



Baltikum

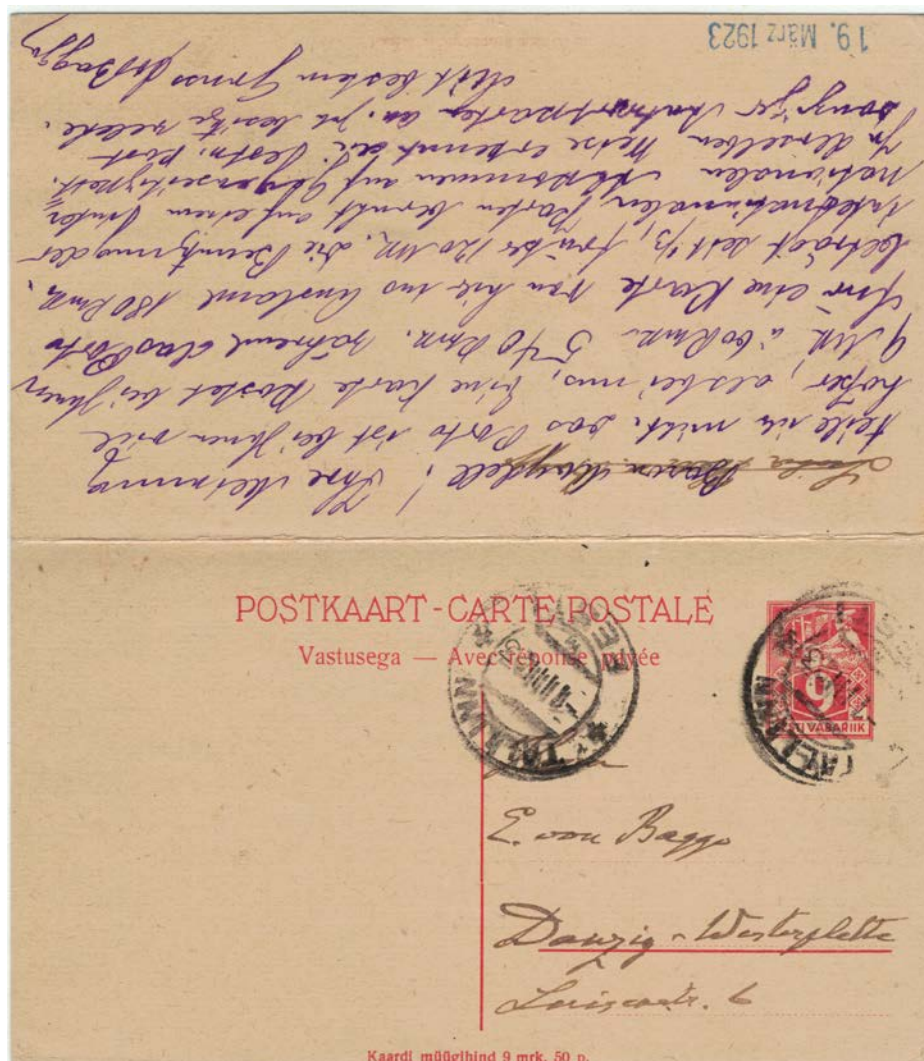
Zeitschrift für Philatelie und Postgeschichte

Arbeitsgemeinschaft Baltikum e.V.

Nr. 14 / 2022

English text version

(to be read together with the original German version,
no illustrations)



Double cards with prepaid reply

Table of contents Nr. 14 / 2022

Greeting / Editorial.....3

Estonia

Telegrams forwarded4

Rediscovered evidence.....6

The Neandertals are among us.....7

In memoriam Peeter Kaulin.....9

Memory of Elmo Viigipuu (1958–2022) 10

Latvia

Līgo 11

Airmail to Rīga on October 11, 1908..... 14

Double cards with prepaid reply..... 16

Domestic air mail line Rīga–Liepāja–Rīga, its postmarks and postal history 19

Rīga – Schlüsselburg (Key castle) 23

Lithuania

Myths in bags 25

From Tomsk to Ramygala 25

Shipment Tracking and Tracing..... 29

New tariffs of the Lithuanian Post 31

Stamp for the defenders of the freedom of Ukraine 32

Opening hours of Lithuanian post offices in shopping centers on Lithuanian holidays..... 33

On the death of Vitold Fugalevich (1930–2022) 34

Working group internal

Cooperation of ArGe Baltikum with others 36

Protocol..... 37

Successful participation in C.G. Award 2022 40

Philatelia 2023..... 41

New bank account of the ArGe Baltikum 41

New editions Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania 2023 41

The collectors of Ulm..... 42

Greetings from Japan 43

Outlook for the BALTİKUM 15 and 16 43

Imprint 44

Greeting / Editorial

Dear collector friends,

You are holding in your hands the second issue of BALTIKUM this year and the first to be compiled by an editorial team that has fortunately only changed in one position. To be precise, everyone has stayed on board: Thomas Löbberring oversees the technical articles on Estonia, Ruud van Wijnen on Latvia and Martin Bechstedt on Lithuania, while Friedhelm Doell is doing the final editing and getting everything into graphic shape. Only the editor-in-chief changed after the general meeting in May this year.

The fact that everything is proceeding smoothly makes me happy and grateful to the aforementioned friends. Up to now, I have designed practically everything with QuarkX-Press on the iMac. Only once, 13 years ago, when I was compiling two issues of the "Eesti Post", did I get the somewhat old computer with Windows 95 – experts call it "the best Windows ever" – out of the basement and experiment with Microsoft Word. Thanks to Friedhelm Doell's expertise, however, it should hardly be noticeable that I am an apprentice when it comes to Microsoft Word.

However, the above does not only apply in connection with the production of the BALTIKUM. We also all do the necessary organisational tasks together, as far as that is feasible. The registration of the new board at the local court is done, as is the planned change of bank account. But we are not only looking at bureaucracy: In Ulm, at the International Stamp Fair, we implemented something that was already planned for OSTROPA 2020 in Berlin: a cooperation of different working groups. The working group Yugoslavia and Successor States under its highly active chairman Dr. Jan Clauss and the working group Baltic States were in charge. Unfortunately, the "Yugoslavs" were unable to set up a stand in Ulm for staffing reasons. Together with the Working Group Russia/USSR, the Research Association Nordic States, and the Working Group Austria, we were in charge of four information stands and found numerous opportunities to exchange information on philately and other topics. What more do we want?

Well, to win new members, of course. In Ulm we succeeded, Tomas Babravičius from Lithuania joined our working group, in December Uwe Jansen from Heidelberg. Already in summer we were pleased to welcome Dr Gerhard Schubert from Neumünster. Unfortunately, it is one of our sad duties to report the passing of deserving philatelists. Three necrologies on Peeter Kaulin, Elmo Viigipuu and Vitold Fugalevitsch appear in this issue. The Baltic Working Group remembers them in silence.

Yours, Torsten Berndt

Constance, December 2022

Telegrams forwarded

Hannes Westendorf (LUX)

Even though telegrams could be sent by the public throughout the Russian Empire as early as 1874, telegraph stations did not become widespread throughout the Empire until the merger of the Russian postal administration with the telegraph administration on May 28, 1885. It was therefore more common, especially before this merger, for there to be no telegraph station at the place of residence of the recipient of a telegram. If this was the case, other means had to be used to deliver the telegram to the recipient. These means will be discussed here.

The applicable rules provided for two possibilities, either forwarding by post (I) or by messenger or estafette (II).

I. Forwarding by post

As an example, a telegram from abroad to Fickel (Vana-Vigala, Estonia) from 1882 is shown here. The applicable rules can be found in the *Reval calendar* for the year 1882¹:

"Rules for the acceptance of telegrams

Telegrams which are to be sent to places which have no telegraph connection are addressed to the nearest telegraph station and forwarded from there by mail, estafette or messenger.

For the forwarding of domestic dispatches by mail or storage in the post office (poste restante), 7 Cop. will be charged, for estafettes or messengers, however, according to the tables at the telegraph stations, the sender will be charged. If the station does not know the price of such forwarding, the sender will indicate the distance in versts and deposit a sum of about 75 cents per 7 versts. If it turns out that the sender has deposited too little money for forwarding, he will pay more and the address station will be notified of this by telegraph at his expense; in the opposite case, the telegram from the last station will remain unforwarded, and the sender will be refunded the money originally deposited too little. If he has deposited too much, the rest will be refunded to him [...].

In the case of foreign dispatches, the forwarding fee is not charged to the sender, but to the recipient."

The telegram shown here was sent by *Princess Sophie zur Lippe, Detmold (Lippe)*, to *Baroness Stietenkron at Excellency Uexküll Castle Fickel Merjama Estonia Pernau*. The postal station

¹ Lindfors' Heirs 1881: *Reval Calendar for the Year 1882 (permitted by the Censorship Reval, December 17, 1881)*. Reval. P. 31 ff.

closest to the Uexküll family estate in Fickel (Фикель, Vana-Vigala) was in Merjama (Мерьяма, Märjamaa).

However, there was no telegraph station in Merjama in 1882. So the telegram was sent to the nearest telegraph station in Pernau (Перновъ, Pernov, Pärnu), where it arrived on July 31, 1882. In Pernau it was stamped with a combination of a postage paid postmark and a handwritten note: "7 K to be paid" and "to be paid by the addressee by mail to Fikel Merjama".

The blue color of the Pernau postmark of July 31, 1882, and the postage due postmark indicate that these postmarks were struck by employees of the telegraph office². The postmarks on the back show that the telegram was forwarded by mail on August 1, 1882, by mail to Merjama, where it arrived on August 2, 1882.

II. Forwarding by messenger or estafette

As an example, a telegram from 1879 will be shown, where a paid reply was added as an additional service. The applicable rules can be found in the *Reval calendar for the year 1879*³:

"For the forwarding of a telegram from the address station by mail or for the note 'poste restante' attached to the address, an extra charge of 13 Cop. is levied, for forwarding by express (for distances up to 7 versts incl.) an extra charge of 75 Cop. is levied, for forwarding by estafette for distances of more than 7 versts an extra charge of 75 Cop. per German mile is levied.

If it turns out that the sender of a telegram has deposited too little money for the onward carriage by estafette, he must give a dispatch from himself to the telegraph station concerned that the money still missing has been paid in by him; in the opposite case, the original telegram will not be carried, from which the sender will then receive back the money deposited by him for the estafette [...].

Every dispatch sender can pay for the reply and have it addressed to any place. The addressee of a telegram with a paid reply is issued a receipt valid for 6 months by the address station for the amount paid by the sender of the telegram for the reply, which reply can then be sent to any domestic telegraph station and to any address. If the amount of the charge exceeds the amount indicated on the receipt, the shortfall is to be collected by the sender of the reply; otherwise, the remainder is not refunded. At railroad stations, the money paid by the sender for the reply will be paid to the addressee. The maximum amount that may be paid for the reply is three times the amount payable for the dispatch itself."

² Do readers perhaps have other covers on which there are stamps in this colour?

³ Gressel, J.H. 1878: *Reval Calendar for 1879 (permitted by the Censorship Reval, October 20, 1878)*. Reval. P. 42 f.

This is a telegram from Wesenberg (Везенбергъ, Rakvere) dated August 23, 1879, to Smilten (Смильтенъ, Smiltene). The nearest telegraph station was in Wolmar (Вольмаръ, Valmiera). Because of the urgency of the matter, the sender *paid for the reply*. This corresponded to a reply of 10 words, unless otherwise specified.

In addition, the contents state "*For express 1 R. 60 Cop. charged*". The distance between Wolmar and Smilten is about 35 kilometers, which is approximately 33 versts. This corresponded to a charge of 3 R. 75 Cop (5 x 75 Cop. per 7 versts for up to 35 versts). Except for the case that there was a special local tariff for an estafette between Wolmar and Smilten, the oncarriage was therefore not sufficiently paid. The sender had to pay the missing fee in addition. Unfortunately, it cannot be traced today whether this also happened here.

The author would be very interested in images of further telegrams and can be contacted at the following address: hwestendorf@gmx.net.

Fig. 1 Telegram 1882 address side

Fig. 2 Telegram 1882 back side

Fig. 3 Telegram 1879 address side

Fig. 4 Telegram 1879 text page

Rediscovered evidence

Hannes Westendorf (LUX)

For the collector of covers on the Baltic postal history of the Russian period, the work by E. von Bochmann from Riga, "*Die Postmarken des Russischen Kaiserreichs, Mit Benutzung amtlicher Akten*" („*The Postal Stamps of the Russian Empire, With the Use of Official Files*“), is certainly one of the most important sources of all. The book, published in 1895 by Hugo Kröttsch in Leipzig, contains a lot of information on the stamps and their use as well as on their different forms of cancellation and especially on the postmarks.

Particularly noteworthy are the photo plates, quite unusual for the time, which contain not only images of the stamps, but also the stamp shapes known until the publication of this work. The work could be purchased without or with the 21 photo plates (in the case at the price of 20 pfennigs per photo plate), although these could also be purchased individually at the price of 25 pfennigs.

Here, for documentation purposes, three covers from Estonia are shown, which served as models for illustrations on photo plate IX⁴. Interestingly, there are still handwritten

⁴ Von Bochmann, E. 1895: *Die Postmarken des Russischen Kaiserreichs, Mit Benutzung amtlicher Akten* (=The Postal Stamps of the Russian Empire, With the Use of Official Files). Leipzig: Hugo Kröttsch. Photographic Plate IX.

numbers in the same script on the top right or left front of the covers, which are certainly another indication that the covers come from the same source.

MOISEKÜLL 9 VIII 1858 ⁵

НАРВА ОТПРАВА. 17 Juli 1859 ⁶

NARVA 22 Juli 1859 ⁷

The Neandertals are among us

Torsten Berndt, Constance (D)

Have you ever taken a closer look at your chromosome 3? This can harbor a meanwhile quite significant variant. Whoever has it in his genome had at least one Neandertal (*Homo neanderthalensis*, with "th", according to the former spelling of the valley) among his somewhat more distant ancestors, i.e. not exactly the next of kin. Until now, the genetic variety did not make itself very noticeable, at least nothing was known about it. This changed when the scientists investigated the genetic conditions under which people suffer particularly severely from Covid-19. The Neandertal gene, which is present in 16 percent of Europeans, significantly increases the risk: the Neandertal among the ancestors has left a mark in the genetic material that one would never wish on anyone.

Findings like this show how important basic research is, but also how significant it is to pursue seemingly outlandish ideas, even if the questions may seem strange to some. This includes the decoding of the genome of the Neandertal and other species of earlier humans, which seem to have died out, but in reality, have passed on their genome to *Homo sapiens*, i.e. are biologically among us. Since it is known that the variant on chromosome 3 increases the risk of contracting Covid-19, it is possible to specifically examine the Neandertal genes on this and other chromosomes for possible risks, but also to examine whether and what consequences the variant on chromosome 3 has for other corona diseases – after all, the family of viruses includes many members, not all of which can affect humans.

Swante Pääbo, winner of this year's Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, freely admits that he initially followed a hobby with the study of the Neandertal genome. The study of

⁵ *ibid*: photo plate IX z.

⁶ *ibid*, photographic plate IX u.

The strike of this very rare stamp is also illustrated in

- Dobin, M. 2009: Postmarks of the Russian Empire. Standard Collection, 3rd ed. P. 59. № 1.13 and

- Hurt, V. & Ojaste, E. 1986: Estonia Handbook. New York. P. 436. № 152, 39:19.

⁷ *ibid*: photo plate IX t.

the genome of extinct species was once by no means one of the tasks of molecular biologists. Since others saw it the same way, he had to go through some struggles to obtain any research material at all; after all, the mass of fossil bones cannot be multiplied at will, and every gram of material used for research is irretrievably lost. Thanks to his assertive inquisitiveness, Pääbo is today considered the founder of paleogenetic. At that time, others probably looked with some amusement at the Swede living in Germany, quite a few might have classified him as an oddball.

At least this will probably change after the award of the Nobel Prize, but perhaps basic research and looking beyond the boundaries of what has been researched so far will also gain in importance. However, expectations should not be set too high, as questions such as "Is there a Nobel Prize-winning gene?" arose in the first few days after the announcement of the decision by the Swedish Academy of Sciences, alluding to Pääbo's father.

No, of course not. Pääbo knew from childhood that he was Sune Bergström's son. But he grew up with his mother. The chemist Karin Pääbo came from Estonia and, like many Estonians, fled to Sweden at the end of the Second World War to escape Stalin's henchmen. She taught her son how to work scientifically and "respect and high regard for science," as he put it in "Der Spiegel" (issue 41, October 8, 2022, pp. 98–100). Bergström, meanwhile, had his own family; Karin Pääbo was more of what used to be called a mistress to him. Only once did he decisively influence the course of his son's life, when in 1977 he recommended that after Egyptology, Russian and history of science, he should also study medicine. But the fact that Bergström and Pääbo, of all people, now add to the small list of closely related Nobel Prize winners speaks less for a Nobel Prize-winning gene than for the fact that history might have a certain sense of irony.

While his father was doing research at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Pääbo studied at Uppsala University. There he received his doctorate in molecular immunology and was able to isolate genetic material from mummy specimens for the first time. He continued his education at the University of Zurich and the London Cancer Research Center before going to the University of California at Berkeley. There, Allan Wilson had already been researching molecular evolution since the 1960s. Wanting to return to Europe, Pääbo accepted an appointment at Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich in 1990. When the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology was established in Leipzig in 1997, he moved there. Since 1999, he has headed the Department of Evolutionary Genetics. In 2010, he succeeded in completely sequencing the genome of the Neandertal.

Svante Pääbo's father died in 2004 and was honored in Sweden during his lifetime. In 1996, the Post honored four winners of the Nobel Prize for "physiology or medicine". Sune Bergström received the award in 1982, exactly 40 years before his son. Karin Pääbo, who died in 2013, left no scientific achievements of distinction. Even in Swedish and Estonian texts on Svante Pääbo, the author found no further information on her curriculum vitae.

Unfortunately, it is also unknown whether there is a relationship to another Pääbo family. The engineer Maks Pääbo - sometimes spelled "Max" – and his wife, the artist Vida Pääbo-Juse fled to Sweden, as did Karin Pääbo. While the parents are known only to a small circle, their daughter Maire-Ilon Pääbo, born in Estonia and living in Sweden since 1944, achieved world fame under her married name Wikland. The illustrations of most of Astrid Lindgren's books come from her studio. However, she did not contribute any drawings to the most famous books, "Pippi Longstocking" and "The Children of Bullerbü", which is why she is somewhat overshadowed by Ingrid Vang Nyman. Whether and how distantly the two Pääbo families are related to each other can perhaps be found out by someone who understands Estonian better than the author.

Figs. 1 and 2: Estonia symbolically depicted the path from primates to modern humans on one of the 2016 Europa stamps, Mi. No. 861. Germany already honored the 150th anniversary of the discovery of the Neanderthal fossil in 2006, Mi. No. 2553.

Fig. 3: Sune Bergström, Svante Pääbo's father, received the Nobel Prize for "Physiology or Medicine" in 1982. The Swedish special issue stamp. Mi. no. 1972, has the sticker for A Mail items on the left, which is not an ornamental field.

In memoriam Peeter Kaulin

Torsten Berndt, Constance (D)

His book "Zeppelin- und Schleuderflugpost aus Estland" ("Zeppelin and Slingshot Airmail from Estonia") is probably in most libraries of Estonian philatelists. Even those collectors whose interest in the former experiments with motor planes, airships and other flying objects is manageable will benefit from reading it thanks to the many illustrations, especially regarding the variety of postmarks appearing on the covers.

Peeter Kaulin's book was published 20 years ago. The publication was based on his award-winning exhibit of the same name, but contains abundant information not usually found in collections on display. Peeter Kaulin made the effort to bring all readers along. He paid special attention to airmail and zeppelin mail, as the titles of the other successful exhibits "Estonia Airmail Letters 1920–1940," "The Baltic Voyage of the Graf Zeppelin," and "The Airmail of Estonia" indicate.

In addition, Peeter Kaulin received further awards for "The Postal History of Estonia from 1918 to 1941" and "The Postal History of the Foreign Letter Examination Office Königsberg 1939 to 1945". Unlike the documentation of the development of airmail, which has always been strongly philatelically influenced – Peeter Kaulin was among those aware of this and spoke around 2007 in Essen of the fact that hardly any document reflects non-philatelic needs – these two collections told postal history pure and simple. Peeter Kaulin was equally firm in all areas of philately.

For health reasons, Peeter Kaulin had to give up his beloved hobby in 2009. He did not live to see the merger of the three working groups. As the Baltic Working Group has only now learned, Peeter Kaulin passed away on February 5, 2022. Especially the Estonia specialists remember a collector friend, who came up with a huge fund of professional expertise and from whom one could always learn something.

Memory of Elmo Viigipuu (1958–2022)

Friedhelm Doell, Aschheim (D)

Who is or was Elmo Viigipuu? - some may ask, who have never heard the name. He was not a member of our ArGe or before of ArGe Estonia?! Correct. But Elmo Viigipuu was an Estonian philatelist through and through, whom many Estonian collectors knew and with whom there were several points of contact, a personality worth reporting about.

I met him personally in 2007 during the Estonian philatelists' tour in Kärđla (see article "Head aega", EESTI POST No. 45/2007) and most recently as a juror at ESTONIA 2020 in Tartu (see arge-baltikum.de, News Archive 2020). I have read his name several times, he has been quoted several times in the EESTI POST and the BALTIKUM as an author in references and mentioned as an organizer of philatelic events.

He did not write directly for the German collector community, partly because he did not speak German or English. However, this did not make his philatelic work any less significant.

After training as a telecommunications engineer, he moved from the mainland to Kärđla on the island of Hiiumaa (formerly / German: Dagö), where for almost 40 years (until his early retirement in 2021) he accompanied the development of telecommunications technology from the old relay telephone exchanges to fiber-optic-based Internet communications for various employers. Widowed at an early age, he supported his daughter Riin from her school years through her biology studies and doctorate, in addition to his adult sons Rain and Raul.

Elmo Viigipuu came to philately in school and exhibited for the first time when he was 17 years old. On Hiiumaa, he joined the local philatelic association, which was renamed the Hiiumaa Philatelic Association (Hiiu Kogujate Selts) after the restoration of the Republic of Estonia, and was its chairman until his death. As a collector, he exhibited a lot, including constantly at the Kärđla Post Office (see 2007 Travel Report). In addition to organizing exhibitions and competitions, he served as a juror, for example, in the competitive exhibitions ESTONIA 2018 and ESTONIA 2020.

Elmo Viigipuu also shared his knowledge as an author. For example, he was involved in defining Estonian philatelic terminology and compiled the book "100 Years of Estonian

Stamps", which was part of the book series celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Estonia. With the help of his son, he founded a philatelic website (www.filateelia.ee) and a philatelic forum and maintained the web site of the Hiiumaa Collectors' Association (www.hiiumaa.filateelia.ee).

In addition, he was involved in communication and postal history, especially in Läänemaa (his home county) and Hiiumaa and was one of the first members of the Estonian Association for Monument Preservation (Eesti muinsuskaitse selts, EMS), which also publishes an Estonian-language stamp catalog. As a member of the Genealogical Society of Hiiumaa, he researched his family history and that of his home county of Läänemaa. Elmo was awarded the Medal of Honor of the Estonian Society for the Preservation of Historical Monuments and in 2022 received the Order of the White Star 5th Class from the President of the Republic for his honorary services.

In the last years of his life, Elmo Viigipuu struggled with a serious illness, but continued his activities as long as he had the strength. On October 8, 2022, he lost that battle. He will be remembered by his family members, children and grandchildren, many colleagues, friends and hobbyists in Hiiumaa, throughout Estonia and beyond. With his passing, there will be a big gap in the Estonian philatelic and collector scene, at least for the time being.

(Written using the memoirs of Rain Viigipuu).

Fig. 1: Elmo Viigipuu 2020 in Tartu

Līgo

Olav Petri, Zeist (Netherlands), and Thomas Løbbering, Holzappel (D)

If you come to Lucerne in Switzerland just before Shrovetide, you will be surprised by ghostly noises in the nights, rattles, by screams of strange figures in the dark and by witch puppets on lampposts. Then the carnival days offer colorful parades and exuberant conviviality with truly tireless musical groups from the villages. Who would have thought that in the cold Swiss winter? Similar things can happen to the traveler not only in Switzerland, but also in Latvia, at a different time of the year!

If you come to Latvia in the summer, you may be surprised by extensive celebrations around a festival called "**Līgo**". I had never heard of it, but my attention was caught by a greeting card I found in an envelope from 1941. On June 16 of that year, someone sent a greeting card on the occasion of "Līgo" to a lady named Olga. "Priecīgus Ligo Svetkus!", "Happy Midsummer", reads the text on the picture side.

Latvia celebrated the Midsummer Festival. And this celebration also took place in hard times. The country had been living as a Soviet Socialist Republic for almost a year and had

lost its independence. The Soviets had arrested thousands of Latvians, and on June 14, 1941, two days earlier, the deportation of another 15,000 people to the Gulag had begun. What a contradiction! The greeting card, partially franked with 20 kopecks, found its way from Valmiera to Cēsis in an envelope, "PIEMAKSAT", with two times 10, together 20 kopecks postage for the missing 10 kopecks to the letter postage for domestic letters.

After further searching, we found some more greeting cards, a postal stationery and a stamp dedicated to the Līgo Festival. Reason enough to find out what the Līgo Festival is all about.

Recurring image elements

What do the greeting cards show? A greeting card from Riga, dated June 15, 1938, depicts a barefoot girl tending a flock of sheep in a beautiful landscape. She wears a wreath of young leaves around her head and a skirt with vertical colored stripes as clothing, over it a topcoat with white border decoration.

Another greeting card sent from Viskafi on June 22, 1939 (next page) shows a young couple. Here the man is wearing a wreath made of leaves of English oak. He is dressed in a gray tunic. The woman is wearing a wreath of daisies, a striped multicolored skirt, a white blouse with red embroidery and a red throw, as well as a brooch.

An old man, wreathed and wearing a white blouse, drinks a hearty gulp of beer from a wooden, decorated cup. Both scenes show a beacon on a pole, while a campfire burns on the ground. The lyrics of a song are written next to it. The picture postcard in Fig. 1, from the gloomy month of June 1941, featured a lovely landscape, a house, and a trio of revelers, two girls and a boy, sitting together on a huge barrel. Beer was drunk from a wooden mug. The boy wore a wreath of oak leaves and was dressed all in white with some red embroidery. The girls, together with the boy, most likely sang the song whose lyrics are printed on the card. The girls' clothing also consisted of a striped multi-colored skirt with a blouse. The shepherdess's shawl and brooch are like those of the shepherdess in Fig. 3. White stockings complete the girls' clothing, while the boy wears shoes with leg wraps.

In the last years of the USSR, the state power propagated the "multiculturalism" of the Soviet Union within the framework of perestroika (restructuring): the ethnically non-Russian republics received much attention in stamp series, a certain "equivalence" with the Russian titular nation was emphasized under Gorbachev.

In June 1991, the USSR Post Office issued a postal stationery dedicated to Latvia's "Līgo Day". We see two children, the boy with green leaf wreath on his head, the girl with daisy wreath. This time the boy is wearing white clothes and the girl is wearing colorful clothes with white stockings. The whole thing is wreathed with flowers and leaves. No, no beer

and no fire, they are children (at that time the Soviet Union-wide campaign "Fight drunkenness" was underway)!

In my not complete collection of modern Latvia there is a souvenir sheet with traditional costumes and a song text, which clearly refer to Līgo. The souvenir sheet, Mi.-No. 12 from 1998, shows the two different kinds of wreaths for men and women, young and old, jumping through the fire together: a barrel of beer for the "thirstiest night of the year" and the special Līgo cheese with caraway seeds. The full moon illuminates the humid scene.

On October 4, 1991, the Soviet Post Office issued a tapeworm set on national folk festivals in the 15 Soviet republics, including a stamp dedicated to the Līgo Festival, Mi No. 6233. Here, fire plays the main role: the sun has already set. It is dark, and a young couple jumps through the fire. In the background, men in modern street clothes and women in long skirts dance around a fire pole. Wreaths on the heads of the women can be seen. Also, the young man, who jumps through the fire in the foreground, wears no traditional costume. Only the buckles of his shoes remind of such.

Midsummer Night and Saint John

The longest day and shortest night of the year on June 21 are celebrated in many parts of Europe. Druids gather at Stonehenge in England to celebrate ancient pre-Christian rituals. Shakespeare associated his beautiful play "Midsummer Night's Dream" with June 21. On June 24, Christians celebrate the feast of St. John. The town of Laren in the Dutch province of North Holland celebrates the Saint Jan Mass with a large procession on that day. Traditionally, the asparagus harvest ends on **St. John's Day** so that enough seed remains for the coming year. The feast of St. John is also widely celebrated in Belarus. There it is called "Janka Kupala", which means John the Baptist, the man who baptized Jesus.

The church calendar has John the Baptist born six months before Christ in the annual cycle: starting from Christmas Eve on December 24, thus exactly on June 24. Celebrating on this day instead of June 21 may also have something to do with the fact that a change in the sun's position only becomes noticeable on June 24, after the sun has been at the same height in the sky for three days beforehand. The Līgo festival in Latvia begins on the evening before, June 23, and culminates on the following day, June 24. It therefore also bears the name "**Jāņa diena**", meaning St. John's Day.

The Soviet stamp series dedicated to festivals in the 15 Soviet republics features the Feast of St. John for Belarus, Mi No. 6244: A young couple floats a wreath of fresh greenery with lighted candles on the water. The Belarusian couple's attire is largely similar to that of the Latvian couple on Mi-No. 6233. Whether "Līgo", "Jāņa diena", "Janka Kupala", Midsummer or St. John's Day, they all denote the same celebration of life and joy.

We have never experienced a Līgo festival. The Internet shows how it goes. The festival is very old, and the traditions have been carried on for centuries. Festival elements are: Out

of the house, into nature; traditional costumes, songs and dances, beer, oak wreaths for men and wreaths with flowers and herbs for women. Oaks represent strength, herbs and flowers represent protection and health. Birch and oak leaves are most used. The wreaths of the previous year are kept, and with them the bonfires are re-lit the following year. One also decorates house doors with green foliage. Furthermore, the burning pitch pole is part of the festival, preferably in an elevated place. The activities of the feast are grouped around it, including jumping through a bonfire. This augurs protection and good luck.

The girl in white coat on Fig. 3 could also refer to a witch's spell from the peasant world of our ancestors, which must be answered accordingly when heard: Then there will be a year with lots of milk! Witches were traditionally dressed in white. Walking barefoot and dancing on lush grass feels sensational: Man "grounds" himself. The lyrics of the Līgo song with its refrain are always sung in full length and at the top of one's lungs. Its repetition over hours strengthens the sense of community immensely.

The Internet provides numerous examples of the liveliness of the Līgo festival in Latvia. Cars are decorated with wreaths of oak leaves, traditional costumes are worn, appropriate festive items are for sale at markets. People still love to leave the house for traditional celebrations and enjoy the summer nature. Abundant beer consumption increases the joy for some. But maybe I should travel to Latvia around June 23/24 to see how it goes. I feel invited!

Fig. 1: Greeting card 1941, picture side

Fig. 2: Envelope for greeting card 1941

Fig. 3: Shepherdess

Fig. 4: Beer drinker in front of young couple

Fig. 5: Soviet postal stationary Līgo 1991, used in Latvia 1992

Fig. 6: Latvia souvenir sheet Mi. No. 12, 1998

Fig. 7: USSR Mi. no. 6233

Fig. 8: USSR Mi. no. 6244

Airmail to Rīga on October 11, 1908

Manfred Mrotzek, Oberzent (D)

The first thing that catches the eye of the Latvian collector on this card are the two machine postmarks from Rīga. I turn the card over and see a photo with a lot of big round balloons and little people underneath. Interest is piqued. What is it? It is a picture "taken on the day of the first races October 10, 1908" (so it says on the address page) of the "International Balloon Races in Schmargendorf-Berlin October 1908" (so it says on the picture page). The cover is called "Officielle Postkarte" ("official post card") (again address page), franked with a vertical pair of Germania No. 85 a or b as foreign postage and cancelled twice with the Bochmann cancel S 35, issue 2 of 1952, page 90. Julius Bochmann writes about it:

"International Balloon Races (Berlin)-Schmargendorf, Hd 08, 10-12 Oct (1908). The postmark was used by a special post office at the balloon filling site. It is the oldest official special postmark for an aviation event. However, airmail transport did not take place. However, there are private drop cards from some of the balloons in this race."

Bochmann valued this stamp at 50,- Deutsche Mark. For the year 1952 a proud price!

The card is addressed to Rīga in Russia. It was postmarked on October 11, 1908, in Gregorian time, which would be September 28, 1908, in Julian time. The arrival postmark in Rīga is dated October 1, 1908, in Julian time, which would be October 14, 1908, in Gregorian time. Ergo, it took three days to transport the card from Berlin-Schmargendorf to Rīga. The card is addressed to: "Fräulein Auguste Graf, Riga, Alexanderstr. 12, or at Frau von Rosen, Baroness." Across it is noted "Russia". The text on the card reads, "Best regards father, Trude, Frieda, Thank you for your letter."

The card has thus been duly franked with foreign postage, cancelled with an official postmark and it has probably arrived at the delivery post office. Did it also fly from Berlin to Rīga as airmail? Did it? I am trying to imagine the person who wrote and mailed this card on October 11, 1908.

At the time, Hans Aschenbrenner wrote a lengthy article about this event for the "Berliner Tageblatt" under the headline "*Gordon Bennett Prize of the Skies*". He described the huge hullabaloo on the "balloon battlefield" (as he calls it): "*Surrounding the launch and filling area, rising amphitheatrically, are five large grandstands with about 20,000 seats; the standing room in front of them holds another 100,000 spectators as witnesses to the spectacle taking place right before their eyes. On the northern tribune the court box has found place ...*"

Our card writer plunges into this turmoil. I suppose it is a young lady, a Fräulein, as they still said in 1908. She heard that the balloons would fly in the direction of Russia, perhaps to Rīga. Full of enthusiasm, she bought a card from a postcard seller who had snapped some photos the day before (on October 10, 1908) and duplicated them overnight. Coincidentally, nearby was also the Imperial Post booth. Here she bought two Germania stamps á 5 Pfennig, foreign postage for Russia. Hastily she wrote greetings in pencil to her father, sister, friend (?) and handed the card to the Imperial Post Office official. And he gave the card to the Imperial Railroad - or to the balloon, which was going to Russia, but never arrived there. Because the wind was going north. The winners of the 3rd Gordon Bennett flight, the Swiss Colonel Theodor Schaeck and First Lieutenant Emil Messner landed in the North Sea on the coast of western Norway. In 73 hours, they flew 1212 kilometers. If the wind had been a little more northeasterly, about 50 degrees to the right, then, with a little luck, they would have landed in Rīga. Then, but only then, the beginning of airmail to Latvia would have to be backdated twelve years. But that was probably not meant to be ...

Sources

Bochmann, Julius 1952: *Katalog der deutschen Gelegenheitsstempel (=Catalog of German Occasional Postmarks)*. 1st stock (1865-1951). Volume 2 of the Neue Schriftenreihe der Poststempelgilde "Rhein-Donau". Berlin.

Aschenbrenner, Hans 1908: Gordon Bennett Prize of the Air. In: *Berliner Tageblatt*, October 11, 1908. *On the Internet at URL: <https://berlingeschichte.de/bms/bmstext/9810novc.htm>*

Figs. 1 and 2: Address and picture side of the picture postcard

Double cards with prepaid reply

Thomas Löbbbering, Holzappel (D)

The idea for the following article - the editors have placed it in the Latvia section of BALTIKUM, since a card with a postmark from Rīga appears as a prelude - was provided by the "self-knitted" postcard from the collection of our collector friend Manfred Mrotzek (fig. 1). Due to the postmark from New York on the text side, initially interpreted as a reply postcard sent from there to Rīga (Fig. 2), doubts soon arose about this interpretation.

First, the obvious: Harry von Hofmann catalogs the form under number VIII as a "Riga Fair Postcard Form" from 1922⁸. Unlike the 1921 fair postcard form, HvH VII, the 1922 form notes the French designation "CARTE POSTALE (Lettonie.*)" prescribed for international mailing by the Universal Postal Union. The form is postage paid with 9 rubles, Mi. No. 83, for mailing as a foreign postcard during the 9th postage period from January 1 to May 31, 1922. The Rīga postmark is dated 21 IV 22, and the New York postmark on the reverse is dated 5 - 5 1922.

Now for the less obvious: The form is "perforated" horizontally across the entire width at the top. Why is that? A first clue is provided by the sender's handwritten note in bumpy English / French "(for answer) avec réponse", literally "(for the answer) with answered". It is not clear from the note itself whether it is the question or the answer part of a double card. The correct wording should have been "Carte postale avec réponse payée", i.e. "Postcard with paid reply" for the question part and "Carte postale – réponse", "Postcard – reply" for the reply part.

I At least it becomes clear where the sewing needle holes come from. The sender has obviously sewn two card forms together and thus produced a double card from two simple card forms, franked the question-and-answer sections each with 9 rubles postage due as a foreign postcard and sent them on their journey. Is the card the question part or the answer part? Well, it is the answer part. Both sewn-together cards were posted in Rīga on

⁸ von Hofmann, Harry 1997: *LATVIA The postal stationery and postal forms 1918-1940*. Hamburg. P. 14 f.

April 21, 1922, and arrived in New York on May 5, 1922. There the cards were separated again. Unfortunately, the question part is not available. Therefore, the question and request to the readers: In whose collection is the question part lying dormant? If someone has it, please let me know.

The rules of the Universal Postal Union stipulated for the dispatch of double cards that the question part had to bear the stamp of the post office of departure on the stamp. The reply portion of the double card had to bear the stamp of departure next to, and not on, the stamp of the sending state. The postal official in Rīga violated this provision by canceling the Latvian postage stamp on the reply section and stamping the dispatch stamp not next to, but on the Latvian stamp. The cancellation of the Latvian stamp should have been done by the U.S. Post Office only when the stamp was returned from the U.S. as a reply card, and only in the case that the U.S. Post Office already recognized or would have recognized Latvian postage stamps at that time by way of reciprocity.

The latter seems doubtful for two reasons. First, all three Baltic states joined the UPU only in the course of 1922: Estonia on May 19, 1922, Latvia on October 1, 1922, Lithuania on January 1, 1922 (de jure recognition by the Ambassadors' Conference on December 20, 1922). On the other hand, Latvia, unlike Estonia and Lithuania, completely refrained from issuing prepaid postal stationery double cards question / answer between 1918 and 1940. The uncertainty of the postman in Rīga is therefore understandable. Estonia⁹ issued double cards for international dispatch for the first time on 19 February 1923 with Mi.-Nr. P4 F/A, Lithuania¹⁰ likewise with Mi.-Nr. P4 F/A in 1924. Latvia, on the other hand, chose the path of issuing reply postcard forms without prepaid franking from 1924 onwards. The present card is therefore clearly the reply card, which was just as clearly not returned as such to Rīga.

What remains to be clarified: What does the handwritten text in blue on the back of the card mean? Google gives the further translation after "I have done nothing ...". Perhaps a reader who speaks Latvian can help?

With the invention of the "Correspondence Card", Austrian Post launched the success story of the postcard as early as 1 October 1869, Mi. no. P1. Shortly after the foundation of the Universal Postal Union, it issued the first double postcards for international traffic with prepaid reply in 1876, Mi. no. P47. The Russian Post followed suit in 1886, Mi.-Nr. P8. Nevertheless, there were always resourceful postal users who, as shown above, took up needle and thread to produce their own creations. The "double card with prepaid reply" shown in Fig. 3 – although not from the Baltic region – provides a nice example. It consists of two identical Czechoslovak Post domestic postcards, first issued in April 1919, Mi. no.

⁹ Schwaneberger-Verlag (ed.) 2008: *Michel-Ganzsachenkatalog Europa bis 1960 (=Michel Postal Stationery Catalogue Europe until 1960)*, Unterschleißheim. P. 113.

¹⁰ *ibid*, p. 315.

P10 (domestic), franked for international traffic with 25 Heller, Mi. no. 5. Mi. no. P10 anticipates the Mi. no. P12 issued by the Post Office a little later, which as a double card corresponds to two cards P10 and cannot be distinguished from them individually.

The presented double card (Fig. 3)¹¹ would not have had to be stamped as a prisoner-of-war card. The nephew "Pepi" writes in Haid / West Bohemia on 21 September 1919 to his uncle Balthasar in the prisoner of war camp Maštacani (Roumanie) "Please reply to enclosed card". Without a Czecho-Slovak postmark, both cards were sent to the POW camp by the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva, as the postmark "Transmis par COMITÉ INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX ROUGE GENEVE AGENCE INTER-NATIONALE DES PRISONNIERS DE GUERRE" shows. The reason why they could not be delivered and therefore not answered is not made clear.

The presentation of one of the rare "intact", i.e., in the question-and-answer part coherent and properly used double card with prepaid answer shall conclude this article, Estonia Mi.-No. P4, issued on 19 February 1923. Its text, written by two well-known Baltic philatelists, makes it additionally interesting: already on February 28, 1923, Baron Maydell, "T.v.M.", from Tallinn reports on the new issue to his collector friend Eduard von Baggo in Danzig-Neufahrwasser.

You can now turn the BALTIKUM 180 degrees and continue reading or follow the text of the transcription. According to the postmark, the double card left Tallinn on -1 III 23 for Westerplatte, Louisenstraße 6, the temporary residence of the von Baggo family after their expropriation in Estonia in 1920. Baron von Maydell writes:

"Dear Mr. von Baggo. If you write to me on this card, you will save a lot of postage. The German post office (sic!, meaning: the post office of the Free City of Danzig) is supposed to accept the first stamp. Actually very strange. Mothers whose sons study abroad are said to have used this way of saving postage very often, but so far there have been no cards with stamps printed on them. With greetings T.v.M. 28/II 1923".

The postmark of departure from Tallinn on -1 III 23 is stamped twice on the question part of the double card, once for cancellation on the Estonian value stamp, once free on the backing paper. If you turn the card over, the same stamp with the date -1 III 23 is freely stamped on the backing paper of the reply section of the double card. This is in accordance with the rules of the Universal Postal Union.

For the return of the double card from Gdansk to Estonia, the post office of the Free City of Gdansk cancelled the Estonian value stamp with its postmark Gdansk-Neufahrwasser 19.3.23.10-11V. as prescribed. The Estonian post office put its Tallinn arrival postmark 22

¹¹ I have refrained from illustrating the text, as the double card would have to be separated and the franking destroyed.

III 23 next to it. Everything corresponds exactly to the rules of the Universal Postal Union for the handling of such a consignment.

What does Eduard von Baggo answer?

"Dear Baron Maydell! I do not share your opinion. Your postage is much higher than ours. A card costs 9 Mk. (sc. Estonian Mark) à 60 RMk (sc. Reichsmark) 540 RMk with you, while the postage for a card from here to abroad is 180 RMk since 1/3 (sc. since 01.03.1923), previously 120 RMk (sc. 01.02.-28.02.1923). The use of international cards is based on an international reciprocal agreement. In the same way, the Eston. Post recognizes Danzig reply cards. I have some. With best regards E.v.Baggo March 19, 1923".

It is obvious that Eduard von Baggo, as an internationally trading stamp merchant, is familiar with exchange rates and postage. But only weeks later, the inflation of the paper mark in the German Reich was to gallop away from the inflation of the paper mark in the Free City of Danzig and both together from the inflation of the Estonian paper mark. However, the reference to Article 21 of the UPU Convention still applies, even though the UPU abolished double cards with prepaid reply on July 1, 1971.

Figs. 1 and 2: Address and text sides of the postcard.

Fig. 3: Handmade reply card from Czechoslovakia

Fig. 4: Question part of the Estonian reply card sent to Gdansk

Fig. 5: Answer section of the Estonian reply card addressed to Gdansk

Domestic air mail line Rīga–Liepāja–Rīga, its postmarks and postal history

Yehoshua Eliashiv, Haifa (ISR)

According to the population census of Latvia in the year 1935, Liepāja (Libau) had 57,098 inhabitants. It was the second largest city after Riga. However, the economic importance of Liepāja was by far larger, than its population count. The ice-free port, the light and heavy industry, highly developed commerce – all these made the city a major hub. One of a logical consequences of this situation was the decision of Latvian Government in 1937 to open a first domestic airline Rīga–Liepāja–Rīga.

The operation of this line, apart of its pure economic impact had a most interesting and intriguing philatelic outcome. Many questions arose when I started this research. What was actually published on this topic? What were the time frames of the use for the special air mail cancellations? What happened during the years 1939 and 1940? I'll try to present my conclusions in a short way and hope to get some reaction from fellows-collectors.

1937 – The first year of operation

The State-owned company "Valsts Gaisa Satiksme" (National air transport) has been appointed to operate this domestic air route. The company used two 7-seated De Havilland DH.89 Dragon Rapide aircrafts (fig. 1). Service was provided twice daily in each direction seven days a week. Flight tickets were sold through the post offices in Rīga and Liepāja (fig. 2). Like many other postal formulars, tickets were printed in State Railways printing house.

There is a fair amount of confusion about the exact date of the first flight. Jakimovs and Marcilger mention June 15, similar to Wikipedia and some other sources. What is correct is that the flight started on June 10, 1937, the figs 3a and 3b provide the proof. The question part of the double card with a prepaid reply from the German stamp dealer Prell from Chemnitz is explicitly addressed to a postal official in Liepāja with a request for information about the exact opening dates of the flight operation. On the reply card, the post office in Liepāja confirms with a postmark date of June 11, 1937, that the inaugural flight took place on the previous day, June 10. This is supplemented by the information that printed matter, postcards and letters were transported at domestic rates without an air-mail surcharge. The identical information can be found in Harry von Hofmann's handbook "Latvia: The Airmail 1920–1940" on p. 117.

The first domestic flight excited many philatelists and stamps dealers. Several specially prepared and philatelically inspired covers and cards were carried on this flight. On fig. 4, we can see a registered cover sent by stamp dealer K. Vitkovski from Riga.

Two cancellers were prepared in Liepāja for use on this kind of correspondence: 0769.1 LIEPĀJA GAISA OSTA A and 0769.2 LIEPĀJA LIDPASTS A. The numbers are based on the (unpublished, ed.) list of our colleague Rainer Lehr "Proven Use of Postmarks" under numbers 0769.1 and 0769.2, the respective numbers of Harry von Hofmann in his handbook "Latvia: The Postmarks and Post Offices 1918–1940" are 0802.1 and 0802.2.

The process of mailing in Liepāja was quite similar to Rīga. Some of the outgoing mail passed through a general sorting facility in the Liepāja Head Post Office, receiving there the regular LIEPĀJA A cancellation. Afterwards the LIEPĀJA LIDPASTS A flight confirmation postmark was applied as well (fig. 5). Others were submitted directly to the air mail counter and received the flight confirmation postmark only (fig. 6).

Here we can find a surprise: the first recorded use of postmark 0769.2 is 3.6.37 (fig. 7). What was the reason to start using the special postmark before the beginning of service? Has anybody flown postal item with a date before the official opening day?

I tried to build some statistics regarding the first season of service which started officially on 10.6.37 and ended on 15.10.37. Apart of information, contributed by fellow collectors, I checked the "Baltikum Auktionen" sales catalogues during 23 years (from November 1994 to November 2016). The results are surprising: 10 items tied by LIEPĀJA LIDPASTS

cancel have been sold during this time, nine of them from the year 1937 and only one from 1938. Additionally, all items were of domestic use – none of them was sent abroad. It leads me to another question: what happened to correspondence abroad via Liepāja–Rīga air route in 1937? Among all items, presented to me, only one has been mailed abroad. The situation in 1938 was completely different.

1938 – expansion of air mail service

The flight season started as early as on 20.4. and continued until 21.10.1938 – being the longest one of all known years of operation. Use of air mail service in Liepāja was relatively high – both for domestic and foreign destinations.

On fig. 8, we can see a small size cover sent to Rīga and tied additionally by slogan hand stamp „Tautas vienība – tautas spēks” („People's Unity – People's Strength”).

The next picture (Fig. 9) shows a cover flown from Liepāja to Rīga and delivered further by surface mail to Palestine, postage paid with 35 Santīmi.

Another good example is an air mail cover to South At 1.65 Lat probably overpaid by 10 Santīmu, the postmark BERLIN ZENTRALFLUGHAFEN of October 7 stamped on the reverse attests to air transport outside Latvia (fig. 10).

1939 – The last year of operation

Although the season of flights started on May 1 and lasted until September 26, there is very few evidence of the air mail services provided. None of the colleagues-collectors have a mailed item – only single stamps (fig. 11) or cutouts. The sole exclusion is a view postcard from the collection of Dr. M. Lucibello – sold under item No. 6502 on H. Koehler Auction No. 366. However, this card is a classic "cancelled to order" item which has never flown. At least it gives us the latest so far recorded date of use: 23.8.39. Has anybody a flown item from this year?

Post office in Liepāja Airport

To support all the activities of the domestic airline the airport of Liepāja was rebuilt and renovated (fig. 12). A special canceller LIEPĀJA GAISA OSTA A was prepared for use in the Airport's Post Office. This is one of the most uncommon Latvian postmarks, which was first discovered by Nikolajs Jakimovs in Riga and written up (by Harry von Hofmann) in Philatelia Baltica No. 77/79 on 9.5.1983.

So far only a limited number of covers and cards were found and here are two samples of them. The first one (fig. 13a+13b), ex collection Dr. Schrödinger, was sent to Rīga on

29.6.37 and returned to Liepāja. The second is the iconic and only known registered cover to Rīga – described by Nikolajs Jakimovs 1983 (fig. 14). Only three additional items – one from the year 1937, two others from the year 1939 showed up during the years. Altogether, as of now, should exist seven different items with this postmark – none of them from the year 1938.

1940 – a mysterious year

In the Harry von Hofmann handbook "Latvia: Air Mail 1920–1940", pp. 124 and 391, the official announcement of the Latvian Ministry of Aviation of 23 April 1940 concerning Rīga–Liepāja–Rīga air service is presented exactly in the same way (to operate the domestic route from May 10 to October 15), like in the previous years. However, it appears to be a complete bogus. I don't exclude the possibility that an intention to continue the flights existed, but the geopolitical situation due to World War II didn't allow this service. There is no philatelic evidence of air mail postmarks from the year 1940.

These are so far the results of my research. They don't pretend to give a summary of this topic. I'm sure, that there is a wide field for further discovery.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Ruud van Wijnen and Rainer Lehr for their kind assistance and Manfred Mrotzek for friendly cooperation.

Literature

1. Jakimovs, Nikolajs & Marcilger, Victor 1991: *The Postal and Monetary History of Latvia 1918–1945*. Spittal an der Drau.
2. von Hofmann, Harry 1999: *Lettland: Die Stempel und Postanstalten (Latvia: The Postmarks and Post Offices) 1918–1940*. Hamburg.
3. The same 2003: *Lettland: Die Luftpost (Latvia: The Airmail) 1920–1940*. Hamburg.
4. Kraul, Sven 1994–2016: Catalogues of Baltikum Auctions. Hamburg.
5. von Hoffmann, Harry 1983: Die lettischen Luftpoststempel und Luftpostzettel (The Latvian airmail cancellations and airmail slips). In: *Philatelia Baltica* Nr. 77/79. Hamburg.

Fig. 1: DeHavilland DH.89 biplane.

Fig. 2: Airline tickets were also sold over post office counters.

Figs. 3a and 3b: Walter Prell investigated the exact date of the first flight

Fig. 4: Letter with correct postage from stamp dealer K. Vitkovski

Fig. 5: Postcard with normal daytime postmark and airmail confirmation postmark

Fig. 6: Letter with airmail confirmation postmark only

Fig. 7: What is the date June 3, 1937 about?

Fig. 8: Domestic letter with violet cancel

Fig. 9: Letter to Tel-Aviv

Fig. 10: Foreign letter to Bullawayo in Southern Rhodesia

Fig. 11: Up to now, there are only used stamps from 1939, no covers.

Fig. 12: View of the hangar in Liepāja

Figs. 13a and 13b: Return cover with postmark LIEPĀJA GAISA OSTA A

Fig. 14 Registered cover with postmark LIEPĀJA GAISA OSTA A

Rīga – Schlüsselburg (Key castle)

Olav Petri, Zeist (NDL) and Thomas Löbbeling, Holzappel (D)

Once upon a time ... that's how fairy tales begin; not only in the grey past, but also in reality: It happened in Soest (Westphalia), stacks of mail in various price categories were for sale. I put aside a postcard with machine cancel Rīga from 1912 because it was addressed to Шлисселбург / Schlüsselburg, a place with a lot of history. There was also a multi-line, hard-to-read box stamp across the address information. Deciphering both electrified me.

Because the postcard was actually addressed to the well-known prison for persons dangerous to the state in Schlüsselburg. And the postmark in the old spelling read "Read through, Schlüsselburg prison for forced labor".

In tsarist Russia, this prison was infamous. It was located on an island on the southern shore of Lake Ladoga, where the river Neva flows out of the lake to join the Gulf of Finland in Saint Petersburg. On this island, the princes of Novgorod had already built a fortified place, Oreshek ("little nut"), in the Middle Ages. This fell into Swedish hands in 1612, who developed it into a fortress, Nöteborg ("Nut castle"). In 1702, Tsar Peter the Great recaptured the fortress from the Swedes during the Northern War and further expanded it. The fortress island and the associated town on the shore were given the name Schlüsselburg (Key castle) in recognition of their strategic location.

With the founding of Russia's new capital, St. Petersburg, some 35 kilometers south of the Schlüsselburg fortress, the latter quickly lost its military significance and turned into the prison island for persons endangering the state that we know from history. The inmates ranged from nameless outlaws to members of the imperial family to disgraced dignitaries, including in the 18th century **Ernst Johann von Biron** (1690-1772), Duke of Courland, the favorite of Peter's half-niece and later Tsarina Anna; or in the 19th century the so-called "**Decembrists**", libertarian-oriented officers of St. Petersburg regiments who had refused to swear an oath to Tsar Nicholas I in December 1825. Five of their leaders were hanged in 1826 and about 600 were exiled to Siberia, despite their great merits in the Patriotic War against Napoleon. The bloody trace of Schlüsselburg as a place of political repression

extends into the 20th century. In 1887, four Narodovols (Narodnaya Volya, social revolutionary secret society), including Lenin's elder brother Aleksandr Ilyich Ulyanov, were hanged in the fortress for preparing an assassination attempt on Tsar Alexander III. The death of his elder brother had a major impact on the subsequent life of his younger brother.

But back to the postcard: the thought flashed through my mind that the addressee of my card, **Jan Danilov Kesper**, could have been such a person dangerous to the state. Secretly, I hoped he had something to do with the 1905 uprisings in Livonia. Unfortunately, however, nothing could be found about him on the internet. The only prisoner I came across, named Kesper, was also imprisoned on an island. However, it was not Schlüsselburg, but Alcatraz in California.

The text of the postcard also reveals nothing. It comes from one of the prisoner's brothers, who complains to the prisoner that others receive mail from Schlüsselburg, while he, the brother at liberty, hears nothing from his brother. The brother at liberty sent 3 roubles to his brother in prison. He reports that he works in a bicycle factory and now earns 140 kopecks a day, whereas he started there for one rouble a day. There is nothing to indicate the nature of the crime or the type and length of the sentence of the incarcerated brother. After all, he was apparently granted the "relief of imprisonment" of being able to communicate with the outside world and even receive money.

The exact address on the card is: "Building 4, Department III, Room 18". Surprisingly, the internet provides additional information on this. The prison buildings had been expanded over time and could accommodate a total of 1000 prisoners in 1912. These were no longer just the dignitaries and writers of the past. Now "common" criminals were also in prison. Building number 4, mentioned in the address, was built in 1911. It had room for 600 prisoners. The prison regime had been modernized throughout Russia after the 1905 revolution and was milder than before, although the Schlüsselburg fortress naturally remained a grim place. Prisoners performed work during the day and wore prison clothes both in summer and winter.

The amnesty of the February Revolution of 1917 brought freedom to the prisoners – whether criminal or political. They took the opportunity to burn down their prison.

From 1928 to 1940, the fortress housed a revolutionary museum, now commemorating the October Revolution of 1917. During the 900-day siege of Leningrad by the Central Powers from 1941 to 1944, there was renewed fighting for the fortress after hundreds of years. The so-called "ice road", which supplied Leningrad in winter, ran across the frozen Lake Ladoga. A monument commemorates this time. Today the fortress is a tourist attraction.

For the interested: There is another connection to our collecting area, more precisely to Courland. The most famous prisoner at Schlüsselburg was Tsar **Ivan VI** (1740–1764),

adopted son of Tsarina Anna, who was married to Ernst Biron, Duke of Courland. Ivan had been appointed successor by Tsarina Anna a few weeks before her death in 1740 at the age of two months, with Ernst Biron as regent. As early as 1741, Ivan VI landed in Schlüsselburg at the age of two, initially together with the dethroned regent Biron, under the mysterious name of "a certain arrested man" – his name was not allowed to be mentioned. 23 years later, in 1764, Ivan was murdered on Tsarina Catherine's orders under the pretext of an escape attempt. A sad fate in lifelong captivity.

Fig. 1: Postcard to the Schlüsselburg prison for forced labour.

Fig. 2: The closely written text side of the card.

Fig. 3: View of Schlüsselburg prison from the air

Fig. 4 Prisoners at work in the prison's shoemaker's workshop.

Myths in bags

Gernot Kaas, Ansbach (D)

This was the title of an article by Helmut Oeleker in "philatelie" 514 / April 2020 about stamp bags. At the time, I remembered a small glassine bag from a dealer in Rīga that I once found in a Belgium (!) collection.

Oeleker suggested presenting this bag to the Baltic Working Group, which I will do today with some delay. According to the stamp, the bag comes from the stamp shop S. F. Solmanis in Riga. As addresses he gave "Ad.(olf) Hitler Strasse 20" and "during the war Ad.(olf) Hitler Strasse 94-36a", also the telephone number "Phone. 93275".

Unfortunately, my internet search for Solmanis was unsuccessful. A search for the street address in Wikipedia yielded the following: There were two stretches of street in Rīga during the German occupation that were named after Adolf Hitler between 1942 and 1944: one is "Adolf Hitler Alley", now Brīvības bulvāris, and the other is "Adolf Hitler Street", now Brīvības iela. This is the location of the monument erected in 1935 to commemorate the fight for freedom between 1918 and 1920, depicted on numerous issues of Latvia.

Fig 1: Stamp shop stamp on the bag

Fig. 2: Maximum card from 1991

From Tomsk to Ramygala

Raimundas Marius Lapas, Chicago (USA)

I really never paid close attention to postal communications between Lithuania and the USSR (including such Soviet republics as the Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia) in the 1920s and 30s until recently when I acquired a true airmail gem – a 1930 inaugural Zeppelin flight card sent from Moscow via Berlin / Friedrichshafen and then probably

forward by train (via Königsberg) to the addressee – the Chancellor of the German Legation in Kaunas, Roman Forner.

Little survives from this period as correspondence between “David and Goliath” [Lithuania and Soviet Union/Ed.] was minimal at best: a few pieces of diplomatic mail, several economic related pieces and the so-called philatelic foreign exchange control stamps on covers from 1923–1941. Only four of them exist to or from Lithuania (I possess three of them – one from Šiauliai to Leningrad, a second from Reutov to Šiauliai, and a third from Simferopol to Kaunas). Such miniscule numbers indicate that philatelic correspondence between these two nations was hardly existing.

In my reference collection of mail sent abroad until October 1, 1922 (when the official currency “litas” was introduced), I proudly guard such mail to some 35 countries (including Panama Canal, Algeria, India, Belgian Congo). Many gems from this turbulent period, such as letters with postage due, soldier correspondence or tourist postcards with stamps removed by the censors, are extremely interesting and of great rarity.

Fortunately, later my detective skills led me to other unusual pieces that I would like to present to the philatelic community in a future article such as an American YMCA advertising cover sent from Petrograd to Anykščiai on 31.7.23.

Oddly it took me a long time to find one sent to USSR (Kaunas 13.VII.22 to Vyatka). Today I have a demand letter about incoming mail with unusual content of historical importance. It's amazing this cover ever survived!

There are those “purists” who will argue that such an item must be restored to a „picture condition” – no matter whether it will be exhibited or written up in a philatelic journal. I decided that I will not tamper with its condition despite the fact I will exhibit. Oddly, the letter found as well as the content is in excellent condition.

The forensics of this **cover**:

Its front sports a date cancellation 15.4.25 ТОМСК [TOMSK] and is addressed partially in Lithuanian, partially in Russian:

ЛИТВА

(Pa)štas Ramygala

(Pas)tasiui Siauliui [?]

СТАНИСЛАВУ ШАВЛИС [Receiver STANISLAV SCHAWLIS].

The reverse has 10 kopeck workers Soviet definitive (alas, in deplorable condition), a double ring violet cachet “Томский университет” [Tomsk University] around the rim and “Для пакетов” [for parcels] in the center. It also sports a Kaunas 25.IV.25 transit marking.

Transcription of the Russian text and translation of the four letter pages

Page 1

Ремигола 10/III/1925

Многоуважаемый Господин Профессор!

Весьма извиняюсь, что обращаюсь к Вам, но сложившиеся обстоятельства заставляют это делать. Дело в том, что летом 1921 года жил в городе Томске мой шурин Теодор Фридрихович Ландовский, где, служа в бывшем в то время в Томске Пермском Сводном Госпитале, посещал Медицинский факультет [...]

Translation of page 1

Remigola 10/III/1925.

Honorable Mister Professor!

I'm very sorry to contact you, but prevailing circumstances force me to do so. The point is that in the summer of 1921 in the city of Tomsk lived my brother-in-law Theodor Friedrichovich Landovsky, working at former Permsky Consolidated Hospital in Tomsk, attended the Faculty of Medicine [...]

Page 2

[...] Томского Университета. Но с 1921 года и до сих пор я от него никаких сведений не получаю и ничего о нем не знаю. Поэтому обращаюсь к Вам с покорнейшей просьбой не отказать навести справочку о его, Ландовского, судьбе и о результатах известить меня по нижеуказанному адресу, прислав мне его адрес и сообщив ему мой адрес. Выражая Вам Многоуважаемый Профессор заранее мою сердечную благодарность, остаюсь в ожидании от Вас [...]

Translation of page 2

[...] at Tomsk University. But from 1921 to the present I have not received any news from him and know anything about him. That's why I turn to you with the humble request not to refuse to find out about his, Landowski's, fate and notify me at the indicated address by sending his address and telling him my address. Expressing in advance, honorable Professor, my heartfelt gratitude, I await from you [...]

Page 3 and translation

[...] благоприятного ответа. /

[...] a favorable response.

Уважающий Вас /

Respectfully yours

Станислав Шавлис. /

Stanislav Shavlis.

[faint office correspondence-logging mark in violet]:

Канцелярия по студенческим делам / Office of student affairs

ПОЛУЧЕНО /

RECEIVED

[handwritten date 27.III.25
with entry registration 187)

Адресъ: Литва /

Address: Lithuania

Paštas Ramygala /

Post Ramygala

Stasiui Šiauliui /

Bezirk Šiauliai

Читала 14/IV 1925 /

Read 14/IV 1925 [signature]

М. Шигина /

M. Shigina (Tizina)

Page 4 (the cover letter from the student office):

Возвращая ваше письмо сообщаем, что канцелярией по студентам Томск(ого) Унив(ерситета) вызывалась студ(ентка) ..Тизина -Ландовская очевидно жена Вашего брата, содержание письма ей было прочитано, в чем она расписалась, о дальнейшем надлежит Вам самому списаться или со студ(енткой) ..?. ой от которой и узнаете о судьбе своего брата – или через Томск(ую) Городск(ую) Милицию.

Управстудделами

?

(управляющий студентческини делами) 14/IV/25 N 436

Translation of page 4

Returning your letter, we inform you that the office for student affairs at Tomsk Univ(-ersity) has called a stud(-ent) Tizina–Landovskaya, obviously wife of your brother, the content of the letter was read to her on which she signed. For further information, you have to write yourself either to the stud(-ent) .. from whom you will learn about the fate of your brother – or to The Tomsk City Police.

[illegable signature]

Manager of student affairs 14/IV/25 N436

My personal footnote: if I had been around in 1925 and got a letter like that, I would get a sinking feeling in my stomach. Sounds like, at best, that brother is in jail.

Acknowledgements

Every article is a result of team effort. Большое спасибо [Thank you for your help/ed.] is extended to Dave Skipton, author of “Soviet Clandestine Mail Surveillance 1917–1991” (Chicago, 2016) for his explanations regarding the cachets on the cover and letter. I’d especially like to thank my dear friend Rossica Society of Russian Philately Journal layout

artist Nik Sorokin as well as my “Alpha-Omega” of 32 years in marital bliss Ramunė Lapas for their vital input transcribing and translating the Russian text.

Any comments or suggestions regarding this or any aspect of Lithuanian postal history can be sent to my e-mail address studijar@msn.com.

Fig 1: Address side of the cover

Fig. 2: Back of the envelope

Fig. 3: Picture postcard of the Tomsk Post and Telegraph Office 1903

Figs. 4 and 5: The first two pages of the letter

Figs. 6 and 7: Pages 3 and 4 of the letter

Fig 8: Picture postcard of Ramygala in 1923, the post office is the white building (photo by C. Lukšis).

Fig 9: The main building of the Imperial Siberian University in Tomsk. Picture postcard from the Tsarist period.

Shipment Tracking and Tracing

Bernhard Fels, Soest (D)

The introduction of barcoded R-papers in Lithuania on September 1, 2006 marked another step towards postal automation. It was now possible to trace a registered mail item without gaps using the item number, both for domestic and international mail. First, a short description of the R-label: It consists of the barcode 39 and a consignment number of 13 digits. At the beginning there is a two-digit letter combination indicating the type of additional service, such as normal registered mail. In the following nine-digit sequence of numbers and letters, the last digit is a check digit. The letter combination LT is the country code for Lithuania according to ISO 3166.

Tracking of a registered foreign letter

On the website of the Lithuanian Post AG (<https://www.trackingmore.com/lietuvos-pas-tas-tracking/de.html>) it is now possible to track consignments using the consignment number, RE234154925LT (fig. 1). Make sure that the consignment number is entered without spaces (fig. 2).

After entering the correct consignment number, the following result appears (see fig. 3):

The registered letter pictured above was posted at the Klaipėda post office on December 30, 2020. It was transported to the Vilnius Logistics Centre (Vilniaus logistikos centras, VLC) by truck. On January 1, 2021, the processing took place in the sorting department of the VLC. The shipment from the VLC to Germany took place on January 2, 2021. The mail reached the IPZ-DEFRAA (IPZ = Internationales Post-Zentrum = International Postal Centre) in Frankfurt am Main on January 4, 2021, where the registered mail was given the German R-sticker. The item was forwarded to the addressee on the same day. Two days later, the recipient received the registered mail.

The IPZ is located at Frankfurt's Rhine-Main Airport. Mail items from abroad and mail items to abroad are prepared here on kilometre-long sorting belts for further transport. Every day, approximately 14 million postal items are processed, and German Customs is also located at the IPZ to check and clear postal items from abroad.

When entering the Deutsche Post AG consignment number in the corresponding menu for tracking consignments on the Deutsche Post AG website, the only search result that appears is the terse sentence: "The consignment was notified and collected by the recipient on 20.01.2021".

Tracking of a domestic registered letter

The standard letter (fig. 5) was posted at the Akademija post office in Kaunas County on 10 March 2021. The municipality of Akademija is located seven kilometers west of the Kaunas city limits. The village was founded in 1999 and is home to the Agricultural Academy of Vytautas the Great University of Kaunas.

It is remarkable that the letter does not bear a postmark of posting. However, nothing is missing here: since a decree of September 1, 2020, postal items whose postage has been paid in cash no longer bear a date stamp. At the end of this article, some postmarks of this post office are shown.

The registered mail was transported by truck to the Vilnius Logistics Centre (VLC), approximately 110 kilometers away, where it was automatically processed.

The mail item was forwarded to Kaunas (main post office) on March 20, 2021, and delivered to the addressee on the same day. This results in a delivery time of ten days from a post office in the outskirts of Kaunas (Akademija) to a post office in the city center (Kaunas Main Post Office)! Both post offices are only about ten kilometers apart.

Tracking on the Lietuvos Paštas website (fig. 6)

Daily postmark of Akademija post office, Kaunas, not to be confused with Akademija in Kėdainiai County (all images taken from our Internet data collection, on the Internet at URL [https://my.hidrive.com/share/nnklb05m1o#\\$/](https://my.hidrive.com/share/nnklb05m1o#$/)): (figs. 7 to 9).

There are two municipalities in Lithuania with the same name: Akademija in Kaunas County and Akademija in Kėdainiai County. This is noted in the daily postmarks of both municipalities.

Fig. 1: Registered letter from Klaipėda to Soest in Germany, posted at the Klaipėda post office 2.

Fig. 2: Screenshot of the tracking page on the Lithuanian Post's website.

Fig. 3 Screenshot of the tracking result.

(no Fig. 4)

Fig. 5: Standard letter from Akademija to Kaunas (the addresses have been deleted).

Fig. 6: Tracking result on the Lithuanian Post website

Figs. 7 and 8: Postmarks of the Akademija post office in Kaunas County.

Fig. 9: Postmark of Akademija post office in Kėdainiai district.

New tariffs of the Lithuanian Post

Bernhard Fels, Soest (D)

On October 26, 2021, the Communications Regulatory Authority of the Republic of Lithuania (RRT) approved an increase in postal tariffs as of January 1, 2022. The last increase in domestic tariffs took place in 2018, while international tariffs were changed in 2014. The latest increase meant an average increase of ten per cent for domestic tariffs and 14 per cent for international tariffs.

As an innovation, postal items are now divided into two categories, registered and non-registered.

Domestic tariffs

| | simple mail | | registered mail | |
|---------------|--------------|----------|-----------------|----------|
| | non-priority | priority | non-priority | priority |
| < 20 g | 0,55 € | 0,60 € | 1,25 € | 1,30 € |
| 20 g – 50 g | 0,65 € | 0,70 € | 1,30 € | 1,35 € |
| 50 g – 100 g | 0,75 € | 0,80 € | 1,40 € | 1,45 € |
| 100 g – 500 g | 0,90 € | 0,95 € | 1,55 € | 1,60 € |

International tariffs

| | simple mail | | | |
|---------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|
| | non-priority | | priority | |
| | EU countries | Non-EU countries | EU countries | Non-EU countries |
| < 20 g | 0,95 € | 0,70 € | 1,00 € | 0,85 € |
| 20 g – 50 g | 1,05 € | 0,75 € | 1,20 € | 0,95 € |
| 50 g – 100 g | 1,35 € | 1,05 € | 1,55 € | 1,25 € |
| 100 g – 500 g | 2,40 € | 2,50 € | 2,85 € | 3,40 € |

registered mail priority

| | EU countries | Non-EU countries |
|---------------|--------------|------------------|
| < 20 g | 3,50 € | 3,50 € |
| 20 g – 50 g | 3,70 € | 3,70 € |
| 50 g – 100 g | 4,10 € | 4,10 € |
| 100 g – 500 g | 5,40 € | 6,60 € |

For the letters shown here, please note that the Lithuanian Post introduced a new data processing system as of October 2020. Since then, non-registered mail has also received

stickers with a barcode. As there is a strong resemblance to the R stickers, these letters are often misinterpreted as registered mail.

Fig. 1: Domestic letter of the first weight category non priority (addressee covered)

Fig. 2 Foreign letter of the 1st weight category non priority

Stamp for the defenders of the freedom of Ukraine

Bernhard Fels, Soest (D)

On March 21, 2022, Lithuanian Post launched a general competition to create a stamp on the situation in Ukraine. Everyone was invited to submit their ideas for a stamp illustration. The ideas were to be submitted by March 31, 2022. The selected design was to adorn the special stamp planned for May. Part of the proceeds from the sale of the special stamp will be allocated to the public institution VŠĮ Mėlyna ir geltona (Blue/Yellow).

The Stamp Publishing Commission, established in 2014 by the Ministry of Transport and Communications, now had the task of selecting the winner from among approximately 2400 designs submitted.

The lucky winner was Ms Eglė Kirlytė from the creative agency "Autoriai". The embrace of two people is meant to represent the support of the Ukrainians.

Personalized stamp: The "Bayraktar" reconnaissance and combat drone

The Lithuanian television station "Laisvės TV" called the Lithuanian population to a fundraising campaign for Ukraine. The campaign was a great success, five million euros were donated within three days. With this amount of money, a reconnaissance and combat drone of the type "Bayraktar TB2" (in English "flag bearer") was ordered in Turkey and delivered to Ukraine.

In the course of this campaign, the same TV station initiated the issue of a personalized stamp at the Lithuanian Post. The first day of sale was June 9, 2022. The special feature: In Lithuania, personalized stamps are usually issued only to customers directly; they are not available to other customers at the post office. In deviation from this, this stamp is also sold directly over the post office counters, it could be called "semi-official". The selling price of the stamp is 2.00 euros, half of which will be donated to the creative agency "VŠĮ Mėlyna ir gel-tona" (Blue/Yellow). The design was done by the "Digital Marketing Agency", the printing was done by the Estonian company "Vaba Maa", where the Estonian stamps are also produced.

The stamps were self-adhesive with die-cut perforation and printed in sheets of 20 (five rows of four stamps each) in an edition of 40,000. The upper edge of the sheet bears an imperforated decorative field with the motif and stamp value in the left corner; this could also fraudulently be used as a franking!

Fig. 1: Nominal value 1.00 Euro plus surcharge 1.00 Euro. The charge for a single letter (priority) to EU countries is 1.00 euro. The stamp will be issued in a souvenir sheet of four stamps with two decorative fields. First day: May 6, 2022 (no FDC)

Fig. 2: 2nd prize Kyjivo Aleksandr Nikitiuk Ukrainian tractor pulling a Russian warship

Fig. 3: 3rd prize Giedrė Svaldenytė national bird of Ukraine, the nightingale

Fig. 4: souvenir sheet issue

Fig 5: Postcard with first day cancel dated May 6, 2022. foreign rate at 1.00 euro - priority.

Figs. 6 and 7: Letter with the stamp on private order and sheet part ukrainos laisvės gynėiam - defender of Ukrainian freedoms

Opening hours of Lithuanian post offices in shopping centers on Lithuanian holidays

Bernhard Fels, Soest (D)

In recent years, Lithuanian Post has relocated smaller and unprofitable post offices to shopping centers and supermarkets with the justification of being closer to customers, for example, through better parking facilities and good accessibility. Generally, these centers are also well frequented on Sundays and public holidays, because unlike in Germany, stores in Lithuania can also open on Sundays.

Previously, post offices in Lithuania were closed on Sundays and public holidays. This rule was probably abolished by Lithuanian Post in 2013 (the exact date cannot be determined). Since then, at least in supermarkets and shopping centers, the relevant post offices are reliably open on Sundays and holidays. At present, Lietuvos paštas has about 57 post offices in shopping centers. These are equipped with modern, uniform facilities and are well received by postal customers.

Lithuanian public holidays

| Lithuanian holiday | English translation | Date |
|--|---|---|
| Naujieji metai | New Year | January 1 |
| Lietuvos valstybės | Day of the Restoration of the Lithuanian State | February 16 |
| Lietuvos nepriklausomybės atkūrimo diena | Day of the Restoration of the Independence of Lithuania | March 11 |
| Velykos | Easter | 1st Sunday + 1st Monday after 1st full moon in spring |
| Tarptautinė darbo diena | Labor Day | May 1 |

| | | |
|--|-----------------|--------------------|
| Motinos diena | Mother's Day | 1st Sunday in May |
| Tėvo diena | Father's Day | 1st Sunday in June |
| Joninės (Rasos) | St. John's Day | June 24 |
| Valstybės (Lietuvos karaliaus Mindaugo karūnavimo) diena | Statehood Day | July 6 |
| Žolinė (Švč. Mergelės Marijos ėmimo į dangų diena) | Assumption Day | August 15 |
| Visų šventųjų diena | All Saints' Day | November 1 |
| Šv. Kūčios | Christmas Eve | December 24 |
| Šv. Kalėdos | Christmas | December 25/26 |

Opening hours of some post offices (selection) on All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day 2021

| Postal branch | Supermarket | Opening hours 1.11.2021 | Opening hours 2.11.2021 |
|--------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Vilniaus 4-asis paštas | „Panorama“ | 8:00-22:00 | 8:00-22:00 |
| Vilniaus 11-asis paštas | „Akropolis“ | 10:00-22:00 | 10:00-22:00 |
| Vilniaus 26-asis paštas | „BIG“ | 10:00-19:00 | 10:00-19:00 |
| Vilniaus 3-asis paštas | „Pupa“ | 10:00-18:00 | 10:00-18:00 |
| Vilniaus 57-asis paštas | „Ozas“ | 10:00-21:00 | 10:00-22:00 |
| Šiaulių 15-asis paštas | „Saulės miestas“ | 10:00-15:00 | 9:00-20:00 |
| Šiaulių 16-asis paštas | „Akropolis“ | 10:00-21:00 | 10:00-21:00 |
| Klaipėdos 2-asis paštas | „Akropolis“ | 10:00-21:00 | 10:00-21:00 |
| Klaipėdos 8-asis paštas | „Studlendas“ | geschlossen | 10:00-18:00 |
| Klaipėdos 19-asis paštas | „BIG“ | 10:00-15:00 | 10:00-20:00 |
| Kauno 39-asis paštas | „Mega“ | 10:00-21:00 | 10:00-21:00 |
| Kauno 44-asis paštas | „Akropolis“ | 10:00-21:00 | 10:00-21:00 |

Fig 1: Letter dated November 1, 2020 (All Saints' Day) from Šiauliai 16 post office branch in "Acropolis" supermarket.

Figs. 2 to 4: Postmarks from the "Putinių paštas" branch in the shopping center in Alytus and "Liporių siuntų centras" in Šiauliai.

On the death of Vitold Fugalevich (1930–2022)

Martin Bechstedt, Bargteheide (D)

Vytautas Fugalevičius (baptismal name in 1930) or Witold Fugalevich (Germanization of the name in 1941) belonged to the distinguished personalities of Baltic philately. With his handbook "Postmarks in Lithuania. Normstempel und provisorische Entwertungen 1918-1940/41 - Pašto Antspaudai Lietuvoje - Postal Markings in Lithuania", first published in

1985, he virtually launched the collecting field "Postmarks of Lithuania". He was a border crosser between worlds with a fate that befell not a few of his generation.

His parental home was in Kulautuva, a spa town 20 kilometers from Kaunas. He grew up in an atmosphere of tolerance with his parents (his mother was a native of Memelland, his father a Lithuanian surveyor in state service). As he himself described it, "Lithuanian was spoken in our home. But when my mother's friends came to visit (they were mostly from the Memel region), my mother spoke German with them. My father talked to his acquaintances (many of them fellow students from the Moscow period) in Russian. I understood quite a lot of German and Russian, only with speaking I had my difficulties." In the autobiographical article "Ein staatenloser Volksdeutscher" (A stateless ethnic German), published in the first issue of BALTIKUM, he describes his childhood and the way in the war and post-war turmoil from Lithuania to Germany¹².

His mother had already experienced treatment by the Russian state; she had been deported to Siberia for four years in 1915. When the USSR occupied Lithuania in 1940, the family had to fear repression by the Soviet occupation forces as "bourgeois elements". Therefore, like many others, they moved to Germany in 1941, but Vytautas, at the age of eleven, became a stateless person because he was denied German citizenship due to his lack of language skills. After camps in the Czech Republic and northern Germany, he and his mother returned to Kaunas, from where they fled the Soviets for a second time in 1944. His father had been detached to Ukraine and died there during the war turmoil.

As a stateless person, Vytautas moved via Thuringia, Berlin and Hamburg to Schleswig-Holstein, among other places, where he found a new home and finally received German citizenship in 1954; his mother's origin had made this possible.

After studying shipbuilding in Kiel, he "hired" at the Kiel Howaldtswerke and worked there mainly as an engineer in the development department of the shipyard. He developed an interest in Lithuanian stamps because of his background, but in the 1960s found the main field of activity in the postmarks on the territory of Lithuania including the Memelland; the stamps were too expensive for him! With his most famous work "Poststempel in Litauen" (Postmarks in Lithuania), he created a standard work known worldwide among Lithuania collectors, which is also appreciated by Memel collectors in Germany. It received a new edition in 1990 and a complete revision in 2015. In 1994 he was co-founder of the Forschungsgemeinschaft Litauen, until 2004 he was editor-in-chief of the journal LITUANIA – Mitteilungsblatt der Forschungsgemeinschaft Litauen im BDPH e.V. One year later, in 2005, he received the silver pin of the BDPH for "Merits in Research and Literature". He wrote numerous articles on philately and postal history of Lithuania and made trips that

¹² Fugalevich, Witold: Ein staatenloser Volksdeutscher (A stateless ethnic German). In: BALTIKUM No. 1 (2016) pp. 54-62, freely available on our website <https://arge-baltikum.de/MTB-20-en.shtml> (quote p. 54).

led to contacts with well-known collectors such as Charles Matuzas and Juozas Žygas in the USA and the Baltic States.

He never forgot his Lithuanian roots. When the Baltic States became independent again in 1990/91, he visited the place of his childhood, Kulautuva, and regained Lithuanian citizenship as Vitold Fugalevich (Lithuanization of the name in 2004). His expert guidance on the first trip of our research community to Lithuania remains unforgettable.

Philately was only one part of his life, however. His great interest in the local environment led him to research and publish on the history of the Howaldtswerft shipyard and on his Holstein hometown of Schlesen, of which he became the chronicler. He designed the village's coat of arms!

As long as his health permitted, Fugalevitsch regularly participated in the philatelist meetings, be it in Ehlershausen near Hannover, be it in Hennef. He always participated actively in the discussions and contributed his immense expert knowledge generously. One always learned something new from him; even those who did not collect Memel or Lithuania benefited from the dialogue with this border crosser.

Vitold Fugalevich passed away in July of this year after a long, in the last decades self-determined life. With him we also lose one of the most distinguished publicists of Baltic philately; his extensive work will remain. His friends mourn the loss of a pleasant contemporary whom everyone was lucky to have met.

Cooperation of ArGe Baltikum with others

Friedhelm Doell, Aschheim (D)

The Baltic Working Group is not alone in the world. It does not have all the wisdom for itself, neither in the person of individuals nor in the totality of its members. We are all dependent on the worldwide exchange of information, whereby the possibilities of the Internet and online data exchange have made ways feasible, which only a few decades ago had to be relatively laborious by mail or telephone exchange.

Soon after the merger of the former working and research communities of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in 2016, cooperations with other working communities were forged:

With the Dutch Filatelistengroep Het baltische Gebied (since the beginning), the ROSSICA Society for Russian Philately, (since 2018), the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutsche Ostgebiete (since 2019) and since 2022 now also with the Lithuanian Philatelic Society (LPS) a journal exchange takes place, which gives ArGe Baltikum members access to the bulletins of the partner communities (et vice versa).

All ArGe-Baltic members on the e-mail distribution list regularly receive the links to the latest issues of the journals of our partner communities. Members without internet access please contact the webmaster (see imprint last page).

However, the exchange is not limited to journals: the monthly video chat of the ArGe Baltikum (with summaries in English) can also be attended by people who are not ArGe members. The LPS also organizes monthly video chats (in English) in which interested people can participate. In such exchanges, one immediately benefits from the knowledge of other collectors when one has questions on individual topics related to Baltic philately and regularly learns something new.

And last but not least, there are of course personal contacts, which we strongly recommend maintaining. Whoever is looking for these contact possibilities will find them, among other things, via the links to active Baltic web sites at <https://arge-baltikum.de/Links-10-de.shtml>.

Protocol

of the General Meeting (GM) of the Baltic Working Group e.V. at the Sports School of the Central Rhine Football Association, Sövenner Straße 60, 53773 Hennef, on May 14, 2022

Item 1 The Chairman, Thomas Löbbering, opened the General Meeting at 1:30 pm. He welcomed the members present from Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands as well as a guest from Switzerland. After ascertaining that the meeting had been convened in due time and that a quorum was present, the members rose to honor the dead of Mr. Walter Ederer.

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 elected the Managing Director, Michael Wieneke, as keeper of the minutes and chairman of the meeting for the election of the new Executive Board. The meeting elected Mr. Karl Lukas ad hoc as the second cash auditor in place of Mr. Martin Bechstedt, who was technically late. Karl Lukas accepted the election.

Item 3 The chairman reported on his activities since the 2019 GM. In his capacity as an association examiner of the Bund Philatelistischer Prüfer Deutschlands (BPP) e.V., he represented the working group at the meeting of Scandinavian examiner colleagues in January 2020 in Tartu and, together with the webmaster, from July 10–12 at the international FEPA exhibition ESTONIA 2020, also in Tartu, Estonia.

The working group participated in both the international Christoph Gärtner Award in December 2019 and ESTEX 2020 with the magazine BALTIKUM and the website in the "Literature (Print and Digital)" class. The exhibits achieved places in the top quarter of the exhibitors with Vermeil and Large Vermeil respectively.

The loss of philatelic events due to the pandemic, including the OSTROPA 2020 / 2021 and 2022 as well as personal general meetings in 2020 and 2021, was compensated as far as possible by digital board meetings and member information, the introduction of the monthly virtual regulars' table since May 2021 and the further development of the website. This was one of the reasons why 16 new members were recruited within three years. Three members left the working group, and one member died.

On March 3, 2022, the chairman applied for participation in the 4th National Literary Competition of the Working Communities in the BDPH in the classes "Print" with the magazine BALTIKUM and the work aid No. 1 and in the class "Electronic Media" with the website www.arge-baltikum.de. On April 23 / 24, 2022, he represented the ArGe at the regular general meeting of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Russland e.V. in Hosenfeld and, among other things, held preliminary talks on the possible establishment of a joint stand of the participating ArGe at the trade fair in Ulm from October 27-29, 2022. In their capacity as association examiners of the Bund Philatelistischer Prüfer Deutschlands (BPP) e.V., the three members of the board of ArGe Baltikum e.V. in accordance with § 26 BGB took part in the annual general meeting of the BPP in Nuremberg from April 30 to May 1, 2022.

As a permanent task, the chairman, in his capacity as publisher, editor-in-chief and responsible person in the sense of press law, prepared the issues of the journal BALTIKUM No. 7 / 2019 up to and including 13 / 2022. In conclusion, the outgoing chairman expressed his thanks for the successful development and cooperation of the past years since 2013.

The managing director, Michael Wieneke, chaired the general meeting including the election of the new board and took the minutes.

The webmaster, Friedhelm Doell, contributed to the further development of the website. The presentation of the collecting areas Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania was extended by the camp mail from 1945 and the postal developments from 1991. Still to come for Latvia is the presentation of the republic as of 1991 including the private posts and for Lithuania the period of German occupation in WWII as well as the second Soviet occupation 1944-1991. New web content has been provided on the page Working aids: the working aid no. 1 "The Administrative Reform in Estonia 2017", Working Aid No. 2 "Directory of Estonian Postal, Telegraph, Telephone and Radio Institutions (1926 and 1929)" and Working Aid No. 3 "Postmarks in Continuing Use in the Baltic States from 1944/45". Furthermore, the project of an electronic database "Daily Postmarks of the Independent Republic of Lithuania after 1990" is in progress. With the evaluation of the Philatelia Baltica booklets, the chronicle of the predecessor working groups could be expanded from 1951 onwards. Since the end of 2020, the entire website is available in both German and English.

Since May 2021, the webmaster has hosted a digital regulars' table on the first Saturday of every month.

The Treasurer, Michael Haslau, presented the detailed revenue/surplus statements for fiscal years 2019, 2020 and 2021.

The cash auditors, Karl Lukas and Thomas Radzuweit, certified that the cash management for the fiscal years 2019, 2020 and 2021 was in accordance with the statutes.

Item 4 The chairman of the meeting read out the unanimous resolution of the Board of Directors of December 7, 2021 to expel the member Lothar Blank **for grossly damaging behavior** in accordance with § 5 of the Articles of Association in conjunction with § 6, No. 2 of the Rules of Procedure and asked the voting members present to vote on this. The General Meeting unanimously approved the exclusion of Lothar Blank with one abstention.

Item 5 Thomas Radzuweit moved that the actions of the Board of Management be ratified. The meeting unanimously granted **discharge** to the Executive Board, with the latter abstaining.

Item 6 The Clerk and Chief Electoral Officer, Michael Wieneke, reported that for the **election of the new Executive Board** pursuant to Section 7 of the Articles of Association in conjunction with Section 2, No. 2, 4th dash bullet of the Rules of Procedure, he had received a written proposal dated March 30, 2022, as follows:

- Chairman: Torsten Berndt (new election)
- Managing Director: Martin Bechstedt (new election)
- Treasurer: Michael Haslau (re-election)
- Webmaster: Friedhelm Doell (re-election)

The keeper of the minutes and election officer proposed

- Mr. Torsten Berndt as Chairman and Editor-in-Chief. The general meeting elected him unanimously. Mr. Berndt accepted the election.
- Mr. Martin Bechstedt as Vice Chairman and Managing Director. The General Meeting elected him unanimously. Mr. Bechstedt accepted the election.
- Mr. Michael Haslau as treasurer. The general meeting elected him unanimously. Mr. Haslau accepted the election.
- Mr. Friedhelm Doell as webmaster. The general meeting elected him unanimously. Mr. Doell accepted the election.

With Torsten Berndt as chairman and Martin Bechstedt as deputy chairman, the general meeting newly elected the aforementioned board members according to § 26 BGB (German Civil Code), Michael Haslau as treasurer and Friedhelm Doell as webmaster again.

The recording secretary and election officer reported the willingness of members Ruud van Wijnen and Thomas Löbbering to stand for **election as cash auditors** for the General Meeting 2023 et seq. in accordance with § 9 of the Articles of Association.

Item 7 The treasurer, Michael Haslau, explained the procedure for payment of **lodging and meals**, the occupancy contract with the house for 2023, and the cancellation policy for lodging. The booking of the accommodation by the board is done in trust at the expense of the booking member. Subsequently, the members present paid their cost contributions for accommodation and meals to the treasurer.

Item 8 Miscellaneous The chairman closed the meeting at 14:45 and invited the members to the next general meeting of the Baltic Working Group e.V. at the sports school of the Mittelrhein Football Club in Hennef/Sieg for **May 12-14, 2023**.

Hennef, May 14, 2022

signed Michael Wieneke
Secretary and election official

Successful participation in C.G. Award 2022

Thomas Löbbering, Holzappel (D) and Torsten Berndt, Constanze (D)

"We took 9th place overall with the BALTIKUM at this year's CG International Philately Promotion Award," reported Thomas Löbbering shortly before this issue went to press. This was another well-deserved recognition for the editorial team of our working group under his leadership.

The C.G. Award, as the prize is also called, can be particularly highly valued, since auctioneer and specialist dealer Christoph Gärtner is very intensively involved with philatelic literature and the newsletters of the working groups and is one of the best connoisseurs in this country. He looks at the contents and the knowledge imparted, less at the names of the authors. Consequently, the category he likes to call "diplomacy" is omitted from his evaluations. The prize is associated with 200 euros for the treasury of the working group.

The individual scores were as follows:

Overall: 9th place out of 21 participants in all 3 areas with 73.5 out of 100 possible points (1st place = 78.5 points). Print Media and Innovative Ideas: no separate placement, 35 out of 50 possible points (1st place = 42.5 points). Digital: 12th place out of 31 participants with 17.5 out of 30 possible points (1st place = 23.5 points). Youth, youth development and public relations: 10th place out of 29 participants with 15 out of 20 possible points (1st place = 18 points). Detailed results can be found online at https://www.cg-award.com/2022_en.php.

Fig. 1: Certificate for winning the 9th place.

Fig. 2: The award ceremony was held by Franz Vordermeier from the Gärtner auction house, the symbolic check was accepted by Rainer von Scharpen for the ArGe Baltikum.

Philatelia 2023

Board of Directors

The Baltic States Working Group will participate with an information stand at Philatelia 2023 in Munich. This will take place on March 4 and 5 at the M.O.C. in Lilienthalallee 40 in the Freimann district. On both days, the fair will begin at 9:30 a.m.; on Saturday, the hall gates will close at 5:30 p.m., and on Sunday at 4 p.m. The Numismata runs parallel. For more information, visit www.philatelia-muenchen.de.

If you are interested in participating in manning the booth, please contact the chair!

New bank account of the ArGe Baltikum

Board of Directors

Because of the problems with the Postbank (for example with the transfer of membership fees) the Baltic Working Group changes to the **Berliner Sparkasse**. The new IBAN is from now on **DE65 1005 0000 0191 1685 21**, the BIC: **BELADEBE**.

We ask all members who have issued **standing orders** to **change** them accordingly. For a transitional period, however, the Postbank account will be retained as a precaution. Those who transfer their membership fee directly, we ask to transfer it to the Sparkasse account.

Members whose dues are collected by direct debit do not need to do anything, as the direct debit authorization is generally valid. The direct debit for the 2023 contribution will probably be made in February or March 2023 via the account at the Sparkasse.

New editions Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania 2023

Friedhelm Doell, Aschheim (D)

If you are interested in the new issues of the Baltic post offices, you will find them here:

Estonia: <https://pood.omniva.ee/en/76-postage-stamps-2023>

Latvia: <https://www.pasts.lv/en/footer/Philately/#plan-for-2023>

Lithuania: <https://post.lt/lt/pasto-zenklu-leidybos-ir-antspaudavimi-planai>

As a translation aid, we recommend the software <https://www.deepl.com/translator>, which also takes a lot of work off the editor's and webmaster's shoulders, or the online Google translator at <https://translate.google.com/?sl=auto&tl=de&op=websites>.

The collectors of Ulm

Friedhelm Doell, Aschheim (D)

In Ulm, um Ulm und um Ulm herum – this is a well-known tongue twister that every child in Germany once learned. Ulm, in the shape of the trade fair, is the place where the successor event to the legendary Sindelfingen Stamp Fair took place after a two-year (pandemic-related) interruption from October 27 to 29, 2022. Philatelists from all over the world met in a large hall with dealers and postal societies and a smaller one with working groups and associations. And the ArGe Baltikum was also there, in the form of an information stand and in the person of several members, who manned this stand (and others) and answered questions.

Torsten Berndt, Thomas Löbbering and Friedhelm Doell (Martin Bechstedt was unfortunately absent due to illness) worked sometimes individually, sometimes together at the booth, framed by the ArGe Austria on the right and the ArGe Russia/USSR on the left, where our member Reinhard Heinrich was also active for two days. Gerhard Dreher manned the booth of the Community of Interest German Occupation World War 1 and offered information about "Ober Ost", while Tobias Huylmans presented at the booth of the auction house Köhler among other things a device for multispectral analysis of colors and imprints, as it is usually used by federal and state criminal investigation departments for document examination.

An interim balance from the ArGe booth: we have a new member (Tomas Babravičius from Lithuania) and a lot of questions were answered by collectors who sometimes arrived with something very special or just started to get interested in the Baltic as a collecting area. However, the most profit was achieved by the booth staff themselves: through a variety of contacts, exchange of information, ideas and suggestions and through the community experience, which extended beyond the fair with joint dinners and an excursion to Blaubeuren.

On the occasion of the fair, the results of the 4th Working Communities Literature Exhibition in the BDPH (associated with the Rauhut Literature Award) were also announced. We achieved: (see fig. 3–6).

These are results we can be justifiably proud of. In particular, Martin Bechstedt and Bernhard 'Tony' Fels are to be congratulated on their Internet application with accompanying book, since in the otherwise somewhat Germany-heavy scoring in this competition, the "peripheral region" of Lithuania was deservedly rated highly here.

Conclusion: The booth staff recommends all ArGe members to be there once at a stamp exchange themselves. Should that be in Ulm, one can already say: A trip to Ulm is worthwhile, whether in the spacious and lively indoor stand or in the surrounding Allgäu!

Fig. 1: this is how we found our place

Fig. 2: and this is how it looked "in operation".

Fig. 3: Stamp manual Lithuania, 85 p. gold, 6th place of 42

Fig. 4: Baltikum, 84 P. Large Vermeil, 12th place out of 26

Fig. 5: arge-baltikum.de, 83 p. Large Vermeil, 4th place out of 13

Fig. 6: Work aid no. 1, 75 p. Vermeil, 37th place out of 42

Fig. 7: Ulm Cathedral, the highest church tower in the world

Fig. 8: Old and new board, united at the Chinese meal

Greetings from Japan

Thomas Löbbbering, Holzappel (D)

Our Japanese member Araki Hirotaka sent the enclosed letter with Lithuania reference on the occasion of the Chubu District Stamp Show in Nagaoka on October 29 and 30, 2022, where he exhibited, among other things, his collection "The Postal History of Lithuania Registered Mail 1989–1996". The decorative FDC bears as franking the stamps on private order on the occasion of the stamp show.

The cover's decorative overprint depicts, among other things, Lithuania's special stamp with surcharge for the benefit of Ukraine dated May 6, 2022.

Outlook for the BALTIKUM 15 and 16

In issues 15 and 16 of BALTIKUM, Ruud van Wijnen's study on return shipments appears in two parts. It comprises 16 manuscript pages and more than 30 illustrations – we show a small appetizer in this issue.

Imprint

Baltikum – Journal for Philately and Postal History ISSN

2511-3372

Newsletter of the Baltic Working Group in the BDPH e.V.

Chairman of the Working Group and Editor-in-Chief (V.i.S.d.P.)

= Person responsible according to the German Press Law)

Torsten Berndt, Eisenbahnstraße 25, D-78467 Constance, Germany

Phone: +49 7531 9414133, e-mail: Berndt.Goettingen@web.de

Vice chairman

Martin Bechstedt, Roggenkamp 80 A, D-22941 Bargteheide

Phone: +49 4532 282528, e-mail: m.bech@t-online.de

English translation, Layout and Corporate Design

Friedhelm Doell, Siedlungstraße 3, D-85609 Aschheim

Phone: +49 89 651 19860, e-mail: Friedhelm.Doell@fridom.de

Treasurer

Michael Haslau, Parkstraße 11, 13086 Berlin, Germany

Phone: +49 30 92408958 (landline) or +49 173 8010822 (mobile),

e-mail: michael-haslau@t-online.de

Printing

Druckfrey, Strietweg 6, 75245 Neulingen,

Phone: +49 173 7332335, e-mail: druckfrey@gmx.net

New bank account from December 2022

Berliner Sparkasse, IBAN: DE65 1005 0000 0191 1685 21, BIC: BELA DEBE



Website

www.arge-baltikum.de, bibliography there under "Products & Links".

The standard membership fee is 35 € per year and entitles to receive the biannual newsletter "Baltikum" in print and digital form. The reduced membership fee for the exclusively digital subscription is € Euro per year. Printed single copies can be delivered to non-members for 12,50 € per copy plus shipping costs on request via the chairman.

The Michel numbering is used with the kind permission of Schwaneberger Verlag GmbH, Industriestraße 1, D-82110 Germering.

Any reference to the articles reproduced in "Baltikum", even in part, requires full acknowledgement of the source. Rights and obligations of the authors remain unaffected. Translations, reprints and photocopies are not permitted without the consent of the editors. Unless otherwise indicated, photos and illustrations are by the authors.