

Priesdorff Correspondence During the Fritsch Crisis (1938) – Thematic & Structural Analysis

Archival Context and Scope

The file **H 24/10 (T78 Roll 281)** – titled “*Priesdorff Correspondence During the Fritsch Crisis, 1938*” – spans May 1935 through March 1940 and contains correspondence between retired Major **Kurt von Priesdorff** and the German Army High Command (OKH). The documents primarily cover Priesdorff’s historical writings – notably his biography of **General von Gneisenau** and his multi-volume work *Soldatisches Führertum* – and how these were handled by the Army leadership. Crucially, the correspondence coincides with the **Blomberg–Fritsch crisis** of early 1938, when Army Commander-in-Chief Generaloberst **Werner von Fritsch** was abruptly accused and ousted, an event that profoundly impacted Priesdorff’s project. Rather than a simple summary of the archive, this analysis examines underlying **themes**, the **structure** of the file, changes in **tone/content** over time, key **individuals** involved, and the **political sensitivities** reflected in the communications.

Structural Organization of the Correspondence

Chronological Flow: The file is organized in roughly chronological order from 1935 to 1940, documenting the evolution of Priesdorff’s dealings with the Army over these years. Early letters (1935–1937) show initial contact and collaboration, while a dense cluster of correspondence in **1937–1938** corresponds to the planning and abrupt cancellation of the Gneisenau project during the Fritsch affair. Subsequent documents up to 1940 wrap up the matter and include any later exchanges. The archival finding aid confirms the date range (“May 1935 – March 1940”) and notes that the Gneisenau correspondence “**coincided with the Fritsch crisis**”, highlighting how the timeline of letters mirrors historical events.

Sender/Recipient Patterns: The majority of letters are between Priesdorff and the **Adjutant’s office of the Army Commander-in-Chief**. Priesdorff, a retired major and scholarly author, writes from his home address to Army officials (often addressing **Hauptmann von Both**, an adjutant). The replies come on behalf of the Army leadership – initially representing Generaloberst Fritsch and later Generaloberst **Walther von Brauchitsch** (who succeeded Fritsch in February 1938). For example, Priesdorff’s letter of 3 May 1938 to Hauptmann *von Both* requests the return of his manuscript and adequate compensation, and the reply (an “*Abschrift*” copy of a letter dated 2 March 1938 from von Both) conveys the Army’s decisions. Throughout the file, **Priesdorff’s outgoing pleas** and **the Army’s incoming responses** form a dialog, supplemented by internal notes and directives.

Internal Notes and Attachments: In addition to letters exchanged with Priesdorff, the file contains **internal memoranda and official notes** that shed light on the Army’s decision-making process. For instance, a typed *Betrifft (Re:)* memo titled “v. Priesdorff ‘Gneisenau’” records an internal evaluation of Priesdorff’s manuscript and recommendations. Likewise, the file includes a formal **contract/agreement** between OKH (represented by an Army legal

advisor) and Priesdorff, which was drawn up to settle the matter after the project's cancellation. Such documents show the **bureaucratic structure** behind the scenes: e.g. an internal routing slip dated 1 March 1938 instructs the Army Legal Department (Ob. Reg.Rat *Barwinski*) to handle Priesdorff's case "as per verbal discussion" and report the outcome. Attachments are also referenced – notably Priesdorff's **manuscript** on Gneisenau (or portions of it) was included for review, and eventually returned to him once the project was aborted. Overall, the file's structure reveals a **sequence of proposals, reviews, correspondence, and resolution documents**, all preserved in the Army archive for this case.

Major Themes in the Correspondence

Several key themes emerge from the Priesdorff correspondence:

- **Historiography and Military Tradition:** At its heart, the file is about the Army's engagement with **historical scholarship and tradition**. Priesdorff, a military historian, was compiling works on revered Prussian figures like **Gneisenau** and **Scharnhorst**. The Army leadership took interest in these works as a means of honoring military heritage and inspiring the troops. In fact, Generaloberst Fritsch **commissioned Priesdorff** to prepare a concise biography of Gneisenau, intending to gift it to the crew of the new warship *Gneisenau* as a token of esteem. This indicates a theme of **official patronage of history** – the Army saw value in disseminating lessons of past heroes to the Wehrmacht's men. Early correspondence is cordial and scholarly: for example, Fritsch's adjutant wrote to convey the general's "*best thanks for the friendly sending*" of Priesdorff's manuscript and noted Fritsch read it with great interest. Fritsch even personally appreciated that one of his own ancestors was featured in Volume IV of Priesdorff's *Soldatisches Führertum*, underscoring how such works resonated with the officer corps. In sum, the letters initially revolve around **collaboration on historical works**, reflecting a shared reverence for Prussian military history and its use in bolstering contemporary military identity.
- **Content Review and Censorship:** A striking theme is the **scrutiny and control of content** by the Army. Even though Fritsch endorsed the Gneisenau project, the **OKH subjected Priesdorff's draft to review** for accuracy and suitability. Internal correspondence shows that the Army attached importance to factual correctness – an adjutant forwarded part of the Gneisenau manuscript to be examined, asking whether the presentation was "*correct and suitable in this form as a gift for all crew members*". The feedback that came back was decidedly critical: after "*thorough examination*", an Army evaluator concluded that Priesdorff's *Gneisenau* manuscript in its current form "*is not suited for [its] purpose*" and "*needs a reworking from the ground up*". In other words, **extensive revisions** would be required if the Army were to proceed with publishing it. This can be viewed in two lights: on one hand, a genuine editorial concern for quality and accuracy (historiographical rigor); on the other, a form of **censorship or pretext**, since the harsh assessment conveniently aligned with the new leadership's desire to halt the project. Notably, the critique is contemporaneous with Fritsch's downfall, suggesting the Army was now scrutinizing the content with a far more critical (perhaps *over-critical*) eye. The correspondence thereby highlights the **Army's gatekeeping role** over publications associated with its name – any work meant for official distribution had to pass muster with regard to content and perhaps ideological tone. Ultimately, this rigorous review became moot once higher political decisions intervened, but it illustrates how **censorship and content control** were intrinsic to the process.

- Military-Political Tension (Impact of the Fritsch Crisis):** The overarching theme binding this file is the collision between military tradition and Nazi political upheaval. The *Blomberg–Fritsch affair* of January–February 1938 – wherein Hitler removed two top generals (War Minister Blomberg and Army C-in-C Fritsch) – reverberates through these letters. What began as a routine patriotic project turned into a **casualty of political purge**. After Fritsch’s ouster, the new Commander-in-Chief, Generaloberst Brauchitsch, was **eager to distance the Army from his disgraced predecessor’s initiatives**. An internal summary makes this clear: *“Before the printing of the [Gneisenau] booklet occurred, the change of the Army’s C-in-C took place. The new C-in-C, Gen. v. Brauchitsch, ordered that the writing no longer be gifted and that Herr von Priesdorff be [financially] settled.”*. Thus, **Brauchitsch immediately canceled** the entire plan. This reveals a theme of **institutional self-preservation and alignment with political winds** – the Army leadership sacrificed the Gneisenau project to avoid any association with Fritsch (who, at that moment, was under a cloud, despite later being exonerated). The correspondence around February–March 1938 is terse and tense as a result. In a letter dated 2 March 1938, Hptm. von Both – now acting under Brauchitsch’s authority – informs Priesdorff that *“the decision has been made. Generaloberst [Fritsch] will no longer be gifting the work.”*. He even alludes to the turmoil by saying he had to wait *“until some calm returned”* to get Fritsch’s answer on the matter. The *subtext* is evident: the **upheaval in Army leadership** directly dictated the fate of Priesdorff’s project. This highlights the **military-political tension** theme – how an internal political crisis in the Third Reich (Hitler’s intervention in Army affairs) penetrated down to the level of an author’s correspondence, abruptly shifting priorities from promoting tradition to closing ranks. The Army’s tone switches from enthusiastic support to damage control in the wake of the crisis, illustrating the broader dynamic of 1938: the Wehrmacht’s subordination to Hitler’s will and the suppression of anything (or anyone) associated with those who fell out of favor.
- Personal Hardship vs. Institutional Procedure:** Another theme is the **human dimension** of this saga – Priesdorff’s personal plight contrasted with the Army’s bureaucratic response. Priesdorff was not just a distant author; he was a retired officer with limited means who had invested labor and money into this project. When the plan was canceled, he faced not only professional disappointment but also financial strain (printing arrangements, research costs, etc., that he had undertaken on the expectation of Army patronage). His letters after the crisis take on an **imploring and emotional tone**, quite distinct from the earlier intellectual exchanges. In his May 3, 1938 letter, Priesdorff appeals to von Both’s sense of fairness and urges **General von Brauchitsch** to reconsider certain points: *“I ask you to put yourself in my position... I cannot bear [the costs] on a small pension with children... Believe me, it is very hard for a soldier to write these lines.”*. Here, Priesdorff emphasizes his loyalty (as a fellow soldier) and the bitterness of his situation, hoping for empathy. This heartfelt plea is met, however, with **impersonal institutional action**. Rather than negotiate directly, the **Army referred the matter to its legal department**. The correspondence shows that the Army’s **Heeresrechtsabteilung** (Army Legal Branch) took over: von Both writes that he has asked the legal department to get in touch with Priesdorff to settle the “business side” of the issue. Subsequently, a formal contract was drawn up whereby the Army would **return Priesdorff’s manuscript and pay him a compensation of 1,000 Reichsmarks**, in exchange for Priesdorff renouncing any further claims. This settlement – *“Herr von Priesdorff receives the Gneisenau manuscript (and all its attachments) back, and is paid RM 1,000 as reimbursement of*

costs... Herr von Priesdorff declares under these conditions that he has no further claims on the OKH.” – solved the matter in a strictly legalistic way. The theme here is the contrast between **individual distress and bureaucratic remedy**. The Army did acknowledge Priesdorff’s contributions and financial loss (hence the payout), but it handled it as a **transaction** rather than an act of camaraderie. Priesdorff’s role as a supplicant and the Army’s stance as a guarded institution reflect the wider reality of the time: personal bonds and informal agreements (like Fritsch’s patronage) could be summarily voided by institutional decisions once political circumstances changed.

Shifts in Tone and Content Over Time

The tone of the correspondence undergoes a dramatic shift from start to finish, reflecting the changing context:

- **Before and During Fritsch’s Tenure (1935–1937):** The early tone is **collegial, respectful, and positive**. Priesdorff is treated as a valued collaborator providing historical knowledge. Letters from the Army side, written by Fritsch’s adjutants, are warm and appreciative. For example, one letter thanks Priesdorff profusely for sending along his work (likely a chapter or related research) and explains that Generaloberst Fritsch, though busy, is reading it attentively and will return the manuscript soon. There is a sense of mutual purpose – Priesdorff eager to contribute his scholarship to the Army’s cause, and the Army showing interest and patience. Correspondence in this phase often discusses **content details**, suggestions, and logistical arrangements for publishing/distributing the work, all in a constructive tone. Even minor delays (such as Fritsch taking time to review the manuscript) are explained apologetically and with gratitude for Priesdorff’s efforts.
- **Crisis and Immediate Aftermath (1938):** Around the Fritsch crisis, the tone shifts to **formal and cautious**, with an undercurrent of regret. The letter of 2 March 1938 from Hptm. von Both – coming just weeks after Fritsch’s removal – is markedly terse and businesslike compared to earlier notes. Von Both addresses Priesdorff very politely as “*Sehr verehrter Herr von Priesdorff*” (as always), but the content is essentially a diplomatic termination notice. He mentions that he “*had to wait for some calm*” before getting clarity from Fritsch, hinting at the tumult of February 1938. Then he delivers the decision: “*The manuscript has been reviewed and the decision is made. The Generaloberst will no longer be gifting the work.*”. The phrasing is matter-of-fact, without elaboration or blame. Von Both then immediately shifts to the administrative steps: the legal department will handle the “*business part*” of compensating Priesdorff. He closes by expressing personal regret (“*I very much regret this outcome*”) but attributes the cause to circumstances, noting that “*for Generaloberst v. Fritsch it is now no longer possible to carry out his original intention.*”. Notably, **the letter avoids any mention of why** – there is no reference to the scandal or Fritsch’s status – maintaining an official decorum. The tone here is **apologetic yet firm**, reflecting that the writer (von Both) likely sympathizes with Priesdorff but must enforce the new decision.

Priesdorff’s own tone in response (his letter of 3 May 1938) shows a mix of **deference and desperation**. He opens by acknowledging that replying to him must have been “*difficult*” for von Both and insists he does not wish to cause trouble, indicating he senses the delicate position von Both was in. Priesdorff then pleads his case for relief – the return of his materials and a higher compensation – in courteous

but emotive language, invoking his financial hardships and identity as a “soldier” to elicit empathy. This contrasts with his earlier, more academic correspondence; now the content is about **personal loss and fairness**, not historical content at all. The fact that Priesdorff waited two months after von Both’s notice to send this appeal may suggest he was hoping the decision could be revisited, but ultimately felt compelled to speak up for himself.

- **Resolution and Later Exchanges (1938–1940):** Once the settlement was reached in mid-1938 (with Priesdorff receiving 1,000 RM and his manuscript back), the tone likely became very sparse. The formal contract and Priesdorff’s acceptance are in legal language, not personal tone. After this point, the file contains little substantive correspondence on the matter – essentially the issue was closed. Any further letters in 1939–1940 were probably perfunctory. For instance, if Priesdorff continued to publish volumes of *Soldatisches Führertum* or other works, he may have still sent courtesy copies to the Army command. The archive includes letters of thanks from the adjutant for such submissions, which maintain a polite tone but are brief and neutral. By this time, **Fritsch was gone and the war had begun**, so the era of patronage for Priesdorff’s peacetime project was over. Thus, the final tone of the file is one of **closure** – the correspondence becomes a record of a settled claim rather than an ongoing collaboration.

In summary, the **evolution of tone** moves from hopeful and collegial (pre-1938), to strained and formal (during the crisis of 1938), to quiet and administrative (post-settlement). The content focus similarly shifts – from discussions of historical narrative and publication plans to discussions of financial compensation and the mechanics of terminating the project. These shifts poignantly reflect the external pressures on the correspondence; what began as a cultural initiative ended as a problem to be managed.

Key Individuals and Their Roles

Several individuals and entities played important roles in this correspondence:

- **Major a.D. Kurt von Priesdorff – Author & Correspondent.** Priesdorff was a retired Major and a **Geheimer Regierungsrat a.D.** (privy councilor, retired) who dedicated himself to military history. He authored the series *Soldatisches Führertum* (a biographical compendium of Prussian generals) and other monographs. In this file, Priesdorff is the **petitioner** and content creator – he writes to the Army leadership seeking support, submits his manuscripts for approval, and later negotiates compensation. His role is central: he is the one producing the historical content (e.g. a biography of Gneisenau) that the Army intended to use. He is portrayed as earnest, respectful, and passionate about his work, but also vulnerable in standing (a retired officer outside the chain of command). The correspondence shows him leveraging both his scholarship and his status as a former soldier in dialogues with the Army.
- **Generaloberst Freiherr Werner von Fritsch – Army Commander-in-Chief (1935–Feb 1938).** Fritsch was the head of the Army and initially the patron of Priesdorff’s project. Known for his appreciation of Prussian military tradition, Fritsch personally initiated the plan to distribute Priesdorff’s **Gneisenau** booklet to the crew of the warship *Gneisenau* as a morale-building gift. In the correspondence, Fritsch’s voice is usually heard indirectly through his adjutant (e.g. conveying thanks or instructions). He **commissioned Priesdorff’s work**, gave feedback on the manuscript (even

personally reviewing it in early 1938), and intended to bear the cost of printing 1,500 copies for the sailors. Fritsch's role, however, is dramatically cut off by the **1938 crisis** – after accusations (the Blomberg–Fritsch affair), he was forced to resign. In the file's narrative, his ouster is the turning point: once Fritsch is gone, his “*original intention*” cannot be fulfilled. Fritsch thus represents the **old Army establishment** – supportive of historical commemoration – whose abrupt removal left the project orphaned.

- **Generaloberst Walther von Brauchitsch** – *Army Commander-in-Chief (Feb 1938 onward)*. Brauchitsch took over leadership of the Army amid the Blomberg–Fritsch affair. In the correspondence, Brauchitsch's influence is evident not through personal letters but through decisions taken in his name. Almost immediately upon assuming command, Brauchitsch **halted the Gneisenau gift project** and opted to compensate Priesdorff instead. He likely viewed continuing a project so closely identified with Fritsch as politically unwise. Brauchitsch's stance is communicated via staff: e.g. von Both references “*the decision of General von Brauchitsch*” in correspondence with Priesdorff. Brauchitsch embodies the **institutional response to the crisis** – under his authority, the Army distances itself from Fritsch's personal commitments and follows through in a strictly controlled, formal manner. While Brauchitsch does not directly author letters in this file, his orders shape them (cancelling the gift, ordering the legal settlement). In essence, he represents the **Army's new direction**, prioritizing alignment with the Nazi leadership's wishes over previous informal agreements.
- **Hauptmann von Both** – *Adjutant to the Army C-in-C*. Hptm. (Captain) **Wolf-Eberhard von Both** served in the Adjutantur (the adjutant's office) of the Army High Command. He is a key correspondent who essentially acts as the **mouthpiece of the Army leadership** in letters to Priesdorff. Von Both's name appears as the signatory of most Army replies, both under Fritsch and under Brauchitsch. His duties included conveying Fritsch's gratitude or instructions to Priesdorff during the good days, coordinating the manuscript's review, and later delivering the difficult news of cancellation. He also liaised with the legal department on Priesdorff's behalf. Throughout, von Both maintains a courteous and professional tone, and at times a sympathetic one (expressing regret for the outcome). His position placed him at the intersection of **personal communication and institutional action**, making him a pivotal figure in managing this delicate correspondence.
- **Heeresrechtsabteilung (Army Legal Department)** – *Legal oversight*. The Army's legal branch becomes visible in the file once the issue shifts from publication to settlement. **Oberregierungsrat Dr. Rosencrantz** and **Ob.Reg.Rat Barwinski** are two legal officials who appear in documents. Dr. Rosencrantz represented the OKH in formalizing the **contractual agreement** with Priesdorff (signing on the Army's behalf). Oberregierungsrat Barwinski was consulted to carry out and finalize the arrangements (his name is mentioned in an internal memo instructing him to handle the matter). The legal department's role was to protect the Army's interests – ensuring Priesdorff's claims were settled **cleanly and quietly**. By drafting a written agreement that included a waiver of further claims, they contained any potential fallout. In the correspondence, the tone shifts once the lawyers step in, reflecting a move to an **official legal resolution** rather than gentlemanly correspondence. Their presence highlights the **institutional/legal framework** that underpinned even personal-feeling arrangements.
- **Major Siewert** – *Staff Officer (liaison)*. A Major **Siewert** is briefly referenced in the file as having met with Priesdorff (an “*Unterredung mit Major Siewert*” is mentioned). Though not a central figure, Siewert's cameo suggests that other staff

officers were involved at times, possibly in reviewing the work or discussing how Priesdorff might contribute (the context hints Siewert discussed the possibility of Priesdorff giving lectures). This indicates that **multiple levels of the Army staff** engaged with Priesdorff's project, not just the top leadership – emphasizing how the initiative had been taken seriously within the institution prior to its cancellation.

Each of these individuals played a part in the **dynamic between Priesdorff (the individual historian) and the Army (the institution)**. Fritsch and Priesdorff represent the enthusiastic origin of the project, Brauchitsch and the legal officers represent its abrupt termination, and von Both (with other staff) navigated between these poles, executing orders while trying to maintain respect and fairness in correspondence.

Political and Institutional Sensitivities in the Communications

The Priesdorff correspondence is suffused with unspoken **political sensitivities**, which can be inferred from how things are said – or not said – in the file:

- **Avoidance of the “Why”:** Nowhere in the letters to Priesdorff is the true reason for the project's cancellation explicitly stated. The fact that Fritsch had been accused of misconduct and removed under Hitler's pressure is *never mentioned*; instead, von Both's letter delicately phrases it as “*now not possible [for Fritsch] to carry out his original intention*”. This euphemistic language reflects the extreme sensitivity around the Fritsch affair – an issue so explosive that even in internal correspondence with a retired officer, they did not put the cause on paper. The Army was clearly **being cautious**: acknowledging the scandal or criticizing what transpired would have been dangerous. Thus, the communications stick to neutral explanations (or none at all), indicating a **self-censoring tone born of political caution**.
- **Fritsch's Name and Legacy:** One key sensitivity was any public association with Fritsch after his fall. Originally, the plan was to explicitly credit Fritsch as the benefactor of the Gneisenau booklet – one directive even noted that the printed edition “*must include: ‘Special edition for the crew of the Gneisenau, a gift of Gen. Ob. v. Fritsch.’*”. Once Fritsch was disgraced in February 1938, continuing with this plan would have been politically untenable. Brauchitsch and the OKH certainly could not distribute a book emblazoned with Fritsch's name as a patron; nor did they even attempt to salvage the project by, say, attributing it to Brauchitsch instead. The decision to cancel outright underscores how **toxic Fritsch's name had become in the Nazi era** (at least in the immediate aftermath of the affair). The correspondence is sensitive to this: Fritsch is referred to with respect (he is still called *Herr Generaloberst* in letters) but any notion of honoring him (through the gift) is swiftly dropped. The internal records show Brauchitsch ordered that Priesdorff's work “*not be gifted [anymore]*” under the new regime. This reflects an **institutional mandate to erase or contain Fritsch's legacy**, a political necessity given Hitler's moves to solidify control over the military.
- **Damage Control and Discretion:** The Army's handling of Priesdorff's case demonstrates a sensitivity to avoiding scandal or dissent. They moved quickly to “**buy out**” Priesdorff's claim and secure his silence (through the no-further-claims clause). The tone of von Both's communications and the involvement of legal counsel show a desire to keep Priesdorff cooperative and prevent the issue from attracting

outside attention. Priesdorff was essentially a civilian by then, and if bitter he could have potentially taken his story public or to court. The OKH headed that off by treating him politely and compensating him reasonably (if not to the full 2,000 RM he asked, at least half). This pragmatism points to institutional sensitivity: the Army did not want a disgruntled former major broadcasting that the *Oberbefehlshaber* had broken a promise. Particularly in 1938, with the military's relationship with Hitler under scrutiny, they could not afford any public mishaps. Thus the communications emphasize an **amicable resolution** – von Both expresses “*regret*” and remains courteous, the final agreement is termed a “*gütliche Einigung*” (amicable settlement) in the file. All of this was aimed at smoothing ruffled feathers with minimum noise.

- **Institutional Hierarchy and Caution:** The file also reflects sensitivities about proper procedure and hierarchy during a politically charged time. For instance, von Both waited to respond to Priesdorff until he had guidance “*after some calm*” and after consulting Fritsch (likely once Fritsch's own situation was clearer). Even then, he coordinated with superiors and the legal branch before committing anything to paper. We see reference to a *verbal consultation* with Ob.Reg.Rat Barwinski before acting, indicating that **nothing was done off-the-cuff** – every step was carefully vetted. This caution in the correspondence mirrors the Army's careful navigation of the post-crisis environment, where any misstep could be politically dangerous. The adjutants and legal officers were keenly aware that their letters could be read at higher levels; hence they are models of measured, official language.
- **Suppression of Content vs. Reappropriation:** Another sensitivity lies in what was done with Priesdorff's *Gneisenau* content. The Army did not attempt to edit or repurpose the manuscript for later use by Brauchitsch – instead, they handed it back to the author. This suggests a desire to simply make the whole thing disappear from official channels. Even though the internal reviewer had suggested the manuscript could be rewritten if the gift idea were to continue, Brauchitsch's leadership chose not to pursue it. The risk of publishing it (with or without modifications) likely outweighed any benefit, due to the taint of its origin. Thus, **the content itself became sensitive**, not for its intrinsic historical details, but because of the *political context*. Priesdorff's work was essentially shelved – a form of soft censorship driven by institutional self-censorship.

In conclusion, the correspondence in file H 24/10 reveals much more than a cancelled publishing project. It illustrates how an archival folder can capture the **intersection of scholarship, military tradition, and authoritarian politics**. Major themes of historiographical effort, content control, and civil-military tension play out through the letters. The file's structure – chronological letters interwoven with internal notes – lets us trace the timeline from optimistic collaboration to abrupt termination and aftermath. The tone shifts and personal pleas recorded in these pages underscore the human cost of political shifts, while the careful wording and legalistic conclusion highlight the Army's institutional priorities and sensitivities in 1938. In analyzing this file, we see a microcosm of the larger Fritsch crisis: loyal soldiers and their plans upended by a regime that demanded absolute conformity, and an organization doing its best to quietly adapt and contain the damage. The Priesdorff correspondence thus provides a **thematic tapestry of historiography under duress, bureaucratic process, and the profound impact of the Blomberg–Fritsch affair on even the most scholarly of endeavors** – all preserved in the careful prose of archival communication.