

THE FAMILY CORRESPONDENCE OF FERDINAND I

Volume 1: *Familienkorrespondenz bis 1526*. Edited by Wilhelm BAUER. Vienna: Holzhausen, 1912 (Volume 11 of the *Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Neuere Geschichte Österreichs*), pp. V – VI.

FOREWORD

[BY THE COMMISSION FOR MODERN AUSTRIAN HISTORY]¹

The present volume establishes a new publishing series of our commission. On the 23rd of June 1897, during a meeting of Austrian historians seeking the approval from the Imperial and Royal Ministry of Culture and Education to establish the Commission for Modern Austrian History, the late Hans von Zwiedinek declared that the publishing of correspondences between Austrian statesmen was among the core necessities for the elucidation of modern Austrian history. The newly founded commission made it its top priority to publish the correspondence of Austrian emperors and statesmen dating back to 1526 and immediately dedicated their activities to the more general preliminary work, particularly the assessment of materials located in the large national state and aristocratic archives.

It was only natural to begin the process with the rulers' correspondences, as it is here that the politics of the imperial court take stage. The task at hand was the systematic arranging of the works for publication in the chronological order of the emperors, therefore beginning with the correspondences of Ferdinand I, the first Austrian ruler of the epoch. This task was entrusted to Wilhelm Bauer.

The preliminary work done by this scholar, and the survey of the material in Belgian and Italian archives undertaken by Hans Zwiedinek, yielded such an overwhelming wealth of correspondences that it proved necessary to narrow the scope of research as well as the time range. It was therefore decided in 1902 to publish first the correspondences between the ruler and the members of his family (Charles V, Mary and Louis II of Hungary, Margaret of Austria), as these have emerged as the most important and productive for that time period. An explicit focus on Charles V's all-important political correspondences was already ruled out by the commission's clearly outlined tasks.

The family correspondences of Ferdinand I will fill an array of volumes, the editing of which shall require a considerable amount of time. However, considering the current state of the preliminary work, a somewhat faster pace can be expected, especially for the continuation through the year 1530.

When the available resources made it possible, the commission entrusted Viktor Bibl in 1906 with the publication of the family correspondences of Emperor Maximilian II. As the experience gained from the many years of work can finally be utilized for our purposes, the first volume of this series might be presented in the foreseeable future.

The guidelines for the gathering and editing, as well as the printing, were determined by the special committee for the publication of correspondences in consultation with Wilhelm Bauer. They are explained in detail by the editor of this volume in the introduction.

The Commission for Modern Austrian History

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