and *596/2* were penned by Gisbrechts van der Steghen, whereas *596/1* was begun by Jehan Le Febvre and finished by the scribe Jérôme de Cock. However, all three books were reviewed and corrected by this same Jérôme de Cock in the year 1558.³ Accordingly, the first and last inscribed page carries Cock's signature. Occasionally the arrival date of the letter is annotated as well as the date on which the letter was answered. The endpaper in *596/2* contains the following note: *Le xv^e novembre 1558 à Prag vindrent les nouvelles à l'empereur moderne du trespas de feu l'empereur Charles, son frere, que Dieu face paix. Icellui advenu le 21^e de septembre dernier. Requiescat in pace.*

The next three volumes, *597/1*, *597/2*, *597/3*, contain the letters from Ferdinand to Charles during the period of 1522 to 1557. They provide no annotation about the writer, the collator, etc. However, in *597/2* there are found at least keywords now and then in the margins, explaining the contents of certain letters. *597/2* and *596/1* both share a partial use of the French numbering system.

The annotations by Jérôme de Cock as well as other facts, indications of arrival dates, various notes, etc., prove without a doubt that *595*, *596/1*, and *596/3* deal with transcripts from originals, whereas the three *597* volumes must have used drafts as their basis. Seeing as the former contains the letters from Charles and the codices *597* those of Ferdinand, the reverse relation in the archival tradition emerges. In this case, the incoming letters to Ferdinand I's chancery were recorded and the outgoing letters remained as the leftover drafts. As there is no piece of writing found in both its original and draft form, at least in the time period at hand, but rather always in one of the two aforementioned forms of transmission one can assume that letters once copied were then disposed of.

Incidentally, it should be mentioned here that there exists a third series of volumes – those with the signature *B 598/1* and *598/2* – which according to their layout, outer arrangement and features would also belong here. They contain however only the fewest correspondences, and consist mostly of transcripts of acts, decrees and the like. All the same, the present volume contains some pieces taken from *598/1*.

Occasional contributions were made by other departments of the Austrian State Archives in Vienna, among which the collections unified under the name *Familienarchiv* should be named. Furthermore, the *Reichstagsakten*, the *Große Korrespondenz*, the *Hungarica*, *Hispanica*, and the range of general documents were also consulted. To mention all the departments which provided explanatory and elucidating materials would require listing and enumerating nearly the entirety of the archives' collections.

In this context it is also necessary to name the *Hofkammerarchiv* (Archive of the Imperial and Royal Ministry of Finances). Except for a single letter, no material could be found there for the present volume. For future volumes however it contains more valuable material. Due to the peculiar composition of the archive's holdings, a systematic processing was excluded at the outset. In this way, it is still possible to later obtain scattered supplemental material from its collections.

Important contributions to the edition of Ferdinand I's letters were found in Brussels in the *Archives Générales du Royaume*.⁴ The often used collection of *Papiers d'État et de*

³ In *595/1*, fol. 188 and *596/2*, fol. 142' the same annotation can be found: *Ce present registre est escript par les mains de Ghysbrecht van der Steghen aussi a esté collationné en l'an 1558 et trouvé concorder avec les lettres originelles par moi, Jherome de Cock, à present conseiller et secretaire d'estat de sa m^{te} imperiale. Ita est J. de Cock.* On the front endpaper of *596/2* it can even be read: *Collationné au mois d'octobre en l'an 1558.* — Similar in *596/1*, fol. 207: *Ce present registre a esté commencé par les mains de Jehan de Le Febvre et parachevé par icelles de Jherôme de Cock usw.*

⁴ Cf. Éd. Laloire, *Les Archives en Belgique. Notice Sommaire* (S.-A. in *L'Annuaire de la Belgique Scientifique, Artistique et Littéraire* 1907/8). Bruxelles 1907.

l'Audience certainly contained the vast majority of fascicles of letter transcripts which had been sent in the last decade of the 18th century to Vienna, where they were stored in the State Archives. Still, supplemental materials for the family correspondence were occasionally found, which were especially welcome when they dealt with now lost or illegible pieces. However, of even greater importance to the present volume than many of these fragments is volume 93 of the *Papiers d'État et de l'Audience*. This collection contains parts of the correspondences between Margaret and Ferdinand between the years 1524 and 1529. The letters from Ferdinand to the Archduchess are all originals, whereas the letters from Margaret to her nephew are nigh illegible drafts. This volume – forgotten during its extradition to Vienna in 1794⁵ – is incredibly valuable, as the drafts contained therein are unfortunately all that remain of Margaret's writings to Ferdinand. The other fascicles of this series, which were used here, were as well preserved in book form.

Examinations of the *Secrétairerie d'État Allemande*, a collection currently undergoing rearrangement, also proved fruitful with its many subdivisions, of which particularly the so-named *Diètes et Diétines* 1522 ss. came into consideration for the publication of Ferdinand I's letters. In addition, the collection *Recueil des documents relatifs au différend entre la reine Marie de Hongrie et Ferdinand, roi des Romains, à propos du testament de leur père Philippe le Beau*, and the *Correspondance des Empereurs d'Allemagne* and the *Affaires militaires*. Apart from these large groups were three boxes with the label *Papiers de Marie de Hongrie*, whose rich contents fell outside the set timespan.

The collections of the *Archives Départementales* at Lille were for at least one part of the correspondences consolidated here of great importance. A good amount of the letters from Ferdinand to Margaret were preserved there along with much useful explanatory material. The question as to how these remnants from Margaret's chancery came to be found in the *Chambre des Comptes* has yet to be properly answered.⁶ The fact of the matter is that these remnants, received letters as well as drafts, are consolidated under the title *Lettres missives* and form a part of the collections of the audit office of Lille. This material, organized in portfolios, offers an important supplement to the *Belgica* fascicles found in the Vienna State Archives and would require historical archive research to determine the internal connection between the two.

Hardly worth mentioning are the contributions born out of the investigations in the Vatican archive and the Vatican library in Rome.

Perhaps this is the right moment to point out that official, as well as private, requests to the administration of the archives in Simancas received in every case a negative response, so that all first-hand research there was abandoned.

With that said, our enumeration of the sites of discovery and research for the edition of the following letters has come to an end. However, due to the previously illustrated circumstances, a potential future discovery of relevant materials should not be ruled out.

GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE FAMILY LETTERS

The present collection contains the family letters of Ferdinand I. An explanation is necessary in so far as the term *family letter* might suggest letters which were designated for the sole use of the addressee, which would therefore place the greatest emphasis on the characteristic of

⁵ Gachart annotes on the front endpaper of this volume: *Ces fragments de la Correspondance de l'archiduchesse Marguerite avec l'archiduc Ferdinand, son neveu, furent oubliés lorsque, au mois de juin 1794, sur les ordres du comte de Metternich-Winnebourg, ministre plénipotentiaire de l'Empereur François II, on emballa les Archives de l'Audience, pour les faire transporter en Allemagne.*

⁶ Cf. Walther, Gött. *Gel. Anz.* 170, S. 256. — Neither does Max Bruchet, *Les Archives Départementales du Nord (Extrait des Publications du Congrès de l'Association française pour l'Avancement des Sciences, tenu à Lille 1909)*, Lille 1909, provide an explanation.

confidentiality. For a variety of reasons however such a strict interpretation was not viable. As it is the goal of this edition to become a *corpus epistolarum* of Ferdinand I, it was necessary to extend the boundaries as far as possible, as otherwise there would have been no possibility for many letters to be incorporated. Apart from that, the actual number of letters treated with complete confidentiality makes up an extremely insignificant fraction of the whole material.

Each letter hereafter is to be considered a family letter, having its origin in the epistolary communication between Ferdinand I and the members of his family in the broadest sense. Even the characteristically formulaic recommendations, along with all correspondences which merely represent expressions of conventional courtesy between related courts, have been included, even if often only in abbreviated form or in excerpts according to interest.⁷

Yet the consistently carried out classification of a certain group of letters according exclusively and solely to external features cannot be the deciding aspect of an edition such as this. The contents of most of the writings – excluding a minority, which has only etiquette to thank for its very existence – deal chiefly with politics. In this way, the Habsburg family politics of those days forms the central theme, which ideally connects these letters with one another and, so to speak, to a historical justification for their collection in a unified whole. Following this line of reasoning, it is easily understood that briefings and instructions have also been included among the letters, as they are complementary to the correspondences' contents, indeed frequently supplanting them.

It may be wise at this point to engage in a moment of historical reminiscence. The lively, often too lively political sense, the at times unbridled imagination of Maximilian I propagated itself in the following two generations of his progeny in a way nothing short of surprising. Not only Philip the Fair, who had inherited the inner restlessness of his father, but also especially Margaret excelled in the secrets of statesmanship with a rare and always renowned discretion. In later years, she became her father's best advisor and overtook Maximilian in maturity and prudence of judgment. When later Maximilian's grandchildren, namely Charles and Ferdinand, were faced in the early years of their youth with the most difficult of political duties, it became apparent that they were better prepared for these challenges as anyone could have foreseen. The quiet Charles had not attended Margaret's political school in vain, and the dissimilarly lively Ferdinand was quick and eager to learn from his maternal grandfather, King Ferdinand of Aragon. Later, though still in those younger years, Mary – now married to Louis II of Hungary – had to reveal her unusual intellectual gifts and put them to work in those matters of politics, which at the time exhausted the interest of all other Habsburg family members. Just as Maximilian I could leave the state administration of the Netherlands intermittently in Margaret's hands, so too could Charles V entrust her with governing his more narrow homeland; however, he would have barely been able to exercise his duties as sovereign in the politically and religiously agitated Germany of the time, had it not been for the lively support he found in his brother Ferdinand. To the same extent, he would not have been able to find a trustworthy and devoted supporter in the severely threatened and internally ruffled Holy Crown of Hungary during the confusion that plagued Hungarian affairs in the aftermath of the Battle of Mohács, were it not for his clever and politically well-schooled sister, Mary. This is neither the time nor place to expand on the individual phases in the relationships of the Habsburg family to each other; in part the present correspondences cover this issue satisfactorily. At any rate, it is clear we are dealing with astute, politically well-trained personalities. They form both consciously and unconsciously the mighty support columns, upon which Charles V's vast empire rested.

⁷ One restriction in the inclusion of the correspondences took place, of course, insofar as the overall Habsburg point of view forms the intellectual center of the whole. For this reason, the correspondence with Louis II of Hungary, where it concerned quite remote objects not closely connected with Habsburg relations, was not further considered. Absolute consistency was naturally not attainable.

With these facts in mind, the justification for compiling these family correspondences of the Habsburg house of this time period together and their separation from the wealth of remaining correspondences becomes readily apparent. On the other hand, we also find the rationale for the peculiarity in the contents of the letters. They deal almost exclusively with politics and contain hardly even the most rudimentary expression of emotion. One exception can be found, ignoring some later items, in the letters from Ferdinand's youth. However, even such examples are few and far between, such as no. 11, in which Mary melancholically reminisces about her brother in the aftermath of Maximilian I's death. The not yet fourteen-year-old princess laments with premature earnestness, how she must allow herself to be guided by strangers in Innsbruck far from her own kin. Whenever emotions do occasionally come to the surface of Charles and Ferdinand's correspondences, then it is always as a result of some tremendous occurrences. And it is characteristic enough that these emotional impulses almost always emerge on the part of Ferdinand. In the time period that this volume covers, it was the ignoble intrigue of the imperial diplomat Hannart above all, which through the shameful exposure it brought upon Ferdinand, caused him much personal turmoil and prompted him to write the letter of complaint from the 11th of July 1524 (no. 82). The tone therein is even more emphatic due to the awkwardness of the language and style suited for the cold dispassion of politics.

To be sure, matters of the heart would also not be lacking from these family letters, had they been passed down to us in their full integrity. The sobriety of political considerations would have assuredly been accentuated with some sort of human warmth, such as that which radiates from the letters from Anna, Ferdinand's wife. However precisely the letters of this princess, who, despite her Hungarian background, demonstrates many genuine German character traits, have been seemingly lost for the time period under consideration here. Only her letters to the Bishop Cles of Trient remain from this time. They express so much motherliness and love to her husband that they make us decidedly more eager to know more about the direct correspondence between the princess and her spouse. For reasons that have to do with the tradition of the transmission of the entirety of the material, it appears this portion of the family correspondence has gone missing.

The fact however that almost all emotional passages have been eliminated from the letters and that the purely personal affairs contained in the individual letters in this respect occupy a nearly vanishing space induces a certain internal unity. The cool objectivity, to which the series of letters are attuned, as well as the solidarity of interests shared by the senders, imprints a mark of uniformity upon the correspondences. If the material collected here cannot itself be regarded as Ferdinand's political correspondences, then the latter certainly makes up its most significant part. All that which has been recorded in the writings to statesmen, generals and the like represents mostly just the guidelines and measures for the plans conceived and discussed within the Habsburgs' inner circle.

At the same time, it would be a misjudgment to take the letters as a mere manifestation of the most secretive expressions of opinion only fit for direct transmission between the sender and addressee. The particular circumstance that most cases dealt with political declarations and frequently with extensive memoranda suggests that at least the inner circle of trusted advisors on both sides shared the secrets of their lords. There are various insinuations that suggest that Ferdinand's letters, for example, (and to be sure not only these) were read aloud in Charles' *conseil privé*.⁸ Those written by his own hand may have been excluded. And especially the fact that the vast majority of the letters collected here were written by scribes proves most convincingly that these familial correspondences in general are not to be confused with purely personal epistolary communication, as one might assume at first glance. Rather, he holds the middle line between the intimate and the official correspondence. There were usually plenty of

⁸ Cf. the reports of F's ambassador Martín de Salinas at K's court, published by A. Rodríguez Villa.

confidants in the vicinity of the individual Habsburgs and often they did not remain silent. For example, it was apparently not uncommon for Ferdinand himself to learn the contents of imperial letters through strangers, to whom said letters referred. Therefore, the archduke once seriously advised his brother to see to it that his councilors and secretaries should better conform their offices to the names they bear (no. 26 [25]).

In general, language use provides a distinctive feature for purely official and unofficial letters. This at least is true for the correspondences among the Habsburgs, which was almost consistently carried out in French. The correspondences of King Louis II of Hungary were often written in Latin, and the same holds true for the private letters of Ferdinand's wife. The writings from Charles V to his brother were probably also written in Spanish, though Spanish letters emerged more numerous only later, and these remarks seek no claim of validity for the entirety of the correspondences, but rather refer to the time period up to 1530. Later, many changes were variously undertaken, namely the use of German became distinctly more common for Ferdinand. The official correspondences made use of Latin or German, depending on whether the issue at hand dealt with international or church affairs, or matters of the German Empire. The same practice was upheld for ostensible letters, where the language was determined by the nationality of those for whom the letter was indirectly designated. Yet we are missing for the time period in consideration well established forms, as can be observed regarding the treatment of briefings. Although their external features would more likely distinguish them as official rather than private letters, they conform in linguistic respects to the family correspondence. One of these briefings (no. 76) is written in Latin. This characteristic makes their clear relationship to the correspondence visible. – It can be said about the language itself that it tends to be dispassionate and neutral, but at the same time it reveals a certain tendency towards wordiness. The French that was used was by no means always the best. Especially in Ferdinand's own handwritten letters, in which a scribe did not smooth out the diction's unevenness, there is at times visible an awkwardness of expression and deficiency in spelling which somewhat impairs the intelligibility of the contents.

The arrangement of the individual letters is rather simple. The form of address is usually very short, and only when Ferdinand would write to the Emperor does he begin the letter with a salutation, which took almost always the same form. It read: *Monseigneur, tres humblement à vostre bonne grace me recommande*. On the other hand, in many letters to Archduchess Margaret it was simply: *Madame* or *Madame, ma bonne tante*. Most often these also begin with the ubiquitous established wording of recommendations. In Ferdinand's letters to his sister the address appears to also have been: *Madame, ma bonne seur, je me recommande humblement et de bon ceur à vostre bonne grace*, and similarly in Margaret's letters to the archduke: *Monseigneur, mon bon nepveu, je me recommande à vostre bonne grace*. Meanwhile Charles addressed his brother simply as *Mon bon frere*, which appears to stem from customary etiquette.

It is only in official correspondences that names and titles are relevant, whereby general practice was strictly observed and names were listed according to rank. The letters from Louis II are thereby excluded from the circle of familial correspondences, as they – excluding those written in Latin – consistently make use of the official formulations and titles. Only as a result of a chance mistake, in the fearful days before Mohács, can it be observed that the Hungarian private scribe broke the chancery customs by writing the name of the Archduke before that of his royal master (no. 210).

The arrangement of the following is for the most part strictly functional. Occasionally keywords on the sides of drafts reveal that there was a sort of arrangement in the works and consequently the individual item is divided into passages according to the number of topics handled. The first of these mostly connects to the received letters, for which they should serve as an answer. Often the history of an item's development is revealed by the reference to the letter reception by the sender. Charles V would answer, say, one or several of his brother's letters. The individual sections delve into the communications of Ferdinand, and then suddenly

the entire construction of the writing changes, once discussed issues are brought up again and settled in a different manner. What happened? The original composure was remodeled because, during the conception of the first draft, a new letter from Ferdinand arrived and the former decisions etc. became irrelevant. The indication of the date of the letter received in the meantime indicates thus the cause of the later alterations. Frequently, the single copy received an addendum in the form of a postscript, whereby it was not uncommon to explicitly point out the reception of further writings from the sender after the conclusion of the letter. It correlates with the yet unmentioned postal circumstances that the postscript attached to a letter often carried a much later date as the first section of the letter. At times, the sender attached a handwritten remark to the writings executed by the scribe. As a rule, the signature at the end is also handwritten. They were signed with *vostre bon frere*, *vostre bonne tante*, Ferdinand in his letters to Charles often as *vostre tres humble et tres obeissant frere*, and in those to Margaret *vostre bon et humble nepveur*, Mary in her youth often as *vostre bonne et belle seur à jamais*.

The date – usually written by the scribe – came after this signature. In most cases, the location is given, preceded by *de* along with the day, month and most often also the year, although this is often only indicated in common years. The blessing makes up one of the ever-recurring elements, taking always a similar form and after which follows the date. Usually it read: *je prie atant le createur qui vous doint bonne et longue vie* or the like. Only Charles makes use of other well wishes, such as: *me recommandant à vous de bon ceur, prie dieu qu'il, mon bon frere, doint ce que desirez* or *atant, mon bon et tres amé frere, prie dieu vous avoir en sa sainte grace (garde)*.

So far as the drafts published here demonstrate, the preliminary copies were mostly written by scribes and often were provided with additions and corrections by other officials. The question as to whether the drafts of Margaret's letters come from her own hand can only be answered if proper comparative materials – that is, undoubtedly handwritten material – were available. The view, that these drafts are the result of the transcription of her dictation, which some private scribe jotted down with the skill and elusiveness of a stenographer, is made more likely through the external form of these letters.⁹ This becomes certain however when one consults Margaret's handwritten letters to Charles V from the 7th of March 1523 (Vienna, St.-A. Belgica PA 15), wherein she proclaims herself an inexperienced scribe with a readily legible, somewhat boxy font, which has nothing to do with the quick cursive of the drafts that her scribe exhibits.

TRANSMISSION OF THE LETTERS

For the critical assessment of information relayed within an exchange of letters, it is of no small importance to investigate the methods with which the individual letters were transported and the length of time they were en route. It is only extremely seldom that the available indications suffice for an exact assessment. To this end, one would have to subsequently pursue each individual letter and the desired outcome may still not be achieved.

Important official letters, letters of recommendation and the like were generally sent via special envoys as is still the case in the communication between courts today. Alternatively, letters which would have otherwise been sent by other means were sometimes given to whichever envoy happened to be leaving the court at that time. Occasionally the letter writer would refer to this method of delivery and called the deliverer *porteur de cestes*. It should be noted that the contents of such letters were generally briefer and less significant, as truly important matters were to be relayed orally by the envoy himself, which is also in most cases

⁹ Cf. A. Walther, op. cit., p. 262. But what he says about the readability of the concepts seems to me to be a little too optimistic. The secretary, which was active at least during our period, does not always make every effort to keep the same regularity in writing the letters.

explicitly mentioned (compare no. 159). Naturally, the arrival of such letters was often in these cases significantly prolonged, as diplomats and court officials appointed for such intermediation traveled more slowly than couriers. In addition, they could oftentimes not take the most direct route because they linked their consignment with other tasks, and because they attracted much more attention upon themselves than a regular messenger in dangerous times.

As far as it is apparent in the correspondence, the following persons respectively served as extraordinary intermediaries, indeed often concurrently as envoys: Between Maximilian I and Ferdinand, Gabriel de Orti (no. 1) and Aloysius Gylabertus (no. 2); between Charles V and Ferdinand, Heinrich de Hemricourt, no. 21, 53, Karl von Burgund (de Bredam), no. 76, 117, Maximilianus Transylvanus, no. 104, Ferry de Croÿ, *bâtard de Rœux*, no. 131, 133, Alonso González de Meneses, no. 133, 139, Don Pedro de Córdoba, no. 158, 182, Montfort, no. 158, Presinger, no. 227, 241, 256 and others. Only in the very beginning of communications between Ferdinand and Margaret do such personalities serve as letter bearers: Don Álvares Osorio, no. 7 and Jean de la Sauch, no. 14. Between the communication between Ferdinand and Mary, it was Stephan Brodarić, no. 87, 251, and *Ballieu* (also called *Bailleul*), no. 129, 231.

Besides this rather rarer method of dispatching letters, there are individual couriers who frequently brought the messages to the desired address.¹⁰ This is often explicitly mentioned and therefore was probably an exception to the rule.¹¹ These couriers were probably also used for oral reporting¹² and were assigned to immediately bring back the response to the sent letter. Occasionally they are themselves named. The names of two couriers appear often, namely Richard Boulengier (Boullengier) and Gabriel de Cathaneis (no. 261). The way in which he is referred to – generally his first name alone – shows that his position differed significantly from those of the individuals named above. He conveyed not only messages from Ferdinand to Margaret, but rather also those destined for Charles and was later employed for the transport of letters to England.¹³

Now and then a combination of dispatching methods might have occurred. Thus Martín de Salinas, the solicitor of Ferdinand at court, entrusted a letter to the Archduke in the hands of the papal legate's courier, who brought it to Milan despite the ban on transporting foreign correspondences, from where it was apparently then dispatched further with the post.¹⁴

With the exception of such cases, letters were most likely as a rule entrusted to the regular post. Be that as it may, one cannot always understand such references as *una posta, par la derniere poste, depescherai une poste* as referring to postal services or mail in the technical sense.¹⁵ For example, when Ferdinand sends a letter to Charles V and receives the response through his *maître des postes*, he is indeed referring to courier services.¹⁶ Perhaps it is the case here that the director of the post office in Innsbruck, Gabriel de Taxis, had been entrusted with the diplomatic consignment.

In addition to these methods of conveyance, there exist all those more secretive methods of dispatching letters with the help of befriended merchants. This method was however most probably only employed when all other means were extremely dangerous. Not only did this

¹⁰ Cf. F. Ohmann, *Die Anfänge des Postwesens und die Taxis*, Leipzig 1909, p. 148.

¹¹ No. 243 *ensuivant ce que nagueres vous ai escript par propre courier*.

¹² No. 218 *par le Courier que presentement je vous ai depesché entendrez ma response*.

¹³ Gayangos, *Calendar of Letters, Despatches and State Papers* 3, 1, pp. 22, 25 etc.

¹⁴ Rodríguez Villa, p. 328. In general, Salinas' reports are an important source for postal matters, as it is safe to assume that no substantial difference has been made between the transport of his letters and those of Charles V.

¹⁵ On the ambiguity of the term cf. Ohmann, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

¹⁶ Ferdinand writes in no. 157 *par mon maistre des postes que puis quelques jours encha ai envoyé pardela vous ai averti . . .*, in another letter *j'ai receu voz lettres par mon maistre des postes*. Cf. no. 216 and Rodríguez Villa, p. 276, Salinas' report: *A cuatro deste mes rescibí el despacho que V.A. invió con su maestro de postas*.

method do little to expedite the delivery of letters but it was also understandably costly.¹⁷ At any rate, it can be confirmed by Salinas' reports that this method was in fact, from time to time, implemented. Should it seem apparent in several remarks in both Margaret's and Charles's letters that *couriers de marchans* were employed for these purposes, then the announcement issued by the archducal *chargé d'affaires* confirms the particulars declared in the secret writ published by Bauer.¹⁸ Sending letters in the form of merchant bulletins was for a time the only means available to add any security to correspondences between the Netherlands, Germany, and Spain.

We are generally not informed about the actual routes the individual items took, and when this does in fact occur, these disclosures contain each and every detail, since one could generally assume these were known. Thus, Charles writes in no. 62: *j'ai par la voie d'Italie receu voz lectres*; and in no. 83: *je vous ai fait responce par la voie d'Italie et de Flandres*. One can also gather from Salinas' reports which route certain letters took.¹⁹ Frequently, as the above remarks demonstrate, letters were issued in one or two copies and similarly sent via various routes. Such duplicates are themselves mentioned occasionally in the letters.²⁰

Using multiple routes was a precautionary measure, as there were constant complaints about the difficulties in delivering letters.²¹ Due to the hostile relationship between the Habsburgs and France, use of the land route was seldom possible. Consequently, sea routes came frequently into consideration for communication coming out of both the Netherlands and Italy. However, this relied on the weather and seafaring conditions. As a result, such explanations for delays can be found: *que c'est pour le mauvais temps qui regne en ceste saison en la mer*; and Salinas reports that no letter out of Flanders had been received *y la causa habia sido por no pasar la mar*.²² Again on the 6th of December 1522, he had to announce that the postal envoy, which he had dispatched to the archducal court on the 1st of November, had been caught in a tempest at sea and had been subsequently forced to return to harbor.²³

The regular postal route to the Netherlands ran at the time through Rheinhausen to Mechelen (Brussels) and Antwerp, where it branched off in times of peace from there to Spain by way of Blois and Lyon. For letters bound for Italy, the route chosen was mostly through Milan and Lyon.²⁴ The precarious circumstances of course did not help in making these routes usable for imperial couriers. As mentioned above, many detours were necessary, of which the sea detours offered plenty of opportunities for delay due to the inherent difficulties of seafaring. The fact that Ferdinand and the Imperial Government (*Reichsregiment*) first urged the Emperor in 1522 to install military outposts between Nurnberg and the Netherlands demonstrates how

¹⁷ W. Bauer, *Die Taxis'sche Post und die Beförderung der Briefe Karls X. usw. Mitteilungen des Inst. für österr. Gesch.* 27, pp. 486 ss.

¹⁸ *A XV de Julio recibimos un paquete de letras de XII de Junio despachado en Nuremberga, y con él recibimos algún enojo, á causa que vino por estraña manera, porque lo truxo un correo por via de mercaderes con ocho ducados de porte; y el paquete, era grande y venia abierto y dentro dél otros cinco paquetes en que los cuatro venian sellados y el principal abierto, donde venian las letras para el Emperador con sus copias. No podemos pensar dónde esto fue hecho sino in Flandes, porque hallamos dentro del gran paquete letras para el Marqués de Ariscote de Flandes. Esta falta lleva el Mayordomo á cargo saber en quien está; y no crea v. md. que es la primera.* (Martín de Salinas to Gabriel Salamanca, August 14th, 1523, Valladolid) Rodríguez Villa, op. cit., p. 130.

¹⁹ Rodríguez Villa, op. cit., pp. 170, 173, 258.

²⁰ For example, no. 216 *j'ai receu voz lettres du derrier d'avril et la duplicata*. Cf. Rodríguez Villa, p. 127.

²¹ In no. 72 Ferdinand apologizes for not having written earlier, *car la cause est la difficulté des passaiges*.

²² Rodríguez Villa, p. 72.

²³ Rodríguez Villa, p. 93.

²⁴ Cf. F. Ohmann, *Die Anfänge des Postwesens und die Taxis*, Leipzig 1909, pp. 118, 184, 277 e. a., also J. Rübsam, *Zur Geschichte des internationalen Postwesens*, *Histor. Jahrbuch* 13 (1892), pp. 67 ss.

severely the post lacked a solid foundation.²⁵ In regards to this, there is not much to say about the Archduke's plan to create a route to Rome, especially as it never materialized.²⁶

One can rightfully assume that the more or less permanent postal routes were of course also utilized by individual couriers, especially because greater speed was allowed by the changing out of horses. The conventional postal services also saw use as they were comparatively much less expensive, especially for communication between Germany and the Netherlands. It is for this reason that virtually no special circumstances concerning sending methods are mentioned in the correspondences between the Archduke and Margaret.

However, the assessment of the amount of time these correspondences were generally en route is of greater significance to scholars and more important for the critical approach to these letters than the above elucidation. The postal dates were in those days ideally determined by three aspects: the method of dispatching, the weather conditions, and the political situation. The latter-most could, as explained before, lead to delays in times of war, whereby there are also cases in which this could give rise to great feats in hastening the delivery. In this sense, one can speak of a normal duration of transportation and an exceptional duration of conveyance, both in the sense of hastened and delayed deliveries.

Attempts to assess the duration of conveyance for individual letters are not met without difficulties. The later custom of marking down the arrival date of letters was seemingly at the time not at all common.²⁷ To be sure, had the practice been already well-established, it would only provide us with the desired information in some cases, as we are often working with transcripts and drafts. Conclusions also cannot be drawn from the remarks beginning most letters, where the date of the letters and their responses are given, due to the fact that many incoming letters would have lain aside for weeks before receiving an answer due to the conditions of sending post and other various circumstances.

If one examines the correspondence between Ferdinand and the Netherlands and calculates the time differences between the dates of the Archduke's letters and those of Margaret's responses, the average duration comes out to 24.8 days, with 7 and 74 days as the extremes on both ends of the spectrum. The calculations are similar when one examines Margaret's letters to Ferdinand and the latter's responses. Here the average is 25.5 days, with the extremes 7 and 79. However, the least-most extremes are of value here, as we cannot know what caused the lapses in time for the longer extremes.

Only two cases allow for the exact assessment of the conveyance dates. On the 27th of January 1526 Ferdinand writes to Margaret from Augsburg (no. 178): *j'ai ce jourd'hui receu deux voz lettres de 19^e et 20^e de ce present mois*. The letters were thus en route for 7 to 8 days. Another time, Ferdinand writes a letter to Margaret from Heidelberg on the 12th of July 1526 which bears the comment: *A Malines, le 15^e de juillet 15^a a^o 26*. This letter took only 3 – 4 days to reach Mechelen from Heidelberg; however, it was answered four days after its arrival on the 19th of July (no. 215). Both cases appear to be the result of an extraordinary expediting as the first deals with the death of Isabella of Denmark and the second with the birth of Ferdinand's daughter. On the other hand, the Archduchess answers a letter from her nephew in Speyer from the 27th of June on the 4th of July 1526 which concerned important political matter but was apparently of lesser importance than the two cases noted above. Yet this letter's conveyance took at most 7 days as well. If one takes the distance between Heidelberg and Mechelen to be 375 km, then the messenger must have traveled 155 km each day, not unheard of, but certainly not the average speed.²⁸ In comparison, the distance between Augsburg and Mechelen (approximately 610 km) was traveled with a daily average of 87 km, that of Speyer and Mechelen (approximately 390 km) with a daily average of 55 km.

²⁵ Bauer, op. cit., p. 452, also no. 23.

²⁶ Ibidem, p. 453 s.

²⁷ The only exception is no. 209.

²⁸ Ohmann, p. 285.

Similar calculations for Ferdinand I and Charles V's correspondences result in an average of 76.8 days for Ferdinand's letters to Charles and the latter's responses and an average of almost 76 days for Charles' letters to Ferdinand. The smallest interval is 22 days and 19 days respectively. If we take into account the data provided by Martín de Salinas, we can ascertain the duration of conveyance from the archducal court to Spain and vice versa in seven cases.

Ohmann²⁹ cites a case in which a messenger in one particular and very urgent occasion covered the distance from Trient to Burgos in eight or nine days. No such example of expediting occurs in the time period in consideration here. The message from the Battle of Mohács, which Ferdinand sent from Linz to the Emperor on the 22nd of September arrived on November 13th (no. 252) in Granada and then on the 15th in Villa.³⁰ The messenger thus needed 51 (or 53) days.³¹ A consignment from Nurnberg to Spain from the 12th of July 1523 offers an informative example. The letters dispatched through the afore explained method of using merchants arrived in Valladolid on the 15th of July—in 33 days—whereas a copy sent at the same time but with more conventional means arrived on the 4th of August and were thus en route for 53 days.³² On another occasion, Martín de Salinas confirmed on the 28th of June 1525 receiving a letter from Ferdinand in Toledo which came from Innsbruck and bore the date the 25th of May. Accordingly the trip took 34 days.³³ In 1522, a letter from the Archduke sent from Linz on the 2nd of September reached Valladolid on the 13th of October, needing in this case 41 days.³⁴ With these few confirmed dates in mind, we can assume a delay when Gabriel Salamanca's letter took 71 days (July, 22nd – September 1st, 1523) to make its way from Innsbruck to Burgos.³⁵

However, in all of these cases it cannot be said with certainty which route the individual letters were dispatched on, be it land or sea, not even whether the route went through Flanders or Italy, and so the average speeds can only be represented in rough outlines, and any attempts at more precise calculations would be of little worth. Be that as it may, the above should provide a picture of the circumstances surrounding the postal situation of the time.

This is also not the place to outline the conditions of the postal communication between Austria and Hungary, especially as only a small fraction of the letters in this volume traveled this route. Furthermore, there are informative sources to be exploited in the future that allow for important conclusions to be made about the time period in consideration. The presentation of these conditions is therefore better suited to be included in a different context at a different point in time.

EDITORIAL PRINCIPLES

In general, the present volume consciously follows the editorial principles accepted by the third convention of the German Association of Historians, "Grundsätze, welche bei Herausgabe von Aktenstücken zur neueren Geschichte zu befolgen sind" ["Editorial principles to be followed in publishing of documents of modern history"].³⁶ With that said, it also became apparent that the historical linguistic tendency to consider a total retention of the original spellings as the norm could not be taken into consideration here. The approach of historians will in this matter

²⁹ Ohmann, p. 291.

³⁰ Rodríguez Villa, p. 336.

³¹ Cf. Sanuto, I Diarii 43, p. 729.

³² Rodríguez Villa, pp. 127, 131.

³³ Ibidem, p. 287.

³⁴ Ibidem, p. 72.

³⁵ Ibidem, p. 142.

³⁶ *Bericht über die dritte Versammlung deutscher Historiker in Frankfurt a. M.*, Leipzig 1895, S. 18—28.

continuously stray from that of the linguists.³⁷ Newer linguistic publications prove sufficiently that these differences are not insurmountable and that even the Germanists feel the need to pay attention to the legibility of texts.³⁸

As for French items, the German and French traditions vary from one another, whereby the latter holds that texts should be printed fully unchanged with the exception of the addition of accents according to modern practice that have been left out of the original. Most German publications make these additions as well, along with other various changes to the orthography.³⁹

The following principles apply to the edition presented here:

- I. All letters to and from Ferdinand were included. Exceptions include letters that are entirely diplomatic in nature and merely happen to be in letter form. Letters have been listed and counted, whose dates are inferred from other writings, but which have themselves not yet been found or which have disappeared altogether.
- II. As a rule, family letters are presented in their entirety. An exception has been allowed for those letters that due to their partially diplomatic nature occupy an intermediary position and can only with a certain amount of reservation be counted among the family letters. These are provided in excerpts.
- III. Excerpts should in terms of content replace the source text to a certain degree. Characteristic or especially interesting passages are to be cited word for word. Whenever a matter is discussed in a similar way in several letters, only the most notable variant will be provided. In general, it will be the case for both the excerpts and the short summary before each item that, unless otherwise noted, the letter writer is the speaker. Otherwise, only the initials (F, K, M, Mg, L) will be used to indicate the most common figures (Ferdinand, Charles, Mary, Margaret, Louis). Apart from that, the abbreviations found under X will also apply.
- IV. The conventional signs for gaps in the prototype and for omissions by the publisher will be retained: for gaps a broken line ---, for deliberate omissions an ellipsis ..., comments by the editor will be designated with brackets.
- V. Italics will be used to represent encoded text. However, if the majority or entirety of a letter is encoded, then it will be noted in an annotation.

³⁷ Even H. Wopfner, who follows in *Quellen zur Geschichte des Bauernkrieges in Deutschtirol 1525*. Innsbruck 1908 (*Acta Tirolensia* 3) the strict conservative editing rules of J. Seemüller (*Mitteilungen des Inst. für österr. Geschichtsforschung* 17, S. 602 ff.), feels himself obliged to make some corrections in the transcripts (upper-case letters, abbreviations, etc.).

³⁸ Cf. *Deutsche Texte des Mittelalters*, ed. by the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences, vol. 1, p. VI s., where the "purely orthographic particularities, such as the use of *u* and *v*, *i* and *j*, *f* and *s*, *i* und *j*, *cz* und *tz*, von *ff*, *ss* at the beginning of a word and similar cases are not painstakingly transcribed but pragmatically emended, mitigated and erased". In the same way E. Wülcker modernized the Planitz reports in a way that exceeded the principles of the Royal Saxonian Commission for History, which recommends the preservation of vowels. *Des kurs. Rathes Hans von der Planitz Berichte*, Leipzig 1899, S. XVII.

³⁹ Both in the question of accentuation and in that of the spelling of certain French words (such as *pouvoir* et al.), the guidelines that Hofrat Dr. Wilhelm Meyer-Lübke had the graciousness to give were followed.

VI. Punctuation is the task of the publisher and will be regulated according to Stieve.

VII. Paragraphs will likewise be arranged by the publisher. For longer items, Arabic numerals in brackets will designate the sections.

VIII. Initial capital letters are to be used at the beginning of sentences, for proper names, and for titles as well as forms of address, moreover for adjectives derived from proper names insofar as this relationship has not been blurred over time.

IX. The original orthography of letters handwritten by members of the Habsburg family will be retained. However also in this case, punctuation and the use of capital letters will be regulated by points VI and VIII, respectively.

X. Apart from this, the spelling will be determined by the following principles:

1. In German letters, vowels are to remain unchanged. Only in cases where *v* or *w* stand for *u*, will the latter replace the former two. Likewise, *y* will be replaced by *i* in words of non-Greek origin. Large consonantal clusters are to be limited with constant consideration for the conventional writing style of the time, insofar as it seems necessary to increase the legibility of the text

Abbreviations for titles and forms of address generally follow the principles laid down by Stieve, hence for example: *E. M^t* for *Eure Majestät*, *I. D^t* for *Ihre Durchlaucht*, *E. L.* for *Euer Lieb*, *H^t* for *Heiligkeit*, and *Hh^t* for *Hoheit*, *Hrl^t* for *Herrlichkeit*, etc.

2. In Latin letters, the use of *u* and *v* is rectified, and *y* generally replaced with *i*. To form abbreviations for titles and forms of address, the first letter and last syllable is generally used. Thus, *S^{tas}* for *Sanctitas*, *M^{tas}* for *Majestas*, however *Ser^{tas}* for *Serenitas*. When used with a pronoun, *Sua S^{tas}* will be used but otherwise *V^{ra} S^{tas}*, *V^{ra} M^{tas}*. The adjectives that appear as a part of the forms of address *illustris*, *illustrissimus*, *caesarea*, etc. are abbreviated with *ill.*, *ill^{mus}*, *caes*, etc. and accordingly *christianissimus rex* with *cris^{mus} rex*.

3. In French letters, the orthography is mostly retained, with the exception of *y* being replaced with *i* in words of non-Greek origin and where modern French would also use an *i*. Apostrophes are added according to the current practice in modern French, along with accents in cases where they are exhibited in contemporary transcripts or where they are needed for understandability.

The abbreviations for titles and forms of address are arranged similarly to the Latin. *M^{te}* for *Majesté*, *S^{te}* for *Sainteté*, *Ser^{te}* for *Sérénité*, *Mons^r* for *Monseigneur*, *S^r* for *Seigneur*, *M^{me}* for *Madame* etc. Accordingly, the Latin abbreviations *Sa M^{te}*, *V^{re} M^{te}* are used. The ever repeatedly used *ledit*, *mondit*, etc. are abbreviated with *led.*, *mond.* etc.

4. What has been said about French letters holds mostly true for the orthography of Spanish letters. Likewise, abbreviations for titles rely on the conventional practices of *M^d* for *Majestad*, *B^d* for *Beatitud*, *S^d* for *Santidad*, *S^{or}* for *Señor*, *A* for *Alteza*, and accordingly *Su B^d*, *V^{ra} M^d* for *Vuestra Majestad*.

XI. In the summaries (*regesta*), excerpts, and in the descriptions of individual letters, the following abbreviations are used: *B* for *Bischof*, *H* for *Herr*, *Hg* for *Herzog*, *Kg* for *König*, *Kf* for *Kurfürst*, *Rf* for *Reichsfürst*, *EB*, *EHg* (occasionally *Eb* and *Ehg*) for *Erzbischof* and *Erzherzog*, *RT* for *Reichstag*, *RHR* for *Reichshofrat* etc. A doubling of letters in the abbreviations refers to the plural form, the first letter for scribal abbreviations and the last for normal abbreviations. Thus: *EDD'* for *Eure Durchlauchten* and *Kff* for *Kurfürtsen*. For gender and augmentative suffixes abbreviations are appended: *Hgin* for *Herzogin*, *K's* for *Karls*.

Scribal abbreviations that coincide with the abbreviation used for a family member and therefore possibly resulting in confusion, e.g. *F* (Ferdinand) for *Fürst*, are avoided.

XII. The order of the letters follows a chronological order with consecutive numbers. For letters given word for word, brief summaries with keywords are provided after the address and date. If the letters are divided into paragraphs, then the key words are accordingly numbered with the appropriate paragraph. After the summary or excerpt of a letter, the archival information is provided along with a description. The texts end with explanatory commentaries, which are designated with the same numerals as the respective paragraphs in the texts of the letters or the summaries.