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An early testimony of organized women's chess in Germany

_ Konrad Reiß - Der Correspondenz–Schachkampf zwischen dem Dessauer Schachverein und Frauen des Schachdorfes Ströbeck 1886/87 - cover

by Siegfried Schönle

Once again it is my pleasure to present to the readers of this website a book by the director of the Löberitz Chess Museum, Konrad Reiß.

He seems to have turned almost every "chess stone" in recent years and in this way has contributed and continues to contribute significantly to the fact that chess history in the (chess) triangle Löberitz - Ströbeck - Magdeburg, i.e. Saxony-Anhalt, is well researched and documented. Numerous of his earlier publications bear witness to this, as does the one presented here in an elegant way!

Der Correspondenz–Schachkampf zwischen dem Dessauer Schachverein und Frauen des Schachdorfes Ströbeck 1886/87.

Ein frühes Zeugnis des organisierten Frauenschachs in Deutschland

from

Konrad Reiß

Löberitz, Zörbig, Leipzig 2023. 96 p. + front matter and VIII endpapers.

Edition 100 Ex.

Hardcover, colored print on lightly toned paper. Numerous illustrations and facsimiles of correspondence chess cards.

This can be obtained from the author (KonradReiss@web.de) for €20 + postage.

_ Konrad Reiß - Der Correspondenz–Schachkampf zwischen ... - foreword

Chess offers, and that is one of the fascinating things about this game, a wide range of interests for research and collecting. So also with this book!

It appeals to those who are concerned with the history of women's chess or for whom correspondence

chess is important, others prefer the history of the chess village of Ströbeck and for others the history of the club and its processing may be of interest.

Game chess should not be forgotten here, since two games were played between Dessau and women from Ströbeck. These games are commented on by Konrad Reiß, slightly amused and sometimes ironic, but then again with the necessary expertise (pp. 29-33).

The book has two parts.

In the first part, pp. 1-39, the author reports on more or less well-known moments from Ströbeck's history.

In detail: The legend of the knight Gunzelin; the first mention of the Ströbeck chess tradition in Peter Heige's law book from 1601; the portrayal of Ströbeck in Selenus (1616) and in Eberhard Welper (1690); the tradition of living chess in the village; the famous chess board, which Grand Duke Friedrich Wilhelm von Brandenburg gave to the village; the chess anecdote "Vadder with advice"; chess at school; by 3 Ströbeck clubs.

Ströbeck 1616

In 1886, women from Ströbeck arranged two long-distance games with the men of the Dessau Chess Club. Among them was Otto Rosenbaum (1852 – 1923), an experienced tournament player. Friederike Bruns from Ströbeck, on the other hand, wrote the postcards in the direction of Dessau.

The conclusion of the first part is formed by the introduction of Friederike Bruns and Otto Rosenbaum as well as brief remarks on women's chess tournaments. It is typical that hardly anything is known about Friederike Bruns, whereas Konrad Reiß reported comprehensively on Otto Rosenbaum in 2021 (Otto Rosenbaum. 1852-1923. Der (fast) vergessene Schachmeister aus Dessau). [see also: [A chess master from Dessau: Otto Rosenbaum](#)]

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In the second part (pp. 41-93) the book offers the reader all the surviving postcards and letters in facsimile print.

One might find this boring, since the individual moves had already been printed and commented on in the form that is customary today. On the other hand, this part in particular offers independent viewing of the documents, deciphering the writing or the writings of the "Kampfschwestern" (battle sisters) (p.45), reading the postmark and also enjoying the aura that these facsimiles offer. Why not transfer the original writing to your personal one in an hour of leisure as well. For example, p. 65 offers an attractive test piece.

In a letter dated May 11, 1887 (p. 33 and 90-91), the Ströbeck ladies also gave up the second "Parthie" and thanked them for having learned.

Chess sport as it should be fair to accept that the opponent played better and I would like to add:

A chess book, a historical presentation, as it is desirable and recommendable!

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- - _ Konrad Reiß - Der Correspondenz–Schachkampf zwischen ... - page 91

Finally, an assessment by Grandmaster Dr. Robert Hübner. He points to the fact that different handwriting can be seen on the addresses of the postcards. Maybe this mystery can be solved at some point.

_ Postcard of February 11, 1887 - Sent on February 11 from the Ströbeck post office with a receipt stamp of February 11 from the Dessau post office

Siegfried Schönle (Kassel) / February 2023