

2022

## “When Will the Time Finally Come When There Will Only Be Humans”: An Unknown Letter from Beethoven to Heinrich von Struve

Julia Ronge

*Beethoven-Haus, Bonn*, [ronge@beethoven.de](mailto:ronge@beethoven.de)

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### Recommended Citation

Ronge, Julia (2022) "“When Will the Time Finally Come When There Will Only Be Humans”: An Unknown Letter from Beethoven to Heinrich von Struve," *The Beethoven Journal*: Vol. 35 , Article 2.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/beethovenjournal/vol35/iss1/2>

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## “When Will the Time Finally Come When There Will Only Be Humans”: An Unknown Letter from Beethoven to Heinrich von Struve

JULIA RONGE

On June 6, 2012, a Beethoven letter was auctioned in Berlin, the existence of which had not been so much as rumoured, let alone made known through publication. It immediately drew the attention of Beethoven scholars. Until then, the letter had slumbered in a north German private collection and had come to light only shortly before the auction.

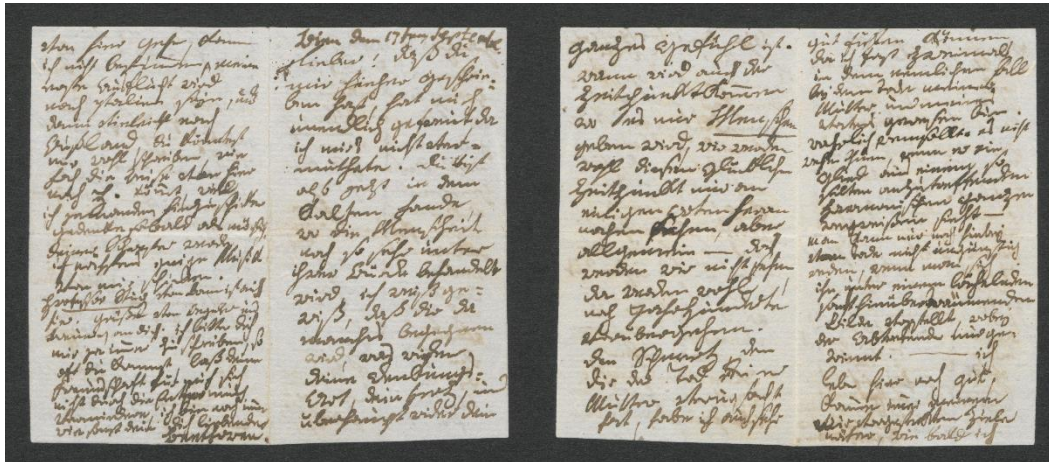
This newly discovered letter was in a virtually flawless state of preservation. The format especially is fetching. Opened up, this four-page letter measures 8.1 × 9.3 cm—no larger than the palm of one’s hand (see Figure 1). Even for that time, it is unusually small. Beethoven trimmed the paper so carefully to the desired size that no watermark can be recognized beyond that left by the wires of the paper-mould.

The letter is written very accurately and without corrections, which is rarely the case with Beethoven and always a sign of particular esteem for the addressee. It dates from 1795, a time from which very few written documents in Beethoven’s hand have come down to us. Scholars know of only eight autograph letters of Beethoven from the years up to and including 1794.<sup>2</sup> No letter had been authenticated from the year 1795, until now.

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This article was originally published in German as “*Wann wird auch der Zeitpunkt kommen wo es nur Menschen geben wird*”: Ein unbekannter Brief Beethovens an Heinrich von Struve. *Faksimile und Kommentar*. Jahrgabe des Vereins Beethoven-Haus 2018, Heft 34 (Bonn: Beethoven-Haus, 2018). The English translation is by Stephen M. Whiting.

<sup>2</sup> Beethoven to Joseph Wilhelm von Schaden, September 15, 1787 (Bonn, Beethoven-Haus, BH 1); Beethoven to Eleonore von Breuning, summer 1792 (Bonn, Beethoven-Haus, Wegeler Collection, W 6); Beethoven to Nikolaus Zmeskall, June 18, 1793 (Bonn, Beethoven-Haus, NE 87); Beethoven to an employee of the publishing firm Artaria & Co., after June 19, 1793 (Bonn, Beethoven-Haus, H. C. Bodmer Collection, HCB Br 273);



**Figure 1: Beethoven's letter to Heinrich von Struve, 17 September 1795 (Bonn, Beethoven-Haus, NE 375)**

The addressee is likewise unique. Beethoven is writing to Heinrich von Struve, one of his friends in Bonn who probably belonged to the Zehrgarten circle, a group of liberal-minded intellectuals who gathered regularly at the inn so named (with adjoining book-shop) on the town's market square. Scholars had previously known nothing about Beethoven's relationship to Struve, in contrast to other members of this group. Struve did sign the autograph book that Beethoven's friends presented to him before his departure for Vienna in November 1792, but no further contact between them had been documented. Lorenz von Breuning, who resided in Vienna during the mid-1790s, reported at the beginning of 1795 to his sister Eleonore in Bonn that "Struve intends to come to us in the spring."<sup>3</sup> This had been regarded as the only other mention of Struve among Beethoven's

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Beethoven to Eleonore von Breuning, November 2, 1793 (Bonn, Beethoven-Haus, Wegeler Collection, W 5); Beethoven to Nikolaus Simrock, June 18, 1794 (Bonn, Beethoven-Haus, H. C. Bodmer Collection, HCB Br 219); Beethoven to Nikolaus Zmeskall, summer 1794 (Vienna, Austrian National Library, 7/2-109); and Beethoven to Nikolaus Simrock, August 2, 1794 (Bonn, Beethoven-Haus, H. C. Bodmer Collection, HCB Br 220).

<sup>3</sup> "Der Struve will das Frühjahr zu uns kommen," Bonn, Beethoven-Haus, Wegeler Collection, W 119, fol. 1v.

circle of close acquaintances. Beethoven's letter to Struve sheds new light on this friendship, bringing it to the attention of scholars for the first time.

Heinrich Christoph Gottfried von Struve<sup>4</sup> was born on January 10, 1772, in Regensburg to Anton Sebastian Struve (1729–1802)<sup>5</sup> and Sophia Dorothea Struve *née* Reimers (1735–95). His father was a legate to the Perpetual Diet of Regensburg, where he represented the interests of Russia. Anton and Dorothea von Struve had twelve children—six daughters and six sons; four daughters and one son died before their parents. Heinrich von Struve's brothers Johann Gustav (1763–1828) and Johann Georg (1766–1831) were likewise diplomats in service to Russia. Two other brothers, Johann Christian (1768–1812) and August Wilhelm (1770–1838), lived in St. Petersburg, where they were employed as assessors at the College of Foreign Affairs and Postal Department, respectively. Struve's father enrolled Heinrich as a child in the Imperial Russian College of Foreign Affairs and thereby predetermined his career.

After study of political science (and also natural sciences) at university in Erlangen, Heinrich von Struve spent several years in Bonn. He too entered Russian Imperial service in 1790, presumably assisting his father at first.<sup>6</sup> In 1795 he travelled to St. Petersburg via Vienna, Kyiv, and Moscow. He returned the following year to work as a legation secretary in Russian service, first in the Lower Saxon district (*Kreis*) in Hamburg, then in Braunschweig and Gotha (1798), then in Stuttgart (1801). In 1801 he married Elisabeth Wilhelmine Sidonie, who was Countess Oexle von

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<sup>4</sup> For particulars of his life, see the article "Struve, Heinrich Christian [*sic*] Gottfried," in *Conversations-Lexicon. Neue Folge. In zwei Bänden. Zweite Abtheilung des zweiten Bandes oder des Hauptwerks zwölften Bandes zweite Hälfte. S–Z, nebst Nachträgen* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1826), 289–90; and Ludwig Pongratz, *Naturforscher im Regensburger und ostbayrischen Raum*, *Acta Albertina Ratisbonensia* 25 (Regensburg: Wunderlich, 1963), 135–36.

<sup>5</sup> See *Hauptzüge aus dem Leben unsers unvergeßlichen Vaters des weyland Rußisch-Kaiserlichen wirklichen Staatsraths, Residenten und Wolodimir-Ordens Ritters Herrn Anton Sebastian von Struve* (Munich, 1802).

<sup>6</sup> Struve marked the fiftieth anniversary of his diplomatic service in 1843 but had celebrated the twenty-fifth year of his accreditation in 1815. When he signed Beethoven's autograph book (see note 18), he already described himself as being "in Russisch Kaiserl. Diensten" (in Russian Imperial service).

Friedenberg (1780–1837), with whom he had three children: Anton Caspar August Gustav (1801–65), Elena (born and died 1803), and Therese Henriette Antoinette Elisabeth (1804–52). In 1805 Struve left Stuttgart, fleeing approaching French troops, and went first to Greiz (Thuringia),<sup>7</sup> then to Prague and Vienna. In 1809 he settled in Kassel, where he became a legate in the Russian embassy. In advance of Napoleon’s Russian campaign and the incipient War of the Sixth Coalition, Struve travelled once again to St. Petersburg. Shortly thereafter he returned to Germany, lived in Altona, and participated in the liberation of Hamburg in 1813. After unsettled years spent in Mecklenburg, Poland, Berlin, Dresden, and Leipzig, Struve became the Russian chargé d’affaires in Hamburg in August 1815, later consul general, resident minister, and finally, in 1821, Russian councillor of state to the Hanseatic cities Bremen, Hamburg, and Lübeck as well as to the grand duke of Oldenburg residing in Hamburg. For services rendered, Struve was decorated by Russia with the Order of St. Anne and with the Order of Vladimir.

Apart from his diplomatic work, Struve cultivated passions for mineralogy and botany. He acquired extensive collections of minerals,<sup>8</sup> insects, and sea creatures, and was considered a serious scientist in his day. In 1806 he met with Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in Karlsbad, with whom he shared his interest in geological formations. In his *Annals*, Goethe characterized Struve as being “as informed in the subject as he was communicative and obliging.”<sup>9</sup> As early as 1810 Struve was elected a corresponding member (Mathematical Class) of the Göttingen Academy of

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<sup>7</sup> Struve’s sister Philippina lived in Greiz, and his father was buried there as well.

<sup>8</sup> The mineralogical collection is described in Karl Cäsar von Leonhard, ed., *Taschenbuch für die gesamte Mineralogie*, vol. 15 (Frankfurt: J. C. Hermann, 1821), 384–90: the “Uebersicht des Mineralien-Kabinetts des K. Russischen Ministers und Generalkonsuls Herrn Ritters Heinrich von Struve in Hamburg.”

<sup>9</sup> “In diesem Fache so unterrichtet als mitteilend und gefällig.” [Johann Wolfgang von] Goethe, *Berliner Ausgabe*, vol. 16: *Poetische Werke, Autobiographische Schriften IV. Tag- und Jahreshefte, Biographische Einzelheiten, Reden, Testamente und Verfügungen* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verl., 1973), 185.

Sciences.<sup>10</sup> In 1816 he was elected a corresponding member of the Imperial Russian Academy of Sciences, and in 1822, a member of the German Academy of Naturalists Leopoldina (now the German Academy of Sciences). Time and again, Struve's scientific findings were published.<sup>11</sup>

In September 1835 he visited Bonn to participate in a meeting of naturalists and doctors—a meeting also attended by Beethoven's old friend Franz Gerhard Wegeler.<sup>12</sup> Wegeler apparently maintained contact with Struve over the years. On March 1, 1826, the cellist Bernhard Romberg (1767–1841), who had joined the *Hofkapelle* in Bonn in 1789 and in 1820, after years as a journeyman virtuoso, settled in Hamburg, reported to Wegeler that “Minister von Struve and Doctor Chausepie were much gladdened by the receipt of your letters.”<sup>13</sup> In November 1837 Heinrich von Struve was a founding member of the Society for Natural Sciences (Naturwissenschaftlicher Verein) in Hamburg, and, until 1843, its first

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<sup>10</sup> In the Göttingen Academy Struve is cited with a third given name, Gotthold. It is no longer possible to determine how this error arose. I am grateful to Gabriele Röder of the Göttingen Academy of Sciences for this information.

<sup>11</sup> For example, his *Mineralogische Beiträge, vorzüglich im Hinblick auf Württemberg und den Schwarzwald* [Mineralogical contributions, especially with regard to Württemberg and the Black Forest] (Gotha: Ettingersche Buchhandlung, 1807); *Beiträge zur Mineralogie und Geologie des nördlichen Amerika's, nach amerikanischen Zeitschriften bearbeitet* [Contributions to the mineralogy and geology of North America, based on American journals] (Hamburg: Perthes & Besser, 1822); *Controverse über die Frage: Was ist Mineral-Species? Veranlasst durch die im Herbste 1845 beim Grundbaue der St. Nikolaikirche in Hamburg entdeckten Cristalle, nebst einer Charakteristik des Struovits in Hinsicht seines Vorkommens, seiner Kristallisation, seiner chemischen, physischen, optischen Verhältnisse, etc.* [Controversy upon the question, what is a mineral species? Caused by the crystal discovered in the foundation work for the St. Nicholas Church Hamburg in fall 1845, together with a characterization of struvite with respect to its occurrence, its crystallization, its chemical, physical, optical properties, etc.] (Hamburg: F. H. Nestler und Melle, 1846).

<sup>12</sup> See *Isis: Encyclopädische Zeitschrift, vorzüglich für Naturgeschichte, vergleichende Anatomie und Physiologie*, ed. [Lorenz] Oken, 9–10 (1836): cols. 641–808. [[https://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb10531532\\_00349.html](https://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb10531532_00349.html)] Struve's name appears in the list of participants in col. 660 (“v. Struve, Russischer Minister Resid. Sts. R., a. Hamburg”), Wegeler's name in col. 661.

<sup>13</sup> “Der Minister von Struve, so wie der Doctor Chausepie haben sich sehr über den Empfang Ihrer Briefe gefreut.” Bernhard Romberg to Franz Gerhard Wegeler, Hamburg, March 1, 1826, Bonn, Beethoven-Haus Wegeler Collection, W 111 fol. 1v.

president. His declared goal from the beginning was the establishment of a Museum of Natural History, which eventually took place in May 1843.<sup>14</sup> In August of that year, on the occasion of his fiftieth year of service, the city of Hamburg conferred honorary citizenship upon Heinrich von Struve. He died there on January 9, 1851.

It is not known why Struve came to Bonn, probably at the end of the 1780s, and remained there at least through 1792. The *Brockhaus Lexicon* of 1826<sup>15</sup> asserts that Struve studied in Bonn, but his name is not to be found in the register of matriculants at the university. It is conceivable that Struve came to Bonn to learn the rudiments of diplomatic craft. His elder sister Susanna Maria lived there with her second husband, Johann Ludwig Dörfeld (1744–1829), secretary to the English legation and a member of the Bonn Reading Society (*Lesegesellschaft*). Other diplomats belonged to the circle of friends at the Zehrgarten and also wrote entries in Beethoven's autograph book: J. L. Facius was one of three sons of the Russian agent in Bonn, and Carl August Malchus was secretary to the imperial envoy, Count von Westphal.

Struve's sister Susanna and her husband both subscribed in 1785 for copies of the *Dilettanterien* by Christian Gottlob Neefe (1748–98).<sup>16</sup> In 1784 and again in 1786 she turns up as a baptismal sponsor in the records of the Bonn parish churches St. Remigius and St. Gangolph.<sup>17</sup> The fact that she was a Protestant was at the time no obstacle to her being a godparent. She died

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<sup>14</sup> Concerning the founding of the Society for Natural Sciences and of the Museum of Natural History in Hamburg, see Herbert Weidner and Otto Kraus, "Aus der Geschichte des Naturwissenschaftlichen Vereins in Hamburg," *Verhandlungen des naturwissenschaftlichen Vereins Hamburg*, new series 30 (1988): 5–150, especially section C, "Ein schwungvoller Anfang," by Herbert Weidner.

<sup>15</sup> *Conversations-Lexicon* (as in n. 3), 289.

<sup>16</sup> Christian Gottlob Neefe, *Dilettanterien* (Bonn, 1785).

<sup>17</sup> In the baptismal register for St. Remigius (Stadtarchiv Bonn, SN 20 – 4/37), p. 290: together with the English envoy Rudolph Heathcote, sponsor of Rudolph Beyer on August 25, 1784; p. 353: together with her husband, sponsor of Johannes Ludwig Dillenberger (in this baptism neither the parents nor the godparents were Catholic, which is indicated in the register with the annotation 'acath.[olici]'). In the baptismal register for St. Gangolph (Stadtarchiv Bonn, SN 20 – 2/18), p. 241: together with Kaspar Anton von Mastiaux, sponsor of Johannes Nepomuk Anton Brandt, son of the *Hofkapelle* tenor Christoph Brandt, on May 12, 1784.

in March 1789. Although she was not Catholic, Elector Max Franz permitted her burial in the city cemetery.<sup>18</sup> The *Bönnische Intelligenzblatt* published an enthusiastic report that underscored the elector's enlightened spirit:

On the 17th of the month the wife of Herr Dörfeld (secretary to the English legation) and daughter of Herr Struve (chargé d'affaires at the Russian court in Regensburg), of the Protestant faith, died here of consumption in her 30th year. She was one of those lovely female creatures in whose face one might read, in unmistakable features, all the gentleness of her virtuous character. Her heart was so good, so noble, so completely attuned to the true spirit of Christianity, that she would really have been happiest uniting all of humanity in virtue, friendship, brotherly love, and beneficence; even more decisive for her virtuous character is that she combined an active charity with this cosmopolitan heart, and that she was just as caring a foster-mother to the poor as she was a Christian, a faithful wife, and a warm friend.

As a Protestant, she now rests in the local common cemetery amongst her Catholic brothers. Not only did the Prince, whose wise, beneficent intention it is to spread the gently gladdening spirit of Christian tolerance amongst his subjects, approve of this, but one also did not detect the least distinction in creed, given the complete simplicity of the local order of burial. Most of those who accompanied her body lamented only that such a good, dear woman had died, and to our good fortune, there was not a single hypocrite's sigh over the evil times of Enlightenment!!!<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> What is today called the Alte Friedhof, in which by electoral decree from April 1787 onward all deceased persons who were baptized had to be buried for reasons of hygiene. The grave of Susanna Dörfeld no longer survives.

<sup>19</sup> "Am 17ten l.[aufenden] M.[onats] starb hier die Gemahlinn des hiesig englischen Gesandtschafts-Sekretärs Hrn Dörfeld, eine Tochter des Hrn Struve Chargee D'Affaires des Russischen Hofes zu Regensburg, Protestantischer Religion, im 30 Jahr ihres Alters, an der Lungensucht. Sie war eins von den holdseligen weiblichen Geschöpfen, auf deren Antlitz man in so wahren unverkennbaren Zügen die ganze Sanftheit ihres tugendhaften



We do not know whether Heinrich von Struve came to Bonn as early as 1789—with the intention, perhaps, of seeing his gravely ill sister before she died—or only later. Nor do we know the length of his stay. Presumably he would have left Bonn before the French occupation of the city in October 1794.

As already mentioned, Heinrich von Struve set out in the spring of 1795 for St. Petersburg via Vienna, Kyiv, and Moscow. He apparently remained in epistolary contact with his friends after his departure. In September 1795 Ludwig van Beethoven answered a letter from him:

*Wien den 17<sup>ten</sup> Septembr.*

*Lieber! daß du  
mir hieher geschrie-  
ben hast, hat mich  
unendlich gefreut da  
ich mir's nicht ver-  
muthete. du bist  
also jezt in dem*

Vienna, 17 September

Dear one! That you  
have written me here  
has made me  
endlessly happy, since  
I wasn't expecting  
it. So now  
you are in the

---

Karakters liest. Ihr Herz war so gut, so edel, so ganz nach dem wahren Geiste des Christenthums gestimmt, daß sie wirklich den größten Theil ihrer Glückseligkeit darinn gefunden haben würde, das ganze menschliche Geschlecht zur Tugend, Freundschaft, Bruderliebe u. Wohlthätigkeit vereinigen zu können; aber noch entscheidender für das Tugendhafte ihres Karakters ist es immer: daß sie mit eben diesem kosmopolitischen Herzen auch thätige Nächstenliebe verband, u. eine eben so sorgsame fromme Pflegmutter der Armen als übrigens eine Christinn, treue Gattinn, und warme Freundinn war.

Als Protestantin ruht sie nun auf dem hiesigem gemeinsamen Kirchhofe unter ihren katholischen Brüdern. Der Fürst, dessen weise wohlthätige Absicht es ist, den sanft beseligenden Geist der christlichen Duldung unter seinen Unterthanen zu verbreiten, verstattete solches nicht nur, sondern man verspürte auch nicht einst, zumal bei der dahier angeordneten ganz einfachen Begräbnißart, den mindesten Unterschied zwischen Glaubensgenossenschaft. Die meisten, die ihre Leiche begleiteten, beklagten nur, daß eine so gute liebe Frau gestorben war, und Heil uns! man hörte nicht einmal einen einzigen Frömmings-Seufzer über die bösen Zeiten der Aufklärung!!!“ *Von Sr. Kurfürstl. Durchlaucht zu Köln etc.etc. gnädigst privilegiertes Bönisches Intelligenzblatt, in Anzeigen und Aufsätzen zum Besten des Nahrungsstandes und zur Beförderung der Aufklärung*, no. 13, 26 March 1789, 98.

*Kalten Lande,  
wo die Menschheit  
noch so sehr unter  
ihrer Würde behandelt  
wird, ich weiß ge-  
wiß, daß dir da  
manches begegnen  
wird, was wi<e>der  
deine Denkungs-  
Art, dein Herz, und  
überhaupt wider dein  
ganzes Gefühl ist.  
wann wird auch der  
Zeitpunkt kommen  
wo es nur Menschen  
geben wird, wir werden  
wohl diesen Glücklichen  
Zeitpunkt nur an  
einigen Orten heran  
nahen sehen, aber  
allgemein – das  
werden wir nicht sehen,  
da werden wohl  
noch JahrHunderte  
vorübergehen.  
den Schmerz, den  
dir der Tod deiner  
Mutter verursacht  
hat, habe ich auch sehr  
gut fühlen können,  
da ich fast<sup>20</sup> zweimal  
in dem nemlichen fall  
bey dem Tode meiner*

Cold Land,  
where humanity  
is treated so very far  
beneath its dignity,  
I am certain  
that there you will  
encounter much  
that goes against  
your way of thinking,  
your heart, and  
against your  
whole feeling.  
When will the  
time finally come  
when there will only be  
humans,  
we will  
probably see that happy  
time approaching in only  
a few places, but  
generally – that  
we shall not see,  
probably  
centuries more  
will pass [before we do].  
The pain that  
your mother's  
death caused you,  
I too have  
felt keenly,  
for I have been twice  
in the self-same situation,  
with the death of my

---

<sup>20</sup> The word "fast" is here an intensifier.

*Mutter und meines  
vaters gewesen bin.  
wahrlich, wemsollte es nicht  
wehe thuen, wenn er ein  
Glied aus einem so  
selten anzutreffenden  
Harmonischen Ganzen  
wegreißen sieht –  
man kann nur noch hiebey  
vom Tode nicht ungünstig  
reden, wenn man sich  
ihn unter einem lächelnden  
sanft hinüberträumenden  
Bilde vorstellt, wobey  
der Abtretende nur ge-  
winnt. — ich  
lebe hier noch gut,  
komme immer meinem  
mir vorgestekten Ziele  
näher, wie bald ich  
von hier gehe, kann  
ich nicht bestimmen, meine  
erste Ausflucht wird  
nach ytalien seyn, und  
dann vielleicht nach  
Rußland, du könntest  
mir wohl schreiben, wie  
hoch die reise von hier  
nach P. kömmt, weil  
ich jemanden hinzuschicken  
gedenke sobald als möglich.  
deiner Schwester werde  
ich nächstens einige Musik  
von mir schicken.  
Professor Stup von bonn ist auch*

mother and of my father.  
Truly, whom would it not  
hurt to see a  
member from such  
a rarely encountered  
harmonic whole  
torn away.  
One can only  
speak not unfavourably of  
death, if one pictures it  
as a smiling,  
gently thither-dreaming  
image, whereby  
the deceased only  
gains. — I  
still live well here,  
I come ever closer to the  
goal I have set for myself,  
how soon I  
shall leave here,  
I cannot say, my  
first trip will  
be to Italy, and  
then perhaps to  
Russia, you might  
write me how  
much the journey  
to P[etersburg] costs,  
because I'm thinking of  
sending someone there as  
soon as possible.  
I will send your sister  
some music of mine  
in the near future.  
Professor Stup from Bonn

*hier. Grüße von Wegeler und  
Breuning an dich. ich bitte dich  
mir ja immer zu schreiben, so  
oft du kannst, laß deine  
Freundschaft für mich sich  
nicht durch die Entfernung  
vermindern, ich bin noch immer  
wie sonst dein dich liebender  
Beethoven.*

is also here. Greetings to  
you from Wegeler and  
Breuning. I beg you to  
keep writing me as often  
as you can. Let your  
friendship for me not  
diminish through  
distance.  
I am, as ever,  
your loving  
Beethoven.

Beethoven's salutation—"Dear One!" (Lieber!) without any further qualifier—is quite exclusive; only Franz Wegeler is ever addressed in this way. Because Beethoven names no name, the addressee cannot be inferred from the letter itself. This information derives instead from the provenance and from the nineteenth-century envelope in which the letter was enclosed, which bears the inscription "Autograph du célèbre / Compositeur Beethoven / billet adressé a M<sup>r</sup> Henri / de Struve" (Autograph of the famous / composer Beethoven / note addressed to Mr Heinrich von Struve). The content of the letter supports this description. Beethoven is assuming that Struve is already in Russia, hence "in the Cold Land, where humanity is treated so very far beneath its dignity." In 1795 Catherine II ("the Great," 1729–96) still ruled Russia. Although she adhered to the ideals of the Enlightenment and carried out numerous reforms in administration and public welfare, the situation of the peasants worsened under her rule; they not only remained serfs but lost further rights.

Beethoven is certain that such suppression goes against Struve's convictions; apparently the two had exchanged views on the subject often and at length. Struve had written the following in Beethoven's autograph book:

The Human Calling.  
To discern truth, to love beauty,  
To desire the Good, to do the Best.

Bonn, 30 October 1792  
Even from afar, think now and then  
Of your true, sincere friend  
Heinr. Struve from Regensburg  
In Russian Imperial service  
Creed: After the flowering of youth, may you harvest in a riper  
season the fruits of wisdom.<sup>21</sup>

With “The Human Calling” (Bestimmung des Menschen) he was quoting the motto of the Enlightenment philosopher Moses Mendelssohn (1729–86).<sup>22</sup> This motto was certainly not only Struve’s guiding thought, but also that of the Zehrgarten circle. In the same spirit, Beethoven entered a similar creed into the autograph book of Theodora Johanna Vocke in 1793:

Do good wherever one can,  
Love liberty above all,  
Never (even at the seat of power)  
Deny the truth.<sup>23</sup>

Beethoven’s yearning for a time when there are only humans, without distinctions of rank and class, accords with Schiller’s ode *An die Freude*, which Beethoven set to music more than once. He may have decided in the Ninth Symphony to adopt Schiller’s toned-down “Alle Menschen werden

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<sup>21</sup> “Bestimmung des Menschen. Wahrheit erkennen, Schönheit lieben, Gutes wollen, das Beste thun. Bonn den 30<sup>ten</sup> October 1792. Denk, auch ferne, zuweilen Deines wahren aufrichtigen Freundes Heinr. Struve aus Regensburg, in Russisch Kaiserl. Diensten Symbol[um] Nach der Blüte der Jugend erndte im reifern Alter die Früchte der Weisheit ein.” Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien, Cod. 15259, Bl. 14r.

<sup>22</sup> The quotation is attested in numerous entries by Mendelssohn in autograph books. See the letter from Daniel Chodowiecki to Countess Christiane Louise von Solms-Laubach, Berlin September 29, 1783, reproduced with commentary as no. 245 in Moses Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Jubiläumsausgabe, vol. 22/1, *Entlegene zeitgenössische Texte zu Moses Mendelssohns Leben und Wirken*, ed. Michael Albrecht (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1995), 230–32.

<sup>23</sup> “Wohlthuen, wo man kann, Freyheit über alles lieben, Wahrheit nie, (auch sogar Am Throne nicht,) verläugnen.” The autograph was lost in the events of war; this text follows a photo-negative image in the Beethoven-Haus.

Brüder" (may all humans become brothers); but the earlier version of that line, "Bettler werden Fürstenbrüder" (may paupers become princes' brothers), which Beethoven also knew, came much closer to the opinions expressed in the young man's letter to Struve. This letter is one of a kind for the convictions formulated therein; no other autograph document has been preserved that states his political attitude so plainly.

The letter is also unique for its mention of Johann van Beethoven. Beethoven expresses his condolences to Struve in the death of his mother, Sophia Dorothea Struve, who passed away on 21 May 1795. The mention of her death is what clarifies the dating of the letter, for Beethoven had dispensed with writing down the year. Beethoven can empathize so well with his friend's loss, because he himself has already lost both his parents. His mother died on July 17, 1787; his father, on December 18, 1792, when Beethoven was already in Vienna. The mention of both deceased parents in one sentence permits an extremely rare glimpse into Beethoven's emotional world, for he is making no distinction between mother and father but emphasizing the pain that their passing has caused him. Biographies of Beethoven have traditionally, and probably wrongly, portrayed the father as violent; this letter gives no indication that Beethoven considered him a brute. Beethoven's views about death allow a brief glimpse of his hope in an afterlife, without permitting any deductions about his religiosity.

After politics and emotions, Beethoven finally turns to more worldly business—not unusual in his correspondence. He is forging many plans for travel. Concrete destinations are not known, but the context suggests major concert tours or even a change of residence. The formulations "I still live well here" and "how soon I shall leave here" even allow the conclusion that Beethoven was thinking about leaving Vienna for good. It is also conceivable that, by September 1795, discussion (if not even planning) had already begun concerning the concert tour undertaken in February 1796 to Prague, Dresden, Leipzig, and Berlin. Beethoven's question about the costs of travel to "P." (probably St. Petersburg is meant here) might even permit the supposition that he already wants to give this letter to the unidentified friend before getting the answer to his question. Perhaps the unusual format of the letter originates from this private mode of transportation, for it fits perfectly into a coat pocket or even into the cuff of a sleeve.

Beethoven's thought about travelling to Italy may have to do with the Romberg cousins Andreas and Bernhard. The violinist and cellist had, like Beethoven, been members of the *Hofkapelle* in Bonn and had visited him in Vienna during a concert tour in spring of 1795. From there they travelled via Munich to Italy and only returned to Vienna the year after.

Beethoven's declared intention to send music to Struve's sister in the near future, is astonishing, insofar as, apart from the sister who had died young in Bonn, he would have known neither of them personally. Possible addressees include Katharina Elisabetha (1759–1838), married to Christoph von Selpert, councillor of several imperial towns and comital plenipotentiary (in Regensburg?), and Philippina Rosina Elisabetha (1775–1819), married to Franz von Grün, president and chancellor of the Principality of Reuss-Plauen in Greiz. Neither sister lived in Vienna; their husbands too were diplomats. Perhaps Heinrich had asked during his visit for compositions of Beethoven's to give to his sisters.

During his passage through Vienna, Struve had surely met his old Bonn friends Franz Gerhard Wegeler and Lorenz von Breuning, from whom Beethoven now conveys regards. He had apparently missed seeing Johann Reiner Stupp (1767–1825), whose arrival Beethoven reports.<sup>24</sup> Stupp's parents were Adolph Stupp (1736–99) and Maria Sybilla *née* Mansfeld (1736–1803). Like his brothers Friedrich Wilhelm and Gregor/Georg before him, Stupp too had studied philosophy and law (from 1786 to 1789) at the Electoral University in Bonn. By 1791 he was residing in Würzburg, where in May he was named professor in Bonn. For a short time that same year he also functioned as "Vicehofmeister der churfürstl. Edelknaben" (vice-tutor of the electoral pages).<sup>25</sup> After a short stay in Göttingen, where he completed his studies, Stupp took up his position at Bonn University in November 1792, where he held the professorship in "die juristische Encyclopädie, und das römische Recht" (general juridical education and Roman law).<sup>26</sup> In 1793 he was promoted to the office of privy

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<sup>24</sup> For biographical information on Stupp, see Max Braubach, *Die erste Bonner Hochschule: Maxische Akademie und kurfürstliche Universität 1774/77 bis 1798* (Bonn: Ludwig Rohrscheid, 1966), 157–59.

<sup>25</sup> Friendly communication from Alexander Wolfshohl.

<sup>26</sup> See the *Kurköllnischer Hofkalender auf das Jahr 1794*, 121.

councillor to the electoral court. Johann Reiner Stupp was another member of the Bonn Reading Society, into which he was accepted in January 1793. In 1795 he was temporarily taken prisoner by the French occupiers, and he was able to flee via Mergentheim to Vienna. His further biography is unknown, but he probably did not remain in Vienna, for at the end of December 1825 Franz Gerhard Wegeler informed Beethoven of Stupp's death.<sup>27</sup>

Beethoven maintained contact with many friends from Bonn, some of them all his life; and he asks Struve, too, not to forget him, despite the great distance between them. Whether the two met once again when Struve returned to Vienna we cannot yet say.

The present letter enables us to gain fresh and deep insight into the convictions and feelings of the twenty-four-year-old up-and-coming artist. Given its many connections to Bonn, it fits perfectly into the collection of the Beethoven-Haus, which tried as early as 2012 to acquire the letter, but in vain. A French investment fund specializing in manuscripts was prepared not only to pay any price but also to drive the prices still higher. The fund reckoned with increasing the market value of its whole collection and hence its return on capital. The Beethoven-Haus declined at the time to participate in this bidding war, and with heavy hearts withdrew from the auction.

That proved to be the right decision. Because the investment fund was operating a pyramid scheme in order to acquire the immense capital it needed, the French government intervened and shut down the fund in 2015. Little by little, the more than 130,000 manuscripts in its possession are coming onto the market again. Thus the Beethoven-Haus got another chance—in Paris in June 2018—to acquire the letter to Struve, and this time it was the lucky bidder. The acquisition was made possible through the support of the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and Media, the Ministry of Culture and Science of North Rhine-Westphalia, and the Cultural Foundation of the German Federal States. The letter entered into

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<sup>27</sup> "Among our acquaintances Privy Councillor Stupp died 3 weeks ago" (Von unsern Bekannten ist Hofr. Stup vor 3 Wochen gestorben), Franz Gerhard Wegeler to Beethoven, December 28, 1825 (Beethoven-Haus Bonn, NE 55).



the collection of the Beethoven-Haus (shelf-mark NE 375) and was published for the first time.