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Baltic philately at its finest in Tartu – MARE BALTICUM 2024

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Editorial

Dear Collector Friends,

the MARE BALTICUM 2024 is rightly on the cover of this issue of BALTIKUM. The exhibition in the European Capital of Culture Tartu was undoubtedly the highlight of the philatelic year. Our thanks and congratulations go to the organisers, led by Oliver Hanschmidt, for their work!

This greeting is written immediately after the International Stamp Fair in Ulm. Not only did we have many discussions there, but we also received the third prize in the Harald Rauhut Literature Prize for our website. We are also delighted to have won two gold medals in the Working Groups Literature Competition. Both www.arge-baltikum.de and BALTIKUM crossed the finish line with these awards. The authors, the technical editors and our board member Friedhelm Doell, who is responsible for the website and the layout of BALTIKUM, have done an excellent job that has been recognised at the highest level. I would like to thank them all! At the fair we once again cooperated well with other study groups, especially with our immediate neighbours on the stand, with whom we also have a historical connection: the Nordic Countries Study Group and the Russia/USSR Study Group.

Please allow me to tell you a little story about cooperation: The editorial staff of “Briefmarken Spiegel” sent me a letter from a reader with a question about a large letter addressed to Israel. I couldn't answer it myself because my Israel collection ended almost 25 years ago. A friend from the Israel interest group who knew Hebrew translated the stamps but was at a loss as to their purpose. So, I asked Yehoshua Eliashiv, well known to readers of BALTIKUM. He solved the mystery, and in addition to the letter to the editor, an article was published for the newsletter of the Israel Interest Group. The article would be out of place in BALTIKUM. If you still want to read it, just send me an e-mail.

Of course, you will receive the invitation to our 2025 General Assembly by traditional post at the end of December. The reason for sending the invitation so early this time is simple: at the beginning of January, I will be moving from Konstanz to Germering to take on a new role there. Before the move, I would like to have done everything that can be done.

We welcome Edward Andros from Peninsula, Ohio, to our association! We look forward to a good working relationship, which has already begun! Just before we went to press, we received the membership application from Aigars Ulmanis from Rīga, after a twelve-day postal delivery time. Welcome to the Baltic States Association!

Yours, Torsten Berndt Constance, November 2024

Insured –
cash letters from the Baltic States before 1918

Thomas Löbbering, Holzappel (D)

Three types of postal item can be distinguished in terms of liability:

1. non-liability mail
2. limited liability mail
3. agreed liability mail.

In the 19th century, the distinction between the ordinary letter (item 1), the registered letter (item 2) and the insured letter (item 3), which at that time was still mainly referred to as a money letter, developed. The differentiation of the terms registered letter and insured letter took place gradually over several decades and varied considerably from one postal administration to another. It was not until the creation of the Universal Postal Union in 1874 and the accession of national postal administrations that decisive steps were taken towards global standardisation of terminology. The following examples from the Baltic region - the Baltic provinces of Estonia, Livonia and Courland in the Imperial Russian Post - will illustrate the similarities and differences between registered letters and insured letters, with a focus on the latter.

Harry von Hofmann describes the main **characteristics of a registered letter**:

1. 1. It is a trackable item that is registered when posted and the recipient must acknowledge receipt.
2. 2. The sender receives a receipt.
3. 3. The Post Office is liable for the item in the event of loss up to a specified **standard amount.**
4. The item must not bear any indication of value.[1]

Registered letters and insured letters therefore have the criteria mentioned under 1. and 2. in common, but differ in the criteria mentioned under 3. and 4. The liability of the Post Office for insured letters is not a standard amount but the agreed amount. Unlike registered letters, insured letters **must** bear a declaration of value, which is equal to the amount insured. So far, so clear, in theory.

What confuses us today is that until the second half of the 19th century it was common practice in both postal and everyday Russian to refer to 'recomandirte' letters as insured letters, as opposed to insured letters for which an additional fee was charged based on

[1] Von Hofmann, Harry 1993: *ЗАКАЗНОЕ – Recommandirt, Die eingeschriebenen Postsendungen im Kaiserreich Russland vom Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zum Ende des ersten Weltkrieges 1918 (Registered postal items in the Russian Empire from the beginning of the 19th century to the end of the First World War in 1918)*. Hamburg. p. 8.

the declared value[2]. Therefore, when calculating postage and determining the fee for the insured amount, it is always necessary to pay attention to these terms, some of which are misleading to us today. It was only gradually that a clear distinction was made between the registered letter REKOMENDOWANO / ЗАКАНОЕ / Recommandirt on the one hand and the insured letter on the other. For the latter, the term "money letter" remained in use until well into the 20th century[3].

Based on the four criteria mentioned above, the following general **characteristics of a monetary letter/insured letter**can be identified:

1. The item must be registered at the time of posting and the recipient must acknowledge receipt of the item.
2. The sender receives a receipt.
3. In the event of loss, the Post Office is liable for the item up to the **agreed value**.
4. The item **must** have the agreed value.

Other features are added:

5. 1. The consignment requires a solid envelope. This **must be** sealed.
6. 2. The envelope must indicate the exact weight of the sealed consignment.

Until 31 December 1896, valuables sent by post to or from Russia, including money, could only be sent in sealed envelopes (or packages) with the above-mentioned characteristics (both domestically and internationally). **From January 1, 1897**[4] **postal and telegraphic money transfers** were **also possible (ПЕРЕВОДЪ, money order)**[5]**.**

Until then, postal orders had to be handed over at the counter for the postal clerk to see and certify the contents[6], after which the envelopes had to be sealed by the clerk for a fee, either together or, if the sender did not have a seal, in the presence of the clerk. The sender received a receipt **(РОСПИСКА).**

Money letters had to be paid for **in cash until June 30, 1904**. **From July 1, 1904**, they had to be franked with **postage stamps** for both domestic and international mail. In both cases, the postman noted the charge on the envelope, usually on the back, along with his signature.

[2] ibid. p. 13

[3] The first clear conceptual distinction between registered and money letters was made in the postal treaty between Russia and Prussia of 22/10 August 1865. Ibid. p. 21 f.

[4] Von Hofmann, Harry 2014: *1625–1915/18 Das Postwesen auf dem Territorium der späteren Republik Lettland* … Vol. II. Hamburg. p. 5 ff.

[5] Ilyshin, A.S. 1998: The Transfer of Money by Mail in the Russian Empire. In: The Post-Rider / ЯМЩИК No. 42, June 1998, p. 48 ff.

[6] Von Hofmann, Harry 2014: *1625–1915/18 Das Postwesen auf dem Territorium der späteren Republik Lettland* … Band I. Hamburg. S. 341 ff.

Fig. 1 shows an 1846 receipt from the Reval provincial post office for an „insured letter“ to St Petersburg, the same as a „registered letter“ in today's parlance. The author wishes to thank fellow collector Erhard Engelmann for the literal translation from Russian:

> **RECEIPT** *At the Revaler Municipal Post Office, the item sent by post was accepted and recorded in the book on January 15, 1846 under the number 109.*
>
> *Sent to the Imperial Court Post Office of His Imperial Majesty, to the Most Serene Princess Maria Nikolaevna[7], assured by Mr Maier,*
>
> ***Received: by weight – 20 kopecks, of which for insurance – rub. – kop. and tax 3 kopecks silver.***
>
> *Postmaster ------- (omitted, ed.) Assistant (signature, ed.) Dry seal of the Reval Government Post Office*

Since only the weight tax has been filled in here, it is proof of the delivery of a registered letter (“recommended”, “insured letter”). If the “Insured” section had also been filled in, it would have been proof of the delivery of a money/value letter.

For “insured letters”, i.e. in our modern parlance “registered letters”, according to Ukase No. 33,447 of October 6, 1843[8], the rate was ‘20 kopeks of silver per lot’ (so-called “double rate”), whereas for an ordinary letter it was only “10 kopeks of silver per lot”. If the letter in the above example had been a money-letter, the second column “insurance” would also have had to be filled in, in the amount of “1 kopeck silver per ruble of insured value”. For a registered letter, as in this case, the Russian Imperial Post Office paid a flat rate of 13 rubles for domestic delivery in the event of loss; for a money-value letter, the amount insured was paid out. The delivery receipt cost the sender an extra “3 kopeks silver”9.

Fig. 2 shows a money letter for 500 rubles = 1,333 francs 34 centimes (handwritten correction in red to 33) from Wesenberg 2 29 XII 1900 (x + 12 = 10 January 1901 Gregorian, editor's note) via Chur to Arosa in Switzerland; the violet money order stamp “Wesenberg №” with handwritten addition of the registration number “433” and the weight specification “2 Lot” in Cyrillic at the bottom right; as this was not permitted in international traffic, the weight specification in grams “22 gr” was also added by hand at the top left. In international money correspondence, the insured value had to be indicated not only in the national currency, but also in the currency of the Universal Postal Union, the “franc d'or, gold francs” [10].

[7] Grand Duchess Maria Nikolaevna Romanova (1819–1876), Duchess of Leuchtenberg

[8] Cf. Cronin, Andrew 1995: Some Notes on Imperial Russian Postal Rates. In: The Post-Rider / ЯМЩИК No. 37, December 1995, p.22 ff.

[9] The fee for issuing a receipt was dropped with effect from March 8, 1889.

[10] In this case, the exchange rates happened to be 1:1:1, as the Swiss franc (like the French franc) and the UPU gold franc had been part of the Latin Monetary Union since 1874.

This was meticulously checked letter by letter, as the handwritten correction of the value by one centime by the Swiss postal administration shows.

The back of the envelope (Fig. 3) shows the postal routing: one day after posting, the letter left the main post office in Wesenberg 1 30 XII 1900 (January 11, 1901 Gregorian calendar), crossed the Russian-German border two days later (Graniza Petrok. G. 5 1 1 1901, now x + 13(!) = January 14 Gregorian, editor's note; border of the Governorate of Petrikau, today Piotrków Trybunalski, Poland) and arrived at its destination of Inner–Arosa via Chur on 18. I. 01.

On the back of the envelope you can see two other features of a postal order from that period: the cash franking and the seal. The postman who sealed the envelope noted by hand the weight of 2 lots, for which 20 kopeks were to be paid, then 50 kopeks (5 x 10, corrected from 10) for the insurance of 500 rubles and 10 kopeks for the sealing, making a total of 80 kopeks (corrected from 40). He confirmed the sealing and cash payment with his signature.

Money letters from the authorities are much less spectacular. As they are largely exempt from postage, domestic money letters are also sent postage-free and therefore without stamps.

Fig. 4 shows such a money letter from the Laisholm postal and telegraph department, dated February 11, 1912, “insured” for 10 rubles, to Adolf Jakobson in Tönumetsa.

The back of the letter is equally unadorned, Fig. 5, closed with two official seals ‘Stranye Korrespondenzia’ (Special Dispatch), Fig. 6, and marked with the initials of the official who applied the seal.

In the following, I will present two money letters “with stamps from the stamp period”. While money letters had to be franked in cash until June 30, 1904, from July 1 of that year, they had to be franked with stamps. This applied equally to domestic and international mail. While violet postage stamps, such as the one shown above from Wesenberg, were mainly used for cash franking, from 1904 onwards adhesive labels with a blue border, cut or perforated, were used throughout the Empire to mark money letters. In addition to the numbering, they showed only the place name in Cyrillic for both domestic and international mail. Other letter codes such as “З” for ЗАКАЗНОЕ (registered mail) or, later, the international “V” for Valeur (value) were missing.

Fig. 7 shows a money letter weighing 26 grams and worth 300 rubles = 800 francs (with handwritten notes at the top left and right and at the bottom) sent from Reval 21 1 13 (February 3rd Gregorian calendar, Ed.) to Menton (France) 8 2 13. In addition to the blue label prescribed for money orders, it bears the postmark of the one-liner ‘Deneschnoe.’ = money (order).

The money order is sealed (Fig. 8) with five identical private wax seals. The handwritten calculation of the postage and the signature of the official who sealed it are partially covered by the arrival postmark of Menton and the franking.

The postage calculation is as follows: 20 + 18 + 10 = 48. There were 20 kopeks for the weight[11], 18 kopeks for the insurance and 10 kopeks for the seal, paid with stamps with Michel No. 72 II A b, 73 II A c and 84.

It is interesting to look beyond the philatelic horizon: the envelope and the private wax seals are in the name of "Thomas Clayhills & Son – Reval". The addressee and recipient of the 500 roubles is "Monsieur le Baron Alexis Girard de Soucanton", who, during his holiday on the Côte d'Azur, resided at the five-star (then as now) "Hôtel de Malte".

The originally Scottish Reval trading company (1633–1940) Thomas Clayhills & Son *Reval* was owned by the Girard de Souscanton family from 1782 to 1910. The family came from France and moved to the Baltic region via East Frisia.

Finally, I would like to show you a domestic money letter from Jurjew / Tartu / Dorpat K - 4 5 17 to Riga m -6 5 17, worth 43,000 roubles. On the front, in addition to the value in figures and words, it bears the blue Jurjew Livl. value label for letters, cut, and a red routing number "3158". On the back are five official seals of the "Post. Telegr. Kontor Jurjew 2", the handwritten weight "61 gr" and the initials of the postal official who affixed the seal. The total postage of 65.10 roubles certainly deserves special mention: Michel No. 69I Ab, two copies of 77Ax a, and nine copies of 56y, including two pairs.

For the postage period from September 21, 1914 to August 14, 1917, the postage of 65.10 roubles is calculated as follows:

– Weight 61 grams = 5 x 15 g at 10 kopecks	0.50 roubles
– Registration	0.10 rouble
– Insurance 43,000 roubles = 430 x 15 kopecks	64.50 roubles
Total	**65.10 roubles**

This is the most expensive postage paid on a letter from Estonia in the Russian pre-inflationary period. 43,000 roubles were the equivalent of 21,500 US dollars at the time, an enormous sum.

The addressee, Ernst Christophorus Wolfram, came from a wealthy Riga merchant and lawyer family. His business partner, R. Hansen, Jurjew, Livl(an)d(ic). Gouv(ernement)., stayed at the Hotel "London", then as now a well-known Dorpater address.

[11] 1 lot (Russian) = 12.794 grams; in international money-order transactions, the Russian lot was calculated at 15 grams each; here: 26 grams, therefore 2 x 10 kopecks, second weight category

Fig. 1: ROSPISKA 1846
Fig. 2: Mechmershausen VS
Fig. 3: Mechmershausen RS
Fig. 4: Domestic official letter VS
Fig. 5: Domestic official letter RS
Fig. 6: Official seal 'Stranye Korrespondenzia' (Special dispatch)
Fig. 7: Money order Menton VS
Fig. 8: Money order Menton RS
Fig. 9: Hôtel de Malte, Menton (Fig. Wikipedia)
*Fig. 10: Lacquer seal 'Thomas Clayhills & Son *Reval*'*
Fig. 11: Money order 43,000 roubles front side
Fig. 12: Money order 43,000 roubles back side
Fig. 13: Hotel 'London', Tartu (Fig. Wikipedia)

Dorpat 1941 – The definitive stamps „Landespost" (state post) and „Wiederaufbau" (reconstruction)

Thomas Löbbering, Holzappel (D)

The stamp issues of the Estonian State Post Office in 1941 under German occupation include only three issues that were used nationwide, namely the two series issued in Dorpat (Tartu), Michel Nos. 1 to 9, and, with some restrictions, the series issued in Pernau, Michel Nos. 5 I to 10 I. All other issues were not used nationwide, but remained at the level of local provisional issues, with – mostly retrospective – and without the sanction of the German and/or Estonian authorities. None of the issues mentioned, neither those used nationally nor those used locally, came about without philatelic influence; some met postal needs. Only the Dorpat series Michel Nos. 1 to 9 were used for postal purposes for a longer period, from their issue on August 7 and 12, 1941 respectively until their withdrawal on April 30, 1942.

This article and its sequel are about them.

Thanks to Harry von Hofmann's research, we can trace the most important postal events in the late summer of 1941 based on the documents he analysed in the Estonian State Archives in Tallinn[1], the Latvian National Archives in Riga[2], the Official Journal of the Reich Ministry of Posts in Berlin and other archives. The interaction between the German military authorities of the Wehrmacht and the personalities of the local German and Estonian officials played an important role in the two Dorpat stamp issues "State Post" and "Reconstruction".

[1] Von Hofmann, Harry (ed.) 2010: *ESTLAND vor dem und als Teil vom Generalpostkommissariat OSTLAND (ESTONIA before and as part of the General Post Office for the Eastern Territory).* Hamburg.

[2] The same (ed.) 2001: *LETTLAND vor dem und als Teil vom Generalpostkommissariat OSTLAND (LATVIA before and as part of the General Post Office for the Eastern Territory)*. Hamburg.

In contrast to the earlier cases of Lithuania and Latvia, the fact that the military occupation of Estonia took place from south to north from the beginning of July 1941, before the capital Tallinn itself fell to the Germans six weeks later on 29 August 1941, also played a role[3]. This left a period of six weeks during which the postal initiative of the local Estonian civilian authorities could develop in cooperation with the German military authorities, without the Estonian postal administration under the **postal director Gustav Jallajas** (1875-1944)[4] being able to exert any direct influence. It was only from the beginning of September 1941 that he was able to exert influence, which he did in the sense of providing postal services to the Estonian civilian population.

During the fighting in the summer of 1941, southern Estonia was part of the so-called "rear area" of Army Group North, i.e. all Estonian authorities were in every respect subordinate to the German commander of Army Group North, Army High Command 18, General Georg von Küchler (1881–1968)[5]. At the beginning of the occupation, he had appointed **Feldkriegsgerichtsrat** (Field Judge) **Martin Köhler** as his representative in the army's rear area in southern Estonia. Among other things, Köhler was responsible for ensuring that Estonian civil and official postal traffic in his area of responsibility was resumed as quickly as possible[6]. To this end, he called on the services of, among others, the commander of the German field headquarters in Dorpat, **Captain Dr. jur. Heinrich Meyerholz** (1894–1981). He in turn worked with the **head of the Estonian post office in Dorpat, Meremaa.**

Köhler and Meyerholz were lifelong philatelists, and in 1941 they knew how to combine their official duties with their hobby. In Köhler's case, this combination led to a court martial in 1943 and his fatal attempt to prove himself at the front in the mountain forests of Greece; in Meyerholz's case, he became President of the Hanover Administrative Court, recipient of the Federal Cross of Merit, First Class, and a juror in the BDPh.

Even during the war, there was disagreement about the question of the order to **publish the first edition of the "Landespost" postage stamps on August 7, 1941**, as Harry von Hofmann reports[7]. According to this, Post Director Gustav Jallajas was of the opinion that "German authorities" had arranged the issue. The German postal commissioner in Reval,

[3] On the historical context, cf. also Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt 2012: Reichskommissariat Ostland; in: Zeitalter der Weltkriege, Band 8. Freiburg i.Br.: Ferdinand Schöningh.

[4] Cf. Bleyer, Julius 1977: Gustav Jallajas, Director-General of the Estonian Postal Services – Commemoration of his Birth Centenary, In: Eesti Filatelist Nr. 20-21. Göteborg. p. 18 ff.

[5] On the orders of Army Group North on September 4, 1941, the immediate resumption of the activities of the Estonian civil postal service was ordered by the senior quartermaster of Army Group North (AOK 18) on Sept. 7, 1941. Cf. Von Hofmann, Harry (ed.) 2010: ESTLAND vor dem und als Teil vom Generalpostkommissariat OSTLAND. Hamburg. p. 353.

[6] At that time, it was still far from possible for the German Service Post Office (Deutsche Dienstpost) in the Generalbezirk Estland to start postal operations. This did not take place until December 1, 1941, when the German Service Post Offices in Reval (Tallinn) and Pernau (Pärnu) opened.

[7] Cfl. Von Hofmann, Harry 2010: *ESTLAND vor dem* ..., p. 42

postal councillor Eisenmann[8], identified the Estonian post office manager in Dorpat, Meremaa, as the originator of the printing order. Harry von Hofmann considers this to be consistent, since the Estonian postal service had a clear interest in returning to franking with stamps instead of cash franking. There is agreement, however, that Dr. Meyerholz placed the order for the printing of the **2nd edition of August 12, 1941**[9].

The design of the issue, based on a sketch by Viktor Krass, is limited to the essentials: the national coat-of-arms and the name of the country in German and Estonian, as well as the denominations of 15, 20 and 30 kopecks. The stamps were printed by the Ilutrükk printing house in Dorpat (Tartu) in sheets of 100, with 100,000 copies of the 15-kopeck stamp[10] and 250,000 copies each of the 20- and 30-kopeck stamps. For the first issue, thick grey chalk paper with a brownish uneven gum (x) was used, for the second issue ordinary medium-thick paper with a white gum (y). Both editions were issued with L 11 ¼ line perforation.

Not so the **printing of 1,500 imperforated sets on medium weight paper of the 2nd edition (y)**[11], ordered by the German field headquarters without any postal necessity. Of these, 500 copies were sold over the counter, with a maximum of one set being issued and its validity claimed as postage for each postal customer. The remaining 1,000 or, according to Hurt/Ojaste, 3,000 imperforated sets went to the purchasers. Harry von Hofmann does not mention any names here, Hurt/Ojaste explicitly names field court judge Martin Köhler[12].

The Estonian postal service under Gustav Jallajas never recognised the imperforate issue as valid for postage purposes. On the contrary, in the course of 1941 and 1942 it led to official letters of complaint from Gustav Jallajas via Martin Köhler to the **General Post Commissioner for Ostland in Riga, Dr. jur. Hans-Joachim Münzel** (1903–n.n. after 1968), which contributed to the subsequent court martial proceedings against Martin Köhler.

Most of the "privatised" imperforated issue ended up in Germany via the aforementioned gentleman and was used by interested parties, thanks to the Reichsbund Deutscher Philatelisten (German Reich Union of Philatelists), to further siphon off the wartime surplus

[8] Postal Councilor Eisenmann represented the General Postal Commissioner Dr. Hans-Joachim Münzel in the General District of Estonia from 25 October 1941 until 1944. On behalf of the German Service Post Office Ostland, Eisenmann was responsible, among other things, for relations with/cooperation with the Estonian State Post Office. Both offices were located in Reval/Tallinn.

[9] ibid. p. 42

[10] Contrary to Gustav Jallajas and postal director Eisenmann, Dr Meyerholz states that 200,000 copies were printed for the 2nd edition of the 15 kopeck stamp. Hurt/Ojaste, Michel and other catalogues accept this number.

[11] Harry von Hofmann mentions 1,500 copies, Hurt / Ojaste mention 3,500 copies. Michel does not mention an edition number and only lists MiNo. 1y U to 3y U.

[12] See Hurt, Vambola & Ojaste, Elmar (eds) 1986: ESTONIA Philately & Postal History Handbook & Catalogue, Gothenburg. p. 204.

of money. In decades of collecting and researching, I have never come across a perfectly used postal item with a MiNo. 1y U to 3y U franking, but I have seen many "philatelistically inspired" frankings. Harry von Hofmann provides numerous examples of this under the heading "Gimmicks"[13]. While Martin Köhler did a great service by making known the imperforated issue of the 2nd edition, Heinrich Meyerholz did the same with "proofs", double prints, misperforations and waste sheets of this issue, which he innocently distributed to young philatelists as late as the mid-1960s[14].

The postage stamps issued for the "Landespost" and "Wiederaufbau" in August and September 1941 were issued in Soviet currency, roubles and kopecks, to match the rates that had been in force in the Soviet Republic of Estonia since December 6, 1940. These initially remained in force unchanged for the Estonian state post office at the beginning of the German occupation. The same applied to the Estonian and Soviet stamps that had been used for postage during the Soviet occupation. The Estonian postal administration did not formally withdraw these stamps, together with the local Estonian issues issued under German occupation, until September 29, 1941. From this date, the two Dorpat issues were the only stamps valid for postage of civilian correspondence within Estonia[15], but this is where the available information on postage rates within Estonia ends.

Hurt/Ojaste recognise **three postage periods** for the period in question: first the **Soviet postage period from December 6, 1940 to September 28, 1941**, then the **postage period from September 29, 1941 to November 30, 1941** – probably with reference to the above-mentioned decree in the Estonian Imperial Gazette – with a doubling of the Soviet postage rates for a local postcard from 10 to 20 kopeks and for a local letter from 15 (+5 kopeks per 20 g) to 30 kopeks (+ 15 kopeks per 20 g) [16] – and **from December 1, 1941**, the German domestic postage rates of the Deutsche Dienstpost Ostland (DDO, German Service Post Office for the Ostland) in marks and pfennigs[17]. **Harry von Hofmann** assumes that the postal rate periods for Soviet domestic postage stamps remained unchanged from 6 December 1940 for the period from July 1941 to 30 November 1941[18].

Michel shows for the period from **August 7 to August 19, 1941**: printed matter 15 kopecks, postcard 20 kopecks, letter 30 kopecks, registered letter 60 kopecks; for the period from **September 29 to November 30, 1941**: printed matter 30 kopecks, postcard 40 kopecks, letter 60 kopecks, no information on registered mail; for the **period starting on**

[13] Cf. Von Hofmann, Harry: *ESTONIA before the...,* p. 38 ff. and p. 107 ff.

[14] Ibid. p. 38

[15] Cf. Ibid. p. 9 and p. 393

[16] Cf. Mändvere, Vello 1984: Postal Tariffs in Occupied Estonia 1940–1944, in: Eesti Filatelist Nr. 30, Göteborg. p. 235 ff. From November 1st, 1941, the German Reichsmark became the official currency in the Reichskommissariat Ostland. At the same time, the Soviet rouble currency was withdrawn. The conversion was made at a ratio of 1:10, i.e. 1 rouble = 10 pfennigs, and this also applied to the postage rates of the Landespost.

[17] Cf. Hurt/Ojaste, ibid., Postal rates in Estonia 1918–1944, p. 407 ff.

[18] Cf. Von Hofmann, Harry: *ESTONIA before the...,* p. 21 f.

December 1, 1941: printed matter 3 RPfg., postcard 6 RPfg., letter 12 RPfg., no information on registered mail.

The beginning of the first postal period on August 7 can probably be explained by the first day of issue of the "Landespost" postage stamps, but otherwise there is no other explanation. The same applies to the end of this postal period on August 19. The gap between August 19 and the beginning of the second postal period on September 29, 1941[19] is also unexplained. Even Esa Mattila's otherwise always helpful postage tables are of no help here. They end with the last postal period of the independent Republic of Estonia on December 5, 1940[20].

We are therefore left with a glimpse of the everyday postal life of consumer mail items, franked with the "Landespost" and "Wiederaufbau" postage stamps. In fact, the period under consideration is limited to the time between August 7, 1941, and November 30, 1941. With the entry into force of the postal period from December 1, 1941, it is generally agreed that the tariff regulations of the Deutsche Dienstpost Ostland shall apply exclusively to the national post of the Estonian civilian population, both domestically and internationally.

In addition, the sale of the "Landespost" and "Wiederaufbau" issues in the national post offices ended on November 30, 1941, after the Field Commander's Office in Dorpat, at the insistence of Gustav Jallajas, had transferred the stocks of the two **Dorpat issues** that had not been sold **in September and October 1941** to the Estonian State Post Office, and these issues were issued at the **counters of the Estonian civil post offices throughout the country**.

From December 1, 1941, as before from November 4, 1941, the DDO exclusively supplied the German service post offices in Latvia and Lithuania with Reich stamps with the Hitler portrait and the overprint OSTLAND[21].

German Reich postage stamps with and without overprint retained their validity until the end of the Ostland period in 1944/45, and the "Landespost" and "Wiederaufbau" postage stamps until April 30, 1942[22].

To be continued.

Fig. 1: Michel No. 1x to 3x on thick coated paper
Fig. 2: Michel No. 1y to 3ya on medium-thick ordinary paper
Fig. 3: Michel No. 3x, 3ya, 3yb blue instead of black-lilac-aubergine in comparison
Fig. 4: Michel No. 1y U to 3y U

[19] Cf. Michel Deutschland-Spezial 2024, Vol. 1: 1849 to April 1945, p. 1023

[20] Cf. Mattila, Esa 1987: *Postal Rates of Estonia 1918–1940.* Lahti.

[21] Until then, German postage stamps with the Hindenburg portrait and Hitler **without** the OSTLAND overprint had been used at DDO counters. Cf. von Hofmann, Harry: *ESTONIA before*..., pp. 13 and 15.

[22] At no time, German Reich stamps were issued at the counters of the Estonian State Post Office or the DDO, but they were cancelled as a favour when presented at the counter.

Fig. 5: Michel No. 2 P U II
Fig. 6 Souvenir piece with, among others, Michel Nos. 1y U to 3y U and special cancellation DORPAT 11.1.1942 TAG DER BRIEFMARKE, carried out in Berlin and later in Riga, but not in Dorpat. DDO registration label and address added later

OSTLAND – FALSE or REAL? (continued)

Thomas Löbbering, Holzappel (D)

Under the same heading OSTLAND – FALSE or REAL?, the author dealt in BALTIKUM 5 / 2018[1] and in PHILATELIE 491[2] with the deviant OSTLAND prints on imprints on 6-pfennig reply stationery of the German Reich, German Reich MiNo. P 302, Fig. 2. According to current knowledge, these appeared in the General District of Estonia from April 1944 with a modified imprint, after having been used in the General District of Latvia without an imprint from 1942.

The author concluded at the time "provisionally and with great caution":

– Overprint 2 is genuine...

– Overprint 2 first appeared in April 1944 at the post office of the German Service Post Office (DDO) Ostland, Reval (Tallinn) ... This supports the assumption expressed by Harry von Hofmann that the overprint was created **on the initiative of "the postal management in the General District of Estonia"** and is therefore **not a private overprint**[3].

– Overprint 2 was applied to **complete postal stationery cards** (question and answer section).

To round off the picture, the author asked readers to send in further scans/photocopies of used examples with the **OSTLAND overprint 2**.

In the follow-up to the above article in PHILATELIE, Axel Dörrenbach, second chairman of the Verband Philatelistischer Prüfer e.V. (Association of Philatelic Examiners), sent scans of the postal stationery card shown in Figs. 3 and 4, which was sent from Pernau via Königsberg (censorship there) to Berlin from July 16, 1944, and was redirected here.

As with all used postal stationery cards registered to date, the content is purely practical. From a philatelic point of view, it is interesting to note that this is a postal stationery card that was already separated before it was used by the postal service, ex German Reich

[1] Löbbering, Thomas 2018: OSTLAND – FALSE or REAL? in: BALTIKUM, Journal for Philately and Postal History of the Baltic States Study Group, No. 5 / 2018, p. 53 ff.

[2] Löbbering, Thomas 2018: OSTLAND – FALSE or REAL? in: Philatelie, Magazine of the German Philatelic Association, No. 491, May 2018, p. 36 ff.

[3] Von Hofmann, Harry 2010: Estonia before and as part of the General Government of Ostland. Hamburg. p. 127 ff.

MiNo. P302 Q+A, the reply section of which was now used as a “normal” postal stationery card. Most used postal stationery cards known to date are reply cards. The card shown here was sold as lot 5287 at the 3rd Jennes & Klüttermann auction in Cologne in 1995 for 1,450 German marks including the hammer price.

Thanks to the help of further collector friends, our members Pertti Hujala (FIN) and Oliver Hanschmidt (EST), we are now able to show further postal stationery with the OSTLAND overprint 2. These are the question parts of three ‘postcards with reply card’, German Reich MiNo. P 302, with the overprint 2. Two of the three postal stationery cards come from the district of the Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church, namely from the parish of the Transfiguration of Our Lord in Pernau.

Both postal stationery cards were posted at the German Service Post Office in Pernau, on January 17, 1944, and on March 17, 1944, Hurt/Ojaste 8:2. The first postal stationery card was sent under the consecutive register number 30 to Nuia to the local pastor of the Estonian Orthodox community. The sender is Johann Ümarik, (senior) pastor and provost of the Pernau parish from 1934 to 1950. The recipient is I. P. Vainola, (senior) pastor of the St Alexei parish in Karksi-Nuia from 1938 to 1949.

> *Reverend Father Peeter!*
>
> *Please send me an extract from the church records for Anastaasia Rinso, born on October 28, 1910, in Karksi and baptised there, daughter of Hendrek and Anna, née Pauska. She is a member of our congregation according to her permanent residence.*
>
> *Please also let me know if and how much membership fees the person owes your community so that these can be paid. Best wishes and greetings for the New Year,*
>
> *Pernau Transfiguration Parish – Rev. J. Ümarik*

The second postal stationery card has the same sender as above, Johann Ümarik. It was sent to the Estonian Orthodox community in Urissaare, to Johann Tamm, senior pastor of the Laiksaare Alexandria Georgi community from 1941 to 1953, under the consecutive registration number 229.

> *Dear Father Johann,*
>
> *Yesterday I had a conversation with the secretary of the synod, Father A. Jürisson. He asked me to find a place in the district of Pernau where they could move and find temporary accommodation for the Metropolitan (K.P.I Kiriku pea isa = Head Priest of the Church, in English “Metropolitan”, Ed.) and the Secretary of the Synod in case they have to be evacuated from Tallinn.*
>
> *I recall that you had a couple of vacant rooms. Please let me know soon whether you could hand them over to the above-named as temporary accommodation in case they need to leave their current location. – I have also written to Kerku, where, to my*

knowledge, the priest's apartment should be vacant, but according to rumours, Father A. Angerjas has already been evacuated there.

Father M.A. (name abbreviated, ed.) is currently in Vääna, and on Thursdays he goes to Tallinn for pastoral care. Father Jürisson is in his apartment together with the nuns, since their apartment and also the church fell victim to the fire. The cemetery chapel is also said to have been destroyed. Also, an explosive bomb went off in front of the Church of the Transfiguration of the Lord (Redeemer's Church in Tallinn), and the statue of Father Platon and the church itself were severely damaged. If the people of Tallinn can't come to you, I may have to find them another temporary place to stay.

Best regards, J. Ümarik

Both dates of use, **January 17 and March 17, 1944**, are **the earliest known uses**, which move the previously known early date of April 12, 1944, forward by more than three months.

The third postal stationery card presented here is a local usage from Ahja. The sender is the headmaster of the Laane primary school in Ahja, Ed Kooviste; the addressee is Aksella Villak-Salu, a teacher at the secondary school in Ahja[4].

P.P.[5]

I would like to inform you that I have scheduled the written exams for Monday, 21st at 10 am. However, if necessary, I can also postpone them to Tuesday.

Kind regards, Ed Kooviste

Head of Laane Elementary School

Laane, 18.V.1945

In terms of contemporary history and philately, two aspects stand out in the case of the postal stationery shown in Figs. 12 and 13: the Ostland postal stationery with a picture of Adolf Hitler continues to be used without objection and without payment of postage (!) – now as a **form template** – ten days after the end of the Second World War. The new bilingual postmark **АКЯ ЭСТ.ССР АНЈА a СССР** is used with the date **19 5 45** upside down and correctly struck next to – instead of on – the now invalid value imprint. Its use ten days after the end of the war certainly represents an unexpected new late use. It pushes back the previously known latest use date of November 17, 1944, by almost half a year into 1945.

Conclusions

[4] In 1945, the former Ahja primary school was expanded into a seven-class „incomplete“ secondary school.

[5] P.P., Latin „perge perge“, meaning „and so on“; the sender has probably already sent similar information; Ed.

The conclusions expressed in the article in 2018 can be expanded as follows:

The **assumption** that overprint 2 is neither a forgery nor a privately initiated overprint has been **confirmed**. The **OSTLAND overprint 2 is genuine**. Without exception, the postal stationery cards known to date have been used as required, predominantly in official correspondence between Estonian and German officials[6]. The postal stationery cards were transported without complaint by the German postal service Ostland, the German Reich postal service and even the Soviet postal service of the Estonian SSR.

The now available usage data of used postal stationery cards with overprint 2 considerably extend the **period of use** to dates between January **17, 1944,** and May **19, 1945**. Use remains restricted to the **General District of Estonia** in the General Government Commissariat of Ostland[7]. Previously, only the German Service Offices in Reval and Pernau were documented.

Subject to further finds, there remain two used complete postal stationery cards German Reich MiNo. 302Q+A with overprint 2. Among the used postal stationery cards, **predominantly used question cards** are still known. Likewise, the use of Q+A parts that have been mechanically separated before postal use as simple postal stationery cards occurs. The question of the origin of the imprint 2 remains to be answered.

Furthermore, readers are cordially invited to email their used copies to thomas_loebbering@hotmail.com or to send colour copies to the author's postal address. Of particular interest are references to written evidence in the archives of Riga, Tallinn or third places that provide certainty about the history of the origin of overprint 2.

Fig. 1: Overprint 1, enlarged
Fig. 2: Overprint 2, enlarged
Fig. 3: Postcard DR (Deutsches Reich) MiNo. 302A – used as a simple postcard – with OSTLAND overprint 2 from Pernau to Berlin from July 16, 1944
Fig. 4: Text page
Fig. 5: Postcard DR MiNo. 302F with OSTLAND imprint 2 from Pernau to Nuia, January 17, 1944
Fig. 6: Text page
Fig. 7: The sender, Johann Ümarik
Fig. 8: The recipient, Peeter Vainola
Fig. 9: Johann Tamm (Fig. 7–9 Wikipedia)
Fig. 10: Postal stationery DR MiNo. 302F with OSTLAND overprint 2 from Pernau to Orissaare, March 17, 1944
Fig. 11: Text page
Fig. 12: Postal stationery DR MiNo. 302F with OSTLAND overprint 2, local use Ahja, May 19, 1945
Fig. 13: Text page

[6] This included their „private correspondence“ (senior civil servant in the general district of EST/LET/LIT writes to his wife, daughter, etc.). The transitions to purely private correspondence, for which the official mail was „actually“ not intended, are fluid.

[7] This includes usages by persons and institutions from the (former) General District of Estonia, e.g. offices relocated back into the Reich territory or post-war usages as above.

Sending letters as parcels – from packing station to packing station

Friedhelm Doell, Aschheim (D)

Martin Bechstedt acquired the Estonian item shown in Fig. 1 from a dealer in Tartu and sent me the scans shown. At first, he thought that the attached note was a packing slip for a letter, i.e. a kind of parcel dispatch note, because he himself had noticed that the letter had been sent from parcel station to parcel station.

The front side, however, looks like a used C5 envelope from Eesti Post, which was used to send stamps by quarterly subscription (the author himself receives such envelopes by subscription). The envelope may have been reused, which is why the old address and registration label are covered with a white sheet of paper.

The inscription on the current shipping label reads:

Omniva saadetis – pakiautomaadi teenus	Shipping receipt from an Omniva parcel machine
Saatja Tartu Veeriku Selveri pakiautomat Tel. 372 52 ..... Vitamiini tn 1, Tartu linn, Tartu linn, Tartu maakond, 96860	Sender Tartu Veeriku (shopping centre), parcel machine (in supermarket) Selver Tel. (Estonian mobile number) Vitamiini Str. 1, Tartu, Tartu, Tartu County, 98860
Saaja 96178 Tel. 372 55 ..... hzd Tõrvandi Coop Konsumi pakiautomat 96178 Kambja vald, Tartu maakond, Estonia	Recipient Postcode of receiving packing station Tel. (Estonian mobile phone number) ? * Parcel machine (postcode 96178) of Coop Konsum in Tõrvandi, Kambja rural municipality, Tartu County, Estonia

** The meaning of this abbreviation is not known to the author.*

By the way, parcel machines in Estonia have their own postcodes, as can be seen.

But what could possibly prompt someone to send a letter as a parcel? From one parcel machine to another?

The current Omniva fee tables help to clarify this (cf. red borders on Fig. 5):

Red border around text on Fig. 6 in English:
Package size S
9 x 38 x 64 cm, up to 30 kg **€3.18**

What does this comparison of tables tell us?

For a registered letter with proof of delivery, which in Estonia can weigh up to 250 grams, you pay €6.00 if it is delivered to your home by the postman. For heavier letters (up to two kilograms are possible), the cost is between €6.30 and €8.70 (Fig. 5).

By contrast, the cost of sending a parcel from one parcel station to another is just €3.18 for parcels up to 30kg in weight!

In both cases, the minimum size is 9 × 14 centimetres, so a normal letter can be sent as a parcel – an enormous economic advantage, which, however, requires the recipient to pick up the letter at the parcel machine. The advantage of this is that the recipient is not tied to delivery times or the opening hours of post offices or postal points (according to Omniva, this is preferred by most customers in Estonia).

It would appear that the sender of the receipt has taken advantage of precisely this economic benefit, namely sending a letter from parcel station to parcel station.

How does it all work in practice?

The sender creates a shipping order via the Internet (see Fig. 6). On the following page (not shown here), the sender's and recipient's names are of course also given in addition to the telephone numbers, but they are not printed on the label, so that a certain level of data protection is also provided for the deliverers.

The paid fee is no longer shown either. So you have to trust that a label has only been printed out if it has been paid for with the prescribed fee.

The sender deposits the parcel in the parcel station, and then Omniva transports it to the destination parcel machine, where it is deposited. The recipient then receives a message on their mobile phone that their parcel has arrived, and they can retrieve it from the parcel compartment of the machine by entering a PIN code that they have received from the sender (who has been informed of this by Omniva).

To increase security, my brother-in-law's wife does the following when she sells something privately via eBay and the like: she enters her husband's (my brother-in-law's) phone number as the sender phone number and her own as the recipient phone number (the same phone number cannot be entered twice). She then receives a message from Omniva on her own mobile phone when her package has arrived at the destination's packing station. She only shares the PIN code with the buyer once she has received the money from the buyer. If something goes wrong beforehand, e.g. with the postal delivery, she can take care of it herself and not burden the buyer with activities.

This seems to be a safer option all round than sending something directly to the recipient, and easier than sending a registered letter if the recipient works during the day, for example. And it is always cheaper, as has been shown above.

This opens up a whole new field of activity for examiners, enabling them to verify the authenticity of postal items. However, I doubt whether this is still possible if fees are not printed and the thermal writing stripe that was obviously used is fading more and more over time.

So all you Estonia examiners: have fun!

Fig. 1: Shipping label on the former back of the envelope (phone numbers pixelated by the author)
Fig. 2: Front of the reused envelope, old shipping information pasted over (reduced in size)
Fig. 3: Sender = Tartu parcel machine (source: Veeriku Selver website)
Fig. 4: Recipient = Tõrvandi parcel machine (source: Google Street View)
Fig. 5: Table of fees for domestic letters [04.08.2024]
(source: : https://www.omniva.ee/sending_a_letter#sending_letter_estonia)
Fig. 6: Online form for domestic parcel delivery [04.08.2024]
(source: https://minu.omniva.ee/parcel/baltics/new)

Book review: Date stamps Estonia

Torsten Berndt, Konstanz (D)

The date stamps of independent Estonia since 1991.
Inventory and classification.

By Martin Bechstedt.
2nd edition 2024.
256 pages, more than 200 colour and 600 black and white illustrations, three supplements.
Format 20.5 x 27.5 cm, hardcover.
ISBN 978-3-942841-10-8.
Price: 39.50 euros plus shipping costs.
Available from Martin Bechstedt, m.bech@t-online.de and in (German) bookshops.

6,000 letters – that's not the daily volume of a large town in Estonia. No, that's the number of letters that Omniva, as Eesti Post is now called, processes throughout the country in a week, excluding the pre-Christmas period. Including 900,000 Christmas greeting cards, the annual letter volume is 1.2 million letters, which is less than the population of 1.34 million[1].

It is surprising that in a country where the average person neither writes nor receives more than one letter a year, there is still a postal service, stamps are still issued, and post

[1] Estonian Public Broadcasting (ERR) https://www.err.ee/1609357953/omniva-vahendab-postkontorite-arvu-veel-viiendiku-vorra.

offices still have postmarks. Admittedly, stamps still sell well worldwide, and even philatelists' favourite countries such as Monaco and Liechtenstein have a modest amount of correspondence, not to mention island territories such as Åland or the Faroe Islands. In the digitised country of Estonia, on the other hand, letter post is now a minor issue. Postal traffic is today quite manageable, as is philatelic and postal history documentation, but you have to find the evidence.

Martin Bechstedt has taken on this task. Back in 2018, he presented a handbook on the date stamps of Estonia since the country regained its independence in 1991. In the six years since, knowledge has grown enormously, and countless reports have been received from members of the Baltic States Study Group and third parties. But Bechstedt is also pleased to note that he has not had to confirm a fear he expressed at the time: that there would be many new stamp types, but now he can say that despite the necessary structural changes, Estonian philately remains manageable. Today, only the larger post offices have date or day stamps, the post points do not.

Bechstedt begins with a detailed introduction to each type of stamp, starting with the adapted and redesigned stamps from the Soviet occupation. The former sometimes lost only the inscriptions „CCCP“ and „CCP“, sometimes with, sometimes without the Soviet star, sometimes also the place name in Cyrillic. The latter were given a new look, with only the date line remaining. One stamp from Tallinn even remained unchanged, as the Soviets stamped international mail with „Tallinn Estonia“ in Latin script.

In the following years, the Estonian postal service used steel stamps. Although they were more expensive than rubber stamps, they lasted longer and produced a better postmark. Rubber stamps were only used as a temporary measure, although some of them proved to be quite durable. Hand-rolled stamps were made of steel, as were machine stamps for a long time. More recently, the use of laser printers has become increasingly popular. Bechstedt has classified eleven steel stamps, five rubber stamps, two hand-rolled stamps and 13 machine stamps.

He then documents the use of cancels with different letters in each post office in extensive tables. The tables are clearly laid out and designed so that anyone who has read the introduction can easily work with them. English translations of entire chapters and other English summaries ensure that the language barrier is not a problem. Readers are sure to discover stamps that have not yet been recorded – a handbook like this thrives on the progress of philatelic research.

In view of the low volume of mail in Estonia, however, you have to look hard to find letters with postage stamps at all.

Fig.: The author and his work during MARE BCALTICUM 2024, when the book was published in a new edition. Photo: Friedhelm Doell

A letter from Livonia to German East Africa

Olav Petri, Zeist (NL) and Thomas Löbbering, Holzappel (D)

An envelope from our collection area in a distant African country has been waiting to be examined for some time. It was addressed to German East Africa in 1912, later known as the British League of Nations Mandate of Tanganyika, then a United Nations Trust Territory and, since December 1961, the now United Republic of Tanzania.

Who writes to whom?

Why is a lady from Wenden (Livonia) writing to Else Morstatt, née Baroness von Campenhausen, in Amani (German East Africa)?

At first glance, the envelope does not appear to be a Baltic postal item, but rather a Russian one. However, the stamp dated December 8, 1912, according to the Julian calendar (December 21 according to the Gregorian calendar), a railway postmark from the route from St. Petersburg to Riga[1], points to the Baltic States. The sender's handwritten address "ins Ausland" (to abroad) is the only information on the envelope, written in Russian. The rest of the address is in German, including the additional note "via Berlin". On the back of the envelope is the sender's address "Wenden".

Apart from the railway postmark mentioned above, there are no postal markings on the envelope. The letter must therefore have arrived in Amani, near the port of Tanga, at the beginning of 1913, presumably on board a ship of the German East Africa Line, better known as the Woermann Line. Amani was home to the German colony's 'Biological Agricultural Institute', then one of the world's leading centres of botanical research, where the German entomologist (insect expert) Dr Hermann Morstatt, Else's husband, was working on plant pests.

Family, philatelic and world history

Both the sender's name and the address include the surname "von Campenhausen", a German-Baltic noble family which, since the 18th and 19th centuries, has included both the Swedish title "Freiherr" (literally 'free knight', a title of honour) and the Russian title "Baron" in its name. Philatelists know the name from the time of the stamps of the county of Wenden, where Heinrich Eduard von Campenhausen (1846–1906) was, among other things, district administrator and district postmaster. In the 1890s he arranged for the reprinting and reproduction of the stamps of the county of Wenden.

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[1] *V*on Hofmann, Harry 2014: *LETTLAND 1625–1915/18*; *Das Postwesen auf dem Territorium der späteren Republik Lettland … (LATVIA 1625–1915/18; The Postal System in the territory of the later Latvian Republic …) Vol. I*. Hamburg. p. 213: stamp BP-10/02 (1913–1916), Wenden (Cēsis) station.

The Campenhausen family owned the Ungurmuiža manor near Ventspils from 1728 to 1939. Unfortunately, I was unable to find any personal information about the sender, “M.” von Campenhausen. Judging by the handwriting, she was probably an older woman, perhaps the addressee's mother or aunt. The addressee, Else Morstatt, née von Campenhausen (1880 to after 1930, exact year of death unknown), was in any case the daughter of the above-mentioned Heinrich Eduard von Campenhausen.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Russia was in a state of ferment. Following military defeats in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 and “Bloody Sunday” in St Petersburg in January 1905, social unrest broke out in the Baltic provinces of the Russian Empire, where tensions between landowners and landless peasants came to a head.

Else's father, Heinrich Eduard von Campenhausen, also fell victim to this first Russian revolution of the 20th century. He was assassinated by a servant in 1906. Under the name Elsa von Campen, Else later wrote a literary account of the events of 1908 in the story *“As well as we forgive our debtors. A Story from the Time of the Latvian Revolution”.*

Else's first marriage was to Eduard von Brümmer of Riga in 1898. The marriage failed and they divorced in 1905.

In 1912, she entered a second marriage with the German entomologist Dr Hermann Morstatt (1877–1958) of Berlin.

Immediately after their marriage, the couple moved to Amani in German East Africa, where Hermann had been working at the Tanga Biological-Agricultural Institute since 1909. The outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 was to change their lives forever.

Hermann Morstatt was drafted into the German colonial forces under their still well-known commander, Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck (1870–1964). As a non-commissioned officer, he took part in the Battle of Tanga in November 1914, in which the German colonial troops defeated a much larger British Indian force, thus securing the existence of the German colony of East Africa for the duration of the war.

Hermann was captured by the British in 1917 and spent the next two years in Egypt. Else, a German civilian, was also taken into British custody and survived internment in a camp in British India (now Bangladesh).

After the war, the couple settled in Berlin in 1920. Hermann became a professor of entomology and spent the rest of his life as head of the library at the Reich Institute of Biology in Berlin-Dahlem. Else published books for children and young adults about Africa in an “old-fashioned colonial style”. Her digitally traceable life path ends in Berlin at the end of the 1930s.

Fig. 1: Railway postal letter from Wenden to Amani, Russia Michel number 87, 10 kopecks
Fig. 2: Railway postal letter from Wenden to Amani (back)
Fig. 3: Orellen manor (Ungurmuiž) (Fig. Wikipedia)
Fig. 4: Tanga Institute of Biological Agriculture, Source: kolonialmarken.de
Fig. 5: Battle of Tanga (Fig. Wikipedia)
Fig. 6: One of the books by Else Morstatt (published 1925), Source: booklooker.de

Two Santīmi for a Donation Appeal

Thomas Löbbering, Holzappel (D)

A simple local printed matter may contain more than initially thought, as was the case with the one that prompted this article. The “Church Council of the Holy Trinity Church in Libau” addressed it as a “Drukas lieta.”, as a printed matter, to “Herrn Ludvig Martens Ludvigstr. 23” in “LIEPAJA.” Duly stamped with 2 santīmi (postal rate period 01.02.1925–20.12.1931), Michel no. 117 I / Harry von Hofmann (HvH) 117 II ns B[1], i.e. watermark 5Y normal vertical, it went on its short postal route on 17 IX 28, cancelled with the stamp LIEPAJA LATVIJA *** L, HvH 0800.19[2]. From a philatelic point of view, there's nothing to get excited about at first glance, if it weren't for the handwritten addition in red “atp. sutitajam”, which roughly translates as “return to client” or, in postal terms, “return to sender”.

A glance at the envelope reveals two things: the appeal “A special donation for our church” and a smaller envelope addressed to the sender of the printed matter, the Church Council. This is hand-stamped in purple with “No.... Contents... Ls”, with the handwritten addition “1878/17”.

Mr Martens was listed as parishioner number 17 in the baptismal register for the year of his birth, 1878. Unfortunately, he did not donate because the space for the amount in lats was left blank, and the envelope was unused. Why didn't Mr Martens make a donation? Did the church council make a second attempt? We don't know.

The imprint “Buch- und Steindruckerei Gottl. D. Meyer, Libau.” on the appeal for a one-off special “Donation for our Church” is sure to attract the attention of Latvian collectors. Almost all Latvia's stamps from 1918 and 1919, starting with Michel numbers 1 to 31, were printed here before the State Printing House in Riga took over. However, it is not the Gottlieb D. Meyer printing works that is of interest here, but rather the appeal for donations itself and the fate of the parish. In the absence of state church taxes, lucrative business ventures, loanable property or wealthy patrons, the German congregation of the Trinity Church was apparently not only heavily indebted, but almost entirely dependent on donations from its parishioners.

[1] *Von Hofmann, Harry 2000: LATVIA The stamps in Lat currency 1923–1940.* Hamburg. p. 54.

[2] The same 1999: *LATVIA The postmarks and post offices 1918–1940*; Hamburg. p. 139.

It had come to this situation as a result of the First World War. Designed by the Königsberg architect Johann Christoph Dorn (1671–1742) and built between 1742 and 1758, it was financed by the German merchant community of Libau in deliberate competition with the Trinity Church of the German community in the capital and residence of the Duchy of Courland, Mitau. It is still one of the largest, most beautiful and opulent baroque and rococo churches in Latvia. The church's organ is still the largest mechanical Baroque organ in the world. It is almost a miracle that both the building and the parish survived the turbulent times of the two World Wars and the Soviet Union.

Since most of the Baltic German parishioners left in 1939/40, the church has been used by the Latvian community, although services in German continue to be held here once a month. Since 2007, Liepāja's Holy Trinity Church has served as the seat of the Evangelical Lutheran Bishop of Kurzeme and Zemgale.

It is probably less well known that Liepāja's Holy Trinity Church has also played an important role in modern Finnish history. It was in this church that the soldiers of the Royal Prussian 27th Jäger Battalion[3] swore an oath of allegiance to the independent state of Finland on February 13, 1918, before they transferred with their new service as the "Finnish Hunters"[4] on February 18 and 25 of that year, and as the core of the Finnish army, they played a decisive role in the Finnish Civil War and War of Independence.

The unit was made up of Finnish volunteers who had been set up and trained in the Holstein Camp Lockstedt, between Kellinghusen and Itzehoe, from 1915 onwards and then deployed in Courland on the Eastern Front.

Even today, infantry soldiers in Finland are called Jääkäri (= hunters), and the municipality of Hohenlockstedt organises the Finnentag (Finnish Day) once a year in February in memory of its Finnish hunters[5].

Fig. 1: Envelope front side
Fig. 2: Appeal for donation
Fig. 3: Inserted envelope
Fig. 4: Trinity Church, condition until 2022
Fig. 5: Trinity Church today
Fig. 6: Organ of the Trinity Church
Fig. 7: Coat of arms of the Royal Prussian Jäger Battalion No. 27
Fig. 8: The flag of the Finnish Hunters
Fig. 9: The Finnish Hunters in Vaasa, February 1918
Fig. 10: The Hoegerhaus 1920, the soldiers' home of the Finnish Hunters
Fig. 11: Stamp of Camp Lockstedt (Lockstedter Lager)

Image credits: Fig. 4 to 10 Wikipedia

[3] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/27th_J%C3%A4ger_Battalion_(Finland)

[4] https://wiki.genealogy.net/Jäg.B_27B_27

[5] You can find a film about such a Finnentag that is well worth watching at https://www.steinburger-geschichte.de/themen/preussische-herrschaft/lockstedter-lager.

Torpedo boats in Libau – the story behind the story

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

Sometimes an article comes about bit by bit, each time a collector comes across something new on a subject. You have questions, you look for answers and suddenly you have a 'story'. In this case, the starting point is a postcard from the First World War. It shows, among other things, German **torpedo boats in Libau**.

The photograph is one of a series of war images printed in Hamburg. The 'court photographer Kühlewind' produced hundreds of such postcards with references to current war events. Another postcard in the series, this time in colour, shows a **naval battle off Riga**, including torpedo boats in action. Finally, a third postcard, printed in Libau by a local printer, shows **Libau municipal money**.

Questions arise: German warships in Libau? What are torpedo boats? What are they doing there? Do we know which ones they were? Did torpedo boats have their own field post office? What naval battle off Riga is shown on the colour postcard? Why was there municipal money in Libau?

Torpedo Boats

For a long time, torpedo boats were the showpieces of the Imperial German Navy. Operating in close coordination with the battleships, they were used to break out from behind the line of their own battleships at high speed and pounce on the enemy ships. Under the cover of their own ships, they could then fire their torpedoes at the enemy ships. By the time the enemy was aware of the attack, they would either be in retreat, in battle formation, or have already been hit.

The torpedo boats themselves were small and often had a hard time in the North Sea, especially when travelling at full speed, when they almost looked like submarines. Their crews were considered part of an elite force.

To win the support of the German people for naval policy, a half-flotilla was even sent up the Rhine to inspire the 'landlubbers' with lots of flags and ceremonies. Postcards were circulated showing torpedo boats passing the famous Lorelei rock. By 1900, Rhine romanticism and nationalism were closely intertwined. Germany was evolving from a defensive to an offensive naval power.

Ships in Libau

The ice-free commercial and naval port of Libau fell into German hands on May 7, 1915, during World War I and, despite the partial destruction of the naval port, continued to play

an important role in the struggle for military supremacy in the Baltic Sea and the Baltic region. The motif of "torpedo boats in Libau" was therefore a welcome subject for propaganda to demonstrate German victories over the Russian Baltic Fleet.

Of course, there are no large German ships on the postcard. The Russians were not to know which large German ships were stationed in the Baltic.

In 1915, the German Navy had two types of torpedo boats in service in the Baltic Sea, one slightly smaller and one slightly larger. The boats had no names, just the letters S or V followed by a number. S and V stood for the shipyards where the boats were built, Schichau in Elbing and Vulkan in Stettin. The internet reports that "half-flotilla 1"[1] was transferred to Libau in 1915. The picture postcards in Figs. 2a and 2b show four smaller torpedo boats and one larger type in the commercial port of Libau.

Field Post

The field postcard with the torpedo boats in Fig. 2b was written on November 1, 1916, by a soldier of transport convoy 323, who, as a member of the 47th Reserve Division, stated "Russia" and "East" as the place of origin, Fig. 3. The card, addressed to Rixheim in Upper Alsace, was censored in Mühlhausen in Alsace. Unfortunately, the card was not sent by a member of the crew of one of the torpedo boats.

After the literature - Harry von Hofmann's books are a treasure trove! – warships sent mail via naval post offices **or** field post offices during the war. Large ships often had their name on the stamp. What kind of postmarks did crew members of the torpedo boats use for their field post?

The lucky purchase of a Libau 1915 Notgeld postcard provided the answer to this question (picture page Fig. 8). The card, dated 8 II 16, does indeed bear a naval ship's cancels with the number 185 (address page Fig. 4). The sender reports that he was "Ob.-Mt."[2] on V 186. This vessel belonged to the 1st Torpedo Boat Flotilla and is shown on the postcard in Fig. 2b. V 186 was one of the larger torpedo boats.

Fake News: The naval battle of Rīga

Fig. 5 – an attractive picture postcard in bright colours – shows various German and Russian warships in battle against a backdrop of the old town of Riga. Are these German

[1] During the First World War, a German torpedo boat flotilla consisted of two „half-flotillas" with five boats each, plus the boat of the flotilla leader.

[2] „Ob-Mt." = „Obermaat" was and is a non-commissioned officer without pertepee rank in German navies (Petty officer, second class, Seargent oder Staff Sergeant in Anglophone armed forces) between „Maat" (mate) and „Bootsmann" (boatswain). In the army, it corresponds to the rank of „Stabsunteroffizier" (Sergeant, Staff Sergeant).

torpedo boats? According to the accompanying text, the picture shows 'Russian warships repelling a German attack near Riga'. It seems that Riga is a kind of Venice by the sea, which could be approached by warships from the Baltic Sea. The ships on the Daugava are flying the St Andrew's flag and are therefore clearly identifiable as Russian vessels.

The turret in the foreground may belong to the Russian battleship "**Slava**". Beautifully rendered are the black torpedo boats, moving at full speed towards the enemy, very similar to German torpedo boats. The artist obviously knew this type of boat very well. The biplanes in the air are seaplanes used by the Germans and Russians for reconnaissance.

One could almost assume that this is a Russian postcard depicting the heroic defence of the Baltic Fleet against the German invaders. However, the card was produced for the German public. It emphasises how fiercely the Russians resisted, thus exaggerating the supposed victory of the German High Seas Fleet. The naval battle depicted, however, is the product of the artist's imagination and has nothing to do with reality – **fake news** in the service of propaganda, interchangeable and, sadly, still relevant.

The facts

In 1904–05, Russia had lost four of its five battleships in the Baltic Fleet in the war against Japan. The "Slava" had escaped this fate because it was still under construction at the time and not yet operational. As the last remaining battleship of the Baltic Fleet in the Baltic Sea, she took part in the unsuccessful Russian defensive action against parts of the German High Seas Fleet in the Gulf of Riga in August 1915, but never on the Daugava off Rīga[3]. With a draught of eight metres, it would not have been suitable for river navigation anyway. So, the "**Battle of Riga**" never took place.

Libau municipal money

Without money, the economy grinds to a halt. This is also true in war. With the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, most of the warring nations, including Germany and Russia, abandoned the gold standard. As a result, gold and silver coins were the first to disappear from circulation, quickly followed by coins made of copper and other alloys.

To a lesser extent, the population hoarded the coins as a nest egg; to a greater extent, the states themselves confiscated the coins to melt them down for the production of ammunition and other war materials.

[3] The crew of the „Slava" scuttled their ship themselves on October 17, 1917, beaching it in the Väinameri sea (a strait and sub-bay of the Baltic sea, located between the West Estonian Archipelago und the Estonian mainland) to delay the capture of the Estonian islands in the Baltic Sea by German landing troops.

In 1915, in response to the crisis, the city authorities in Libau also issued several series of so-called municipal money in denominations ranging from one kopeck to five rubles. The local Istomin printing house initially printed the banknotes in Russian only, but after the city was occupied by German troops in mid-1915, they were printed in both Russian and German. The various series of cash office vouchers were only valid for a few months at a time, for example the series issued on October 20, 1915, was only valid until January 1, 1916.

The German administration in the area of responsibility of the Commander-in-Chief East (Ober. Ost) had a great interest in creating a unified economic and currency area as quickly as possible, one that was independent of Russia and the Russian rouble. As early as 1915, Reichskassenscheine (imperial treasury notes) were issued in marks and pfennigs, initially used mainly by the German occupying forces, but increasingly by the local population as the war progressed. For the sake of simplicity – and to benefit the German war chest – the exchange rate from rouble to Ober Ost mark was set at one to one. In 1916, iron coins were minted in denominations of 1, 2 and 3 kopecks.

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Fig. 1: Torpedo boat S 115 (source: Wikipedia)
Fig. 2a: Torpedo boats in Libau after the city was captured by German troops on May 7, 1915
Fig. 2b: Torpedo boat (semi) flotilla 1 in Libau on a field postcard from 1916 (picture side)
Fig. 3: Field postcard Libau – Rixheim 1916 (address side)
Fig. 4: Field postcard Imperial German Navy Ship Post № 185 8 II 16
Fig. 5: The naval battle off Rīga
Fig. 6: Imperial Russian ship of the line 'Slava' off Kronstadt (source: Wikipedia)
Fig. 7: Russian coins in circulation until 1914 (source: Löbbering)
Fig. 8: Municipal currency Libau 1915 (picture side of the field postcard in Fig. 4)
Fig. 10: ditto, reverse

Rules for processing postal items with „postage paid“ stamps

Bernhard Fels, Soest (D)

Until recently, it was possible in Lithuania to hand in postal items and pay the postage in cash directly at a post office counter. These items, known as ’postage prepaid in cash’ by philatelists, are collected by collectors.

The postal items received a frame stamp with the text 'MOKESTIS SUMOKĖTAS / TAXE PERÇUE' (in Lithuanian and French “postage paid”), indicating that the fee for the item was paid in cash.

The date stamp was also struck. The advantage for stamp collectors was, that in most cases a clean and clear impression was obtained.

From September 1, 2020, it is no longer possible to affix date stamps to postal items (letters and postcards) that have been paid for in cash at a post office counter. Letters and postcards will only receive a date stamp if they are franked with stamps. It is not yet clear whether this also applies to cash-franked registered letters, or whether these will continue to receive a day stamp for documentation purposes.

It is impossible to determine the date of postage on such mailings, unless you have a barcode reader, which is unlikely. As a result of this instruction, a very popular collection area for Lithuania has been closed!

Fig. 1: Postage paid letters from Lithuania with a day stamp were possible until August 31, 2020.
Fig. 2: From September 1, 2020, the day stamping has been dropped. The letter is not a registered letter, as assumed by Deutsche Post, but has the new barcode label from Lithuanian Post.

Read for you: From the philatelic collection of the Klaipeda Sea Museum

Martin Bechstedt, Bargteheide (D)

Filatelija*. Lietuvos jūrų muziejaus rinkiniai prabyla. – Philately. The collections of the Lithuanian Sea Museum speak.*

By Daumantas Kiulkys, 2023.
Lithuanian and English.
304 pages.
Around 300 colour illustrations.
Format 20 x 27 cm, soft cover (the book will be published with two different front covers but the same content – see images).

ISBN 978-609-8295-10-8.
Price: 55 euros plus shipping costs.

Order from the Lithuanian Maritime Museum in Klaipėda at the internet address: https://shop.muziejus.lt/collections/muziejaus-knygos/products/lietuvos-juru-muziejaus-rinkiniai-prabyla-filatelija.

A sample chapter can be downloaded free of charge at: https://arge-baltikum.de/Kat-30-en.shtml

Anyone holidaying on the Curonian Spit will pass through Klaipėda, Lithuania's third largest city, known in German as Memel. The city boasts a major attraction: the old city fortress houses a state-of-the-art marine aquarium and maritime museum. Daumantas Kiulkys, one of the museum's employees and a keen philatelist himself, has taken over the museum's extensive postal history collection and, with the help of renowned Lithuanian philatelists, has presented the most beautiful and interesting objects in a large-format book, placing them in the wider context of Lithuanian maritime history.

In the preface, Kiulkys outlines one of his major objectives: “Anyone who has experienced the fascination of stamps from around the world as a child will remember it fondly”. The book presents the most beautiful stamps and covers from the Museum's collection about seafaring, its history and maritime life. It is designed to appeal to visitors to the museum and is explicitly not intended for philatelists only. It begins by explaining what philately is, what it involves, what it offers and what it can achieve. It then goes on to show stamps from all over the world on the theme of the sea and shipping – the technically brilliant images, many of which are presented in oversized format, are a feast for the eyes.

In the following chapters, Kiulkys uses the museum's exhibits to explain the most important events, processes, personalities and ships in Lithuanian maritime history. As the museum is located in Lithuania, its collection is mainly made up of material from the region. This makes the book of interest to collectors from the Baltic States:

Some high-quality covers from different eras can be seen, for example from the time of the emigration to the USA, the postal ship connections across the Curonian Lagoon, the acquisition and loss of the Memel region or the sinking of the 'Wilhelm Gustloff' in 1945. I will show some examples of philatelically interesting covers whose postal routes are described in detail in the accompanying texts.

Fig. 4: Kiulkys explains here exactly why this happened: "Collectors of maritime mail know that the stamps of another country were not cancelled directly on the postal items, but with a postmark containing this word. The Helsinki transit cancel of August 18 was placed next to the stamp. The fact that an arrival postmark was also placed in Pandėlys, Lithuania, makes the cover even more beautiful (the trade price can still be read on the cover)!

Fig. 5: The accompanying text shows that the ship's stamp “Kurisches Haff” (Curonian Lagoon) had been applied to the card as an advertising stamp before it was sent.

Fig. 6: This modern stamp showing the lighthouse and port facilities on the River Dange, with cranes and warehouses, has caused some controversy because the facilities shown on the stamp are not visible in real life.

Fig. 7: What makes this stamp special is that it was cancelled on December 31, 2016, the last day of validity of stamps in Litas currency. Lithuania had already introduced the euro on January 1, 2015.

Each chapter is preceded by a worthwhile introduction in both Lithuanian and English. The illustrated covers, as shown here as examples, are described in detail in both languages, but unfortunately only in chapters 2 and 3 (Ship Mail Parts 1 and 2); in the other chapters there are only brief comments in Lithuanian - translation programmes can help here. The reader is richly compensated for this with brilliant illustrations, often enlarged.

Anyone who, despite the focus on plate errors and tricky varieties, retains a sense of wonder at the beauty of stamp designs will enjoy this book and its technically brilliant images, selected with great expertise.

Fig. 1: Book title

Fig. 2: Alternative book title with company airmail letter from May 1st, 1937, to the USA. Probably to increase the distribution of the book, a second cover picture with an attractive airmail letter from Klaipeda to the USA was chosen for a partial edition of this book with the same content. This picture is intended to arouse the (justified) interest of philatelists.

Fig. 3a: Postcard from the letterbox of the steamer “Cranz”, which connected the towns of Cranzbeek (now in Russia), Schwarzort/Juodcrantė and Klaipėda/Memel on the Curonian Spit. The coloured card shows a picture of the resort of Schwarzort and was postmarked in Memel on June 26, 1908.

Fig. 3b: The frame postmark ‘From the letterbox of the steamer Cranz’ is *very rare (page 88, where the postal route is explained in more detail).*

Fig. 4: The back of a postcard from Estonia via Finland to Pandėlys in Lithuania (page 108). The card was written in Tallinn on August 17, 1930, and probably posted directly on the ship. That is why the stamp was not cancelled, but only the next day in the port of transit, Helsinki, with the ‘PAQUEBOT’ stamp.

Fig. 5: Postcard with sand dunes on the Curonian Spit, Memel August 3, 1939 (page 94). The card is from the German period, five months after the occupation of the Memel region by German troops in March 1939.

Fig. 6: Lithuanian stamp Mi-No. 1110 on the founding of the city of Klaipėda 760 years ago (page 253).

Fig. 7: Philatelic letter from Lithuania from the Klaipėda post office 8, Michel no. 639, motif: Kurenkahn (cf. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurenkahn), (page 153).

Translation Support

Torsten Berndt, Constance (D)

„Computers are stupid" was the headline of the legendary German rock band Spliff, and it hit the nail on the head. With only the ability to distinguish between zero and one, a computer is not really one of the most intelligent creations of technology. In fact, when it starts up, a memory chip must tell it that it is a computer and not just a collection of electronic components soldered to circuit boards. A simple screwdriver, on the other hand, knows what it is for in a world without a memory chip.

For a computer to perform exceptionally well, it needs a lot of help. This is also true of the computers that postal companies use in their sorting centres today. Much of what happens there is fully automated, and in some letter and parcel centres you hardly see a human being working. Unsorted mail goes in the front and sorted mail comes out the back. The machine rattles away in between.

But what if the machine can't read the address, perhaps because the sender's handwriting is not up to standard – teachers call it "dreadful crawl" – or simply contains so much information that the computer doesn't know what to do?

Then it has to be translated into a language that only recognises zeros and ones: the language of digital data. Since Deutsche Post's sorting machines must not only sort mail according to the recipient's location, but also read the street and house number, the traditional coding with red lines at the bottom of the envelope or card is no longer sufficient. In the postmodern age, matrix codes similar to those on today's postage and special stamps are required.

For this reason, mail items delivered by Deutsche Post now have yellow labels to indicate the difficulty the machines have in reading them. In addition to the matrix code, these labels show the address with street and town in clear text, and a numerical code just in case. This enables the machine to sort the item even if, for example, an address label produced abroad (in this case in Lithuania) does not meet Deutsche Post standards. Although the address label also has a barcode, it was created for sorting in Lithuania and was therefore incomprehensible to Deutsche Post's machines.

“In Lithuania, every unregistered item is given a label with a barcode, because in future all postal traffic is to go through the VCL (Vilnius Logistics Centre), a huge new building at Vilnius airport. There are at least two types of labels, each with a barcode. On the unstamped letter shown, it is a large font with the words 'postage paid'. The R labels look different. In the past, Deutsche Post often classified these unregistered items from Lithuania as registered because of the barcode, which was wrong," explains Martin Bechstedt, editor for Lithuania.

Figuratively speaking, the Lithuanian sticker explained in Lithuanian digital language what the machine had to do in Vilnius. In Germany, a yellow sticker was added, the matrix code of which contained a digital instruction manual in German for the German sorting machine.

If you keep all the items with the yellow stickers, you can use them to tell the story of modern postal history. While you are sorting or labelling album pages, you can listen to the unbeatable long grooves of Spliff in the background, analogue or digital.

Fig. 1: Sorting centre at Vilnius Airport (Press photo Lietuvos Paštas)

Fig. 2: The address label on the letter from the SOS Children's Village in Vilnius is designed according to the standards of the Lithuanian postal service. The German sorting machine was unable to process it. Therefore, the item received an additional yellow label with a matrix code and the address in plain text. Despite the barcode, it is not a registered letter!

Baltic philately at its best in Tartu – the MARE BALTICUM 2024

Friedhelm Doell, Aschheim (D)

MARE BALTICUM 2024 - what a wonderful show! What Oliver Hanschmidt (who was on hand almost every minute of the show to deal with problems large and small) and his helpers had organised in Tartu surpassed much of what visitors have seen at competition shows before. Whether it was the sheer number of exhibition frames (over 560) and exhibits (153), the large number of dealers, the musical and other artistic interludes, or the beauty of the medals - almost everything was just right here (apart from a few details that weren't ideal, but those exist everywhere).

All Baltic philatelists were invited to meet and get to know each other in person on Saturday, especially to put faces to familiar names, to hear what others collect and what they specialise in, and to make new contacts in Tartu and beyond - one of the highlights for all participants!

Of the 153 exhibits, 43 (28 per cent) were related to the Baltic region. These 43 exhibits were produced by 36 exhibitors (some were represented with several exhibits). A third of these, namely 12 of the Baltic exhibitors, were members of the Baltic Working Group. With a total of 16 exhibits, they won one Gold, seven Large Vermeil, six Vermeil, one Large Silver and one Silver.

Among them were the two exhibits created by the ArGe Baltikum as a joint project: the magazine BALTIKUM (editor-in-chief Torsten Berndt) and the ArGe website www.arge-baltikum.de (webmaster Friedhelm Doell). Both were awarded (international) Large Vermeil. Together with the books by Martin Bechstedt and Bernhard 'Tony' Fels on the date stamps

of Estonia and Lithuania, they received the highest ratings for Baltic exhibits in the literature class.

The obverse of the medal shows the Old Tartu Stone Bridge and the coat of arms of Tartu, while the reverse shows the logo of the exhibition (designed by our member Olaf Hoffmann) and the stamp of the Old Tartu Observatory.

Fig. 1: 25 Baltic philatelists posed for the photographer (Renate Feustel); at least five others who were in the building at the same time are not in the photo.
Fig. 2: Baltikum certificate
Fig. 3: Medal obverse
Fig. 4: Medal reverse
Fig. 5: Web certificate
Fig. 6: Individualised stamp (photo: Yuki Itabashi)
Fig. 7: All the stamps tried out... (photo: Martin Bechstedt)
Fig. 8: Exhibition postal stationery (photo: Yuki Itabashi)
Fig. 9: "Picture of an exhibition"

Video Conferencing in Philately

Friedhelm Doell, Aschheim (D)

During the coronavirus pandemic, many people started to meet “virtually” in video conferences because physical “live” meetings were not possible. In addition to a computer with a monitor and speakers – for passive participation – you need a microphone and/or a camera to be actively heard and seen or digital images (e.g. photos or scans) of covers and stamps that you want to show. The ArGe Baltikum also set up such video conferences, for the first time in May 2021 (see report in BALTIKUM no. 12/2021 on p. 66).

After more than 40 such videoconferences, sometimes with an announced topic, sometimes “just” with what the participants had to hand and show, an unexpected positive effect has emerged: when it comes to questions about the content of document inscriptions, prints, stamps, etc., such network meetings offer opportunities for feedback that many other forms of exchange do not:

1. The “classic” form of public question and answer, by publication in a magazine with a reply by one or more readers in the next issue, was limited to the answers given; follow-up questions were extremely rare, and if they were, they were usually bilateral between the questioner and the answerer. Readers were usually not informed of the final answers.
2. Asking an expert directly (by letter with a copy of the piece in question, later by e-mail), which was assumed to have a high probability of being answered correctly, sometimes led to a satisfactory answer, but could “miss the mark” if the person knew nothing more about the subject. Again, there was no further publicity with contributions.

3. Personal encounters in the form of a visit or a get-together, e.g. in the context of a general meeting or a joint exhibition stand, also made it possible to take valuable originals, but here too the knowledge of the participants was limited - often there were neither comparative pieces nor further literature to hand.

In videoconferencing, on the other hand, participants usually have their reference materials with them or can bring them in very quickly, and literature with references is available next to the computer. In addition, the 'swarm intelligence' of all participants is 'tapped', in the sense of brainstorming, ideas are considered aloud, rejected, deepened, and one thought leads to the next - all in connection with the possibility of access to comparative pieces, literature, and the knowledge of the group. It may be that a questioner does not even think of explicitly asking a particular person because he does not expect an answer to his question, but in the context of working out an answer in the group as a whole, this can lead to completely different solutions than the questioner had in mind.

Two examples may illustrate this:

1. The following cover is shown and the meaning of the blue box stamp 'saatetud' (Estonian for 'sent') is explained. The back shows a 'normal' sender's address, the destination address is a PO box.

The discussion leads to the verification of the sender's address on Google Maps during the video chat.

Maps shows “(uus) Tallinna vangla”, which means “(new) Tallinn prison”. This makes it clear that the letter is part of the prison mail, presumably from a prisoner, and has a postmark to prove the date of posting.

Another cover shows the address of the former Tallinn Prison (right in Tallinn), thus explaining the postmark of the same design affixed there.

It was only during the video chat that the idea of checking the address was born, and the Estonian language skills of one of the people involved made it possible to quickly establish the circumstances.

2. The following cover is shown in an internet forum and the question is asked why it does not have the usual value imprint and has a date long before the first stamp after Latvia regained independence (which was issued in October 1991).

A catalogue owner among the participants discovers after a quick browse that it is the postal stationery Michel No. U2, which was issued on December 24, 1990. The first-day postmark reads "Rīgas Galvenais pasts" - "Main Post Office Rīga". The envelope was sold for 80 kopecks, the postmark was valid for the domestic rate of 5 kopecks (which was also

used for postage to Estonia, Lithuania and the USSR). Without the additional fee, the postmark was only valid until December 31, 1990, when the domestic fee rose to 15 kopecks.

The video chat made it possible to access a catalogue in the hands of a participant, while the questioner didn't know that this person owned a Michel postal stationery catalogue with a section on Latvia.

The list could go on and on. The monthly video chats are now a huge benefit to the participants, and it would be unthinkable to go back to a time without these video get-togethers. It makes you wonder how collaboration ever worked before. Perhaps you would like to give it a try - a “jour fixe” on the first Saturday of every month could enrich your Baltic philately hobby enormously!

Fig. 1 (top): Sender (name obscured)
Fig. 2: Front of the cover
Fig. 3: Google Maps image excerpt
Fig. 4: A postal stationery cover discussed in the video meeting

Well Frequented Information Stand

Torsten Berndt, Constance (D)

Ulm has established itself in the trade fair calendar. After this year's International Stamp Fair, it is certainly true to say that. All three days were well attended, and even on Friday, both non-profit and commercial exhibitors were satisfied. Only the basic concept caused one or two visitors to grumble, as publishers, specialised dealers and auctioneers continue to crowd into Hall 1, while the working groups, the associations, the Hamburg Philatelic Library, the youth area and the exhibition space are relegated to Hall 2. Not every visitor realises that there is also something to experience next door, as the author discovered. ‘Behind the toilets’ is what one visitor called the location, without meaning it disrespectfully.

As already reported in the editorial, the Baltic Working Group once again achieved good results in the competition. BALTIKUM and our website www.arge-baltikum.de won gold in the competition of the working groups organised by the BDPh. With the third place in the Harald Rauhut literature competition for our website we can even claim a prize money of one hundred euros for the association's coffers. With these results we have probably reached a kind of glass ceiling. Perhaps we will get close to the Large Gold one day, but the higher ranks are occupied by working groups that are primarily dedicated to the 19th century or, like the Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Sammler deutscher Kolonial-Postwertzeichen (Working Group of Collectors of German Colonial Postage Stamps), cultivate an area that is highly specialised per se.

But never mind! We design BALTIKUM and the website for our members and Baltic collectors all over the world, not for jurors! We can't complain about a lack of interest, so we're on the right track. This also applies to our information stand at the fair, which was well frequented on all days.

Some visitors had to accept some bad news, such as the collector who presented a cover from the Second World War, to which Thomas Löbbering could only say: "This can't be genuine"' But anyone who comes to a trade fair knows that the information they receive will be neutral and professional, so they don't come with exaggerated expectations. The focus is on professional exchange, with visitors and with fellow collectors in other working groups. As in previous years, everyone works very well together.

Once again the stand was manned by Friedhelm Doell, Reinhard Heinrich, Olaf Hoffmann, Thomas Löbbering and the author. Next year, Philatelia Munich is on the calendar for March 1st and 2nd. We are registered and practically part of the inventory, as one of the organisers said with a touch of irony. We have also heard that Ulm has been secured for the next few years. The last weekend in October is scheduled for October 23-25 in 2025.

Fig. 1: At the trade fair stand
Fig. 2: Stamp art at the ArGe Medizintechnik (Medical Technology working Group) stand (Photos: Friedhelm Doell)

Plenty of Sources

Torsten Berndt, Constance (D)

„Bücherhalle" („Hall of Books“) – Hamburg's district libraries have a name that is not so familiar elsewhere. Readers can reach the nearest library almost anywhere in the city on foot, or at least within a few minutes by bike. There are also large academic libraries, such as the library of the relatively young University of Hamburg, which also functions as the state library.

A little younger than the alma mater is a library that, after 50 years, is already one of the leading libraries in Europe. The Philatelic Library now has more than 21,250 volumes, more than 1,000 catalogues and more than 7,000 journals and newsletters from working groups, as well as 70,000 specialist articles that can be searched via the catalogue. With a total of almost 30,000 titles, it does not quite match the number of media held by the Philatelic Library in Munich, but the two are not comparable due to their sponsorship. In Hamburg, the library is run by a purely private organisation which, thanks to its non-profit status, is allowed to issue tax-deductible donation receipts but does not receive any tax money itself. The Munich library, on the other hand, is owned by the city and therefore has opportunities that are not available to any private initiative. The collections of the

libraries in Frankfurt am Main, Wuppertal and Zeitz, which were also founded on private initiative, are considerably larger than those in Hamburg.

Reading Room

In the spacious rooms, all the volumes are neatly arranged on the shelves. Unless they are on loan, visitors to the reading room can search for new specialist information in the publications, so they don't have to wait for the librarian to get interesting literature from a magazine. Current national and international journals are also available. In addition to local and inter-library loans, photocopies and scans can be made both on site and by mail order.

The librarian Axel Faust and many volunteers from the supporting organisation are available to help and advise readers. Not only do they have philatelic knowledge in various fields, but they also know many other philatelists who can help in other areas. Only general questions, such as the exact appearance of the 1653 Paris stamps, must remain unanswered in the Philatelic Library, as elsewhere.

Catalogue search

“The library's great strength lies in its extensive and easily accessible collections, which also enable detailed background research in specialised areas. The library is systematically structured and the staff are very competent and dedicated,” says our deputy chairman Martin Bechstedt, who has volunteered in the library in the past. Of course, there is no focus on the Baltic States. But that would not be the purpose of such an institution.

The range of literature naturally extends from Albania to India and Cyprus (”Zypern" in German) to Åland - the latter, as is well known, comes after the ‘Z’ in the Scandinavian alphabet. Specialists in all fields will find just as much to interest them as collectors of local history; historical maps of postal routes or postal control areas can be found alongside postage books, postal regulations and other official works. Researchers will find a wealth of resources. In addition, there are numerous monographs and handbooks, a large collection of newsletters from the Working Groups and, of course, the catalogues which are the basis of all philatelic work. The Philatelic Library also supports beginners with general educational literature, so it is by no means just for old hands.

A visit to the Philatelic Library is therefore worthwhile for everyone. Even if it only has Hamburg in its name and not the name of the Hamburg libraries, it is a real book hall. An all-round philatelic one.

Borrowing

But how does the borrowing process work in a specialised library? As we all know, borrowing books from a public library is child's play. You walk through the rows of shelves, look here, look there, maybe flick through a volume or two and then take a few books home to read in peace. Books that are rarely borrowed may be kept in the stacks, where only the librarians have access, due to lack of space. It can sometimes take a while to get books if the stacks are in a building far from the public library.

In a specialised library, it is also possible to browse the reference collection - visitors to the Philatelic Library Hamburg often do this successfully, as even experts are sometimes surprised to find important information in works far removed from their own horizons. As a rule, however, research is carried out in the catalogue, and in many cases this is necessary, as most specialist libraries have large stacks and hardly any reference collections. In the pre-digital age, searching was quite time-consuming if you had to go through the subject index, for example, and have lots of ideas about what terms might be used to find materials. Nowadays, you let the computer do the searching, save the results, compare them and then select the books or journals you want to look at in more detail.

Previous knowledge plays an important role in the search. If you are at the beginning of your research, you will often have to make do with rather general keywords. This usually means that you get a lot of results, most of which have little or nothing to do with what you are looking for. The more familiar you are with the subject, the easier it is to narrow down your search. Instead of one or two dozen pages of results, you will get four or five, maybe even less. This makes the selection easier.

However, it is advisable not to put too much trust in the computer. Unlike humans, it works purely mathematically and therefore logically. This leads, for example, to different search results if you enter “Posthornsatz” (“Posthorn set”) and “Posthornserie” (“Posthorn series”), even though the same issue is meant. If you search in the card index, you are more likely to find both keywords more quickly than digitally, simply because you are slowly approaching the keyword by scrolling backwards and forwards. On the computer, you have to type everything in one by one, which means doing mental work that cannot be represented mathematically. This is especially true for country names, which often appear in the country's spelling.

Once you have done this, searching the catalogue is as easy as selecting books to borrow from a public library. On the website of the Philatelic Library, www.philatelistische-bibliothek.de, click on “Katalog” (Catalogue) and then on “Online” in the window that opens. The general information that now appears includes the now obligatory reference to cookies and technical information about supported browsers. You can usually ignore these, but the test showed that everything works just as well with Safari, Apple's browser, as with Firefox and Microsoft Edge. The screenshots were taken using Firefox on an iMac.

If you get a list of results like the one in Figure 2, click “Katalog” again at the top left and enter the keyword(s) in the search box that opens. The same rules apply as for a general search on the Internet, e.g. using DuckDuckGo or Google. In a new window, you will see a list of all the books registered for your search. As already mentioned, this can be done on several pages. When you click on a book, a window opens with all the necessary information (in German) about it, and you can decide whether you want to borrow it. Everything is very easy, almost like in a public library.

When you get there, simply take the books you have chosen with you. Hamburgers can do that. And they are not the only ones. Philatelists from Holstein, Lauenburg and the north of Lower Saxony can also reach the Philatelic Library in no time at all. If, on the other hand, you don't live in the greater Hamburg area and have to spend two, three or more hours travelling to and from the library, you should check whether you have enough time and whether the travel costs are manageable.

Interlending

Fortunately, there has long been an alternative - interlending. The Philatelic Library only sends literature on request by post. After all, philately is the study of postal history. The books are therefore sent by Deutsche Post (DHL) from Hamburg to the borrower and back.

However, the Philatelic Library is not connected to the inter-library loan system of public and university libraries. Some people may remember this from their student days, perhaps even from their school days: the librarians would obtain a book that was not available locally from another library. However, philatelists do not have to go to their local public or academic library to obtain a book from the Philatelic Library. To borrow books from the Philatelic Library, you need a library card.

All you have to do is fill in a form on your computer, print it out, sign it and send it to Hamburg along with a photocopy of your id card or passport. It's not rocket science. The form can be found on www.philatelistische-bibliothek.de under the “Ausleihe” (“Borrowing”) tab in the “Beantragung eines Leserausweises” (“Apply for a reader card”) box. The form is quick to fill in, but the most time-consuming but necessary step is probably the photocopy of your ID card – not everyone has a printer that can scan and photocopy. However, we can already reveal that this is the only form that will be used – there is no room for bureaucracy in the Philatelic Library. If you don't have a computer at home, you can also apply for a reader's card informally.

Borrowing is then informal. By e-mail, telephone or letter, you simply ask the library to send you the book whose shelfmark you have found in the catalogue search. There is neither a form nor any other rules, only the librarian Axel Faust or the volunteers must be

able to identify the work you are looking for without any doubt – “the book with the stamp on the title, you know” is probably not quite sufficient as a description ...

The website states that it is not possible to give thematic advice. This is understandable, given the huge number of volumes available, and the number of philatelic topics that can be presented is probably similarly large. In practice, however, the staff of the Philatelic Library are always ready to help and assist the reader, whether on general questions about libraries - not everyone went to university and has been familiar with academic libraries since their student days at the latest – or on philatelic matters. The expertise is immense, and the Philatelic Library can easily be compared to a working group, with the only difference that the active members are not dedicated to individual classical or thematic collections, but to literature.

A few days after the order was placed, the courier rang. This should be the norm. Unfortunately, with the way the postal system works these days, it can happen that the bell is silent and a notification card is left in your letterbox instead. Collecting the parcel at the post office or parcel station is then unavoidable.

The package includes a return label. This not only makes things easier when the three-week rental period is up. It also ensures that the package is insured. All the reader has to do is make sure that the packaging is suitable. Ideally, you should use the same box that you received the book in, if it has survived the first postage without damage. Thanks to the returns label, you don't need any change to send the item. Only the first or second trip to the post office is necessary, unless the parcel carrier rings the doorbell and takes the parcel for immediate delivery.

Finally, there is an invoice in the parcel. Of course, interlending involves costs that cannot be borne by the Philatelic Library's non-profit organisation alone. Its members only must pay for the postage, which usually accounts for the lion's share of the invoice. However, thanks to the return label, these costs are lower than if you were to send the items yourself. Non-members also pay two euros per volume borrowed - a maximum of twelve can be borrowed at any one time. Discounts are available for young collectors and members of associations that have joined the sponsoring organisation.

So the costs are manageable and interlibrary loan itself is a breeze. The only thing that is easier is visiting the library. But not everyone is lucky enough to live in Hamburg or the surrounding area. In fact, one of the great Baltic researchers found a second home in the Hanseatic city. Harry von Hofmann not only wrote his name in the annals of Baltic philately, but also in the history book of the Philatelic Library. From 1974 to 1980, and again from 1984 to 1987, he chaired the supporting organisation, in which many other distinguished philatelists were involved. Inge Riese, Gertraud Lange, Hilde Ramm, Sabine and Hans-Joachim Schwanke, Jutta and Dieter Fullrich, Professor Rüdiger Martienß and Martin Breuer are just a few examples.

Unfortunately, the existence of the Philatelic Library is currently under threat. In particular, the cost of renting premises has exploded and now exceeds income. Even insolvency of the Supporting Association cannot be ruled out, as its reserves will be exhausted in the foreseeable future. The Philatelic Library is therefore urgently seeking further members of the Supporting Association and sponsors. The institution receives no public funding; everything that has been created is the result of private initiative. It would be a pity if Hamburg were to lose its philatelic library just for the sake of money.

How to find it: Map: The Philatelic Library is located at Basedowstrasse 12, 20537 Hamburg. It is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 14.00 to 18.00. Visits are also possible by appointment (tel. +49 40 2512340; auskunft@philatelistische-bibliothek.de). Basedowstrasse is close to the city centre on the Bille, Hamburg's third river after the Alster and Elbe. Several city buses stop at the Grüne Brücke bus stop, and the S-Bahn station Rothenburgsort is a five-to-ten-minute walk away. If you are travelling by car, it is easy to find a parking space in the business park.

Fig. 1: The library from the outside (Image: Google Street View)
Fig. 2: If you enter "Handbuch Estland" ("Handbook Estonia") in the search mask, this list of results appears.
Fig. 3: Double-click on the desired title to open a window with detailed information.
Fig. 4: The form for applying for a library card is clearly laid out and requires only a few details.
Fig. 5: The Philatelic Library stocks a large number of Harry von Hofmann's books.

Transparency notice: The author is a member of the supporting organisations of the philatelic libraries in Hamburg and Wuppertal.

Annual General Meeting 2025

Torsten Berndt, Constance (D)

Our Annual General Meeting will take place on the long weekend of May 23-25, 2025 at the Sportschule Hennef. Unlike previous years, you will receive the invitation at the end of the year. The reason for this is simple: at the turn of the year, I will move from Constance to Germering – you will find the address and phone number on the last page. I would therefore like to take care of everything that can be done in advance.

Board elections are scheduled for 2025. The current board is standing again. Martin Bechstedt, our Vice President, Michael Haslau, our Treasurer, and Friedhelm Doell, our Webmaster and Corporate Designer, have kindly agreed to stand for another term. I too would be delighted to continue working with this tried and tested team. This also applies to the production of BALTIKUM. All three Special Editors, Thomas Löbbering for Estonia, Ruud van Wijnen for Latvia and Martin Bechstedt for Lithuania, have agreed to stay on board. Although the Special Editors are not elected at the General Assembly, I can say that the members of our association appreciate their varied and excellent philatelic work. It is mainly thanks to their efforts that BALTIKUM has received such excellent reviews at recent exhibitions in Estonia and Germany.

Auditors are not due to be elected until the 2026 Annual General Meeting. Thomas Löbbering has already agreed to stand for re-election. Ruud van Wijnen would like to hand over to someone younger. He believes that „after 2 or 3 years a fresh pair of eyes needs to look at the books“, as he noted. The Board was able to interest Olaf Hoffmann in the position of additional auditor. As a freelancer of many years' standings, he is well qualified for the job. He is well known to members as the designer of our posters, which can be seen in the exhibition frames at trade fairs, and of the signet and stamp of MARE BALTICUM 2024 in Tartu.

With these personal names, the board of directors is of course only making an offer to the members. Any member is free to stand for any of the positions at any time. Please feel free to share your ideas with the Board - any member of the Board is always happy to receive suggestions. As we have deliberately limited ourselves to the essentials in the constitution, there are no assessors on the board, nor any representatives who report directly to the board. However, the General Assembly can always decide to appoint someone to do youth work, for example. The board is happy to welcome anyone who would like to actively shape the development of the Baltic States Working Group.

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