

Dear Chess Friends,

Please forgive the intrusion, but having received your addresses from several chess friends (Tony Gillam, Horst Helten, Vlastimil Fiala, Bob Jones et al.) we trust that you will be interested in the following project.

The idea of compiling all available chess related bibliographic data in a (huge) database has been mooted. Jurgen Stigter and others were discussing the foundation of an association of chess book collectors to do this.

A first meeting at Jurgen Stigter's home in Amsterdam on November 30th 2002, following the chess book market at the Max-Euwe-Centrum, was joined by some 20 colleagues including Juri Awerbach, Ken Whyld, Walter Simon (Vienna), Peter Holmgren (Sweden), a Dutch contingent with Hans Engberts, Joop Jansen, Harold van der Heijden, René van der Heijden, Bert Corneth, Gert Timmerman, and a German one with Harald Balló, Ralf Binnewirtz, Horst Lüders, Hans-Jürgen Fresen, Norbert Fieberg, and Michael Negele.

Our initial questions:

1. Would you be interested in cooperation / participation ?
(What are your main interests in chess literature ?)
(What are the main languages you are able to read / write ?)
2. Should we include your name and address into our database ?
3. Who of your contacts could be interested in joining this group, too ?

The Chess Bibliography project

Five years ago we would also have written: mission impossible.

But now - using intensively the internet and email contacts - there will be a realistic chance of realisation.

Very important will be a solid definition of the requirements for the database.

Jurgen Stigter is a computer-expert, so he knows a lot of this business (and also people who are able to do the jobs needed). He is quite confident that the integration of existing databases (like of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague or may be of the "Kiel catalogue", too) could be a good starting point for the new database. Also some bibliographies and catalogues of private collections are available for integration into our database.

But the main (and very time-consuming) work will be to obtain full title descriptions - since many catalogues like L/N only give (very) short ones – and to find the missing titles.

The main idea is really to create a world wide web of chess collectors (and other specialists) who are using the same "mask" that will be defined (and designed) to complete existing datasets or to create new ones.

This should be done by "country administrators" who are able to do a transcription of

the original title (and some other information) into English.
There should be also a kind of "theme-specialists", such themes could be e.g. problems, studies, magazines, columns, chess in non-chess-literature and so on.
So there will be a fixed matrix of organisation to do the job.
A lot of points are still to be considered, e.g. transcription of non-"latin"-script-titles; comments should be in principle in English, but other options are possible - using the mother-language of the administrator and later translation.

Amsterdam-group

Jurgen Stigter and the others of the initiating meeting are aware that it is a significant task to bring this project to run - but also a very advantageous one.

In a few days a questionnaire will be sent to chess book collectors, (chess) antiquarians, chess sellers, big (chess) libraries and others to clarify who is interested to take part in this project (and / or in the association to be founded).
Maybe this Amsterdam-group will be associated with Chess Collectors International (as e.g. the Königstein-group), which would be helpful to use an existing world wide organisation. A yearly membership fee (like \$50) could be used to finance the software and server costs for the database, and other activities like an additional leaflet to the "The Chess Collector" magazine, organisation of meetings and conferences, own publications like reprints of old chess literature or non-print publications (e.g. CD-ROM).

Yours sincerely

Jurgen Stigter & Michael Negele

(provisional board of the "Amsterdam Group")

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