THE FAMILY CORRESPONDENCE OF FERDINAND I

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THE DIGITAL EDITION

In order to make the previously published volumes of Ferdinand I's family correspondence, most of which are no longer available in bookstores, accessible to the interested public in a contemporary form, the *Commission for Modern Austrian History* initiated around 2015 the project of digitising the previously edited material. The digitisation of the first volume from the year 1912 turned out to be much more complex than originally assumed, since every letter text had to be checked and collated carefully. As is well known, there currently does not exist any program which could easily convert Pdf files into Word for French, Spanish, German or Latin texts from the Early Modern Period. Furthermore, the index had to be completely redesigned. After all these difficulties, the digital edition of the first volume can finally go online. May it be positively received by the experts. The digitisation of the other volumes printed thus far is to follow in the next few years.

The digital version of the edition will follow the structure of the printed original. Only in very few cases have changes been made. A complete review of the transcripts, new summaries (*Regesten*) or an expansion of the commentary were beyond the scope of the digitisation project. This would have far exceeded the available modest working and financial capacities and could not have been justified in view of the already excessive amount of time used for the published version of the correspondence and in face of the 24 years of family correspondence of Ferdinand I (1541–1564) still to come. Nevertheless, a few important innovations were made:

1. The individual letter numbers of the first volume were preceded by the letter *A* (e.g. No. *A66* in the digital edition for No. *66* in the printed version); this addition was necessary because the second volume of the edition begins to count anew with the number 1, as already explained, whereas the digital edition had to provide each letter with a unique identification. The references in the comments have also been adapted to the new numbering.

2. The introductory texts and the summaries of the letters were translated into English in accordance with the edition of the fifth volume from the year 2015.

3. The information on the nature of the document, its archival location and available print versions have been extended by the page numbers of the printed edition.

4. The spelling of the original introductory texts in German has been carefully adapted to the current German spelling rules.

5. Obvious errors – not least in the citation of Spanish research literature – have been corrected and marked "Kommentar/Anmerkungen der Herausgeber der digitalen Edition" ['comment by the editors of the digital edition']. For example, in No. A3 the place name *Casaleggio* was corrected to *Casalegas* (a place in the province of Toledo) or in No. A26/20 *Michael von Hezinghen* was corrected to *Michael von Eytzing*.

6. The layout has been improved and some abbreviations changed for better understanding.

7. The footnote count of the introduction is continuous in the digital edition, while in the print version it began again with the number 1 on each page.

8. The editorial comments were no longer listed as footnotes, but incorporated into the commentary, as was the case in the last printed volumes.

9. The information on the addressees of the letters, which is usually found on the back of the original, has been moved up from the beginning of the commentary section to the archive note, in accordance with the procedure in the later printed volumes.

10. Furthermore, the index was redesigned and divided into an index of persons, places and subjects. The names of places and partly also of persons were renewed in the index, but neither in the summaries nor in the commentaries, according to today's usual orthographic conventions. Thus, toponyms are reproduced in the digital index in German if their use is still widely observed today in German (e.g. *Venedig*, *Neapel*, *Brüssel*). In all other cases, the spelling used in the language(s) of the country in question has been adopted.

11. In contrast to the printed version, where the index provides the corresponding page number for the searched term, the index entries of the digital edition refer to the respective letter and the respective point of content.

12. For the creation of the index – due to the progress of historical research, and above all thanks to the much easier research possibilities on the Internet today – it was possible to newly identify a number of persons, e.g. in No. 34 *Blanche Rose* as *Richard de la Pole, Duke (Earl) of Suffolk* or the repeatedly mentioned *Conte de Sorne* as *Count Eitel Friedrich (Eitelfritz) III von Zollern (Hohenzollern)*.

13. The index entries refer to the transcripts of the original letter texts and – if available – to the respective sub-items, but not to the use of these entries in the summaries and comments. Only if names and terms are used in the summaries or comments which do not appear in the actual text of the letter are they also shown in the index.

14. The main correspondence partners Ferdinand (abbreviated *F*), Charles (*K*) and Mary of Hungary (*M*) are not listed in the index of persons because they are mentioned too often; in the subject index, however, many entries on individual topics concerning them can be found.

15. Since it was not possible to make a clear distinction between place names and thematic terms in the subject index, in addition to the purely thematic terms (e.g. "Gesundheit/Krankheit" for 'health/illness', "Bauernkrieg" for 'German Peasant's War', "Salz" – for 'salt'), the place names of subject areas appearing frequently were included in the subject index (e.g. "France" for the sometimes tense, warlike or peaceful relations with France or "Turks" for all questions concerning relations with the Ottoman Empire). The subject index also contains Ferdinand`s territories (such as "Böhmen" for 'Bohemia', "Erblande" for the 'Austrian Hereditary Lands', "Österreich" for 'Austria' or "Mähren" for 'Moravia') and other often cited territories and regions. The names of cities and of regions which are either not located in F's territories or occur only rarely can be found in the index of places. For France, specifications have also been included in the register; "France B" (B for the German "Beziehungen") in this context means "relations with France," which can mean both peace and war. "France U" (U for the German "Umtriebe") refers to the often mentioned "pratiques", the "French machinations".

16. Not only the new design of the index and the English summaries should facilitate the use and the search for certain names and terms, the digital edition also permits – and this is a further, decisive advantage – a single word search. This allowed for a reduction of the subject index.
17. The "Zusätze und Berichtigungen" ['additions and corrections'] found in the printed edition of the first volume on page 559 have been incorporated into the corresponding letters.
18. Furthermore, in the digital edition, the chronological list of the letters and documents printed and cited in the book version (pp. XXXV-XLII) has not been reproduced in a separate file, since this list is already visible in the database.

The editing team would like to thank all users for their feedback! Please send your comments directly to: christopher.laferl@plus.ac.at.