

## EUROPEAN CLASSICS

### XIII. GERMANY, EMPIRE

The *German Empire* of the classic stamp period—officially called “Deutsches Reich”—was created on January 18, 1871, during the Franco-German War, by a proclamation, issued at the Versailles Palace, when Wilhelm I, King of Prussia, was proclaimed Emperor of Germany. The new Empire consisted of 25 states, namely four kingdoms (Bavaria, Prussia, Saxony and Wurttemberg), five grand duchies, thirteen duchies and principalities, the three free cities (Bremen, Hamburg and Lubeck) and the newly acquired “Reichslande” Alsace-Lorraine (Elsass-Lothringen). Situated in the center of Europe, Germany bordered on the north on the North Sea, Denmark and the Baltic Sea, on the east on Russia (Baltic Provinces and Kingdom of Poland), on the south on Austria (Galicia, Silesia, Bohemia, Upper Austria, Salzburg, Tyrol and Vorarlberg) and Switzerland, on the west on France, Belgium and the Netherlands. It covered a territory of almost 210,000 sq. mi., with a population of nearly 41 million in 1871. The new capital, *Berlin*—the former capital of Prussia—had 826,000 inhabitants in 1871.

The constitution of the new empire came into force on May 4, 1871 and on the same date the new postal administration, the “*Reichspost*”, started to operate. The constitution entitled those states, which had at that time their own postal administrations—Baden, Bavaria and Wurttemberg—to keep them and to continue to conduct their own postal service. But only Bavaria and Wurttemberg made use of this privilege, while Baden relinquished its own postal service on Dec. 31, 1871 and had it taken over by the “*Reichspost*” on Jan. 1, 1872. On the same day, the postal service in Alsace-Lorraine, until then separately conducted, also was absorbed by the “*Reichspost*”. The territory of the “*Reichspost*” now included the whole territory of the so-called North German Postal District (“*Norddeutscher Postbezirk*”) plus Baden and Alsace-Lorraine, therefore extending to all of Germany except Bavaria and Wurttemberg, covering a territory of little over 170,000 square miles, with about 35 million inhabitants.

When the “*Reichspost*” was established, it took over all *post offices* of the North German Postal District as well as the little over 200 post offices in Alsace-Lorraine, which until then had been administered by the North German Postal District. On Jan. 1, 1872, the “*Reichspost*” also took over the post offices in Baden, which numbered about 230, as well as the sub-post offices in that country, the “*Postablagen*,” of which 291 existed on that day. The postal system of the North German Postal District, which in turn had been based on that of Prussia, was continued. It divided the post offices into several classes, according to their importance, and operated in addition to the regular post offices a great number of postal agencies, called “*Postagenturen*”, which were post offices with greatly reduced service. The Baden “*Postablagen*” all were converted into such postal agencies and continued to function as such.

The “*Reichspost*” also took over from the North German Postal District a number of *post offices abroad*. Most of them were border offices which were to facilitate the transit of mail to other countries, as such offices at *Basel* (Switzerland), *Oldenzaal* and *Venlo* (Netherlands). Only one post office, that at *Constantinople* in the Turkish Empire, can be considered a real post office abroad.

The postal law of Oct. 28, 1871, by which the “*Reichspost*” was established as a monopoly of the government, had a loophole, by restricting this monopoly to the postal service between different towns. This fact provided the basis for the establishment of *private mail services*, which rendered local mail service. During the classic stamp period only in a few cities were such services established and only in *Berlin* such a private mail service actually used stamps. Under the name “*Brief- und Druckschriften-Expedition*” such a city mail service functioned in Berlin from May 1873 to August 1874, when it was abolished as unprofitable.

Germany, until Jan. 1, 1875, used two *currencies*, Thaler and Groschen for the northern parts of the country and Gulden and Kreuzer for the much smaller southern part, which consisted of Baden, Hessen, Sachsen-Meiningen, Sachsen-Coburg-Gotha

(district of Coburg only), Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt and the districts of Frankfurt am Main, Wiesbaden and Sigmaringen of Prussia. The Thaler (th) was divided into 30 Groschen (g), one Groschen was equivalent to 12 Pfennig (pf). The Gulden (gld) was divided into 60 Kreuzer (kr). The relation between Groschen and Kreuzer was 1 Groschen equivalent to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  Kreuzer, but in the postal service, special rates were used, neglecting the fractions. In some states, local currencies remained in use for some time in addition to the regular currency, but this is philatelically important only for Hamburg, where for city mail a rate of  $\frac{1}{2}$  Schilling, equivalent to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  pfennig, remained in force. On Jan. 1, 1875, the Mark (m), divided into 100 (new) Pfennig (pf), was introduced in the postal service as uniform currency.—For *weight and distances*, the metric system was employed.

The *classic stamp period* of Germany ended with the introduction of the new uniform currency for the whole empire on Jan. 1, 1875, therefore extends only over little more than  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years. During that period, the newly created empire was consolidated and reorganized, but without any important political or postal-historical occurrences.

When the "Reichspost" started to operate it had at its disposal the *stamps* issued by the *North German Postal District* for the countries of the North German Confederation. They were continued in use and therefore actually became the first stamps of the "Reichspost". These stamps, used between May 4 and Dec. 31, 1871 can be collected as "forerunners". They were the perforated 1869 issue, consisting of postage stamps of  $\frac{1}{4}g$ ,  $\frac{1}{3}g$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}g$ , 1g, 2g and 5g for the Northern District, 1kr, 2kr, 3kr, 7kr and 18kr for the Southern District, the  $\frac{1}{2}s$  stamp for the Hamburg city mail and two high values, 10g and 30g, used in both districts; postal envelopes of 1g and 3kr, wrappers of  $\frac{1}{3}g$  and 1kr, official postage stamps of  $\frac{1}{4}g$ ,  $\frac{1}{3}g$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}g$ , 1g, 2g, 1kr, 2kr, 3kr and 7kr, issued in 1870, as well as telegraph stamps, issued in 1869, in the denominations of  $\frac{1}{2}g$ ,  $1\frac{1}{4}g$ ,  $2\frac{1}{2}g$ , 4g, 5g, 8g, 10g and 30g, used in both districts. The North German Postal District postal stamps and stationery in Groschen and Kreuzer currency were withdrawn and demonetized on Dec. 31, 1871, except the 10g and 30g stamps, which

remained in use until the supply was exhausted. The  $\frac{1}{2}s$  Hamburg city stamp not only remained in use but new printings were made until the end of 1874, when it was withdrawn and demonetized on Dec. 31, 1874. Therefore, it is also a fullfledged issue of the "Reichspost" and should be listed as such, if such a double listing of the same stamp for two countries were not impractical. The telegraph stamps remained in use longer, until Oct. 31, 1872, on which date they were replaced and demonetized.

The first actual stamps of the "Reichspost" were used from *Jan. 1, 1872*, on which day the new *Postage Stamps, Postal Envelopes and Wrappers* became valid for postage. The first *Postal Cards* were issued on *Jan. 1, 1873*; previously postal card forms with stamps pasted on were used, a practice started by the North German Postal District in 1870. *Postal Cards with attached Reply Card* followed several months later. *Telegraph Stamps* were issued on *Nov. 1, 1872*. *Official Stamps* were discontinued. By decree of Nov. 30, 1871, *privately ordered stationery* was introduced. Stamps could now be printed against a small fee on privately supplied envelopes, the minimum order being 10,000 envelopes.

The new stamps and stationery were issued to the post offices and sold to the public for its convenience as early as Dec. 15, 1871, only in Baden and Alsace-Lorraine this was delayed until the last days of December 1871. *Premature use*, before Jan. 1, 1872, is known in a few cases.

When the stamps and stationery were introduced, the same *denominations* as had been in use by the North German Postal District, were issued, namely  $\frac{1}{4}g$ ,  $\frac{1}{3}g$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}g$ , 1g, 2g and 5g for the Northern District and 1kr, 2kr, 3kr, 7kr and 18kr for the Southern District, as well as 10g and 30g for both districts. For Hamburg, the  $\frac{1}{2}s$  city mail stamp remained in use, as stated before. During the classic stamp period, only two further values were issued on Nov. 1, 1872, namely  $2\frac{1}{2}g$  for the Northern District and an equivalent 9kr for the Southern District, both for local registered letters and also useful for the special delivery fee, parcel post and mail to foreign countries, especially to England and the United States. Of postal stationery, only envelopes of 1g and 3kr, as well as wrappers of  $\frac{1}{3}g$  and

1kr were issued, just as had been the case in the North German Postal District. The first postal cards with printed stamps were introduced on Jan. 1, 1873,  $\frac{1}{2}g$  and 2kr respectively, which were followed several months later by postal cards with attached reply postal card,  $\frac{1}{2}g + \frac{1}{2}g$  and 2kr+2kr. For the printing of stamps on privately supplied envelopes, first only 1g and 2g were permitted, in addition to  $\frac{1}{3}g$ , which was only permitted for certain charitable institutions. But due to the fact, that the minimum order was 10,000 envelopes, nobody ordered 1g and 2g stamps imprinted on envelopes and such stationery is unknown from that period. By decree of March 6, 1872, the minimum requirement was abolished and the permission extended to privately supplied letter sheets, wrappers and post cards. Now all values— $\frac{1}{4}g$ ,  $\frac{1}{3}g$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}g$ , 1g, 2g,  $2\frac{1}{2}g$ , 5g; 1kr, 2kr, 3kr, 7kr, 9kr, 18kr—could be printed on envelopes and letter sheets,  $\frac{1}{3}g$  and 1kr on wrappers as well as  $\frac{1}{2}g$  and 2kr on post cards. For the telegraph stamps, the same values as for their predecessors of the North German Confederation,  $\frac{1}{2}g$ ,  $1\frac{1}{4}g$ ,  $2\frac{1}{2}g$ , 4g, 5g, 8g, 10g and 30g, were issued and used in both districts.

Of the *private mail services*, only the "Brief- und Druckschriften-Expedition" of Berlin issued adhesives as well as stationery, first on May 27, 1873, 2pf postage stamps and 2pf postal cards. In May 1874, additional 3pf postal cards were issued, as well as  $1\frac{1}{2}g$  money collecting (C.O.D.) cards.

The introduction of the new Mark and Pfennig currency on Jan. 1, 1875, ended the usefulness of the stamps in Groschen and Kreuzer currency. The  $\frac{1}{4}g$  and  $\frac{1}{3}g$  stamps as well as all Kreuzer stamps, the  $\frac{1}{3}g$  and all Kreuzer stationery were *withdrawn* on Dec. 31, 1874 and *demonetized* on the same day, because conversion into the new currency would have led to fractions of a pfennig. The  $\frac{1}{2}s$  Hamburg city mail stamp for the same reasons also was withdrawn and demonetized on Dec. 31, 1874. The same fate befell the two high values, 10g and 30g. The other values in Groschen currency, postage stamps and stationery, which were easily convertible (1g=new 10pf) remained in use to be used up. They were withdrawn almost a year later, on Dec. 16, 1875 and demonetized on Dec. 31,

1875. The telegraph stamps were treated differently; although they were in Groschen currency, they were not used up but were withdrawn and demonetized on Dec. 31, 1874. The only private mail service, in Berlin, had ceased to operate before the end of the classic stamp period, in August 1874.

The *postal rates* of the "Reichspost" were to a large part taken over from the North German Postal District, but a few changes took place. Domestic letters paid 1g (3kr) up to 15 grams and 2g (7kr) from 15 grams to 250 grams, local letters  $\frac{1}{2}g$  (2kr), in Hamburg  $\frac{1}{2}s$ . The fee for post cards, which had been the same as for letters, was reduced on Jan. 1, 1872 to  $\frac{1}{2}g$  (2kr). Printed matter paid  $\frac{1}{3}g$  (1kr) for every 50 grams; from 1873, this was reduced to  $\frac{1}{3}g$  (1kr) up to 250 grams; over 250 grams to 500 grams the rate was 3g (11kr). Local printed matter paid  $\frac{1}{4}g$ . Samples first paid the same rates as printed matter, later  $\frac{1}{2}g$  (2kr) up to 250 grams. The registration fee and the fee for return receipts were 2g (7kr), for special delivery  $2\frac{1}{2}g$  (9kr). For money letters, money order cards and parcel post, complicated rates were charged, partly based on value, weight and distance. For foreign mail more uniform rates were in use, the letter rate being 2g (7kr) or  $2\frac{1}{2}$  (9kr) to most European countries. To some neighboring countries, for example, Austria and Hungary, the same fees as for domestic mail were in force.

Postage stamps were *used* for the payment of postage on all kinds of mail, such as letters, post cards, printed matter, samples, money letters, etc., as well as for all special fees, as registration, special delivery, etc. The use of postage stamps had been extended prior to Jan. 1, 1872, to the newly introduced money order cards and parcel post cards, on which all fees could be paid by means of stamps. This was continued after the new stamps were introduced on Jan. 1, 1872, and the high values—5g and 18kr, as well as 10g and 30g—almost exclusively were used on money letters, money order cards and parcel post cards, while their use on other mail, usually only on heavy letters to foreign countries or mail to distant overseas places, was very limited. The two high values, 10g and 30g, were not sold to the public, but the postal clerks pasted them on mail submitted to

them against payment of the fees in cash. The use of telegraph stamps, by telegraph offices and post offices, which were often combined, was confined to the payment of fees for telegrams.

The German post office in Constantinople received all values of the postage stamps in Groschen currency and they are all known used there including both types of the arms embossing and the high values, 10g and 30g. Postal stationery, especially envelopes, were undoubtedly also used there, but we have never seen any examples of actual use.

The designs, which were used for the classic stamp issues of Germany were partly new ones, partly taken over from the North German Postal District, changing only the name of the issuing postal administration. The latter was the case for the high values of the postage stamps, 10g and 30g, which now had the inscription DEUTSCHE REICHS-POST, as well as for the telegraph stamps, which were now inscribed TELEGRAPHIE DES DEUTSCHEN REICHES. Otherwise, the design remained unchanged for the former, while for the telegraph stamps the value indication GROSCHEN in the tablet at bottom was removed and the space filled with a design of crosses and dots, possibly because originally it was intended also to issue a set in Kreuzer currency. The new design for the postage stamps was a rather simple one, on a guilloched ground, which left a blank circular space in the center, we find the curved inscription DEUTSCHE REICHS-POST at top and the value indication—GROSCHEN or KREUZER, between the figures of value—at bottom. In the blank space in the center, the German arms were inserted in colorless embossing. The space between the stamps was printed in solid color, therefore providing for the first time stamps which had a colored margin. The German arms were first in a "provisional" design, an eagle with a small shield on its breast, the feathers of the wings all pointing downwards and no ribbons on the crown. Already before the stamps were issued, late in 1871, a new definite design was officially adopted for the arms, but only from June 1, 1872, it was used for stamps, adhesives as well as stationery. The stamps with the new arms design were issued only after using up of the stamps with the "pro-

visional" arms. The new arms showed the eagle with a much larger shield, the feathers of the wings now partly pointing upwards and the crown with a ribbon on each side. Soon after the new values of 2½g and 9kr were introduced, many complaints were made, that in artificial light their color could be easily mistaken for the color of the red (1g, 3kr) and yellow orange (½g, 2kr) stamps. To provide a better distinction, the new values were overprinted in the color of the frame with large figures "2½" and "9" in the center, over the embossed arms, and issued early in 1874 in this altered design. For the postal stationery, the regular design of the adhesives, also with embossed arms in the center, first in the "provisional" and then in the "definite" design, was used, except for the postal cards, for which a separate design without embossing was introduced. It showed in an oval frame the arms in the "definite" design, with DEUTSCHE REICHS-POST above and EIN HALBER GROSCHEN or ZWEI KREUZER below, "½" or "2" in a small circle on each side. The corners were filled in with fancy ornaments. For the privately ordered postal stationery of all kinds, generally the design used for the regular envelopes and wrappers was employed, but on some privately ordered ½g and 2kr cards the stamp has the same design as on the officially issued postal cards.

All classic stamps and stationery of the German Empire were manufactured by the Prussian State Printing Works at Berlin, the same establishment which previously had supplied Prussia and the North German Confederation as well as several other countries with their stamps and stationery. All stamps and stationery were typographed and letter-press printed; on the postage stamps in the arms design and the stamps in the same design on postal stationery, the arms were inserted in a second operation in colorless embossing.

The dies for the frames of the postage stamps were cut in steel separately for each value; there was only one die for each denomination. The dies for the frames of the stamps in the same design on postal stationery were used singly for the printing and therefore for the most needed values not only several dies were used at the same time, but worn dies had to be replaced fre-

quently. As a result, on stationery 26 different dies of the 1g stamp, 18 of the  $\frac{1}{3}g$ , 9 of the 3kr, 6 of the 1kr and two each of the  $\frac{1}{4}g$  and  $\frac{1}{2}g$  can be distinguished. Those of the 1g are divided by specialists into dies with small ( $3\frac{1}{2}mm.$ ) and large (4mm.) numerals. For the colorless embossing, the dies—first in the "provisional" then in the "definite" arms design—were cut in steel; there was only one die for each of the two designs from which all material for the embossing, for the stamps as well as for the stationery, is derived. For the overprints "2½" and "9" on the  $2\frac{1}{2}g$  and 9kr stamps, no separate dies were made, but the printing plates type-set. The dies for the two postal card stamps were also cut in steel. For the high values, 10g and 30g, the dies of the same values of the North German Postal District were used, only the name of the postal administration was changed by way of working dies. The same was the case for the telegraph stamps. The key design for these stamps, which had no value indication, was used, after the inscription had been changed, GROSCHEN removed and replaced by a design of crosses and small dots, all by way of a working die. The printing plates for the figure of value and GROSCHEN, which were added in a second printing, were type-set. All dies were made in the Prussian State Printing Works by staff engravers; it is claimed that the dies for the embossed arms were made by the famous engraver Schilling, who cut the dies for many embossed Old-German States envelope stamps.

The *printing material* of the various stamps was obtained from the original dies by electrotyping. As for the stamps of the North German Postal District—and previously those of Prussia—the plates consisted of 150 designs, in 15 rows of 10. For the frame of the stamps in the arms type, 150 matrices were made for each value, assembled in the proper size of the plate and then an electrotype made, which was mounted on wood and used as plate for the printing. When more printing plates were needed, more such electrotypes of the whole plate were made and used. The mounting of the plates on wood seems to have been accomplished by nailing or screwing them on, in the blank center of the design of the four corner stamps. Copies of such

stamps, on which the nail head or screw head shows in color, are known of several values. The plates and counter plates for the embossing of the arms were manufactured from the original die by embossing, obtaining four matrices, which in turn were used to manufacture the 150 clichés and 150 counter clichés to form the plates of 150. The plates for the 10g and 30g stamps, as well as for the telegraph stamps were made in the same manner as the plates for the frames of the postage stamps. The settings for the overprints "2½" and "9" as well as the value indications of the telegraph stamps were type-set and were then probably electrotyped. There are many small variations in the position of the figures, especially in the "2½" of the postage stamps, which repeat themselves on every sheet, proving that all printing material came from the same setting. The only conspicuous variation can be found in position 114 of the  $2\frac{1}{2}g$ , where the "1" of the "½" is distinctly shifted to the left. The stamps on postal stationery, as far as those in the embossed arms type are concerned, were printed singly from the dies, while the stamps on the postal cards were printed together with the frame and text, from plates of at least 16 cards.

For the values, for which there were the largest supplies needed, several frame plates were made and partly used simultaneously. To distinguish these plates, the printers used either plate numbers—only "1" is known—or letters—letters between A and O are known. There were no imprint and no marginals. Only the values of  $\frac{1}{3}g$ , 1g and 2g are known with letters on the sheet margin below the bottom left corner stamp and the  $\frac{1}{2}g$  with "1" below the bottom right corner stamp, but not on all plates. The other values are not known with plate markings, which are also missing on the 10g and 30g, as well as on the telegraph stamps. For the embossing, also several plates were used but there were no special markings to distinguish them. As at least several of the frame plates were used for both kinds of arms embossing, the same plate markings are partly known on the stamps with the "provisional" as well as the "definite" arms. On some of the Kreuzer values, we find fancy double crosses on the top as well as on the bottom sheet margin, for which there is no

ready explanation. They come only on the most needed values, 1kr, 3kr and 7kr. It may be that these markings were applied to distinguish some of the later plates of the Kreuzer values and that a cross (German "Kreuz") was used for these Kreuzer stamps to supply a marking which was easy to remember. All frame plates of the postage stamps in arms design and the plates of the telegraph stamps had two needle dots at the top as well as at the bottom sheet margin, one as guide for the embossing or the value overprint, the other as guide for the perforation; the 10g and 30g had one needle dot each on the left and right margin, while the overprinted 2½g and 9kr stamp even had three needle dots each on the top and bottom sheet margin, as guides for the overprint, embossing and perforation. There exist a number of constant plate flaws, but none is of any special significance.

The *printing* of all stamps was done on the letter press. It seems that in some cases, especially for the most needed values, two plates of 150, side by side were used, but the embossing must have been done only with single plates of 150. All issued sheets contained 150 stamps, in 15 rows of 10, for the 10g and 30g in 10 rows of 15.

There exist no real *printing errors* on the classic stamps of the German Empire, due to the efficient job of the Prussian State Printing Works. Only some partial double prints of the frames, due to shifts during the printing, are remarkable, the nicest one being a 1g with large shield, which shows the left numeral doubled, as an "11". Less accurate was the *embossing* of the stamps. No genuine inverted embossings have been found, but more or less strongly shifted embossings are not too rare. Of several values, in both types of the arms, regular double embossings were found, mostly on unused but also on used copies. They are sometimes not very obvious and we believe that some copies with double embossing still are slumbering undetected in general collections or dealers' stocks. Curiously enough, almost all known used stamps in the large shield type with double embossing were used between September and December 1874, therefore at the very end of the classic stamp period.

The first printings of a number of values

had an *invisible underprint*, which was the same as that used for the postage stamps of the North German Confederation. This underprint was abolished shortly thereafter and only ¼g, ½g, 1g, 2g, 5g and 3kr stamps are known with it. It is remarkable that the ½s Hamburg city mail stamps printed under the rule of the "Reichspost" had no underprint, which makes them theoretically a new issue of the "Reichspost". The underprint, normally invisible, sometimes becomes accidentally visible due to chemical influence; it can also be brought out purposely, showing in brown when reducing agents are employed and in yellow when oxidizing agents are used.

The *paper* for all stamps and stationery, except the postal cards, was regular white machine-made paper, which shows only insignificant variations. For the postal cards, thin cardboard of light buff color was used.

The *color scheme* used for the stamps of the German Empire was the same as for the corresponding values of the stamps of the North German Confederation, *violet* for ¼g, *green* for ⅓g and 1kr, *red orange* for ½g and 2kr, *rose* for 1g and 3kr, *blue* for 2g and 7kr and *bistre brown* for 5g and 18kr; the 10g and 30g were *gray* and *blue* respectively, the telegraph stamps *blue* with *black* value indication. Soon after the stamps were issued, complaints were made that in artificial light the red orange stamps could easily be confused with the rose stamps. This led to a change of color for the ½g and 2kr stamps, which now became *yellow orange* instead of red orange. The change started as early as April 1872; therefore, the stamps with small shield come in both colors, while those with large shield exist only in the yellow orange color. When the new values of 2½g and 9kr were introduced, the color chosen for them was *orange brown*. But already in the earliest printings there were great variations and a distinct chocolate brown, which is an entirely different color, is characteristic for one of the early printings. These varying colors led to confusion of the new stamps with the yellow orange and rose stamps of the set, so that the "2½" and "9" overprints were ordered, which come only in orange brown shades. The stamps on postal stationery were printed in the same colors as

the adhesives, only for the ½g and 2kr stamps on the postal cards, which were printed together with the frame and text, brown was chosen.

The accidental shades which we can find on the postage stamps, are quite numerous. The inks used were generally of mineral and vegetable origin and it seems to have been difficult at that time to procure standard colors. The green varies from yellowish to bluish shades, the blue varies through all shades of blue and ultramarine, the brown from orange brown through red brown to chocolate brown, while the variations of the other colors show mainly in their intensity, for example, rose through carmine rose to deep carmine, pale violet to bright and deep violet, etc. For the postal stationery, the variations are even greater and the postal cards come in numerous shades from pale brown to black brown.

The gum was white and was rather pure arabic gum, without any special characteristics.

All stamps of the German Empire were issued perforated and a uniform comb perforating device was used for all stamps. It provided a perforation  $13\frac{3}{4} \times 14\frac{1}{4}$  (14x17 perfs), for the 10g and 30g  $14\frac{1}{4} \times 13\frac{3}{4}$  (17x14 perfs). A horizontal row (10g and 30g vertical row) was perforated on three sides by every operation of the device and 16 operations were needed to complete the perforation of a sheet. Either the top or the bottom sheet margin (left or right for 10g and 30g) were perforated through. It has been proven from small peculiarities that the sheets were in part perforated from their face, in part from their reverse side. The perforation is also sometimes more or less rough. There exist characteristic varieties of all these stamps, being one or two perforations lower than regular stamps, therefore having vertically only 16 or, considerably scarcer, 15 perfs. For the 10g and 30g, this applies correspondingly, these stamps being less wide and having horizontally only 16 or 15 perfs. All these smaller stamps came from the first or the last operation of the perforating device, therefore either from the first or the last row of a sheet. It is claimed that this was due to irregularities in the working of the automatic perforating mechanism, but we rather believe, that this

was made purposely, to take account of the fact, that the perforating device did not fit the sheets exactly, which otherwise would have produced too many off center stamps; this was partly alleviated by making the stamps of the first or last row shorter. On the other hand, stamps which are higher than regular stamps, are of accidental origin, caused by irregularities in the movements of the perforating device, which produced stamps with broader corner perfs. Some freakish perforations, running through the center of a stamp, can be found more frequently than may be expected, although they are still rare. It can be supposed that the worker who did the perforating erred and took the needle dots which should guide the embossing as guide for the perforating, causing these freak perforations which partly slipped through the controls and were regularly issued.

It seems that the controls in respect to the perforation in any case were not very rigid, because a number of imperforate sheets or parts of sheets of these stamps were regularly issued and used. Known are ½g, 1g, 2g, and 5g with small shield (Fig. 66) and ½g, 1g and 5g with large shield. The ½g, 2g and 2½g with large shield were also reported imperforate, but we have no proof that they actually exist. All the imperforate stamps are, of course, rarities and are especially sought in multiples or on cover.

The postal stationery also had some characteristic features. Of the envelopes, the 1g was issued in two sizes, 147x84mm. and 148x115mm., while the 3kr exists only in the former. They had the stamp in the top right corner and in the same corner and on the two adjacent flaps on the back an oblique black double-line overprint in small letters, across the stamp, reading EIN GROSCHEN POSTCOUVERT or DREI KREUZER POSTCOUVERT respectively,



Fig. 66

in endless repetition. The stamps first had the small shield eagle, from June 1872 the large shield eagle embossing. From June 1873, the envelopes were issued without the black overprint. The *wrappers* were of size 352x66mm. and along their two longer sides ran a border line in the color of the stamp. They come with the stamps with small as well as large shield embossing. The *postal cards* without imprinted stamp come in many variations. First the cards of the North German Postal District, inscribed "Norddeutsches Postgebiet—Correspondenz-Karte", were used up, than, already in 1871, new cards were printed with the form number "C. 154" at bottom right, which showed the new arms in the "provisional" design and the inscription "Deutsches Reichspostgebiet—Correspondenz-Karte." On these cards the eagle was soon changed to the "definite" design and, from Jan. 1, 1872, the inscription was changed to "Deutsche Reichspost—Postkarte." All these cards had a size of 163x108mm. and elaborate instructions for their use at bottom. Middle of 1872, the size of the cards was reduced to 144x88mm. and shortly thereafter, from October, 1872, the printed instructions were omitted. The regular cards were on thin buff card, while cards with attached reply cards were on lilac rose card. They were all sold at the post offices with pasted-on stamps. When the cards with imprinted stamps were issued, the practice of also having cards without stamps was continued. The cards with imprinted stamps had an ornamented frame, which was different for the cards with attached reply card.

Of the *postal stationery* with stamps *imprinted on private order*—all in the larger shield type—, we have to distinguish between two kinds, namely those which were made for actual use and those which were ordered by stamp dealers to create collectors' items. As the public made little use of the possibility of having stamps imprinted on their private stationery, such items were almost unobtainable for collectors, who at that time were as much interested in stationery as in adhesive stamps. Some of the contemporary stamp dealers, especially J. B. Moens, placed orders for such stationery to supply their philatelic customers. Of such philatelically inspired stationery there exist envelopes in many colors, wrap-

pers and postal cards, in all possible denominations. They come almost only unused and are scarce used. Commercially ordered stationery of this kind is generally scarce and exists almost exclusively used; only the commonly used values are known of such privately ordered envelopes and only a few examples of privately ordered postal cards; of the privately ordered wrappers, no commercially made ones seem to exist. The letter sheets, which were privately ordered and which exist with imprinted 1g stamps only, were ordered by an enterprising merchant who had advertisements printed on them and then sold them below face. They come on white or blue paper; seven different series of advertisements exist. Most of these letter sheets, although originally made without philatelic intent, were purchased by dealers and collectors and therefore used copies are considerably rarer than unused ones. In a special category are also the envelopes of the charitable institutions which made use of the special privilege of having  $\frac{1}{3}g$  stamps—a reduced letter rate, granted to them—imprinted on their envelopes. Such envelopes already existed in the North German Postal District and this practice was simply continued. As there were considerable remainders of envelopes with  $\frac{1}{3}g$  North German Confederation stamps, which could not be used up, the stamps on such envelopes were officially overprinted with a boxed P.P. and pasted over with the new  $\frac{1}{3}g$  adhesives in the small shield type. After these provisionals were used up, such envelopes with imprinted  $\frac{1}{3}g$  stamps, first in the small shield type, then in the large shield type, were made and used. These special envelopes come with the imprints of two different organizations, namely "Angelegenheiten der Victoria National Invaliden-Stiftung" and "Angelegenheit der Kaiser-Wilhelms-Stiftung für Deutsche Invaliden", or similar.

The stamps of the *private mail services*—only those of a Berlin undertaking, operating from May 1873 to August 1874, fall within the classic stamp period—were rather primitive. The only adhesive is a 2pf stamp, lithographed in black on pale rose paper, which shows "Druckschriften-Expedition/Berlin" in an oval frame, with "2 Pfennige" in the center and ornaments filling the corners. It comes imperforate and line-



perforated 11½. The postal cards first had a 2pf stamp in similar design and were printed in black on dark buff card; they come with various kinds of texts and different advertisements on the back. In May 1874, a 3pf postal card, black on cream or grayish brown card, was issued which had a stamp in a new oval design, also with ornaments in the corners and 3/PFENNIG in the center. The money collecting cards, introduced at the same time, had an embossed stamp in a similar design, with value indication "1½ Gr". They were first printed in ultramarine and black—these are very rare—, then in red brown and black, both on lilac rose card.

Of all stamps and stationery which were in use on Dec. 31, 1874, considerable *remainders* were left in the possession of the postal administration. A large part of them was destroyed, but quantities of all values were sold to stamps dealers, partly considerably below face, so that unused multiples, in many cases even full sheets of 150, are available without great difficulty. Of the telegraph stamps only small quantities of the remainders seem to have been sold and they are rather elusive in unused multiples. Of the stamps, which had been replaced and were used up—all values in the small shield type and the unoverprinted 2½g and 9kr in the large shield type—no remainders existed and they are all scarce to rare in unused multiples.

*Used multiples* are rather plentiful—mostly from use on parcel post cards—and used blocks are known of all values, but some of them are scarce to rare. Only the more common values (½g, ½g, 1g, 2g, 3kr), as well as the highest value (5g, 18kr) are more plentiful.

The existence and sale of large remainder stocks is responsible for the fact that a number of German Empire stamps and some stationery items are considerably *rarer used than unused*. Of the adhesives, that is principally true of the 2kr yellow orange, with small shield and with large shield, the 18kr with large shield and the overprinted 2½g and 9kr stamps. Of stationery, the large size 1g envelopes and all 3kr envelopes are scarce used, as are all wrappers, especially the 1kr with small shield. The postal cards with attached reply card also are rare used, the 2kr+2kr very rare. All postal stationery

printed on private order is rare used and many philatelically inspired varieties are not known at all genuinely used.

On *entires*, all stamps are rather common, except the 5g and 18kr values which were mostly used on parcel post cards and otherwise can be found almost exclusively on money letters. On regular letters—usually registered to foreign countries—they are scarce and especially the 18kr in the large shield type deserves a considerable premium. The ¼g stamps are rather scarce in single frankings, on local bulk mail, especially the stamp with small shield eagle. Scarce and unusual is the use of Groschen stamps in the territory of use of Kreuzer stamps and vice versa; although such use was neither permitted nor forbidden, such cases can be found only sporadically and deserve a considerable premium. Almost equally scarce, but somewhat less elusive are *mixed frankings* between Kreuzer and Groschen stamps, whether they were used in the Kreuzer or in the Groschen territory. Mixed frankings between the ½s Hamburg city mail stamp and Groschen stamps, which can be found sometimes on Hamburg city letters, also are scarce and attractive. Mixed frankings between other stamps of the North German Confederation and that of the German Empire are also known, but they were against regulations and are all rare. They are either from late December 1871 and involve premature use of German Empire stamps, or from January 1872, at which time the stamps of the North German Confederation had ceased to be valid for postage. Nevertheless, such frankings slipped through and are sought by connoisseurs. Mixed frankings between stamps with small and large shield are common. Mixed frankings with the 1875 issue of Germany are not scarce, as far as those Groschen values are concerned, which remained valid until Dec. 31, 1875. Other values, which had lost their validity for postage on Dec. 31, 1874, also slipped through occasionally and such mixed frankings with the 1875 issue are rare curiosities. Mixed frankings between stamps of Germany and France occurred for the same reasons as described for mixed frankings between Alsace-Lorraine and France stamps (see page 57, Volume II). Due to the lack of a postal treaty, the rates for letters

between Alsace-Lorraine and France had to be paid for each country separately. The senders procured for themselves privately stamps of the other country to be able to pay the full postage and, after the Alsace-Lorraine stamps had been replaced by stamps of the German Empire, the latter stamps were used in such mixed frankings.

The only unusual frankings which deserve the term *emergency frankings* are *bisects* but these are known from only one post office, namely, Syke in Hanover. There, the district office sometimes used for their official local letters instead of  $\frac{1}{2}g$  stamps vertically bisected 1g stamps. Both the small shield and the large shield type of the 1g are known in such frankings (Fig. 67), which are rare. It is rather curious to note that the district office at Syke practised bisecting of stamps undisturbed for many years, although this was strictly against regulations. Such bisected stamps on local Syke mail are known of 1g Hanover stamps as early as the 1859 issue, then of Prussia 1861, 1g, as well as North German Confederation—1868 and 1869, 1g stamps—and still can be found of the 1875 10pf stamps of Germany. Therefore, the district office at Syke used such bisects and the post office there recognized them for a period of at least ten years.

The use of *cut squares* for postage was permitted by a decree dated Aug. 4, 1873, but this concerned only cut squares of envelopes. Even before that date we can rather frequently find cut squares used for postage and not only stamps cut out of envelopes but also of wrappers and postal cards. They were usually all recognized as valid and none are great rarities. Cut squares from privately ordered stationery also were used in some cases, but they are rare. Some of the cut squares from regular stationery also



Fig. 68

Fig. 67

deserve a considerable premium, especially in mixed frankings with regular postage stamps, which exist also with the 1875 issue.

No specific cases of *fraudulent frankings* are reported, aside from the rare attempts of re-use of previously used stamps which were cleaned. In the Ferrari collection was a cancelled copy of the 5g with small shield (Fig. 68), claimed to be a *postal forgery*. We know a second copy which was sold at an auction in Germany in 1930. Both copies are cancelled ELBING, one with the date 21/4 73, the other 14/5 73, therefore three weeks apart. It seems doubtful, whether these really are imitations made to defraud the post office or proofs which were fraudulently cancelled to deceive collectors.

When the "Reichspost" took over, it also inherited all the *postmarks* used by the Postal Administration of the North German Confederation, including those used in Alsace-Lorraine and in the still occupied parts of France. On Jan. 1, 1872 it also took over the postmarks in use until then at the postal establishments in Baden. The North German Confederation originally had taken over on Jan. 1, 1868 all the postmarks of the various Old German States and had continued to use most of them. Gradually they were replaced by new postmarks, in designs similar to those used by Prussia. The new postmarks came in three main types, double circles, single circles and rectangular boxes. A small number of large post offices had a special kind of postmarks with the town name in a horse shoe or similarly shaped frame. All these postmarks have the lettering either in Roman or in sans-serif capitals, and show the date with year, also generally the hour of the day. The policy of gradually replacing the old postmarks with these new types was continued by the "Reichspost" and the same three main types as well as the "horse shoe" type were assigned as replacements. New post offices also received the same types of postmarks. The sans-serif type of lettering became predominant and was later used almost exclusively.

In Baden, all the postmarks which were in use when the "Reichspost" took over, were first continued without change, including the oval "Postablage" markings and

the numeral cogwheel cancellers. While the "Postablage" markings were all replaced rather rapidly—we do not know them used after August 1872—the numeral cogwheel cancellers remained in use much longer and can occasionally be found during the whole classic stamp period and, in scattered cases, even far beyond that, up to 1895.

We are discussing the use of postmarks of the Old German States, after these states were absorbed by the North German Confederation and subsequently by the German Empire, when describing them for the specific Old German States. Therefore, we can refrain from repeating here these facts and can confine them to the statement that a great number of the Old German States postmarks known on the stamps of the North German Confederation also can be found on the German Empire stamps. Their number diminishes due to an accelerated pace at which they were replaced after Jan. 1, 1872, but quite a number survived the classic stamp period and can still be found in 1875 and thereafter. Nevertheless, the new types of postmarks, single and double circles as well as rectangular types, become more and more predominant, until at the end of the classic stamp period only a very small fraction of stamps were still cancelled with the help of old postmarks of the period before 1868. The postmarks, by the way, were not all centrally manufactured in Berlin, but in part locally by the "Oberpostdirektionen", into which the territory of the "Reichspost" was divided.

The regulations for the cancellation of the 10g and 30g prescribed that they were to be cancelled by writing in black ink the name of the post office and the date across of them. This regulation was generally observed and this kind of pen cancellation can be found on almost all such stamps, whether they were used on letters, money letters, money order cards or parcel post cards. Additional cancellation by a postmark usually is accidental, especially when the stamps were used together with lower values. Cancellations by postmarks alone were against the regulations and occurred only as exceptions; they are very rare.

Aside from regular town postmarks, there were also numerous postmarks of *travelling post offices*, on railroads—which continued

to use the Prussian type of such markings, three straight lines, with the name of the two terminals and the date between—as well as on ships, which had more diversified markings. There were also many *additional markings*, for registered mail and special delivery, as well as money letters, etc. and for mail to foreign countries.

The German *field post offices* operating in France until August 1873 used regular German stamps which were cancelled by various fieldpost markings, single and double circles, as well as rectangles. They are all rare, because the mail service was only for German military personnel and almost all mail was free of postage. It seems that only stamps with the small shield eagle were used at these fieldpost offices because only the ¼g, ½g, 1g, 2g and 5g of that issue are known with such cancellations.

The *post offices abroad* used regular postmarks such as were in use at the post offices in Germany proper, without any special indication. Only the post office at Constantinople had single circles with year date and hour of the day, which included a specific indication. First, until the end of July 1871, the postmark of the North German Confederation post office, which had been taken over, inscribed CONSTANTINOPEL N.P.A. — "N.P.A." standing for "Norddeutsches Post-Amt"—was continued in use, then, until the middle of September 1871, a provisional single circle, inscribed CONSTANTINOPEL D. R. P. A. — "D.R.P.A." meaning "Deutsches Reichspost-Amt"—can be found. The definite postmark, introduced middle of 1871, had the inscription KAISERL. DEUTSCH. P.A. CONSTANTINOPEL; it is the only one which can be found on German Empire stamps.

Occasionally we can also find *foreign cancellations* on German Empire stamps. As far as they are not accidental occurrences—stamps which by mistake were not cancelled by the post office of origin and were cancelled in transit or on arrival by a foreign post office—they come mostly from ship mail and are more frequent from the Baltic Sea, where Danish and Swedish postmarks can be found rather frequently. French postmarks—numeral cancellers or town markings—usually are the result of the use of mixed frankings be-

tween French and German stamps on mail between France and Alsace-Lorraine.

*Postal stationery* was cancelled in the same way as the adhesive stamps. The *telegraph stamps* usually were cancelled by pen strokes, which can be found in black, red or violet. The telegraph offices had no cancellers and only when the telegraph stamps were used by the post offices, were they cancelled with the regular postmarks. They are considerably scarcer and more popular postmarked than pen-cancelled. The stamps and stationery of the Berlin *private mail service* were either cancelled with a single circle date stamp, which showed the day and month only, or with a postmark with "D.E.B." at top, date in the center and the hour of the day at bottom.

Black ink was generally used for all postmarks and the use of inks in other colors is a rather scarce exception. The least rare is the use of blue ink, especially in Baden, where blue markings can be found occasionally until middle of 1873, especially for "Postablage" and postal agency markings. Red ink was used until June 1872 for a number of additional markings, especially on registered letters and occasionally, as very rare exceptions, we can find such red markings or even red town postmarks on stamps, the former almost always in combination with regular black postmarks. Incidentally, we can also find some *registration labels* which were officially introduced on Feb. 1, 1875, but were used by some post offices even earlier, either as official trials or as private efforts of the postmasters.

Under the postal administration of the North German Confederation, in 1868 *special "Paid" postmarks* were introduced for mail which had to be mailed at the post office, namely registered letters, money letters and parcel post letters. They were intended to save stamps and served a purpose similar to the Paid postmarks of the pre-stamp period. They were continued in use by the "Reichspost" and can be found during the whole classic stamp period, but from a small number of large post offices only. These "Paid" postmarks were all single circles in the same design as regular postmarks, but with a thick "F."—standing for "Frei" or "Franco"—between the town name and the date. They are always

in red, to show distinctly that postage for such shipments was paid in cash instead of by stamps. Although they must have been used on a large quantity of mail, they are scarce, as most such stampless envelopes were not recognized as interesting postal documents and were therefore not preserved.

There was also a considerable amount of *official mail* which did not pay any postage or profited through agreements with the postal administration for bulk payment. The latter was mainly the case with the various states, as well as from July 1, 1874 with the railroad administrations. Such official letters for which postage was paid by yearly bulk payments, had to be marked "Frei laut Aversum No..."—the numbers run during the classic stamp period from 1 to 13,—or, for the railroads "Frei laut Entschädigungs-Conto". The markings on the letters were either done by handstamps or by special printed labels, which were on yellow paper for the railroads, to be pasted on the letters by the sender agency.

There were no official *reprints* made of any of the classic stamps and stationery of the German Empire. But it is claimed that the infamous counterfeiter Georges Fouré had at his disposal an original cliché of the 7kr and a die for embossing the small shield arms, with the aid of which he manufactured 7kr stamps with inverted center. Such stamps, which usually have a cancellation of Baden, are therefore privately and fraudulently made reprints. There exist only crude *forgeries* of several values of the postage stamps but several *fakes* are more dangerous. As has been stated before, no genuine stamps with inverted eagle embossing are known; provided they are not the reprints described above, they were made by flattening out a genuine eagle embossing and replacing it by a faked inverted one. Similarly, the scarcer values with small shield were made of stamps with large shield, and vice-versa. Other less dangerous fakes concern the imperforate varieties which are faked by cutting of the perforations and adding wider margins. Cut squares from envelopes are also sometimes offered to uninformed collectors as imperforate varieties. Quite dangerous are often *faked cancellations*, because there are plenty of cheap unused stamps around which invite such faking.

Especially the 2kr in both types, the 18kr with large shield as well as 10g and 30g are favorite objects. All special kinds of cancellation, as well as the scarce blue and red cancellations also were often faked, mostly by painting, and the fakers sometimes did quite remarkable jobs of accuracy. In any case, the collector of classic German Empire stamps generally has not much to worry about forgeries and fakes, because they mostly concern rare varieties and he will be quite prepared and warned when he gets to collecting this kind of items.

The classic stamps of the German Empire comprise 28 main numbers in the *Scott Catalog*, which does not list the telegraph stamps. Actually, there are 30 main numbers, as the color changes of the ½g and 2kr (Scott #3a and 8a) should be listed as main numbers and we will consider them as such. Unused, these 30 stamps are priced at \$430, used at \$199 (the 10g and 30g figured as pen-cancelled, otherwise the figure would be \$69 higher), while the cheapest kind, unused or used, amounts to only \$140. As can be seen, classic German Empire is a rather inexpensive field, as the highest priced stamps list \$75 unused and \$50 used, the lowest priced \$1 unused and only 5c used. All together, fifteen stamps are priced lower than \$2 and eight of them below \$1, which makes the country an ideal one for specializing.

The literature concerning the classic German Empire stamps was rather poor and the little which was available was scattered in many volumes of German philatelic magazines, until the specific section of the Kohl Handbook was published, which contains an excellent monograph of these issues, prepared by Dr. Kalekhoff and Dr. Munk. It covers 29 pages including a general introduction. This section of the Kohl Handbook was recently reprinted with the other Germany part and therefore is easily available separately. Little was published since this monograph was written and the few new valuable articles in the field also are scattered in various magazines. In English, practically nothing comprehensive is published concerning German Empire stamps and up to now, not even a translation of the pertinent part of the Kohl Handbook was made available. Therefore, without a knowledge of German, a collector will have a hard time in this field. However, relatively

so little research work is published and available, that not much energy will be wasted if the collector starts from scratch.

The classic stamps of the German Empire are an interesting and diversified field in which even the collector of small means can make a good showing, due to the fact that there is sufficient material available and there are no rarities among the regular stamps and no great rarities—at least as far as the prices reveal—among the varieties. Even with modest means, a very sizeable collection can be brought together and many attractive pages can be assembled showing the postmarks of the various Old German States which appear for the last time on these stamps. This is a not too difficult and a pleasant field to collect and can be recommended heartily.

(Next: XIV. Gibraltar)

## MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

● The next issue of the *MERCURY STAMP JOURNAL* is scheduled for December, 1955. It concludes *Volume III*; title page and index will be inserted.

● Our Office hours are from 9 A. M. to 5 P. M., Monday through Friday, and from 9 A. M. to 1 P. M. on Saturdays. In important cases, appointments at other hours may be arranged.

● The Friedl Expert Committee, after the summer recess, started to hold meetings twice a week. This enables the Committee to continue to give fast service—usually, it takes no more than ten days to render an opinion on genuineness and condition—despite the fact that the weekly average of items submitted for an opinion almost doubled in the last months of the previous season. The Committee is internationally recognized as one of the foremost authorities on foreign stamps and is in regular contact with most foreign expert committees and expert-specialists for exchange of information and mutual aid in difficult cases. Expertizing terms are supplied on request, free of charge. Address of the Committee: 522 Fifth Avenue, New York 36, N. Y.

● A *Catalog of the Imperforate Classics of Europe* by our editor is in preparation and is scheduled for publication in 1956. A detailed announcement will be made in the next issue.