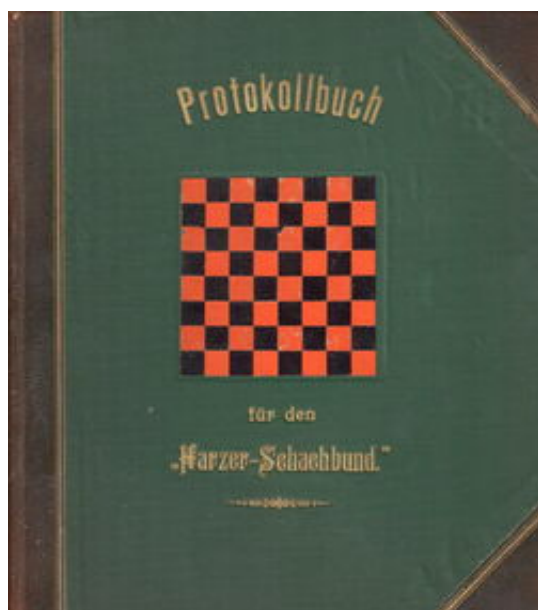


2023-08-21

Der Harzer Schachbund [The Harz Chess Federation]



Harzer Schachbund - book cover title page (outside), 2nd volume

by Siegfried Schönle [Original article in German is [here](#). Translation by DeepL]

According to the German Chess Federation, there are over 2000 chess clubs in Germany. Each of these clubs has its own history, be it short or far back in the history of chess in Germany.

A generally perceptible sign of this are, among other things, the countless club magazines, commemorative publications, publications on club anniversaries, which as a rule find significance and attention in the narrow circle of the club and the respective city, and more rarely cause a supra-regional interest.

A brief look back into the history of chess associations or chess clubs shows that the oldest chess club in Germany was founded in Berlin in 1803 - later called the Great Chess Club. This can be proven, among other things, by the following anonymously published writing:

Berlinische Nächte. [anonym, Mercy, Joseph Aloys, 1764-1833].

In einer großen Gesellschaft von Schachspielern. 72. Nacht.

2 vols. viii, 372 p., 1 leaf ; viii, 355 p., 2 leaves; cf. esp. vol. 2 and pp. 104-112.

Leipzig and Züllichau, 1st ed. 1803/1804 : Darnmannsche Buchhandlung.

Cl.8°; gilt boards with 2 frilled labels.

In the 72nd night, vol.2, pp. 104-112, of 104 nights of this "scandalous night chronicle" of Berlin at that time, the author describes a new chess society in Berlin, in the "Taubenstraße" near W.

„Was die geduldigen Leser am Tage thun, nämlich dem Spiele der Journalisten und Zeitungsschreiber mit sich selbst bis zum Umlegen der letzten Figur zuschauen, das geschieht auch in dieser neuen Gesellschaft von – Schachspielern bei W. in der T --- straße, die sehr würdige Männer von edlen Ständen, und trotz der literarischen Klubbs schon vierzig Mitglieder zählt.“ (S.105)

["What the patient readers do during the day, namely watch the game of journalists and newspaper writers with themselves until the last piece is knocked down, is also done in this new society of - chess players at W. in T --- straße, which counts very worthy men from noble estates, and despite the literary clubs already forty members."]

And a few lines further on it is said:

„Nur hat diese an Figuren arbeitende neue Gesellschaft die Schwachheit mit so manchen Figuranten der gelehrten Gesellschaften gemein, daß sie auch Gesetze einführen will.“ (S.106)

["Only this new society, working on figures, has in common with so many figures of learned societies the weakness that it also wants to introduce laws."]

The acquisition of these rare volumes allowed me to draw Prof. Hans Holländer's attention to this literary chess passage before 2003, which was reflected in the catalogue Schachdows Schachclub. Ein Spiel der Vernunft in Berlin 1803-1850, ed. by Barbara and Hans Holländer 2003.

Prof. Holländer apologised for his failure to comply with the usual scholarly practice of thanking the informant of important sources in an email to the author dated 8.1.2003:

„Zu den 'Berlinischen Nächten'. Mea culpa. Ich hätte Ihnen natürlich in einer Fußnote für die Information danken müssen und habe das - leider – vergessen. Bitte entschuldigen Sie. Ich halte mich sonst an die „übliche Praxis“.

["Regarding the 'Berlin nights'. Mea culpa. Of course I should have thanked you in a footnote for the information and - unfortunately - forgot to do so. Please accept my apologies. I otherwise stick to the "usual practice".]

The new publication to be presented here is not quite that old - but at least it goes back to the 19th century, it provides information on the years 1882 to 1939 and, how could it be otherwise, on a limited region of Germany. Moreover, not only about a chess club, but about a chess federation, the

Harzer Schachbund.

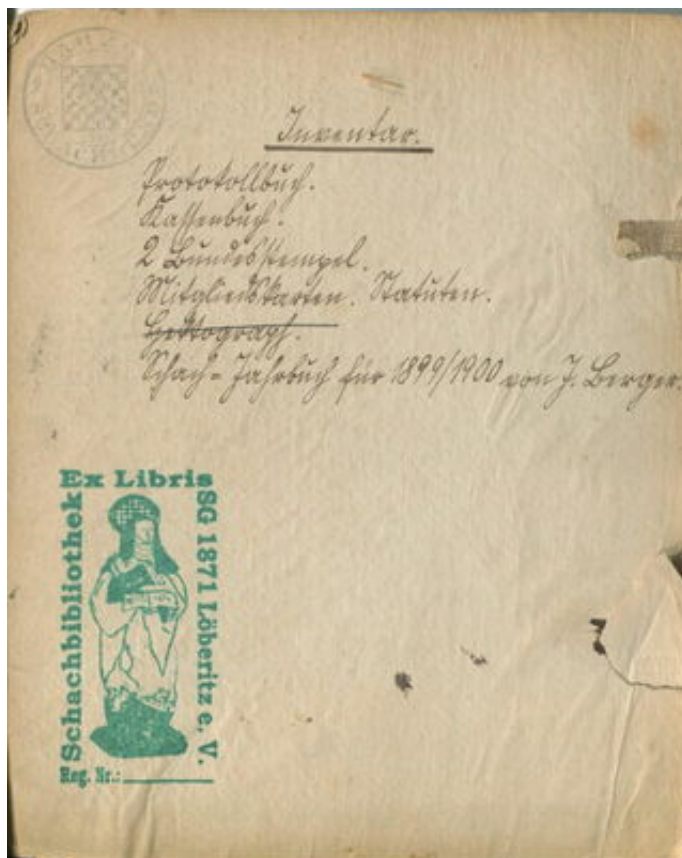
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Harzer Schachbund - book cover title page

(outside)

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Harzer Schachbund - book cover title page

(inside)

The green stamp immediately tells the reader where the original is kept:

Schachbibliothek SG 1871 Löberitz e.V. [Chess Library SG 1871 Löberitz e.V.]

Thanks to the active museum director, Konrad Reiß, these two minute books are now available in a full facsimile to today's interested chess historians and/or collectors.

The two minute books cover the period 1882 to 1939 and were arranged and arranged by Konrad Reiß, i.e. prepared for today's printing.

The facsimile is divided into three parts.

Part 1 contains an introduction, a short history of the Harzer Schachbund and a contribution on provenance, written by Konrad Reiß.

Parts 2 and 3 then contain the two minute books in facsimile. The illustrations are reproduced with the original page number. Additional pages are inserted with the programmes, newspaper articles etc. found in the books without page numbers.

As an impressive example, here is the first entry.

„Erste constituierende Generalversammlung des Harzer Schachbundes vom 3. Mai 1882.“

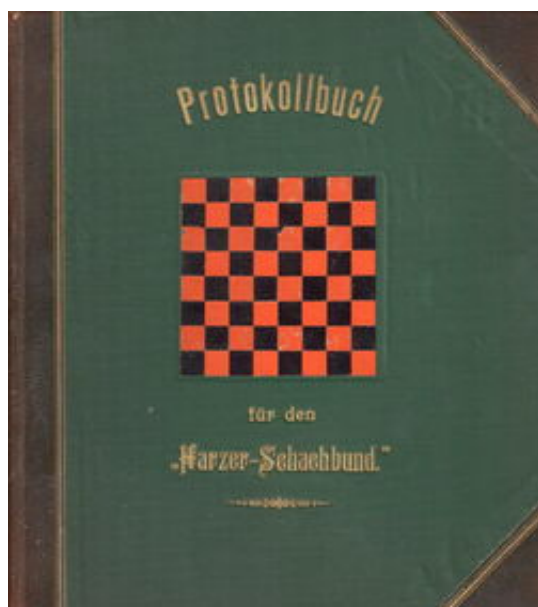
["First Constituent General Assembly of the Harz Chess Federation of 3 May 1882."]

Erste konstituierende Generalversammlung
des Harzer Schachbundes
vom 3. Mai 1882.

Seine Begründung nimmt Harzer Schachbund
haben die Vereine des Harz Halberstadt
Quedlinburg, Aschersleben & Nordhausen
auf, am 3. Mai 1882, vorm. 11 U.
in der Generalversammlung im Hotel
zum Deutschen Hause in Aschersleben
abgehalten.

Als Statuten des bethatigten Einverständnisses
empfanden: J. C. Schwaighaupt - Halberstadt
J. C. W. Zimmermann - Quedlinburg,
J. Hartmann - Ed. Bornstein - Nordhausen,
J. F. Dising - Aschersleben, sowie einen
Anzahl Mitglieder des Vereins letzter Harz

Harzer Schachbund - First Entry, „Erste constituierende Generalversammlung des Harzer Schachbundes vom 3. Mai 1882.“



Harzer Schachbund - book cover title page (outside), 2nd volume

The second minute book covers the years 1901 to 1939 and is more elaborately and beautifully bound than the first.

If one takes the trouble to read in facsimile, which admittedly is not always easy, one definitely encounters contemporary situations.

The nocturnal flâneur and author of the "Night Chronicle", A. Mercy, was, among other things, secretary and registrar at the royal lottery in Berlin. In 1803 he reproaches the chess society with the "weakness" "that it also wants to introduce laws."

The minute books speak of the "statutes", see above book cover title page (inside).

Today one would rather speak of association statutes. Do we have a quorum according to the statutes? - this is how one or the other annual meeting of today's chess clubs begins.

The page-turning reader of the print sees tables, notations, lists of participants, tournament results, notes, references to Ströbeck and others.

Very charming to read and historically valuable are the scattered newspaper articles, four of which are shown here in conclusion. Unfortunately, it remains unknown from which newspapers these clippings originate.

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Edition size: 10

No. 1/10 (LBN 5278) and an unnumbered proof copy have found a place in the Löberitz Chess Library and No. 2/10 will be presented to the chess village of Ströbeck on 19th September on the occasion of the anniversary "200 Jahre Schulschach in Ströbeck" ["200 years of school chess in Ströbeck"].

The facsimile can be ordered from Konrad Reiß, konradreiss@web.de

Siegfried Schönle, Kassel, August 2023

