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Editorial

Dear Collector Friends,

Once again, this year, the general meeting of our working group took place in a relaxed atmosphere. One is almost tempted to speak of a family atmosphere, but philately as a whole is too one-sidedly male on the one hand and too old on the other. A working group cannot change that. The basic work must be done locally, in the local clubs. Specialists for individual areas of collecting can only provide support – which we will of course continue to do – but cannot pick up philatelists at home. I would like to thank all participants for a well-run general assembly!

A few days after our general meeting, the editors Thomas Löbbering (Estonia), Ruud van Wijnen (Latvia) and Martin Bechstedt (Lithuania) and our layout designer Friedhelm Doell completed their work on this issue of BALTIKUM. Together with the expert contributors, they have once again succeeded in highlighting the diversity of Baltic philately. I would like to thank them most sincerely! I would like to appeal to all members to suggest and offer potential articles to the specialist editors. Everyone will receive all possible support. The three expert editors will answer all philatelic questions competently and comprehensively.

At the end of July, the most important date of the philatelic year is on the calendar: the Mare Balticum will take place in the European Capital of Culture Tartu; Friedhelm Doell provided detailed information about the event in issue 15 of BALTIKUM. The board hopes for a large turnout in Tartu.

We will take part in the competition at the German-Brazilian bilateral exhibition in Haldensleben in June. The BALTIKUM and our website have been registered again. We will also take part in the literature competition of the Working Groups. The winners will be announced at the International Stamp Fair in Ulm at the end of October. We will again have an information stand there and hope for a large turnout. Unfortunately, our working group does not have its own stand in Haldensleben. I will be there on behalf of the Israel interest group and will of course be talking about the Baltic States.

Our new member Aija Héloise Pince comes from Latvia in the Baltic States. Pierfranco Longhi is also a new member from Italy. We welcome them both and look forward to philatelic exchange!

Two members, Hansjörg Föll and Christian Schmidt, left us at the turn of the year due to work and age reasons. We would like to thank them both for their contribution and wish them continued fun and success with their hobby!

Yours, Torsten Berndt Constance, May 2024

Härra, proua, preili – How to read and understand Estonian addresses

Friedhelm Doell, Aschheim (D)

Whenever they come across an Estonian address, authors who do not speak the language or only have a basic knowledge of it repeatedly come up against their linguistic limitations. What do all the abbreviations mean, what are the possibilities and variants, and how can they be categorised? The whole thing becomes particularly interesting if you are interested in ‘social philately’, i.e. in the question of ‘who wrote to whom and what did they write about?’.

The following article is not intended to be a manual (that would go beyond the scope of BALTIKUM), but it does present the most important terms and abbreviations used in Estonian addresses and address labels. It does not include any explanation of stamps, stickers or notes on routing or delivery; this article deals only with the markings used by the sender and, where applicable, the recipient. I would like to thank Oliver Hanschmidt for discussing the finer points of their meaning.

Target regulations on the content

Chapter B.4) "Correct Addressing" in the Baltic States Working Guide No. 2 explains the requirements of the Estonian Postal and Telecommunications Directory of 1929 on how to write domestic letter addresses "so that the letter arrives quickly".

Letter addresses sent to the city had to contain (Postmargi koht = place for the stamp):

1. first name and surname or company name of the letter recipient

2. street name and house number

3. flat number (korter, kr.)

4. name of the town.

Letter addresses sent to the countryside should also contain the address details as stated in the official regulations of 1929:

1. first name and surname or company name of the letter recipient

2. homestead (talu)

3. village (küla)

4. municipality (vald)

5. if applicable, more detailed designations such as "village post box Männiku" and

6. name of the place with the post office or postal agency.

The last line should be underlined in both cases.

However, there have always been, and still are, many mixed formats and different sequences of address components, e.g. the name of the addressee is often found at the end of the address.

Currently, postal addresses should be written as follows [1]:

1.	Recipient (first name and surname of a person or institution)	
	in the countryside:	*into the city:*
2.	homestead (talu), if applicable locality (alev/ik) / village (küla) municipality (vald)	Street name, house number, Flat number, if applicable 2
3.	Postcode	
4.	district (maakond) (optionally)	town
5.	Country (may be omitted within Estonia)	

But beware: in practice, there are many variations in how parts of the address are written one below the other. It is therefore not possible to draw conclusions about the function or meaning of a text from its position alone. The following explanations are intended to help.

Postcodes in Estonia

In 1941, the German Reichspost was the first postal administration in the world to introduce area codes, from the end of 1943 also for the Reichspostkommissariat Ostland with the standardised area code "5c".

Postcodes were introduced in Germany in 1962/1965, in the Soviet Union (and thus also in the Estonian SSR) only in 1971[3]. These postcodes were 6-digit numeric and began with "20...." in Estonia. They had to be written on forms (envelopes and postcards) in machine-readable form and also appeared at the top of the sender's address. After Estonia regained its independence in 1990, the country code "EE...." was initially used instead of "20....", with the 4 following digits corresponding to those of the Soviet era. In some cases, "EE" was also omitted and only the "rest" was used as a 4-digit postal code [4] [5].

[1] https://et.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aadress [19.05.2024]

[2] For example, 67-3 means: house no. 67, apartment 3.

[3] Previously only on a trial basis in 1930/31 in the Ukrainian SSR.

[4] Hämar, Rudolf 1994: Estnische Postleitzahlen (Estonian postcodes), in: *Eesti Post Nr. 18/1994.* Mitteilungsblatt Nr. 18/1994 der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Estland. Dortmund. p. 27 f.

New 5-digit postal codes were introduced in Estonia on July 1, 1998. The main purpose was to speed up the sorting of letters in large post offices with several delivery sectors. Previously, these post offices had only a single postcode, but now up to 10 delivery sectors were integrated into the postcode (the old postcodes were valid until the end of 1998)[6].

Pronunciation and grammar

A few basic rules for pronouncing Estonian[7]:

- The emphasis is always on the first vowel (underlined in the examples), even with compound diphthongs and expressions made up of several words (e.g. V<u>i</u>ljandi, v<u>ä</u>ike, v<u>ä</u>ga <u>a</u>ustatud).
- *A, e, i, o, u, ö* and ü sound like in German.
- The German *short A* is pronounced like the "u" in "hut" only more open and tense. The German *long A* is pronounced like the "a" in "father".
- The German *short E* is pronounced like the "e" in "get" or in "men". The German *long E* is pronounced like the "a" in "laid" but longer and without gliding.
- The *short i* is pronounced like the "i" in "mitten". The German *long i* is pronounced like the "ee" in "seed" but without gliding.
- The *short O* is pronounced like the "o" in "knot" or in "hot" if you are British. The *long O* is pronounced like the "o" in "so" but with the lips more rounded and without gliding.
- The *short U* is pronounced like the "oo" in "foot". The *long U* is pronounced like the "oo" in "pool" or "stool" but with the lips more rounded and without gliding.
- There are no English equivalents for the German *long or short Ö* (O-umlaut). They are pronounced like a German E with the lips rounded.
- There are no English equivalents for the German *short or long Ü* (U-umlaut) either. They are pronounced like a German i with the lips rounded. Or better, the "ew" of the word "yew" said in disgust with the lips rounded but tensed and no gliding.
- The ä (the German *long and short Ä* (A-umlaut) are usually pronounced like the German long and short E although some native speakers may pronounce them some-

[5] Kromm, Max 1995: Estnische Postämter und Postleitzahlen (Estonian post offices and postcodes), in: *Eesti Post Nr. 18/1994.* Mitteilungsblatt Nr. 18/1994 der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Estland. Dortmund. p. 51 ff.

[6] Benenson, Osip 1998: Neues aus Estland (News from Estonia), in: *Eesti Post Nr. 27/1998.* Mitteilungsblatt Nr. 27/1998 der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Estland. Dortmund. p. 27

[7] Cf. Doell, Friedhelm 2005: Vom deutsch sein und vom Gast sein in Estland (Being German and being a guest in Estonia), in: *Eesti Post Nr. 40/2005.* Mitteilungsblatt Nr. 40/2005 der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Estland. Dortmund. p. 5 ff.

what differently.[8] In Estonian, it is pronounced more openly (sounds vulgar in German) (e.g. hästi = good)

- the õ (called "o with Tilde" or "o-tilde" for short) sounds similar to the international after-thought sound (written "eh" in literary German). To form the vowel "õ", form a German "u" (English “oo”) and then pull the corners of your mouth to the side with your fingers (e.g. õhupost [airmail], which is not pronounced "öhupost").
- Vowels are pronounced as they are written, especially with diphthongs. äe sounds like ä+e (e.g. päevaleht = daily newspaper), ei like e+i (e.g. reis = journey) etc.; vowel doubling lengthens the pronunciation (e.g. Haapsalu) (but not at compound expressions).
- P, t and k are not aspirated (i.e. followed by a breathy "h"), their pronunciation tends towards b (bp), d (dt) and g (gk).
- H corresponds to the German "ch" in both variants (either like “ch” in champagne or as a rasping sound made in the back of the mouth something like clearing the throat before you spit – the Scots use this sound to pronounce “loch” as in Loch Ness) and is not a vowel lengthening as it were in German (e.g. rahva = people, pronounced rachwa, kohtukutse = court summons, pronounced kochtu-kutse)
- Š corresponds to the German voiceless "sch" (as “sh” in “ship”, “shoe”, “shred” or “shadow”.), ž to the voiced "g" (as in the French words garage or mirage), but these letters are not used for Estonian, but only for (from an Estonian point of view) foreign language expressions.
- V is pronounced like "w" in “wanted”, in old names it often appears as w (with the spelling reform in 1927 the spelling was changed from w to Estonian v).
- Estonian does not recognise the grammatical gender of nouns. An Estonian term can therefore refer to a man or a woman, as long as the biological gender is not derived from other words (such as Mr or Mrs). In more recent times, there is also an ending -anna for explicitly female persons. An example: sõber means friend, sõbranna means explicitly "female friend".
- Street names (like stop names) are generally not written in the nominative case, but in the short form of the inner local case (see grammar box); they therefore usually end with a vowel.
- It should be noted that Estonians sometimes write the residential place of a person in the form "in xxx", which in Estonian is expressed by the inner local case with the ending "s" after the genitive form (meaning "in something"). For example, if the line with the place name says "Võrus", it means "in Võru".
- The Tallinn district of Nõmme has a special linguistic feature: people who live there do not live "in Nõmme" (Nõmmes), but "on Nõmme" (Nõmmel).

Then there is also the form "into xxx" (often for organisations, administrations, departments etc.), which in Estonian is expressed by the inner local case with the ending "-se"

[8] Thanks to https://www.learngermanonline.org/pronunciation for the examples of pronunciation in English

(often with s-doubling). "valla valitsusse" therefore means "into the municipal administration" with the meaning “to the municipal administration”, "... külasse" = "into the village ...".

The Estonian “to the xxx” or “to xxx” in connection with persons or locative terms is done with the outer locative case with the ending "-le" after the genitive (meaning "to/on something" or "to a place" in the sense of "to xxx"). "juhatusele" therefore means "to the presidency", "direktorile" = "to the director", "Võrumaale" = "to Võrumaa", "põllutööministeeriumile" = "to the Ministry of Agriculture".

The ending "-lt" on the genitive case of a word means "away from something" or "from something" for short; "Viljandi vallavalitsuselt" therefore means "from the city government (= city administration) of Viljandi", "Venemaalt" = "from Russia".

The ending "...-ga" (added to the genitive) corresponds to the preposition "with ..." i.e. "abikaasaga" = "with spouse", "perega" = "with family".

A short grammar excursion

Estonian is an "agglutinative" language, in which endings are "glued" to the genitive to form grammatical cases, whereas in German and English prepositions or postpositions (words placed before or after, such as “from”, “to”, “at”, “with”, etc.) are used for this purpose.

An example:

(NB: the word components are separated by dashes in brackets for clarification purposes only).

*klaas (pronounced with an “a” like in “father”) = glass (**nominative**), gen. (**genitive**) klaasi (klaas-**i**) = of the glass.*

Postally, so-called inner and outer local cases are of particular importance, which (like most other cases) are formed by attaching ("sticking") other groups of letters (morphemes) to the genitive:

***Internal locative cases**: klaasisse* (klaas-i-**sse**) = into the glass), klaasis (klaas-i-**s**) = in the glass, klaasist (klaas-i-**st**) = out of the glass.*

(this form is not commonly used with klaas, more common would be klaasi sisse or shortly klaasi (klaas-i))*

***Outer local cases**: klaasile (klaas-i-**le**) = to the glass (outside) / onto the glass, klaasil (klaas-i-**l**) = on the glass (outside) / on the glass (on top), klaasilt (klaas-i-**lt**) = away from the glass.*

The added endings -se (-sse), -s, -st, -le, -l, -lt are the same in all Estonian words and can be transferred accordingly.

Unfortunately, the genitive is not always formed regularly and can also include changes to the word stem (without a change in meaning!). For example: Nominative (nom.) mees (=man) → Genitive (gen.) = mehe, nom. uba (=bean) → Gen. = oa, while attached vowels such as the "u" in nom. kirik (=church) → Gen. = kiriku are easier to understand.

This often makes it difficult for readers unfamiliar with Estonian to find the nominative case (the lexeme listed in a dictionary) on the basis of an existing case form. The only dictionary Estonian–German (as of 2024) that provides a remedy is the one by Berthold Forssmann (see bibliography at the bottom), which also contains information on the genitive, nominative plural and partitive (these are the four word forms from which all other cases are derived). Translation programs such as deepl.com can of course also correctly handle the case endings.

In the following tables, the terms are sorted alphabetically as they are in German spelling: ä as in a, ö and õ as in o, ü as in u. In Estonian dictionaries, these letters appear in the alphabet after the z in the order õ, ä, ö, ü.

Persons, groups of persons

While in German as well as in English a salutation such as “Dear Mr …” is only used at the beginning of the actual letter text, in Estonian it is usually also prefixed to the name in the recipient's address.

The civil status designations are usually abbreviated.

All nouns – with the exception of proper nouns – are written with a lower-case initial letter in continuous text in accordance with Estonian spelling conventions, with capitalisation at the beginning of sentences and also in addresses.

Dots after the abbreviation are optional if there is no risk of confusion with a full Estonian word.

Designation	Abbreviation	Meaning
abikaasa		spouse
abikaasaga		with spouse / wife
admiral	adm	admiral
ajateenia		conscripted soldier
ametnik		official, civil servant
armas		dear / love
candidatus (lat.)	cand.	student in main study programme
ema		mother
emand		mistress (also in the sense of: lady of the manor, noble lady)
esimees, Gen. esimehe		chairman ("first man")
herra / härra	hr, hrr, hra, h-ra	Sir, Mr
herrad / härrad	h-rad	Sirs, Gentlemen
insener	ins	engineer
isa	i.	father, priest, pastor
isand	Is, is	lord (also in the sense of: lord of the manor, noble lord)
ja		and
juhataja	juhat.	head, chairperson, director
juhatus		presidium
juht		leader, manager
kapten	kpt	captain
kätte anda	k.a.	"to be given into the hand", to hand over
kindral	kin	general

kiriku pea isa	K.P.I.	metropolitan ("head father of the church")
kodanik	kod	citizen
kohtupristav		bailiff (until 1940)
kohtutäitur		bailiff
kolonel	kol	colonel
lapsed		children
leitnant	ltn	lieutenant
linnapea		head of the city, mayor
lugupeetud	lp, lgp	to the honoured
madrus	mdr	sailor, seaman
major	mjr	major
maksude inspektor, maksuinspektor		tax inspector
Mees, Gen. mehe, Pl. mehed		man
minister, Gen. ministri		minister, secretary
müük		sale
mutt		granny, old woman, "mum"
naine		woman
neiu	n	(young) miss
nimeline	nim	nameless, Anonymous
nimetud		named
...nik		member of an (occupational) group
noor...	n–	young
noorherra / noorhärra		young gentleman
noornaine		young lady
onu		uncle
õpetaja	õp	teacher, pastor (= church teacher)
õpilane	õpil	pupil
pere, perekond	prk, perek.	family
perega, perekonnaga		with family
piiskop		bishop
poeg, Pl. pojad		son
põllumees, Gen. põllumehe		farmer
praost		probst
preester		priest, pastor
preili	prl	miss (unmarried woman)
proua	pr, pra	(married or older) woman
seersant	srs	sergeant (non-commissioned officer)
Senoro	Sro. S.jo	Mr (in Esperanto)
seltsimees	sm, sms	comrade, member
Seine Hochwohlgeboren	S.H.	(Address to the lower nobility and doctors of law) (German)

Salvo titulo	S.T.	"With reservation / preservation of title" (cover letter to someone whose title is not mentioned) (Latin)
tädi		aunt
tegev…		managing…, … of the service
tehnoloog		technologist
ülem		Chief …, First …, Commander, Head
üliõpilane	üliõpil.	university student
väga (wäga) austatud	v.a., w.a.	to the dear, dear
vallavanem		"community elder", mayor
vanaema		grandmother
vanaisa		grandfather
vanem…	v–	upper…
…vanem		eldest
veebel	vbl	(staff) sergeant
vend, Pl. vennad		brother
viitse…	v–	vice…

Companies, institutions, events

Some frequently occurring companies and public institutions should not go unmentioned, as they appear on postal documents time and again:

Designation	**Abbreviation**	**Meaning**
abonentosakond		subscriber department
ajakirjandus		press
ajaleht		newspaper
aktsiaselts	AS, as, A/S	stock corporation
aktsiaühing	a/ü	stock corporation
algkool	algk.	primary school
amet		amt, office, agency
apostlik	ap	apostolic
äri…		business…, company…
äriühing	ÄÜ	enterprise
arveldusarve	a/a	bank account, current account
arvelduskonto	a/k	bank account, current account
arvestus		calculation, costing
asutav kogu		(State) Founding Assembly
avalik, Gen. avaliku		public
batarei		battery (military unit)
divisjon		division (military unit)
Eesti apostlik-õigeusu kirik	E. a.–õ. k.	Apostolic-Orthodox Church in Estonia
Eesti Maapank		Estonian Land Bank / Agricultural Bank

Eesti Rahvapank		Estonian People's Bank / Volksbank
Eesti Pank		Estonian (National) Bank
Eesti põllumajandustehnika	EPT	Estonian agricultural technology
Eesti raamat		Estonian book
Eesti Rahva Muuseum	ERM	Estonian Folk Museum (National Museum)
era...		private...
esindus		representative office, agency
filatelistide päev		Philatelists' Day
füüsikushaigete sanatoorium		Sanatorium for the physically ill/disabled
füüsilist isikust ettevõtja	FIE	Self-employed (physical) entrepreneur, sole trader
gümnaasium		high school
haigla		hospital
haridus...		educational...
inspektsioon		inspection
jaam		station, railway station
jaemüük		retail sale
jalaväe		infantry ("foot army")
jaoskond	Jskond, jsk	department, division
kaitse		protection
kaitse liit	KL	defence league
kassa		cash desk
kaubamaja		department stores'
kaugejaam		telecommunications office
kauplus	kpl	shop
kesk...		central...
keskkool	keskk., kk	secondary school
keskliit		central organisation
keskus		centre
kihelkond, Gen. kihelkonna	kihelk., khk	parish
...kinnistus, ... kindlustus		... insurance
kirik, Gen. kiriku		church
kirikla		rectory
kirikuamet		church office
...koda		workshop, manufactory
kogudus, Gen. koguduse		(church) community
kohtukutse		court summons
kohus, Gen. kohtu		court
koja		chamber (professional association)
kolhoos	kolh	collective farm
...kond		association, ... society, ...ship
kompvektitööstus		confectionery factory
kool		school

koondis		association, federation
külanõukogu	kn	village soviet, village council
kutse		notification, invitation, summons
...la		(building / facility with a specific function)
laev		ship
laevastik	laev.	fleet, Navy
lastetoetus		child support
levik, levi...		distribution...
liha		meat
linna...		city..., municipal ...
linnaarhiiv		city archive
linnaosavalitsus	LOV	city district administration
loomaarst (=looma-arst)		veterinarian
loomaravila		veterinary clinic
maa		land
maakohus	MK	regional court
maakond, Gen. maakonna		county, district
maamaksud		property taxes
(Eesti) maapank		Estonian Land Bank (1926-1940)
maja		house
majaomanike ja põllumeeste ühispank		collective bank for homeowners and farmers
majandus, ...majandus	maj	trade, ...economy
maks		tax, fee
maksuamet		tax authority, tax office
margi...		(postage) stamp...
mets, Pl. metsad		forest, forests / forestry
munitsipaalettevõtte	ME	municipal enterprise
näitus		exhibition
nõukugu		council/committee, soviet
õigeusu, õige usu	õ-u	orthodox
osakond	osk, osak.	department
osaühing	OÜ, O/Ü	Limited liability company
pääste		fire brigade, rescue service
palat		chamber, higher authority
palgaarvestaja		payroll accountant
palgaarvestus		payroll accounting
palk, Gen. palga		wages
pank, Gen. panga		bank
pea-	p	main
pensioniamet		pension office
perekonnaseisu amet		registry office ("family status office")

piim		milk
politsei		police
polk		battalion
põllutöö...		agricultural...
pood		(small) shop
pool, poole, poolt		side (half), on the side, from the side
posti jooksvate arvete büroo		postal giro office
posti telefoni telegraafi kontor	ptt kontor	post, telephone and telegraph office
postiagentuur	postiagent., AG, postiag. p.a., pag, p.ag., post agt, p.agentuur	postal agency
postipunkt	pp	postal collection/distribution point
postkontor	pk	post office
postitalu	postit	letter farmstead
postvagun		railway mail (wagon)
psühhiaatria		psychiatry
raadio		transmitter
raamat, Gen. raamatu		book
raamatu aasta		Year of the book
raamatupidamine		accounting
raamatukogu		library ("book collection")
raekoda		town hall
rahu...		peace...
rahukogu		college of aldermen (at the Justice of the Peace Court)
rahvusvaheline	rv	international
rahvusvaheline olümpiakomitee	ROK	International Olympic Committee
rajoon		rayon, district
ratsapolk, ratsa rügement		cavalry regiment
raudtee	rdt	railway ("iron road")
raudteejaam	rdtj	railway station
raudteevanimaja		railway depot
ratsa ...		equestrian..., cavalry...
registreeritud firma	RF	registered company
riigi ...		State..., ... of the state
riigiaktsiaselts	RAS	State-owned stock corporation
riigiettevõte	RE	State-owned company
riigi teataja	RT	Government Gazette
riigikogu		(Estonian) Parliament ("State Assembly")
riiklik		national
rood		squadron

sadam	sd	harbour
selts		association, union, society
seminar		(teacher) seminar
side		communication, telecommunications
sidejaoskond, Gen. sidejaoskonna	side jsk, sjsk, sjk	division / department for (tele-) communication, telecommunications department, post office
sidesõlm		telecommunications node
sihtasutus	SA	foundation
siseministeerium		ministry of the Interior
sisene		domestic, civil
sõja-		war
sõjavägi, Gen. sõjaväe		army
soomusrong		armoured train
sotsiaal		social...
sotsiaalabiamet		social welfare office
sovhoos	sovh	sovkhoz
staap		(military) staff, staff department
statistikaamet		statistics office
suurtükkiväe		artillery ("cannon army")
täisühing	TÜ	general partnership
tarbijate kooperatiiv		consumer co-operative
tarbijate ühistu	tarb. ühistu	consumer organisation
teede...		roads...
teenindus...		... care, ... services
toetus...		supporting...
toimetaja		editor, editor-in-chief
toimetus		editorial office
...tööstus		...factory, ...plant
töötlus...		handling...
tootmis		production
trükikoda		print shop
tsiviil (tsiwiil)	tsiv. (tsiw.)	civil...
ühis-...		public ...
ühisettevõtte	ÜE	joint venture
ühispank		co-operative bank
ühisus, ühing	Ü	association, union
ülemnõukogu		supreme soviet
ülikool	ülik.	college, university
väärt...		value...
vägi, Gen. väe		(armed) power, army
vabariigi presidenti kantselei		Chancellery of the President of the Republic
vaestekool		school for the poor

väikeettevõte	VE	small business
vald, Gen. valla ...		municipality, municipal ... / ... of the municipality
... valitsus		... government, ... administration
vallamaja		town hall, mayor's office
vesi, Gen. vee		water
veevarustus		water supply

Streets, addresses within built-up areas

In Estonian, the term "street", if it should correctly be called "tänav" (tn/tn.), is usually omitted in everyday life, even street signs or city maps or online maps only name the part that precedes the word "street" in German or English.

In addition to the term tänav, which means "attached street" or "road leading to houses", there is also "tee", the street in the constructional sense, which occasionally occurs as part of a street name and is then usually written out in full (e.g. "Peterburi tee" [in Tallinn] = St Petersburg Street).

The same applies to the compound words "maantee" = country road and "puiestee" = avenue ("tree road") formed with "tee". These are usually abbreviated, as shown in the following table.

Designation	**Abbreviation**	**Meaning**
esmasmajas		in the first house
kaar		crescent, bow
kelder		basement
korrus	krs	floor (I.krs = ground floor, II.krs = 1st floor)
korter	k, krt	flat
korteriühistu	KÜ	condominium (flat owner) community
kül(l)a	k	(to the) village
linnaosa	lo	city district
maakond	mk, maak	county, district
maantee	mnt, m	country road
mõis		manor house, castle
nimekast		P.O. box ("name box")
plats	... pl	place
põik		cross street (= name component)
postkast	postk, ptk, p.k., pk	P.O. Box
puiestee	pst	alley, avenue
suur...	s ...	large
tal(l)u	t	(to the) farm, homestead
tänav	(–), t, tn, tän	street
tee		street

tuba		room (studio flat)
uulitsa	uul	street
uus		new
väike (wäike) ...	v (w) ...	small
väljak	... v	(large) square
vana (wana)		old

Locations and regions

In connection with eponymous terms, comparable basic terms appear whenever a certain type of "place" or "region/country" is mentioned.

Designation	**Abbreviation**	**Meaning**
alevik	alev, a-k	spot, locality
Austriamaa		Austria
Eesti Nõukugude Sotsialistik Vabariik	Eesti NSV, ENSV	Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic, Estonian SSR, ESSR
Eestimaa, Eesti		Estonia
Eesti Vabariik	E.V.	Republic ("Free State") of Estonia
Euroopa Liit	EL	European Union
ida		east
Inglismaa		England
kohalik		local (in town)
kül(l)a	k	(to the) village
lääne		west
Läti		Latvia
Leedu		Lithuania
linn		city
lõuna		south
maakond	maak., ...maa	county, district
mõis / mõja		manor house, castle / to the manor house / castle
Norra		Norway
Nõukogude Liit	N.L.	Soviet Union
oblast	obl	oblast
põhja		north
Poola		Poland
Prantsusmaa		France
rajoon	raj	rayon (administrative unit)
riik		State ("realm")
Rootsi		Sweden
Saksamaa		Germany
siin		here, at this location (used for local mail)
Sõltumatute Riikide Ühendus	SRÜ	Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)

Soome		Finland
Suur-Britannia		Great Britain
Taani		Danmark
Tallinn	Tln	Tallinn (Reval)
Tartu	Trt	Tartu (Dorpat)
Ühendkuningriik	ÜK	United Kingdom
Ühinenud Rahvaste Organisatsioon	ÜRO	United Nations
üle		through
vaksal		Railway station (building)
Valgevene		Belarus
Ven(n)emaa / Wen(n)emaa		(to) Russia

Shipping and receipt notes, imprints

Designation	**Abbreviation**	**Meaning**
aadress		address
ametlik		official
ametnik	ametn	officer
ametpost		official mail
amettähtkiri		official registered letter
ametväärtkiri	am.v.k., am.vk	official letter of value
ära anda ...-le		to be handed over to ...
... infokaarti		... information cards
juurdemaks		surcharge
kaart, Gen. kaardi		(post) card
... kaudu		via ... (routing)
kätte saadud		received
kinni(ta)tud		confirmed, finalised, answered
kiri, kirjad		Letter, letters
kirimale		Fernschach („Briefschach“)
kohtukutse		court summons
kopeek, kopikas partitive: kopikat	k, kop	kopeck (partitive with numbers greater than 1)
kroon, partitive: krooni		crown (currency) (partitive with numbers greater than 1)
lähtekoht		starting point, origin
lisamaks		surcharge, additional fee
maks(e)tud		paid
margiraha		fee ("stamp money")
mark, partitive: marka	m	Mark (currency) (partitive with numbers greater than 1)
müügihind		selling price

nõudmiseni		postal storage („poste restante“)
õhupostiga		by airmail
panderoll		banderole/stripe tape, packet
penni		Pfennig (singular and plural)
Pfennig	Pf	Pfennig
post(i)maks	pm, p-ks	postage
postipakett		mail bundle / mailbag
postkaart		postcard
raha, rahas		money, in (with) money
recommandée	recommand, rec	registered (in French)
Reichspfennig	Rpf.	Reichspfennig
reklaam posti teel		Advertising mail ("advertising by post")
rekom(m)andi(e)rt	rek	registered (in old German)
rubla	rbl	Rouble
saad(et)ud		sent (often noted after a response)
saadetis		delivery
saatekulu		shipping costs, postage
saatja	stj	sender
sent, partitive: senti	s, snt	Cent (partitive with numbers greater than 1)
side ...		communication ..., post ...
sideametlik		postal
sissekirjuna		as registered mail
sissekirjutud		registered
sissetulnud		received
sularaha, sularahas		cash, in (with) cash
tagasi		back
tähit(at)ud	tähit, täh, täht	registered
tähtkiri, täht kiri		registered letter
tähtpanderoll		registered parcel
tähtsaade		registered shipment
tasuta		free of charge
tasutud		paid
teade		message, information
teenistuslik		operational
trükitöö		printed matter
üle ...		via ... (routing)
väärtkiri	v/kiri	value letter
väärtus		value
väljamakstud		paid out
väljastus		delivery, receipt
väljastusteatega		with delivery note/delivery advice note
vastusega		with (attached) reply (card)

vastuse jaoks		for the reply
virk		hurry (sticker for express letters)

Letter contents

Of course, it is not possible to translate all possible letter contents here, but some frequently recurring abbreviations and information should be explained.

In Estonian, years are always followed by an "a." for "aastal" ("aasta" means "year", "aastal" "in the year"), so you can imagine the translation of "1923. a.", for example, as "in the 1923rd year", in English "in the year 1923" or simply "1923".

Designation	Abbreviation	Meaning
arve		invoice
esimene, esmas		the first
esimine päev		first day
esmaspäev	esmasp., e, E	Monday ("the first day")
Euroopa liit	EL	European Union
Euroopa meistrivõistlused	EM	European Championships
Euroopa majandusühendus	EMÜ	European Economic Community
Euroopa ühendus	EÜ	European Union
häid pühi		happy holidays
häid, head		good, nice
head uut aastat		Happy New Year
hommik, hommikul		morning, in the morning / a.m.
jõulud		christmas
kä(tt)es		"in hands", received
kaheksa		8
kaks, Gen. teine		2
kakskümmend		20
kaksteist		12
kallis		dear
kell	k	clock, time
keskpäeval		at noon
kiri		letter
kolm		3
kolmapäev	kolmap., k, K	Wednesday ("the third day")
kümme(nd)		10
kuu, ...kuus		month (moon), in the month of ...
kuus		6
laupäev	laup., l, L	Saturday
lihavõttepühad		Easter

lõuna		south, noon
Maailma meistrivõistlused	MM	world championships
neli		4
nelipühad, nelipühi		pentecost
neljapäev	neljap., n, N	Thursday ("the fourth day")
öhtu, öhtul		evening, at night
olümpiamängud	OM	Olympic Games
õnnitlused		congratulations
öö, öösel		night, at night
päev, päeval		day, during the day
Palavik/suurupi teisipäev		Carnival (Tuesday)
palavikupühad		"Carnival holidays"
pühad		public holiday(s)
pühapäev	pühap., p, P	sunday ("the holy day")
puhkused		holidays
reede	r, R	Friday
rose/roosi(line) esmaspäev		Rose Monday
sada		100
seitse		7
sina, sinu		you, your
suur reede		Good Friday ("big Friday")
teie		your
teisipäev	teisip., t, T	Tuesday ("the second day")
tuhat		1000
üheksa		9
üks		1
üksteist		11
ülestõusmine		ascension
uus aasta		New Year
uusaasta õhtu		New Year's Eve
vastu võtmed (wastu wõtmed)		accepted, received
viim(a)ne		the last
viis		5

Fig. 1: Sample address 1929 "into the city"

Fig. 2: Sample address 1929 "to the country"

Fig. 3: Area code 5c

Fig. 5: Soviet postcode 20xxxx, initially used in Estonia from 1990; FDC of the first Estonian stamps dated 01.10.91

Fig. 6: Estonianised, former Soviet postcode now with EExxxx

Fig. 7: Estonianised, former Soviet postcode now only with 4 digits, without "EE"

Fig. 8: new Estonian 5-digit postcode, here from 23.07.98

Fig. 9: Letter dated 7 July 1992 to the first President of the newly independent Republic of Estonia, Arnold Rüütel, address: Weizenbergstraße 39 in Tallinn (= Presidential Palace)

Fig. 10: Street names in Estonia: without "tänav" in the labelling and often also in spoken language (example from Google Maps)

Fig. 11: Official ("ametlik") value letter ("v/kiri") with value indication 150,- (crowns) from the post office "Viljandimaa" (in Viljandi) to the head of the post office in Kärstna, date of dispatch not verifiable

Fig. 12: An application example. We read:	in English:
„V(äga) a(ustatud)	To (the very honoured)
Herra Mühlberg	Mr Mühlberg
Väike Pärnu m(aantee) № 2	Small Pärnu Country Road 2
Tallinn“,	Tallinn

It's as simple as that...

Further reading

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Doell, Friedhelm 2019: *Verzeichnis der Post-, Telegraphen-, Telefon- und Funkeinrichtungen Estlands (1926 und 1929), Einführung und Übersetzung* (Directory of postal, telegraph, telephone and radio facilities in Estonia (1926 and 1929), introduction and translation into German). Arbeitshilfe Nr. 2 der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Baltikum (Working Aid No. 2 of the Baltic States Working Group), Version 1.0. Oonly available online at URL: https://arge-baltikum.de/arbeitshilfen-10-de.shtml (19.05.2024)

Forssman, Bertold 2019: *Wörterbuch Estnisch–Deutsch (Estonian–German dictionary)*. 2., überarbeitete Auflage (2nd, revised edition). Bremen: Hempen-Verlag.

Estonian list of abbreviations ("Lühendivalimik"), available on the Internet at URL: http://www.eki.ee/dict/qs2006/lyhendid.html [19.05.2024]

An insured parcel from Abja to Schadowo

Thomas Löbbering, Holzappel (D) and Erhard Engelmann, Berlin (D)

In the January issue of Briefmarken-Spiegel 1/2024, an article by Torsten Berndt on the collecting areas of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania was published under the title "Visit to the Baltic States". It also featured a parcel card from Абия / Abja / Abia, then Livonian Governorate (box cancels top left), to Schadowo, then Kowno Governorate (now Lithuania), from the Thomas Löbbering collection. When describing the item in the picture, I made the mistake of describing it as a payment order instead of an accompanying address for an insured parcel.

Thanks to the kind support of Erhard Engelmann, Verein der Briefmarken-Freunde Russland/UdSSR and member of the Russia/USSR working group, the description of the

picture in Briefmarken-Spiegel has now been corrected and this article has been produced for BALTIKUM.

Fig. 1 shows the front of the parcel card СОПРОВОДИТЕЛНЫЙ АДРЕСЬ. (also accompanying address for a parcel). The pre-printed inscription БЕЗЬ ЦѢ[1] НЫ (without value) was crossed out and replaced by hand with Ценной на 10 Руб (value of 10 Rub).

The handwritten entries at the bottom of the parcel label contain detailed information about the parcel being sent: In the bottom left-hand column ВѢСЬ (weight) 4¾ Фунт [2], including the shipping fee for the specified weight, 45 kopecks, the insurance fee (Страх), 10 kopecks, and including the total amount Итого (total), 55 kopecks.

Next to it in the second column there is a rectangular label of the dispatch post office Абия with the number 5, under which the parcel was registered in the outgoing post book (logbook). In the third column there are two postmarks of the dispatch office Абія ЛИФЛАН.Г.Г. of the First Postal Department ПОЧТ.ОТД. with the dates 15 and 16 XII 1908 and in the right column the postage of 55 kopecks. The postage was calculated according to the regulations of the third tariff period from January 1, 1905 to April 14, 1917. Weight: 2 to 7 funt = 45 kopecks, value up to 10 rubles = 10 kopecks insurance fee, total 55 kopecks.

The reverse side of the parcel card, fig. 2, is used for the details of the proof of receipt СЛУЖЕБНЫЯ ОТМѢТКИ. The arrival postmark of the post office ШАДОВО КОВ a 18 12 08, Schadowo Gouvernement Kowno, is cancelled in the upper part.

Usually, the incoming post number of the receiving post office is entered on the left under По получаеульской книгь, mostly in handwriting. It is not clear why this was not done here. The lower part contains the handwritten acknowledgement of receipt by the addressee (Росписка получателя), who collected the parcel from the post office on 20 December 1908. It is interesting to note that it was not the addressee, Mr Harry Girgenson, who received the parcel, but a third person who was authorised to receive it, as confirmed by the signatures of the post office manager and another witness.

Since Estonia's territorial and municipal reform in 2017, the previously existing municipalities of Абия / Abja / Abia, Halliste, Karksi and the small town of Mõisaküla have formed the municipality of Mulgi (7,300 inhabitants in 2021). While today's Abja is struggling with emigration and population loss, the then rural municipality of Abja experienced a strong economic boom at the end of the 19th century due to the construction of the narrow-gauge railway from Mõisaküla to Viljandi from 1895 (in operation until 1973).

[1] The letter Ѣ/ѣ, which means ять jat in Russian, has been replaced by E/e.

[2] Фунт / Funt / Pound; Russian measure of weight; one Funt equals 0.453592 kilograms. The parcel therefore weighed 2.15 kilograms.

The opening of the railway station in 1895 coincided with the opening of an auxiliary post office on April 1, 1895, which was upgraded to a branch post and telegraph office in 1904 and to a post and telegraph office on December 1, 1917. The opening of the long-distance railway line from Mõisaküla to Viljandi (where Abja is located) in 1897 and the connecting line from Viljandi to Tallinn in 1901 (car numbers 239 and 240) underlined the rapid development of the time.

The Handbook of Estonia by Hurt / Ojaste lists the postmark Абія ЛИФЛАН.Г. 1 ПОЧТ.ОТД 1 as the first under the number H/O 1:1 and assigns it a period of use from 1901 to 1914. The stamp is documented in the author's collection between September 1, 1898, and April 30, 1914. The author requests that earlier and later postmark dates be sent to thomas_loebbering@hotmail.com.

Fig. 1: The postage fee of 55 kopecks was paid using Michel Nos. 43y and 48y II.

Fig. 2: View of the reverse side of the parcel card

Fig. 3: Абія ЛИФЛАН.Г. 1 ПОЧТ.ОТД 1, Hurt / Ojaste 1:1, early postmark of September 1, 1898

Fig. 4: Hurt / Ojaste 1:1, late cancellation dated April 30, 1914, on registered letter to Riga

June 4, 1940: Jaan Tõnisson to Aleksander Warma

Oliver Hanschmidt, Tartu (EST)

An interesting find from 1940 has come to light. At first glance, it appears to be a registered letter franked with a 30 Senti Konstantin-Päts stamp, Michel No. 147. A closer look at the envelope reveals that it was sent by rail from Tartu on the Valga-Tallinn line, TPO#18.13[3] or Hurt / Ojaste 27:10[4]. This makes it one of the generally rare, registered railway covers.

Addressed to Helsinki, Finland, the addressee immediately catches the eye of an Estonian: "K.a. Herra Minister A. Warma, Eesti Saatkond, Itä-Kaivopuisto 20a", i.e. "His Excellency, Mr Ambassador A. Warma, Estonian Embassy, ...".

Aleksander Warma only arrived in Helsinki on November 29, 1939. One day later, on November 30, the Soviet Union invaded Finland and the Winter War began. During the war, foreign embassies were temporarily evacuated from Helsinki. Ambassador Warma returned to Helsinki in February 1940, despite the threat of bombing, to celebrate the anniversary of the founding of the Republic of Estonia on February 24, 1940 in the newly renovated embassy building in Itä Kaivopuisto – Kaivopuisto is a district of Helsinki, and "Itä" means "east".

[3] Hanschmidt, Oliver 2023: Cancellations and Markings of Estonian Railway TPOs (Travelling Post Offices) 1918–1944. Tartu.

[4] Hurt, Vambola & Ojaste, Elmar 1986: ESTONIA, Philately & Postal History, Handbook Catalogue. Gothenburg.

Unfortunately, Warma's time in Finland was short-lived: on June 16, 1940, the Soviet Union issued an ultimatum to Estonia and occupied the country.

On August 6, Ambassador Warma informed the diplomatic corps in Helsinki that the embassy had ceased its activities and left. The building was sealed and the keys handed over to a representative of the Finnish Foreign Ministry. A few days later, the Soviet delegation took possession of the building. Until his departure from Helsinki on September 19, 1944, Aleksander Warma tried to restore the embassy to its former function. Unfortunately, his efforts were unsuccessful.

Aleksander Warma (Varma)[5]

* June 22, 1890, in the village of Viinistu, rural municipality of Kõnnu, Harju County.

† December 23, 1970, in Stockholm, Sweden

Aleksander Warma attended the naval schools in Käsmu and Narva as a young man before obtaining his captain's licence in Riga and serving in the Russian navy during the First World War. After the war, he studied law at Tartu University between 1920 and 1928 before joining the diplomatic service of the Republic of Estonia.

After serving as counsellor at the Estonian embassy in Moscow (1931 to 1933), as consul general in Leningrad (1933 to 1938) and as ambassador to Lithuania (1938 to 1939), he finally became Estonian ambassador to Finland (1939 to 1944), before holding various positions in the Estonian government-in-exile based in Stockholm after WWII.

He last served as Prime Minister and acting President from March 30 ,1963, until his death on December 23, 1970.

The back of the envelope should not be underestimated either: the sender is none other than Jaan Tõnisson, address Tööstuse 7, Tartu. The proof is a comparison of the handwriting in the sender's address with a handwritten letter from Jaan Tõnisson dated October 9, 1940.

Jaan Tõnisson[6]

* 22.12.1868 in the rural parish of Tänassilma, Viljandi County

† unknown

Active in journalism and politics throughout his life, Jaan Tõnisson was certainly one of Estonia's most influential democratic statesmen until 1940.

[5] Further information at https://president.ee/en/republic-of-estonia/heads-of-state/437

[6] For more information see Wikipedia, „Jaan Tõnisson“

Between 1893 and 1935, as temporary owner and editor-in-chief of the Tartu daily newspaper and printing house "Postimees", he had a decisive influence on Estonian public discourse on the road to independence. From 1905 to 1907, he was a member of the first freely elected Russian Duma in St Petersburg. As Chairman of the North Baltic Committee from 1915 to 1917 and from 1918 to 1940 as a delegate to the Estonian Constituent Assembly (asutav kogu) and as a member of both chambers of the Estonian Parliament (riigikogu and riigivolukogu), he held high and highest state offices: Prime Minister from 1919 to 1920, State Elder (State President) from 1927 to 1928 and 1930, Foreign Minister from 1931 to 1932. Under the authoritarian government of Konstantin Päts from 1934, he remained the voice of democracy in parliament. Arrested by the Soviet secret service in December 1940, he was presumably shot in custody in July 1941.

Unfortunately, only the envelope

I have searched the personal archives of A. Warma and J. Tõnisson for the contents of the envelope shown here or other letter contents dated June 3 or 4, 1940. Unfortunately, I could not find anything. I am quite sure that the information was of great importance to A. Warma. The probable reason for my lack of success is revealed in the minutes shown above. Point 6 reads: "The secret correspondence was destroyed, with a few exceptions, on the basis of a verbal order from the Foreign Office".

Which flight was used to transport the letter from Estonia to Finland?

As can be clearly seen from the HELSINKI AVION postmark, the date of arrival at the Helsinki airport mail sorting system is 5.VI.40. However, the last two digits, which indicate the exact time at which the postmark was affixed, cannot be clearly deciphered. The two-digit number definitely starts with a 1 (one). The second digit can be either a 0 (zero), a 3 (three), an 8 (eight) or a 9 (nine). So it could be 10 o'clock in the morning or 1, 6 or 7 o'clock in the afternoon. This means that the following flights are possible:

1. Lufthansa flight 33 Tallinn 17:20 → Helsinki 17:55

The time is taken from the official Deutsche Lufthansa (DLH) timetable of May 1, 1940. If this flight actually took place, the time on the arrival stamp should be 7pm. Unfortunately, it is not clear whether Lufthansa operated the Tallinn-Helsinki route at all from May 10, 1940, due to the flight ban in preparation for the German Western Campaign.

2. AGO flight 1875 Tallinn 8:10 → Helsinki 8:45

The time is taken from the official flight schedule of the airline AGO[7] dated June 1, 1940. If this flight had taken place, the hour on the arrival stamp should be read as 10 am or 1 pm.

3. AERO O/Y flight 1631 Tallinn 13:55 → Helsinki 14:30

The time is taken from the official flight plan of the Finnish airline AERO O/Y[8] dated June 1, 1940. If this flight had taken place, the time on the arrival stamp should be 6 or 7 pm.

How can the uncertainty be resolved?

If we collect further cancellations of HELSINKI AVION that are dated June 5, 1940, or the period from the end of May to mid-June 1940, we can use the process of elimination to determine whether some hour indications such as 10, 13, 18 or 19 were not used and thus limit the number of possible flight variants. Even better, of course, would be reliable information on which flights actually took place on June 5, 1940. Please inform the author at oliver.hanschmidt@gmail.com.

The rough translation from English into German was done by DeepL, the philatelic fine-tuning was done by Thomas Löbbering.

Fig. 1: Registered railway letter R No. 3 POSTVAGUN VALGA–TALLINN -4 VI 40

Fig. 2: The building of the Estonian embassy in Finland in 1946[9]

Figs. 3 and 4: The closure protocol of the Estonian Embassy in Finland, given in Helsinki on 6 VIII 1940

Figs. 5 to 7: Aleksander Warma at different ages

Fig. 8: Sender Jaan Tönisson

Figs. 9 and 10: Contents of the letter

Fig. 11: Jaan Tönisson

Fig. 12: Arrival stamp Helsinki Airport

Figs. 13 and 14: Cartographic representations of Lufthansa flights between Tallinn and Helsinki

[7] AGO, semi-state-owned Estonian airline 1939-1940, 1941 taken over by the Soviet airline AEROFLOT in 1941

[8] AERO O/Y, Finnish airline, today Finnair; AERO O/Y's JU 52 named KALEVA, operating between Tallinn and Helsinki, was shot down by Soviet aircraft under unknown circumstances on June 14, 1940, see Wikipedia under KALEVA. AERO O/Y operated under the umbrella of the Swedish airline ABA (A.B. Aerotransport).

[9] Further information on the Internet at https://estofennia.eu/viron-lahetystotalon-varastetut-vuodet/ and https://helsinki.mfa.ee/en/embassy-and-contacts/history-of-the-embassy-building/

By airship or by catapult flight across the Atlantic?

Thomas Löbbering, Holzappel (D)

The year 1937 has gone down in aviation history as the year of the disaster of the airship LZ 129 "Hindenburg". After the commissioning of the LZ 129 in March 1936 and the trouble-free operation of its predecessor, the LZ 127 "Graf Zeppelin" (commissioned on September 18, 1928), for the first time two airships were available for service across the North and South Atlantic in 1936/37, the LZ 129 was destroyed by fire during the landing manoeuvre at Lakehurst (New Jersey, USA) on May 6. Not only did 36 of the 97 people on board burn to death, but almost all the mail went up in flames. Out of 17,609 letters and cards, only about 370 were recovered in whole or in part[1].

After its 590th and last voyage, the 2nd South America voyage from April 27 to May 8, 1937 (the 3rd South America voyage in total), the utilisation phase of the airship "Graf Zeppelin" LZ 127 ended as planned.[2] The disaster of the LZ 129 at Lakehurst meant that within a day there were no more airships available.[3] What's more, the Hindenburg disaster marked the end of transatlantic Zeppelin travel. The "fixed-wing aircraft", the aeroplane as we know it today, began its triumphant progress.

However, only part of the mail volume was carried by airship during the 1937 South America flights, namely printed matter, samples, parcels and express mail. The rest of the mail from Germany and delivery mail from Europe, such as postcards, letters and registered mail, was carried by aeroplane. Deutsche Lufthansa flew from Stuttgart on Thursdays and Air France on Saturdays. The airship flew fortnightly on Mondays (it was still possible to post mail on board).[4]

In the following, I would like to show you an airmail letter that was sent in those historic days of May 1937. It is a business letter from one of the directors of the oil shale plant in Kohtla (N.C. Gold Fields Ltd. Oil Works), Dipl.-Ing. H.A. von Wahl, to Helen Baroness Wrangell, an employee of the Scadta airline[5] in Baranquilla (Colombia), from where the letter was forwarded to Bogota.

The light airmail cover shown at the top left, weighing three grams, is franked with Estonia Mi-Nos 98 (2) and 130, with postage for an airmail letter to Colombia weighing up to five grams at 2.25 crowns and 0.25 crowns for an international letter weighing up to 20 grams in the postage period from May 1, 1937 to March 31, 1939.[1] The sender from

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[1] Wikipedia, LZ 129

[2] The airship LZ 127 was transferred to Frankfurt / Main, released for inspection and dismantled on March 1, 1940.

[3] LZ 130 "Hindenburg" was still under construction in 1937 and only travelled within Greater Germany between December 1938 and August 1939.

[4] Cf. MICHEL 2017: Zeppelin and airmail special catalogue 2017/18, 3rd edition. Unterschleißheim: Schwaneberger Verlag. Pages 295 and 320.

[5] SCADTA, abbreviation for Sociedad Colombo Alemana de Transportes Aéreos, German-Colombian air transport company, oldest airline in South America, founded in 1919

Kohtla had it posted at the post office TALLINN–VAKSAL +A+ EESTI -4 V 37, Hurt / Ojaste 649:3, so that it reached BERLIN-ZENTRALFLUGHAFEN a at 8 p.m. on the following day -5.5.37 as evidenced by the transit postmark affixed on the reverse. The sender expressly noted in three languages the routing mark "**MIT ZEPPELIN FLUGPOST / BY AIRSHIP ZEPPELIN / ZEPPELIN ÕHUPOSTIGA**", outlined in red.

But which Zeppelin airship could have carried the letter? The letter was posted more than a week too late for **LZ 127**'s second South American flight from April 27 to May 8, 1937 – the airship's last flight to America. **LZ 129** had completed its first South American flight from March 16 to 27, 1937, and had been on its first – and last – North American flight since May 3. Transport by Zeppelin airship was therefore objectively not possible and due to the above-mentioned agreement between Deutsche Lufthansa and Air France, not planned. Accordingly, the routing note was crossed out in violet.

Somewhat indistinct, but still recognisable, the envelope bears the red "DEUTSCHE LUFTPOST * EUROPA – SÜDAMERIKA *" postmark on the front. So the letter travelled on by airmail from Berlin to Stuttgart and then into the air transport bag to South America: via Marseille, Seville and Las Palmas to Bathurst (today Banjul, capital of Gambia, ed.); there loading onto the "**Westfalen**" and by ship across the South Atlantic in 36 hours; while still on the Atlantic, launch of the Do J Wal "**Taifun**" on the catapult runway of the "Westfalen" with destination Natal on the north-east coast of Brazil and onwards within hours by plane to Rio de Janeiro; from there onward transport to Colombia[6].

The Haberer **catapult flight** no. 539[7] left Germany for South America on May 6, 1937. Our airmail light letter may have been transported on this flight. The second possibility arose with the Haberer catapult flight no. 541 on May 13, 1937. In view of the Berlin-Zentralflughafen postmark of May 5, 8 p.m. and the CORREO AEREO BARANQUILLA c 15.V.1937 arrival postmark (on the front and back), both possibilities seem possible. However, the transport time of 36 to 48 hours between Stuttgart and Rio de Janeiro described above, plus the uncertain transport time for the route from there to Colombia, argues much more in favour of flight Haberer No. 539. In any case, I know of no other catapult cover from Estonia to Colombia in May 1937. The question posed at the beginning of this article can therefore be answered clearly in favour of the catapult flight.

When might Dipl.-Ing. H. A. von Wahl have learnt of the end of international Zeppelin airship travel across the Atlantic?

Fig. 1: LZ 127 "Graf Zeppelin" on September 24, 1930, over Pärnu

Fig. 2: Explosion of LZ 129 "Hindenburg" in Lakehurst on May 6, 1937

Fig. 3: Light airmail cover Tallinn-Vaksal – Berlin – Baranquilla – Bogota, May 4–15, 1937

Fig. 4 without text

[6] Cf. Haberer, Erich 1987: Catalogue of the Catapult Mail, Part 2: South Atlantic. Weil der Stadt. P. 5 ff.

[7] Dito, p. 54

Latvia's First Block Issues – Notes and Discoveries, Part 2: Michel Block No. 2

Yehoshua Eliashiv, Haifa (ISR)

Part 1 of this article can be found in BALTIKUM No. 16 / 2023, page 26 ff.

Introduction

N. Jakimovs and V. Marcilger in their seminal work "The Postal and Monetary History of Latvia" in chapter 3 on page 52 provide the following information on the Michel No. 1 and 2 block issues: "... (Block No. 1) ... Edition of 40,000 copies... On May 13, 1939, the same block was reissued on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the Ulmani government, with the addition of the years '1934' to the left and '1939' to the right of the national coat of arms and the date '15/V' between the stamps... Edition of 60,000 copies..."

This information needs to be clarified in that the total print run of 100,00 copies did indeed reach the post office counters in 1938 but could not be sold. The remaining unsold stock of 60,000 copies was overprinted for the 1939 edition. In other words, there were never two editions.

Although older catalogues following Jakimov and Marcilger report May 13, 1939, as the date of issue, I have never seen a postmark date before May 15, 1939. The indication of May 15, 1939, as the first day of issue of block no. 2 in the Michel catalogue must therefore be accepted; this is also because the overprint "15/V" expressly mentions this date.

Imprint

It must have been a great challenge for the press operators to overprint 60,000 copies from blocks that had already been cut and gummed. A German letterpress from Heidelberger Druckmaschinen AG, known as the Original Heidelberger Tiegel (OHT), fig. 13, was used for this purpose, and was particularly suitable for inserting small-format individual sheets.

Unfortunately, the gumming process caused major problems by curling the individual blocks. To avoid this undesirable effect, the printers used a mechanical press with a rectangular frame. The traces of this frame are clearly visible on many blocks, fig. 14. Harry von Hofmann describes this irregularity in his book "The Stamps, Lat Period 1923–1940" on page 201.

Dual, "double" imprint

Before the printing could begin, the workers had to adjust the plate and make sure that it was centred exactly in relation to the existing image. They made a fatal mistake: the

first proof showed an incorrect position of the plate. The error was recognised and the same block was overprinted again with the correct position of the plate. As a result, the overprint appears twice, a "double" overprint, fig. 15, with the date "15/V" on the left stamp – printed blue on blue – not immediately visible, but clearly visible under a magnifying glass.

Numerous varieties

The question arises as to why the printer did not sort out the incorrectly double-printed block and send it to the wastepaper basket. In my opinion, the reason is simple: the printer obviously received the sheets for further processing with a delivery note from the postal authorities for the total quantity of 60,000 sheets. If a smaller quantity had been delivered, they would have had to pay the difference – two lati per item. On this point I disagree with Harry von Hofmann's comment on page 201 of the Handbook that a considerable number of blocks were classified as waste and disposed of by the printer.

A good example of this are the blocks with heavily offset overprints, figures 16 and 17. The block shown in fig. 16 has a smaller format than normal: the width is 118 mm instead of 140 mm. The mis-cut may have been the reason for the strongly displaced "slanted" overprint. Many blocks show shifted overprints – to the right, to the left, up or down – and none of them ended up in the printer's wastepaper basket.

Another problem was the blue colour of the overprint. It was impossible to overprint 60,000 blocks on a single letterpress in a single day. At the end of each day, the ink had to be emptied from the letterpress and the machine cleaned. It was obviously difficult to achieve the same shade of blue the next day as the day before. The brightness of the print varies between dark blue and light blue, fig. 18, and there are shades in between. I therefore assume that the overprinting work took more than just three days.

Figure 19 shows a "nice" variety. The miscut was caused by a fold in the paper that was present before the block was cut. The block was therefore "folded" throughout the overprinting process.

Postal use

Collectors used both block 2 and its predecessor, block 1. Below are three examples of blocks used with correct postage on letters transported in perfect postal condition.

Figs. 20 and 21 show a registered first day cover dated May 15, 1939, sent from Rīga to Paris as general delivery (poste restante). The franking of 35 santīmi for the international letter and 40 santīmu for the additional registered service is completely correct. 30 centimes storage fee had to be paid in Paris by the addressee and proved with a French postage stamp.

Figs. 22 and 23 show a registered letter in the second weight category of 21 to 40 grams from Rīga to Dordrecht in the Netherlands. The sender is the well-known Latvian philatelist P. Kalnozols. The frankings of the registered letters shown so far were cancelled with the special cancels RIGA G.P.K. 1934. 1939. on the fifth anniversary of the coup d'état by Kārlis Ulmanis.

Figs. 24 and 25 show a registered airmail and express cover addressed to another prominent philatelist, Dr Victor Meyer in Berlin-Schöneberg. Block 2 is affixed on the reverse. In addition to the franking of 75 santīmi for the registered foreign letter, 25 santīmi had to be paid for the airmail surcharge and 1 lat for express delivery.

This is the story of the Latvian miniature sheet issues Michel No. 1 and 2. I hope I have aroused your interest and shown you some possibilities to enrich your own collection. Comments are always welcome!

Special thanks to Thomas Löbbering for his excellent translation from English.

Literature

1. Jakimovs, Nikolajs & Marcilger, Victor 1991: *1918–1945 The Postal and Monetary History of Latvia*, Spittal an der Drau.
2. von Hofmann, Harry 2000: *Latvia – Handbook of Philately and Postal History: The Stamps, Lat Period 1923–1940.* Hamburg.

Fig. 13: Letterpress printing machine "Original Heidelberger Tiegel (OHT)" for printing formats up to sheet size DIN A4 (Image source: Deutsches Museum / Konrad Rainer / Wikipedia)

Fig. 14: Print marks of the rectangular frame press, visible on the front and back of overprinted blocks

Fig. 15: Dual, "double" overprint due to corrected centring of the printing plate

Fig. 16: Smaller block format with slightly diagonal overprint, yet not rejected

Fig. 17: Overprint shifted upwards

Fig. 18: Two examples of colour variations in the overprint colour, dark blue and light blue

Fig. 19: A paper fold ... and no consequences for the overprint

Fig. 20: The small-format envelope leaves hardly any space for the address.

Fig. 21: The postmark shows a mailing time of one day.

Fig. 23: The postmark on the back shows a mailing time of two days.

Fig. 24: The letter was transported from Rīga to Berlin by airmail.

Fig. 25: Within Berlin, the express letter was sent by pneumatic tube and thus reached its addressee in just two days despite censorship!

Southern Lithuania / Gardinas / Grodno / Hrodna – Part 1: A Lithuanian edition?

Martin Bechstedt, Bargteheide (D)

„A much disputed beauty.“[25]

„We have been pointing out for years that the so-called emergency issue for southern Lithuania (S.-K. No. 26-33) must more and more degenerate into a hoax issue." [26]

Two contemporary voices on these overprinted Russian stamps from 1919, highlighting the key points of a heated debate over a hundred years ago.

What was this issue from the Belarusian city of Grodno? Earlier generations created the collecting field of "war stamps" and grouped under this heading all the provisional issues created by the fighting of the First World War, including these stamps. Today, people have different priorities, and the question remains as to how these issues should be evaluated philatelistically and where they should be classified. Are they really Lithuanian issues, correctly placed in catalogues under "local issues" in Lithuania, or would they be better placed elsewhere? The fact is: What used to be in the Michel catalogue under "South Lithuania (Grodno district)" at the end of the Lithuanian section is in the current catalogue under "Gardinas (Grodno)", so the Lithuanian place name is used as the leading one. There are no dissenting voices.

However, the local issues from the period of Lithuanian unification in 1919/20 – not including the Vilnius region/Central Lithuania and the Memel region/Klaipėdos Krasts – do not currently receive the same attention in German philately as those from the period of German occupation of the Baltic States in 1941. The fact that these stamps have been listed for decades in the Michel catalogue under the section "German Occupation Issues 1939/45" and are regarded by collectors in Germany as "national issues under German occupation" certainly plays a role here, which is not the case for the local issues of 1919/20 in the Baltic States. According to the historical circumstances, the Grodno issue could also be treated as such with the same justification, since the de facto power in the area in question lay with the remnants of the German occupying troops or the Freikorps and the "Grenzschutz Ost". In this respect, the 1919/20 and 1941 issues have long been treated unequally in philatelic terms and should be re-examined.

The original stamps have a vertical, diamond-shaped chalk overprint and the numbering 14¼:14¾. The overprint was in black (B) or red (R).

[25] Pastor Plamsch from Grodno 1923 in No. 13 of "Collector's Week" (p. 82) with the article: "The Lithuanian Provisional Stamps of Grodno". This does not refer to the city, but to the stamp issue.

[26] The Senf editorial office in the "Sammlerwoche" 1928, section "Fernsprecher" (“telephone”) (S.-K. stands for Senf-Katalog); today's spelling.

Table 1: The stamps of the Grodno issue

Stamp Mi–No.	Original stamp Mi–No.	Over-print colour	Value level Overprint/Original stamp	Colour	Counts	Rarity ** = ⊙
1 B	63 B	B	50 sk. on 1 kop i*mperf*	orange	50	•••••
2 A	65 A	B	50 sk. on 3 kop	carmine red	500	•••
3 A	67 A	B	50 sk. on 5 kop	lilac brown	500	•••
3 B	67 B	B	*imperforated*	lilac brown	25	•••••
4 A	69 A	R	50 sk. on 10 kop	black blue	500	•••
5 A	71 A	B	50 sk. on 15 kop	brown-purple/blue	500	•••
5 B	71 B	B	*imperforated*	brown-purple/blue	20	•••••
6 A	73 A	R	50 sk. on 25 kop	green/violet	500	•••
7 A	74 A	B	50 sk. on 35 kop	brown-purple/green	500	•••
8 B	75 A	B	50 sk. on 50 kop	brown-purple/green	500	•••
9 A	76 A	B	50 sk. on 70 kop	brown/orange	500	•••

Rarity of the stamps: ••• rare •••• very rare ••••• greatest rarity

The following criteria have been used, to varying degrees, in cataloguing such issues:

1. Power of disposition: Who had the de facto power in the area concerned at the time the stamp was issued?

2. Legality: To which state, government or administration was it formally subject?

3. Actor: Which institutions or persons actually initiated and published the issue?

4. Validity: Has the competent postal administration recognised the stamps as franking – even at a later date?

5. Current affiliation: To which state does the territory in question belong today?

One should also not forget the "philatelic pleasure principle" or "Mount Everest argument"[27]: I collect something because it exists, it has aroused my interest and I enjoy it.

In the first part of this article, these criteria will be used to assess the 1919 Grodno edition. The focus will therefore be on the history of this local edition. A note on the place names: We are dealing here with areas with different populations. For the sake of sim-

[27] When asked what motivated him to make the first ascent of Mount Everest, the Brit Sir Edmund Hillary put it in his own inimitable way: "Because it exists!"

plicity and without any intention to discriminate, we will use the name Grodno as it is commonly used here (in Germany).

At first sight, some things do not fit into any scheme, such as this “war edition” of Grodno, a veritable Belarusian city with 24,460 inhabitants according to the 1916 German census, which never became part of Lithuania after the re-establishment of the state. Russian double-headed eagle stamps had a bilingual overprint with Latin and Cyrillic letters: LIETUVA and Літва. The Cyrillic alphabet was never voluntarily used by the Lithuanians, it was always imposed on them by the Russian occupiers. The categorisation of the marks as "under Russian occupation" (Scott 1964, Gibbons 1973) is fundamentally wrong according to the facts and was first corrected by Polchaninoff in 1973! To anticipate: This local edition is rightly a Lithuanian one and has been attributed to that country in catalogues for decades. The reasons for this are complex.

Like the local issue from Telšiai, these stamps owe their existence to the initiative of a philatelist during the unstable political situation in north-eastern Europe after the end of the First World War. The rare series, issued by a “Lithuanian-Belarusian Ministry” in Grodno, has a certain official character. However, the central authority in Kaunas categorically denied the validity of this series in 1920. One hypothesis is that at the time it did not seem opportune for the Lithuanians to officially claim the territory for Lithuania vis-à-vis the Allies, even though it had already been annexed by Poland. They probably did not want to jeopardise de jure recognition. There was little civilian postal demand for the stamps, mail could only be sent to Germany, and the few letters that were sent during the legal period were delivered by the German field post office. So why a Lithuanian issue?

Grodno at the end of the war

During the First World War, the town belonged to the district of Bialystok-Grodno in the "Territory of the Commander-in-Chief East" with the "Postal Territory of the Commander-in-Chief East" („Postgebiet Oberbefehlshaber Ost“), not to Lithuania. After the reorganisation in 1917, it belonged to the "Administrative District of Lithuania" as a district or district town. The name "South Lithuania" did not exist at that time and would have been administratively incorrect. In the Peace of Brest-Litovsk of March 3, 1918, the Soviet power had renounced the Baltic States, but revoked this decision in 1918 after the armistice in the West. Who now had legal sovereignty over the territory, who ruled it de facto?

After the armistice of November 11, 1918, the Allies demanded the withdrawal of German troops from the occupied territories. This was done immediately on the western front, while in the east the order led to a partial dissolution of military order, with units dispersing with the intention of returning home as quickly as possible. The disorderly demobilisation left behind areas abandoned by the German occupation, into which con-

tingents of the Red Army, Bolshevik militias or White Guards or Polish corps moved. Germany and the Allies recognised the need to prevent the Red Army from advancing further west.

The occupying forces in the east were faced with the seemingly irreconcilable tasks of demobilising the army and returning it to Germany, while at the same time protecting the German border areas. As a result of the spontaneous self-dissolution of troops in some places, serious border problems arose with the newly established Polish state.

When Bolshevik troops advanced westwards into the Baltic states in a matter of weeks in late 1918, the German High Command formed the "Grenzschutz Ost" in November 1918, mainly from volunteers and remnants of the occupying armies, and ordered them to the east. These troops brought their own field post service with them.

Grodno was of great strategic importance as an important railway junction, especially in the course of the repatriation of regular army units and the distribution of troops from the “Eastern Border Guard” and other volunteer units. These began to replace the withdrawing units. The headquarters of the Xth Army was transferred from Vilnius to Grodno on December 22, 1918. In addition, many units of the retreating troops from areas further north-east stopped at the railway junction in Grodno.

This was the situation in the spring of 1919, when the local edition was produced: the area between East Prussia and southern Lithuania was claimed by Poland, the Bolsheviks (in the form of the Belorussian Soviet Republic) as well as by Lithuania, but the real power was exercised by those German units that had not been withdrawn but remained there on the orders of the Allies under Article XII of the Compiégne Armistice or, like the Eastern Border Guard and other volunteer units, which had been ordered there to keep the Red Army at bay. Formally, these troops were no longer allowed to exercise sovereignty! In order to avoid a power vacuum, some of the power of the German commanders was placed in the hands of local people who were assumed or recognised to have some authority.

The map below, taken from a Lithuanian historical atlas, attempts to depict the confused situation at the end of 1918/1919.

According to the tsarist census of 1897, the population of the Grodno district was 204,854, made up of 134,639 White Russians, 40,710 Jews (before the First World War, Jews were also referred to as a separate ethnic group in Eastern Europe), 12,900 Russians, 11,593 Poles and 2,912 Lithuanians. Other ethnic groups played a negligible role. Despite their small numbers, the local Lithuanians were the best organised and managed to secure the support of the German military to set up an administration. Facts were created: On November 27, 1918, representatives of Belarus joined the Lithuanian Taryba, which appointed Jakob Voronko as the Minister of the Interior of Belarus. On January 20, 1919, the Lithuanian Ministry of Belarusian Affairs issued a declaration

stating that Belarusians living in the former Grodno governorate should belong to the state of Lithuania. All this lent a certain legitimacy to the emerging local Lithuanian administration.

The united Belarusian-Lithuanian Soviet Republic "Litbel", proclaimed on February 27, 1919, had no access to the city of Grodno itself; this construct was officially liquidated again on July 17, 1919.

The situation is described in detail in a Lithuanian historical atlas from 2001.

The essentials: The front line in spring 1919 divided Lithuanian territory into two parts (green-red double line): East occupied by the Red Army, West (green dotted area) under the order of the Lithuanian government in spring 1919, relying on the German troops left behind; this area extended as far as Suwalki and Grodno. In reality, the remaining German troops ruled under a formally Lithuanian (municipal) government. The "Litbel" had no influence here.

Legend top right	
Green dotted area	Area, which was controlled by the Lithuanian government at the end of January 1919 with the support of German military units
Green flags	Locations of Lithuanian armed forces
Green/blue ovals	Operation of Lithuanian/German military units involved in fighting with the Red Army
Green dashed T-line	The main area of Lithuanian partisan activity
Gediminas Tower	The old capital of Lithuania, Vilnius, where the Lithuanian Taryba was active (September 21, 1917, to May 15, 1920)
Lithuanian flag	Provisional seat of government Kaunas from January 2, 1919
Dashed black line	National borders 1914
Pink-coloured line	Today's state border of the Republic of Lithuania

Legend bottom left	**Territory occupied by German troops (until the Peace of Brest-Litovsk of March 3, 1918)**
Light yellow area	Before the peace talks in Brest-Litovsk November 20, 1917
Strong yellow surface	Newly occupied during the interruption of the peace negotiations in Brest-Litovsk of March 3, 1918 (February 18 to March 3, 1918)
Blue line	Front line February 18, 1918
Blue dashed line	March 3, 1918 (resumption of peace talks)
Blue arrows	Advance of German troops February 18 to March 3, 1918
Crossed flags	Peace concluded March 3, 1918
Dashed brown line	Peace treaty line, east of which the Soviets ruled

Development until end of January 1919	
Red arrows	Offensives of the Red Army, following the retreating German army, after the Soviet-Russian government had unilaterally annulled the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (November 13, 1918)
	The advance of the Red Army followed the retreat of the German army after the Lithuanian government sent a letter of protest to the Soviet-Russian government on December 31, 1918 against the invasion of Lithuanian territory by the Red Army.
Brown dashed line	Border of the Litbel SSR, planned by the Russian Communist Party (RKP[b]), resolution of the Central Committee (CK) of January 16, 1919
Red-green double line	**Front line at the end of January 1919**

The postal services in Grodno

Until the planned withdrawal of the regular German troops at the end of 1918 – which only partially took place – a field post office had existed in Grodno, to which a civilian post office of the military administration was attached, which closed at the end of 1918. On December 30, 1918, a Lithuanian post office opened under the management of Dimitrius Artemjevas / Artemyev, who was sent from Vilnius as postmaster. Evidence shows that German soldiers also used it.

Before contact with Kaunas was broken off due to attacks by Bolshevik units, it was possible to send stocks of the first and second Vilnius issues and the Kaunas issues to Grodno by courier "in the panje wagon". According to contemporary witness Adolf Plamsch (1920), values of 10 and 15 Skatikų of the first issue and 20 and 30 Skatikų of the second issue arrived in Grodno as early as December 30, 1918. These were initially cancelled with the GRODNO one-liner taken from German stocks.

On January 3, 1919, a two-circle rubber stamp with an exclusively Belarusian Cyrillic inscription in capital letters (translated: Grodno Post and Telegraph Office) was introduced to take account of the Belarusian majority. This explains the significant proportion of Lithuanian stamps with this Cyrillic postmark. Occasionally, stamps from the Berlin issues were also cancelled with it.

Doniela (inter alia 2014) emphasises that there were many philatelists among the departing and arriving German soldiers, including the then German postmaster of the Grodno field post office, Wienke, who also used the Lithuanian Post for philatelic mail and courtesy cancellations.

At the beginning of 1919, a contingent of White Russian volunteers occupied Grodno and took over its administration, but it remained under Lithuanian sovereignty. The civil post office, which had been opened on December 30, 1918, remained under the Lithuanian administration of postmaster Artemjevas. According to verified witnesses, the stocks of Lithuanian stamps (Vilnius and Kaunas issues) were exhausted by February.

Communications had been cut due to the fighting with the Soviets and Poles. At the suggestion of the Lithuanian postmaster, the Lithuanian-Belarusian administration authorised the printing of an emergency issue, according to the official version. As in Telšiai, it was an enterprising philatelist, Pastor Adolf Plamsch from Grodno, known from contemporary articles in the literature, who initiated this issue and promoted its use.

The overprints show considerably more wear, soiling and chipping of the stamps, as first published by Eisin in 1967. Fields 1 to 25 are numbered from left to right. The most up-to-date description of the field characteristics can be found in the catalogue by A. Jankauskas (2012, pp. 292-297). A detailed description of the field characteristics is given in part 2 of this article.

500 sets of the 1909–1911 Tsarist double-headed eagle issue and three sets of the cut 1917 Kerensky issue (circulation 50/25/20) were given a bilingual overprint in black or red on five lines. This took account of both Lithuanian postal sovereignty and the Belorussian majority. A printed sheet contained 25 fields, corresponding to the 25-part sheets in which the Russian stamps were available. Each cliché has characteristic features that have been analysed in detail (Eisin 1967, Jankauskas 2012). The printer can no longer be identified.

A contemporary witness reported having received confirmation of the production of the stamps and their print runs from the then Chief of Field Post 3007 and Lithuanian Postmaster D. Artemyev. The series appeared in Grodno on March 4, 1919. The same contemporary witness "v. W." (see footnote 4) reported in the Berliner Briefmarken-Zeitung: "*However, the stock could not withstand the rush of the many buyers under the German occupation for long, and so a new issue would probably have had to be issued fairly soon if the well in Kovno had not started to flow*" (Litauen-Süd article by "v.W." 1920, p.52/53).

This lyrical formulation means that the very next day, March 5, 1919, stamps of the fourth Berlin issue arrived in Grodno from Kaunas. Several philatelic covers are known, almost all without a recognisable date of posting, as the date of posting cannot be determined due to the exclusive use of the dateless Cyrillic "KOHTOPA" postmark for these stamps. Only one R cover has a registered mail receipt with the date "7.IV". Arrival cancellations also allow an approximate date to be determined. So far only philatelic covers are known, some of which were actually used. Most stamps were affixed to blank paper or envelopes and cancelled with the same postmark as a courtesy.

On April 26, 1919, Polish troops occupied Grodno, ending the joint Lithuanian-Belarusian administration and the postal service.

Are these Lithuanian issues? The Belarusian Cyrillic inscription on the overprint, the postmark used, and the fact that Grodno was and is clearly on Belarusian territory would suggest otherwise. This was also the case in the German occupied territory of

Oberbefehlshaber Ost. Furthermore, the stamps were not recognised by the central administration in Kaunas.

Nevertheless, this series is correctly attributed to Lithuania: the production order was officially issued by a joint Lithuanian-Belarusian ministry, formally appointed by the Taryba and operating under Lithuanian sovereignty. The first Lithuanian stamps were delivered to Grodno and could therefore be used there regularly. At the time, it was completely unclear who would rule the area in the future. After the armistice, the German troops, as the real rulers, no longer had a mandate, and power was partly transferred to the local Lithuanians. Lithuania had an option on the territory at the time, although it was not a realistic one.

In the current Michel, the stamps for Lithuania can be found under the heading Local Issues – Gardinas / Grodno. Applying the principle of legality, which emphasises the formal responsibility of the issuing institution, these stamps should be designated as the Belarusian-Lithuanian issue Grodno / Gardinas, but should still be assigned to Lithuania, as the state of Belarus did not yet exist and the Belarusian deputies had joined the Lithuanian parliament, the Taryba, in November 1918.

If one accepts the Grodno issue as Lithuanian, then one has the most expensive set and, with No. 5 U (50 Skatikų on 15 kopecks imperforated, edition of 20), the rarest stamp of this country. The price scale is open at the top, for example a complete block of four with margin pieces was offered at Cherrystone 2020 for 23,000 dollars.

Counterfeiters have always seen it that way, because soon overprinted stamps and covers with Cyrillic postmarks were and still are forged in large numbers.

Part 2 of this article in the next issue of BALTIKUM No. 18 will present the various types in the sheet of 25, varieties, covers and forgeries of the Grodno issue.

Fig 1:
Map of Lithuanian local issues after the First World War:
1. Raseiniai
2. Telšiai
3. **Grodno / Hrodna ("South Lithuania")**
4. Suwalki triangle
I. Vilnius region / Central Lithuania
II. the Memel region / Klaipėda

Fig. 2: The Grodno issue (enlarged), imperforated in very small print run

Fig. 3: Administrative map of the area Oberbefehlshaber Ost 1917 (Wikipedia)

Fig. 4: Map of the front lines in the Lithuanian War of Liberation in the years 1918 to 1920, Lithuanian representation (Fig. from Lietuvos Istorijos Atlas. Vilniaus Universiteto Kartografijos Centras 2001, p. 39); Gardinas / Grodno marked with a black arrow (not on the original map)

Fig. 5: Lithuanian post office in Grodno (from Doniela 2010: Gardinas (Grodno) 1919 – Lithuanian Philately | Lietuvos Filatelija files, website www.lithuanianphilately.com)

Fig. 6a: One-liner GRODNO on Vilnius issue Michel No. 1

Fig. 6b: Grodno cancellation Grodnenskaya Kontora

Figs. 7a and b: A typical collector's item of German soldiers with the stamps of the third Kaunas issue: Registered letter of the "Mobile Station Command II" from Grodno, cancelled with the Cyrillian "KONTORA" postmark, processed by the field post office, field postmark no. 3007 dated 16.4.19 on the reverse.

Fig. 8: Local letter to the initiator of the Grodno local issue, "Sr. Hochwohlehrwürden dem Herrn Ortspfarrer Adolf Plamsch" (To the Most Reverend Adolf Plamsch, the local priest) with no. 1A (50 Skatikų on 1Kopeck imperforated); the "KOHTOPA" postmark bears no date, but the letter was probably received on April 22 according to the written note. This popular letter has already passed through several hands.

Fig. 9: Test print of the 25 fields of the overprint

Fig. 10: Illustration of Eisin's field features (1967)

Fig. 11: Philatelic cover

Fig. 12: Set of four miniature sheets from the 2020 Cherrystone auction (reduced)

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Lithuanian Post tariff increase for 2024

Bernhard Fels, Soest (D)

On December 19, 2023, Lithuanian Post announced in a press release that postal rates would increase on January 1, 2024. The need for a rate increase was justified as follows: Rising domestic costs of postmen's salaries, significant increase in prices of goods and services, increase in prices of fuel and other energy resources.

When sending standard items weighing up to 20 grams (letters and postcards) abroad, shipping prices to the most popular destination countries (USA, Canada, Australia, the Netherlands and Italy) will increase by an average of 11 to 22 per cent. The rates for sending letters and parcels within Lithuania will increase by around 20 per cent.

Lithuanian Post also points out that from 2024 there will be no non-priority mail within the country. This change is mainly due to the decreasing demand for this type of mail, as postal customers increasingly opt for prioritised mail. The sending of non-priority mail items to foreign countries has already been discontinued as of 2021.

Domestic tariffs

Standard letters up to 50 g	1,55 €	Registered mail	2,00 €
51 – 500 g	1,85 €	Registered mail	2,30 €

International tariffs (selection)

	Standard up to 20 g	Standard 21 to 50 g	Registered up to 20 g
Germany	1,70 €	1,85 €	6,00 €
Bulgaria	1,30 €	1,60 €	3,45 €
Liechtenstein	1,35 €	1,80 €	3,70 €

With these steep rates, Lithuanian Post is in line with the price increases in the other two Baltic states and the Scandinavian countries. Postage rates are also being increased at shorter and shorter intervals.

Fig.: Standard domestic letter (FDC) + registered mail up to 50 grams, rate 2.00 euros

Fig.: Standard letter up to 20 grams to Germany, rate 1.70 euros

Lithuania stamp corner

Bernhard Fels, Soest (D)

Additions to the article "Current developments at Lithuanian Post: Activities – Post Offices – New Rates – Postmark Specialities" in BALTIKUM No. 16 (from page 58)

Post office names

As already described in Baltikum No. 16 on page 64, post offices that order new date cancellations change their post office designation. Previously, only the name of the post office was shown in the top line of the postmark, but now the Rokiškis post office has a date stamp labelled Rokiškis paštas (Rokiškis Post).

A different wording was chosen for the Vilnius 57 branch:
Vilniaus 57 - asis paštas (lt.) = Vilnius post office 57

Post office Vilnius 3 with different distinguishing letters (DL)

The Vilnius 3 post office is located in the "PC Pupa" shopping centre. Three service counters are available to the public.

Five date stamps are in use at the Vilnius 3 post office to handle the postal service. The date stamps have the distinguishing letters (DL) b, d, e and ž (colour of the latter: green). The DL "e" appears twice in different sizes. Actually, no two devices with the same distinguishing letters should be used.

Fig.: DL size: 1,5 mm

Fig.: DL size: 2,0 mm

Fig.: green stamping ink

Incorrect envelope labelling – Return letter

Bernhard Fels, Soest (D)

For some time now, letters sent to Lithuania have been returned as undeliverable if the marking on the envelope does not comply with current postal regulations. We were wrong to assume that the letters were being returned to the sender because the recipient's address was incorrect. On closer inspection, this was not the case.

A consultation with Lithuanian Post revealed that the envelopes had to be labelled in accordance with the regulations, namely those of Deutsche Post and Lithuanian Post. Otherwise the letter would be refused carriage.

The letter shown was addressed to a post office in Vilnius. What did the post office have to criticise here?

- In the recipient's address, only the post office itself was named, but no person working there who would have to deal with the letter.
- The sender's address was stated directly above the recipient's address. According to the regulations, the sender's address must be placed in the top left-hand corner of the envelope.

The envelope was therefore labelled with a CN 15 return label (return letters abroad) with the note "unclaimed" and returned to the sender.

Notes on the format of the recipient address: Country abbreviations (e.g. LT = Lithuania) are no longer used. The destination is written in capital letters, if possible in the language of the destination country. The destination country is also written in capital letters, for example in German, French or English.

The DP camp for interned Balts in Hanau and its post office

Werner Klieber, Hanau (D) and Hartmut Fueß, Frankfurt a.M. (D)

After the defeat of the German Reich in May 1945, millions of people from many countries found themselves without shelter in the bombed-out cities and rural areas of Germany. They had come to Germany as prisoners of war, forced labourers, prisoners in penal camps or as refugees, mostly involuntarily. Most of them wanted to return home as soon as possible. Due to political changes, their return was often considerably delayed. Emigration to the USA, Canada or Australia was also not immediately possible.

The victorious powers set up camps for these people, known as **Displaced Persons Camps (DP Camps)**. They were housed in empty barracks. People were allowed to move freely inside and outside the camp, and there were official jobs available. The food was

satisfactory and residents were given identity cards with photographs. The camps were usually set up for particular ethnic groups, or members of particular nationalities were grouped together in certain camps. The 269 camps on German territory were set up and supervised by the occupying powers in accordance with the rules of the **U**nited **N**ations **R**elief and **R**ehabilitation **A**dministration (**UNRRA**), established in 1943 before the United Nations was founded, and its successor, the **I**nternational **R**efugee **O**rganisation (**IRO**), from 1947.

In the spring of 1945, the Americans set up a **DP camp** in the barracks of the Lamboy district of the city of **Hanau am Main**. These barracks had been built in the German Reich between 1890 and 1910 and, after a period of disuse, had been reoccupied by the Wehrmacht from 1937. They had survived the war with little damage. The camp's location on the outskirts of the city also ensured sufficient physical separation from the suffering German population, who often regarded the camp's residents as privileged. The camp was continuously manned by between 4,000 and 6,000 people. In addition to **Balts** (Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians), there were also Poles and Ukrainians. Over time, however, non-Baltic people migrated to other camps. According to the 1946 census, Lithuanians were the largest group with 3,539 people. There were 1,632 Latvians and 854 Estonians. Among the Lithuanians in 1945/46 was the 3rd President of the Republic, **Kazys Grinius** (1866–1950), who was in office in 1928.

The self-organisation in the camp was remarkable. As there were many teachers among the internees, regular school classes for up to 200 pupils were set up as early as July 30, 1945. A camp council had already been formed in May 1945, and **Vytautas Kazimieras Jonynas** (1907–1997) was elected chairman. Jonynas was a Lithuanian artist who, after studying in Lithuania and France, had been a professor at the Kaunas Art School since 1935. He gained international recognition as a lithographer and book illustrator and through exhibitions in France. In 1944 he fled from Lithuania to Germany and was interned in the Hanau DP camp after the end of the war. He was able to leave the camp in 1946 and moved to Freiburg im Breisgau in the French occupied zone.

There he set up an arts and crafts school for war refugees. **Raymond Schmittlein**, head of the Directorate of Public Education in the French Occupation Zone since 1945, made both of these things possible. Schmittlein had worked for the Institut Français in Kaunas and Riga in the 1930s and had met Jonynas there[1]. He commissioned Jonynas to design the stamps for the issues of the French zone (Baden, Rhineland-Palatinate, Württemberg-Hohenzollern, Saarland). Schmittlein also arranged for the stamps to be printed by the Franz Burda printing works in Offenburg. In addition to the first series of the four regions in 1947, Jonynas also designed the stamps of Baden for the 100th anniversary of the Baden Revolution of 1849, with the image of Carl Schurz, Michel Nos. 50–52[2]. Jony-

[1] Engels, Wolfgang 2009 in: Rundbrief 128 der Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Französische Zone. p. 5–11

[2] In 1959 Jonynas designed another series of stamps for the Vatican in honour of St Casimir, the patron saint of Lithuania, MiNo. 330/31.

nas emigrated to the USA in 1951 and returned to Lithuania in 1990[3]. The Lithuanian Post dedicated a stamp to him on the centenary of his birth in 2007, Mi–No. 928, fig. 1.

But back to the Hanau DP camp: On August 9, 1945, former **Lithuanian postal workers** formed a **committee** that lasted until the camp was closed in 1949. J. Bareisa, a former board member of the Lithuanian postal service, became its first chairman. The work of the committee is documented in the minutes of its 25 meetings. The first priority was to search for relatives. Another important task was the distribution of newspapers and the delivery of letters, postcards and parcels within the camp by committee members on a voluntary basis. Fees had to be paid for communication with other camps and the authorities. This enabled the committee to generate income that could be used to provide grants for cultural events, scholarships, financial assistance for funerals and, finally, symbolic salaries for employees.

As you would expect from a group of postmen, thoughts soon turned to postmarks and stamps. Board member **Antanas Gintneris** was given the task of designing a stamp featuring the portrait of Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas (1275–1341) or the symbolic horseman that adorns many Lithuanian stamps. However, the horseman did not make it onto the stamp. Instead, it appeared on the stamp issued in the autumn of 1945. The committee could not and did not want to call it a "stamp", as it had no postal value outside the camp. Occasionally, however, the fee stamp appears to have been used for postal purposes, as shown in figure 2. It can be found as a revenue stamp (vignette) on the back of a registered letter, fig. 3. This version remained in use for over three years.

It was not until October 13, 1948, that the committee decided to produce further revenue stamps. They were printed by Meerbott OHG in Großauheim near Hanau. The paper was slightly beige, and the perforation was poor. The inscription on the stamps reads DP Camp LPS HANAU / MOKESCIO ZENKLAS, which means fee paid. The fee stamps were only used within the Hanau camp, mainly on documents for translations, on telegram receipts and on posting slips, fig. 4.

Three denominations were issued: 5 Pfennig green with three statues of Lithuanian freedom, designed by **Pr. Drasitus**, 10 pfennigs blue with a drawing of a girl with a chapel column[4] and 20 pfennigs red with a burning house. The two 10 and 20 pfennig stamps were designed by **J. Kaminskas**[5]. The 5 Pfennig value was later reprinted in brown. Figures 5a to 5c show the stamps and figure 6 an airmail letter to the USA showing the 10 Pfennig vignette with the cancellation with date bar. There were at least four other cancellations without date bars.

The Estonian and Latvian camp inhabitants are not known to have "their own" postal organisation. However, these ethnic groups did organise a **stamp exhibition** from

[3] Andriusyte-Zukiene. Rosa 2007; *Vytautas Kazimieras Jonynas*, Mamografia. Lietuvos dailes muziejus.

[4] In Lithuanian: „Koplytstulpis“, see https://lt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koplytstulpis [27.05.2024]

[5] The print runs were: 5 Pfg.: 5,370 pieces; 10 Pfg.: 11,190 pieces and 20 Pfg.: 5,400 pieces

November 1 to 3, 1947. Fig. 7 shows an admission ticket. The donation stamps shown there are from blocks of ten stamps each with the Latvian coat of arms in red and the Estonian coat of arms in blue, fig. 8.

During the three days of the exhibition, there were two postmarks with the inscription "**HANAU PHILATELIC EXHIBITION**". The block and stamps could not be used for franking. However, visitors to the exhibition sent the stamps with special cancellations all over the world, franked with the valid stamps of the Allied Control Council. In particular, one address in Los Angeles seems to have been used for mass production, fig. 9.

There were other Baltic DP camps in numerous communities in the western occupation zones of Germany. Philatelic activities are known from Altenstadt/Schongau, Augsburg[6], Detmold, Geislingen, Kempten, Meerbeck and Seedorf[7]. The Hanau camp was closed in August 1949. The remaining stocks of stamps from the camp are said to have been transferred to the Hanau main post office.

The authors would like to thank Professor Juras Banys, President of the Academy of Sciences of Lithuania, for translating parts of the Lithuanian biography of Vytautas Jonynas. We would also like to thank Martin Bechstedt for providing us with the commemorative stamp of Jonynas.

The brochure "Das DP-Lager in Hanau und seine Post" (“The DP Camp in Hanau and it’s Post”, in German language) is available from the author Werner Klieber, Katharina-Belgica-Straße 1, 63450 Hanau, Deutschland and by email at werner.klieber82@gmail.com at a price of €15 plus postage.

Fig. 1: Lithuania Michel No. 928, Vytautas Kazimieras Jonynas (1907 to 1997)

Fig. 2: Vignette 1945 on a letter to the Hanau post office (without a valid German stamp)

Fig. 3: Vignette 1945 on the back of a registered letter from Hanau to Recklinghausen, June 1946

Fig. 4: 10 Pfennig stamp on the posting slip for a registered letter

Figs. 5a to 5c: The1948 postage stamps comprised three denominations

Fig. 6: Postage paid airmail letter to the USA, postage 30 pfennigs, airmail surcharge 50 pfennigs.

Fig. 7: The admission ticket to the stamp exhibition in the warehouse tells a story of philately.

Fig. 8: Special vignettes with the coats of arms of Latvia and Estonia were issued for the exhibition

Fig. 9: The postcard to the United States is slightly overstamped – 30 pfennigs postcard fee would have sufficed – and its camp post vignettes were also cancelled with the official Hanau postmark.

[6] Steinmann, G. (ArGe Pfadfinder) 2020; Das baltische DP-Camp in Augsburg. Philatelie 521, p.36–37.

[7] See also the website of the ArGe Baltikum at https://arge-baltikum.de/estonia-70-en.shtml#60.

Notes for BALTIKUM authors

Friedhelm Doell, Aschheim (D)

Dear active writers and interested parties who would like to write an article for this magazine in the future, please consider me for articles:

1. Write your article as a **Word file** (or a document that can be read by Word, such as OpenOffice) in continuous text, with paragraphs and details of where, for example, which figure should appear. Please write **captions** with "Fig xx: <description>" on separate lines. **Tables** as Word or Excel tables (or Excel-compatible, e.g. OpenOffice), inserted into the main document or as a separate file.

2. Use the correct **special characters in the respective language** for proper names, place names, stamp labelling, etc. Cite according to our rules: Surname, first name [If applicable <& surname, first name of a second author>] Year: Title. [If applicable in: <literature reference, for journals complete publisher's name>]. Place of publication. [Publisher if this is important]. [Pages, if applicable]. [For webs, date of access].

3. **Scan** documents for an image in original size with at least 300 dpi, better **600 dpi**; if enlargements are planned, use a correspondingly finer scan. Always use a **white background**! If you want to show white stamp edges or **perforations**, please use a **medium grey** background (not black or coloured). If possible, rotate the scans exactly straight and crop them to the exact pixel.

4. If you have **layout ideas**, please send them in the margins and with the BALTIKUM fonts and sizes **as a PDF**. For details see:
https://arge-baltikum.de/assets/pdf/Web/ArGe_Baltikum_Gestaltungshinweise_V1.6.pdf
(in German language).

Valuable talks in Munich

Torsten Berndt, Constance (D)

Good attendance, many contacts – the last PHILATELIA in Munich was also a complete success. The concept of limiting the show to two days simply meant that visitors were well distributed over the two days and there was never a day when there was more or less a flood of visitors, as is always the case with three-day shows. Of course, in the last hours of Saturday and especially on Sunday afternoon, the flow of visitors slowed down considerably. But that happens at all fairs. It cannot be stressed enough that less is more, that both visitors and exhibitors prefer two-day events to three-day events. The concept of mixing non-commercial and commercial exhibitors rather than separating them is equally convincing.

This time our team consisted of Friedhelm Doell, Reinhard Heinrich, Olaf Hoffmann and the reporter. As well as answering visitors' questions, we also learned a thing or two. Who knows, for example, that comparatively few postcards were produced in Lithuania before the German occupation during the First World War? There are plenty from Estonia and Latvia, a visitor specialising in philocartography told us, but you have to look long and hard to find Lithuanian ones. Well done to the Lithuanian collectors in our group whose albums also contain postcards!

This time, our monthly video conference took place "Live from PHILATELIA". Despite a few audio problems with two devices used and the limited time available (the hall closed at 5:30 p.m.), it was a valuable experience and showed further potential for improvement. Friedhelm Doell promised to keep at it.

On Saturday, a veteran of philately and philatelic expertise visited us: Wilhelm van Loo had found his way to Munich from the far west. Sprightlier than some people 20 years younger, he wandered around the hall, took photographs and found time to chat. It is always a pleasure to talk to him, and not just because of his wealth of experience.

With its contemporary concept, the organising trade association APHV has positioned PHILATELIA for the future. The motto for the farewell was: "Next year, same wave, same place".

Fig. 1: The trade fair team (Olaf not in the picture) in conversation with a visitor (left)

Fig. 2: Torsten Berndt in dialogue with Wilhelm van Loo

Minutes of the General Meeting (GM)

of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Baltikum e.V. at the sports school of the Football Association Mittelrhein, Sövener Straße 60, 53773 Hennef, on May 11, 2024

Present: Martin Bechstedt, Torsten Berndt, Friedhelm Doell, Bernhard Fels, Michael Haslau, Reinhard Heinrich, Olaf Hoffmann, Karl Lukas, Thomas Löbbering, Doris Masch, Olav Petri, Hans Pijpers, Hannes Westendorf, Michael Wieneke, Ruud van Wijnen

Excused: Wilhelm Bockmann, Yehoshua Eliashiv, Manfred Mrotzek, Aija Héloise Pince

Guests: Thomas Wilthöft (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Russland/UdSSR)

Agenda item 1 The Chairman, Torsten Berndt, opened the General Meeting at 13:30. He warmly welcomed the members present from Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Mr Berndt established that the meeting had been convened on time and that a quorum was present.

Agenda item 2 In accordance with Section 7 of the Articles of Association in conjunction with Section 2 (2) No. 6 of the Rules of Procedure, the General Meeting unanimously elected Martin Bechstedt as secretary with the abstention of the person concerned.

Agenda item 3 The members of the Executive Board informed the members present about their activities in the past year. Below are the annual reports:

3.1. Report of the Chairman Torsten Berndt

As in the previous year, the Executive Board worked together in a calm and relaxed atmosphere. We coordinated everything quickly, mainly digitally and sometimes by telephone. We often involved the specialist editors, who also took part in the Board meeting prior to this general meeting. We were also able to draw on the expertise of Michael Wienecke, who also attended the Board meeting. I would like to thank you all for your excellent cooperation over the past twelve months!

A. BALTIKUM

I consider the production of BALTIKUM to be the most important part of the work. The diversity and depth of the topics is entirely due to the expert authors and editors Martin Bechstedt (Lithuania), Thomas Löbbering (Estonia) and Ruud van Wijnen (Latvia). They have done an excellent job that will last. BALTIKUM is therefore one of the works cited and is represented in various philatelic and other libraries. Unfortunately, this is only partially reflected in the reviews at exhibitions. I think this is mainly due to the fact that our field of collecting starts with the so-called semi-classical period, but the majority of the jurors are classicists.

Friedhelm Doell is responsible for the visually appealing appearance of the BALTIKUM. He manages to do tricks with Microsoft Word that I probably couldn't do even with the best technical equipment. I would like to thank everyone for their selfless efforts!

B. Participation in trade fairs

At the end of June and the beginning of July we set up an information stand at an exhibition in the Schöneberg town hall in Berlin. We worked together with the Israel Interest Group. The exhibition focused on Berlin anniversaries, so we did not expect a large number of people interested in the Baltic region. Nevertheless, there was a lively exchange with visitors and representatives of other working groups. The stand was organised by Michael Haslau, Christoph Wendland from IG Israel and myself.

At the end of October 2023, we attended the International Stamp Fair in Ulm and at the beginning of March 2024 the Philatelia in Munich. At both events we had many discussions with visitors and representatives of other working groups, more in Munich than in

Ulm. This is probably due to the shorter duration of Philatelia – it lasts only two days instead of three – and also to the solid mix of stands from specialist dealers, auctioneers, associations and societies. In this way, APHV President Wolfgang Lang, who was responsible for the concept, was able to facilitate a livelier exchange, which was made more difficult in Ulm by the division into a hall with commercial stands and one with non-commercial stands and display frames. In Ulm Friedhelm Doell, Reinhard Heinrich, Oliver Hanschmidt, Olaf Hoffmann, Thomas Löbbering, Ruud van Wijnen and I were responsible for the stand, in Munich Friedhelm Doell, Reinhard Heinrich, Olaf Hoffmann and I. In Ulm we also worked together with the Austrian Working Group, the Russia/USSR Working Group and the Nordic States Research Association.

I would like to thank all the active members who took part in the stands and at the same time express the hope that more members will agree to take part in the stands. Only with active public relations work will it be possible to attract new collectors to Baltic philately and to convince Baltic collectors of our work. Ulm and Munich are on the agenda for this autumn and next spring. With a few more members we could also have booked a stand for the German-Brazilian bilateral exhibition in Haldensleben at the end of June, again in cooperation with the Israel Interest Group.

C. Competitions

Reports on the awards received for the www.arge-baltikum.de website and BALTIKUM have been published in BALTIKUM. There is no need to repeat them here.

I would like to highlight the recognition that Friedhelm Doell has received for his work on our website from the European Federation, FEPA. Particularly in view of the fact that our collecting areas are not the first things that come to mind when people talk about philately, it is excellent that www.ArGe-Baltikum.de has been rated as one of the five most innovative philatelic websites. Only the Deutscher Altbrief-Sammler-Verein (DASV) scored higher. The fact that the judges at the IBRA in Essen took a different view, and even rated the DASV lower than us, confirms what has already been said under A. BALTIKUM.

D. Organisational matters

The attempt to find a cheaper alternative to the Hennef Sports School as a conference venue was ultimately unsuccessful. The Gustav Stresemann Institute in Bonn did not offer any price advantages. The Baltic House in Annaberg did not respond to a written enquiry, nor did they reply to a follow-up telephone call. After careful consideration, we therefore decided to continue with Hennef.

Third parties asked the Baltic Working Group various technical questions, which were answered by the respective experts for the collection areas. A surprising contact was made with the German-Baltic Genealogical Society. They had found a copy of BALTIKUM

in an estate and asked for more. We sent a complete set to Damstadt. BALTIKUM is now part of their library.

The Working Groups are generally unhappy about the imminent loss of their representation in the BDPh. Those who know the chairman of the Association of Philatelic Working Groups (VPhA) better would have been surprised if he had found a successor. In a few weeks the VPhA will be dissolved for lack of a board. The board of the BDPh will then consist mainly of those who, among other things, introduced the penalty fee for direct members of the working groups – they will have to pay 23 euros per year to the BDPh, five euros more than if they were members of a local association affiliated to the national organisation. Unfortunately, further attacks on the working groups cannot be ruled out.

The members did not ask any questions.

3.2. Report of the Deputy Chairman Martin Bechstedt

The philately of the newly independent Baltic States from 1990 onwards has received received more attention last year. This had been requested by some members.

Enquiries about Baltic philately at fairs and on the Internet were dealt with by our experts. Collectors were most interested in the following questions:

- Authenticity of stamps and covers
- Rarity, value judgement
- Professional categorisation and assessment
- Procurement of documents

The answers to these questions were obviously satisfactory for the enquirers and so successful that they helped us to gain some new members.

The intensification of **Internet contacts** has led to a considerable increase in the global exchange of data. This was essentially achieved via

- Online chats of the US-American LPS from Chicago and our ArGe
- Informal online groups on specific topics that exchange information via e-mail
- Permanent contacts of philatelists

In particular, the increase in the volume of data that can be transferred via the Internet has led to the rapid exchange of highly informative images (scans) and much qualified discussion.

3.3. Report of the treasurer Michael Haslau

Looking back, there were losses in 2022 due to the change of account from Postbank to Sparkasse and increased printing costs. In 2023, a surplus was achieved due to better payment rates for membership fees, an increase in members and significantly reduced printing costs. It will be possible to conclude the consequences of the account change on June 1, 2024. Some contributions are still outstanding.

For the next few years, surpluses in the three-digit range can be expected if the printing costs of BALTIKUM do not increase dramatically and membership fees are paid regularly. Consequently, no contribution increases will be necessary in the near future.

3.4. Report of the webmaster (and editor / corporate designer / translator / online host) Friedhelm Doell

The following changes have been made to the **ArGe website** since the last General Meeting in 2023:

Literature and media have again been supplemented with additional information.

The **presentation of the collection areas** on our website corresponds to the status of last year's General Assembly. The topics "Private Mail in Latvia" and "Second Soviet Occupation 1944-1991 in Lithuania" are still open, i.e. completely without content, as we have not yet found any experts who could write something about them.

After 9 years of work on the web, the input of the permanent content of the web that goes beyond current events is therefore – as far as possible – **largely complete**.

There are hardly any **current events** for the start page that lead to changing content there, apart from information about members' meetings and trade fair stands; anyone who finds out something that could be worth a news item is welcome to let me know at short notice.

The participation of the web in **IBRA 2023** was a complete success with 85 points and Large Vermeil at FIP level, especially if you consider the statement of our ArGe member, the globally active US exhibition commissioner Vesma Grinfelds, "that Large Vermeil actually means Gold for us, because we always get so few points for it due to the insignificance of the collecting area seen worldwide!"

I am also particularly pleased that the web was one of the runners-up for the FEPA 2023 **Francis Kiddle Medal** for the most innovative website in Europe.

It remains to be seen whether the MARE BALTICUM in Tartu and the Haldensleben in the German-speaking world will also receive such awards. So far, experience has shown that websites that are basically an online version of fringe exhibitions and/or deal with content from before 1900 have a much better chance of scoring high. Other purposes and contents are obviously too foreign for most of the jurors.

From the current No. 17 onwards, the issues of **BALTIKUM** will be designed entirely by me, as the editor-in-chief's computer and Word programme are not up to date and therefore not technically suitable for editorial work – as was possible until 2022. Depending on the author, I receive more or less edited figures and articles that have been checked by the editor-in-chief; in addition to the layout, I also do the proofreading, although our agreed citation rules are regularly not adhered to. The job of layout designer at BALTIKUM is becoming more complex than ever imagined, so the title should be adjusted accordingly (e.g. Editorial Designer). However, the editor-in-chief remains responsible for contacting authors, sourcing articles and editing them.

The **English editions** of BALTIKUM, for which I am solely responsible for translation, production and publication, could not yet be published in numbers 1-10 for job-related reasons; this is a project that is still on my list. Anyone interested in working on this is very welcome!

The **monthly virtual get-togethers** that started in May 2021 have been continued, on the 1st Saturday of every month at 17:00 German time. The meeting is open to everyone, and the times and access details are published on the ArGe website. It has now taken place 37 times.

There will probably soon be an article about the advantages of this video chat compared to a professional exchange in the BALTIKUM or at the General Assembly. According to Torsten Berndt, who knows many philatelic study groups and other groups, a video chat of a study group that is open to everyone is **unique**, at least in Germany.

In connection with the corporate design, it should be emphasised that the design of the **posters for the exhibition stands**, which was discussed at the last members' meeting, has been completed by Olaf Hoffmann and myself (with graphic work by Olaf Hoffmann alone) and that these posters have already been successfully used in Ulm and Munich (see reports on the web and in BALTIKUM). Olaf's graphic work should also be mentioned for the design of **postmarks** for Philatelia Munich and MARE BALTIKUM in Tartu, which have now also been converted into official Eesti Post day postmarks.

Olaf has thus become an important member of the ArGe for the work on the **corporate design**; He deserves explicit recognition, respect and a big thank you for this commitment, which is otherwise only known among board members and editors!

3.5. Report of the auditors Thomas Löbbering and Ruud van Wijnen

The cash reports and cash books of the working group were fully audited by the auditors. In addition, the documents submitted in support of the accounts were examined on a random basis. The cash balances agreed with the balances recorded in the cash

books. There was also agreement between the bookings and the invoice documents in the complete bank statements of the association account submitted.

The association's accounting documents were identifiable, clearly organised and kept in the correct chronological order. No objections were identified.

Agenda item 4 Discharge of the Executive Board

The auditors requested that the actions of the Executive Board be **approved** in accordance with Section 7 No. 2 of the Rules of Procedure. The meeting granted discharge to the Board of Directors unanimously.

Agenda item 5 Accommodation and catering

Treasurer Michael Haslau briefly explained the procedure for paying for accommodation and meals in the current year. The booking of accommodation by the Executive Board is made in trust at the expense of the member making the booking.

The date of May 9 to 11, 2025, for the next GM mentioned in the invitation cannot be realised due to the occupancy of the sports school. In consultation with the sports school, the Executive Board therefore proposes the extended weekend from May 23 to 25, 2025. The General Assembly gives its unanimous approval.

Agenda item 6 Miscellaneous

6.1. Press kit

The ArGe Baltikum is fortunately well represented in the specialised press. Thomas Löbbering presents the press kit with the various press releases on the ArGe.

6.2. Further publications

Thomas Löbbering presents a publication by Werner Klieber and Prof. Dr Hartmut Fueß on the Hanau Displaced Persons Camp as well as two current newsletters from the Federal Working Group Poland. The Board suggests to the Federal Working Group Poland that the respective newsletters be exchanged digitally.

6.3. Articles on literature exhibitions

The Chairman presented some contributions to the discussion from the AIJP Journal, which dealt with current developments in the literature exhibition business.

6.3. Lively discussion

The members discuss the future of philately, forms of knowledge transfer and dissemination in a wide range of contributions. The coexistence of print and digital media is seen as an opportunity, not as competition.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 2.30 p.m. and invited the members to the next General Meeting for May 23 to 25, 2025.

Hennef, May 11**,** 2024**.** Signed. Martin Bechstedt, Secretary

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