

move, most of it the property of our customers and therefore to be taken care of with special attention. It took three large vans and a dozen men more than eight hours of work to break up our old office and install us in the new one. Many days of preparatory work were spent by our staff, and it took more than a week before everything was again in its proper place. We like it in our new quarters, which are more modern and better adapted than the old ones, providing more space and wonderfully good natural light, an important feature in every stamp business. In moving to our new location, we have joined the general trend of New York's business to move east. Our move was more symbolic than real be-

cause we are actually still only around the corner from Fifth Avenue and in the center of New York's midtown business section, the commercial heart of the city, as Wall Street is the center of the financial one. We are now located only a few blocks from the Collectors Club, where most of the philatelic societies of New York congregate, and, last but not least, only one block from one of our favorite restaurants. After a few days in our new location, we felt so completely at home there that not even once did we go in the morning absentmindedly to our old location. We are sure that our customers also will like the comforts of our new office and that they will feel as at home there as we do.

## EUROPEAN CLASSICS

### XXII. IONIAN ISLANDS

The *Ionian Islands* are a group of seven large islands and a number of small ones, of which six are stretched along the west coast of the Greek peninsula, while the seventh — *Cerigo* (Greek *Kythera*) — is south of the southern promontory of that peninsula. They have an area of 740 square miles. The largest island is *Cephalonia* (Kephallenia), the smallest *Ithaka*, which covers only 44 sq. mi. The others are *Corfu* (Kerkyra), *Zante* (Zakynthos), *Santa Maura* (Leukos) and *Paxo*. During the classic stamp period, the islands were a separate political entity under the protectorate of Great Britain; the official language was first Italian, from 1850 on increasingly Greek, which is the language of the population. English was used only in foreign relations. The islands had a population of 213,000 in 1863 and were governed by a British High Commissioner, a six-member Senate and a 40-member Assembly. The islands were ceded to Greece on May 30, 1864 and incorporated into the Kingdom of Greece. — The seat of the British Governor was *Corfu* (Kerkyra), a town of about 25,000 population in 1863.

The *History* of the Ionian Islands is a very old one. *Corfu* was first mentioned in Homer's *Odyssey*, covering a period around 1200 B. C.; its name was at that time *Scheria*. The first authentic reports about the islands date from about 700 B. C. At that time they were colonized by Greeks from the mainland, but retained temporary

independence. Athens and Sparta fought for *Corfu* in the Peloponnesian War in the 5th century B. C. In the 4th and 3rd centuries B. C., the islands were subjected to various occupations, until in 229 B. C. *Corfu* fell into the hands of the Romans who kept it as a "free state". The other islands had the same fate in later years, for example *Cephalonia* in 189 B. C. Very little is known of the following thousand years, until in 890 A. D. we find the islands as a province of the Eastern Empire, called *Thema* of *Cephalonia*. The islands changed hands rather frequently; since 1081, they were alternately occupied by Sicily, Naples, Genova and by Greeks from the mainland. In 1479, several of the islands came under Turkish sovereignty. The Republic of Venice, which in the meantime had become the dominating power in the Western Mediterranean, started in the 14th century to extend its influence to the islands. In 1386, *Corfu* placed itself under its protection and in 1401 accepted Venetian sovereignty. The other islands followed, but the Venetians were partly driven out again by other Italian powers or by the Turks, until they established themselves firmly around 1500 on all islands except *Cerigo*, which changed hands frequently and only in 1717 definitely came under Venetian sovereignty. The rule of the Republic of Venice lasted until 1797, when the treaty of *Campo Formio* dissolved the Republic. In July 1797, the Ionian Islands became a French possession, but the French were driven out by a Russian-

Turkish force in October 1798. In 1800, the islands became for the first time a separate political entity as "Septinsular Republic", under Russian protectorate. The peace treaty of Tilsit again gave the islands to the French who occupied them in August 1807 and incorporated them into the province of Illyria. But shortly thereafter the islands came under attack by the British who occupied Cerigo, Zante, Cephalonia and Ithaca in October 1809, Santa Maura in April 1810, Paxo in March 1814 and finally Corfu in June 1814. In 1815, the treaty of Paris created the United States of Ionia, consisting of the seven islands as well as the district of Parga on the mainland, under the protectorate of Great Britain. This latter district was ceded to the Turkish Empire in 1819. The British administration did not interfere much with the local affairs and concentrated on the external affairs. After the independent Kingdom of Greece was created in 1827, a movement started on the islands for union with Greece. In 1848, the Assembly passed a resolution which requested immediate union, but only in 1862 did the British show willingness to accede under certain conditions to this wish of the population. On March 29, 1864, the five big European powers ended the protectorate. A few weeks later, on May 3, 1864, the British left the islands, and they were incorporated into Greece on June 2, 1864. After a short intermediary period, the Ionian Islands ceased to be a separate political entity and became Greek districts.

The *Postal History* of the Ionian Islands has its beginnings during the Venetian occupation, when the sailing ships of the Republic of Venice established a rather regular mail service from the islands to Venice. The earliest reports about such service are from late in the 17th century. No organized interinsular service seems to have existed at that time, letters being carried occasionally by passing ships. The first attempts at a domestic mail service were made during the first French Occupation (1797 to 1798), but actually were realized only during the Russo-Turkish rule (1798 to 1807), when the "Seven Island Mail Service" ("Posta Settinsulare") was established. From then on, the mail service was taken over and continued by the various occupying powers, first again by the French (1807 to 1809) and then by the British (1809 to

1815), and consolidated when the United States of Ionia under British protectorate were established. One post office functioned on each of the seven islands, and the general post office at Corfu supervised the six other post offices. The first postal law was passed in 1827 and reorganizations were ordered by the laws of May 21, 1845 and July 27, 1857, the latter also ordering the introduction of postage stamps, becoming effective on December 10, 1857. The foreign mail service was rather irregular and became more stabilized in 1830, when the newly organized Austrian Lloyd established a regular steamer service from Trieste to Constantinople with a stop at Corfu. Later, the Austrian Lloyd steamers also connected Corfu with the mainland at Syra, with Ancona, Malta and Alexandria. Almost all foreign mail was carried by the Austrian steamers which were also used for the mail to and from Great Britain via Trieste. A British steamship service from Liverpool via Malta to Corfu was rather irregular and used only for soldiers' and sailors' mail which paid a reduced rate. Between the islands, part of the mail was carried by the Austrian steamers which stopped at several of the islands, the balance transported by local steamers and sailing ships. Regular mail service by steamers existed between Corfu, Cephalonia, Zante, Santa Maura and Paxo, while only occasional service was maintained to Ithaka and Cerigo. When the islands were incorporated into Greece, it took some time before the postal service was completely integrated, the last remnants of the independent mail service being the special postal rates which were abolished only on January 2, 1865.

The extent of the mail service can be seen from statistics of the *number of letters* mailed in the Ionian Islands during the stamp period. In 1859, 115,000 letters were posted, which number increased to 215,000 in 1864, an increase of 80%, but still being not more than one letter a year per head of the population. Of 154,821 letters mailed in 1861, more than half, namely 79,713, were mailed at Corfu, 31,827 at Cephalonia, 29,109 at Zante, 7,206 at Santa Maura, 2,847 at Ithaka, 2,243 at Cerigo and 1,876 at Paxo. Of this quantity of letters, only about 15% were interinsular letters, while about 10% went to the mainland and about 75% were forwarded to the Austrian Lloyd

for transportation to various foreign countries, including Great Britain.

Of foreign countries, only *Austria* had a post office at Corfu. It was connected with the agency of the Austrian Lloyd, and the postal agent usually was the same person as the Lloyd agent. There are very few letters known which were posted directly at this Austrian post office. It mainly handled foreign mail which it received from the Ionian post offices or which it handed over to these post offices. It seems to have been a special arrangement that the Austrian postal service did not solicit receiving mail directly from the public and did not deliver mail to the addressees, but acted mainly as a forwarding post office for foreign mail. Only in the somewhat lawless interval after the British departed in 1864 and before the Greek postal administration took over, the Austrian mail service seems also to have accepted mail directly from the senders. In such cases not the Lloyd agency but the Austrian Consulate General in Corfu acted as agent, forwarding the mail to the Lloyd agency for transportation by sea. Mail was also delivered directly to the Lloyd steamers when they stopped at the harbor of Corfu or at other islands and then handled as any other ship mail.

Since 1821 the Ionian Islands had their own *Currency*, one obolus (ob) being equivalent to one tenth of a penny (p). Both currencies were in use simultaneously. For *Weight* and *Distances* the British measurements were used. As *Calendar*, the Gregorian calendar was in use, but when the Greek administration was established in 1864, the Julian calendar, which was 12 days late, was introduced as in Greece itself.

*Postage Stamps* were introduced in the Ionian Islands on *May 15, 1859*. No other kinds of postal stamps and no postal stationery were used before the Greek postal administration took over.

At the *Austrian post office* in Corfu, *Postage Stamps* were introduced on *October 1, 1864*, namely the stamps in soldi currency, at that time in use in Venetia and at the Austrian post offices in the Levant. Stamps were introduced in Corfu later than at all other Austrian Levant post offices, which was due to the change in sovereignty, making it doubtful that the post office there would be allowed to continue to operate. It seems that no Austrian postal stationery was

introduced at Corfu.

Concerning the *postal rates*, our knowledge is rather insufficient to come to valid conclusions. All authors, obviously one copying the other, refer to the postal law adopted on July 27, 1857, which became effective on December 10, 1857, as the basis of the rates during the period of issuance of postage stamps. The lean excerpts from this law published by various authors give the rates for domestic letters as follows: Up to  $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. 1p(10ob), over  $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. and up to 1oz. 2p(20ob), over 1oz. and up to 2oz. 4p(40ob). For each additional ounce, the postage was to be "doubled", which seems to be open to several interpretations. There is no doubt that these rates must have been altered or amended when postage stamps were issued, but no author is able to provide any information in this respect. Originally, only 1p and 2p stamps were ordered, but a  $\frac{1}{2}$ p stamp added to the order six months later, so that all three values were ready when the introduction of postage stamps took place on May 15, 1859. Several authors suppose that the  $\frac{1}{2}$ p stamp was for printed matter, but no indication exists in the published postal regulations that there was a reduced rate for printed matter, and we do not know of any case of such use of  $\frac{1}{2}$ p stamps. But they were rather frequently used on domestic letters, and we can find more letters franked with a 1p plus a  $\frac{1}{2}$ p stamp than domestic letters which are franked with 1p only. We also know frankings of 3p and 5p, which equally do not fit in the published rate schedule. The simultaneous employment of the 1p and  $1\frac{1}{2}$ p rates for domestic letters leads to the conclusion that the latter includes a surtax for a specific service. In variance with other authors we are inclined to believe that the  $\frac{1}{2}$ p surtax was charged for interinsular letters which were carried by the steamers of the Austrian Lloyd, a supposition which is supported by the fact that we know several letters with  $1\frac{1}{2}$ p frankings which were marked by the sender "Col Vapore Austriaco" or similarly, a marking which we have never seen on letters franked only with 1p. This in turn leads to the conclusion that the latter were carried by other means, probably local steamers, sailing ships or slower means of transportation, which fact justified a lower rate. But this is only a theory and the reason for the  $1\frac{1}{2}$ p frankings may have been a different one, which

can only be proven by the discovery of additional postal regulations. It is surprising that such have not been found up to now, despite the rather diligent efforts of a number of collectors. We must suppose that they have not survived the fires and earthquakes by which the islands were harassed from time to time. We know a number of registered domestic letters, but the postage on such single letters was either 1p or 1½p, and the registration fee, the amount of which is unknown, must have been paid additionally in cash. For letters to foreign countries, generally only the domestic postage was paid in stamps, although a few exceptions from this rule are known. It is noticeable that on such covers no 1½p frankings can be found and the rates conform to those officially decreed in 1857, namely 1p, 2p, 4p, etc. They paid postage only to the ship which transported the letters, and further postage was collected from the addressee. For letters carried by the ships of the Austrian Lloyd, 10s were collected from the addressee as a sea surtax; for such letters to Austria, 15s postage was collected in addition. These figures were usually marked on the face of the letters by crayon, "10" or "15/10" as the case may have been. As an exception, postage on some letters to foreign countries could also be paid in full to the destination; we know several such covers, all addressed to Austria or Lombardy-Venetia. The specific Ionian Islands rates remained in force for some time after the islands had come under Greek sovereignty. Only on January 2, 1865 (January 14, 1865 by the Gregorian calendar) were the Greek postal rates introduced on the islands.

A reduced letter rate of 1p was charged for Soldiers' and Sailors' Letters to Great Britain. Generally no Ionian Islands stamps were used on such letters, and when they were prepaid with stamps, the contemporary 1p stamps of Great Britain were employed for that purpose.

As stated before, the Ionian Islands postage stamps consisted of three denominations, ½p (50b), 1p (100b) and 2p (200b), which were all introduced at the same time, May 15, 1859. The 1p and 2p stamps obviously were for the single and double letter rate, and for lack of better information we must suppose that the ½p stamp was issued to pay for a surtax on domestic letters.

The use of stamps was not obligatory,

either in the domestic or in the foreign mail service. Postage could be paid at the same rates either with stamps or in cash. Unpaid letters paid double rates, but in the domestic service only. Actually, only on a very small percentage of letters was postage paid with stamps. The use of stamps decreased from year to year after their introduction; most of their use occurred in 1859 and 1860, much fewer were used in 1861 and 1862, while their use became very sporadic in 1863 and ceased completely in 1864. It has been estimated that from 1859 to 1863 inclusive not more than 3% of all letters were franked with stamps. There is no ready explanation why so few senders made use of the stamps. It seems that most people brought their letters to the post office anyway and stamps were not necessary in such cases. It may also have been that the strong Greek nationalism objected to the use of stamps with the likeness of the Queen of Great Britain and circumvented such use by paying postage in cash. Possibly the postmasters and postal clerks were participating in this kind of a conspiracy. There is evidence that the sales of the stamps ceased some time before the end of British rule. An early British collector who ordered full sheets of the stamps from an agent in Corfu late in 1863 could first obtain sheets of 1p and 2p stamps only; eventually, after a second effort, he obtained also one ½p sheet, but the Corfu agent reported at that time (late in January 1864) that there were no more stamps available at the post office there. We have no explanation why the sale of stamps was discontinued after only about 30% of the printed quantity had been sold. Of this latter quantity, about one third was obviously not purchased for franking purposes, but by stamp dealers and collectors, so that only about 20% of the printed stamps, therefore about 30,000 copies, were used for franking purposes.

The Austrian post office at Corfu charged 15s for the single letter to Austria or to the Austrian post offices in the Levant, various higher rates to other countries, except to Greece, to where the rate was only 10s. When stamps were introduced on October 1, 1864, probably only the two denominations needed for these rates, namely 10s and 15s, were introduced, but the use of other denominations seems possible, although actually only the 2s was found used at Corfu. Only stamps with the narrow perforation 14 are

known used at Corfu, which indicates that Corfu must have received all supplies before the second half of 1864 and none later.

The Ionian Islands postage stamps must have been *demonetized* when Greece took over on June 2, 1864, but no documentation of this measure is known. Their actual use had ceased already around the end of 1863. The Austrian stamps, which were introduced at the Austrian post office in Corfu only several months after the end of the use of Ionian stamps, were used for three months only, and they must have been withdrawn in December 1864, as we know of no such stamps used in Corfu after December 31, 1864. In this respect too, Corfu was unique, as all other Austrian Levant post offices did not discontinue the use of stamps. This was probably due to the fact that from 1865 on, the Austrian post office at Corfu acted strictly as transit post office and did not accept any more mail directly from the public.

The *design* of the postage stamps shows the head of Queen Victoria, faced to the left, in the center of a garter which contains the Greek inscription "IONIKON KRATOS", meaning "Ionian State"; the garter is placed in a rectangular ornamented frame. The head of the Queen was engraved by Charles Henry Jeens after a drawing in watercolor by Henry Corbould. The same drawing of the head had been used previously for the Queen's head on the 1854 issue of New South Wales and the 1857 issue of Ceylon, for which latter the engraving used on the Ionian Islands stamps originally was made. No value indication was included; to avoid the use of a double currency (local and British), distinction of the denomination was to be made by the color of the stamp.

The original *die* for the stamps was manufactured by engraving the frame and transferring into it the head of the Queen from the original die made for the first Ceylon issue.

To obtain the *printing material*, the same transfer roller process as for the engraved stamps of Great Britain was used by Perkins, Bacon & Co. of London, the printers of the stamps. It is described in Volume IV, page 34. The transfer roller was applied in a vertical direction to create the printing plate of 120 designs in ten rows of 12 designs each. The space between the rows is about 1½mm; between the columns it varies, generally being narrow, about 1mm,

but still narrower between several positions, especially 71 and 72, 83 and 84 and others. There are also two rather obvious double entries in positions 84 and 96 as well as a minor one in position 14. There was no margin print of any kind.

The *recess-printing* of the stamps was done rather carefully, and no varieties of any importance are noticeable. All three denominations were printed from the same plate.

As *paper*, hand-made paper with individual watermarks of a double-lined "1" and "2" on each stamp was used for the 1p and 2p stamps respectively. It was the same paper as used since 1854 for the 1p and 2p of New South Wales which were manufactured by the same printers. They did not care on which side of the paper they printed, and therefore regular position of the watermark seems equally common as reversed position. But stamps with inverted watermark are not known. No suitable watermarked paper was available for the ½p denomination — no such denomination was at that time used in New South Wales — and due to the pressure of time, this denomination was printed on unwatermarked hand-made paper. As is usually the case with hand-made paper, variations in the thickness are noticeable, but no other varieties of importance are known.

The *color scheme* was originally intended to be the same as for the stamps of Great Britain, *red* for the 1p and *blue* for the 2p. Accordingly, the red stamp was printed on paper with the watermark "1" and the blue stamp on paper with watermark "2". But the stamps were actually issued in reversed order, the blue stamp as 1p and the red stamp as 2p. The reason for this change, which was made by the local authorities, is unknown. The ½p was printed in yellow, a color which was not used for any engraved classic stamps of Great Britain, but for several British Colonial issues of that period. There are no shades of any importance due to the fact that there was only one printing of each denomination. The inks used for the stamps are very sensitive to sulphurization which is responsible for blackish shades of the blue and brownish ones of the yellow stamp.

The *gum* of the stamps was the same as on the contemporary stamps of other countries manufactured by Perkins, Bacon & Co.

It was more or less yellowish and becomes brownish under the influence of tropical climate.

The stamps of the Ionian Islands were issued *imperforate*. Due to the narrow spacing, most of the used stamps are close or cut into the design on one or more sides.

The stamps were issued as printed, in sheets of 120.

After the use of Ionian Islands stamps was discontinued in 1864, large quantities of *remainders* existed, as only about 30% of the stamps printed were used or sold to philatelists during the actual period of use. The London dealer W. S. Lincoln bought the remainders, about 35,000 copies of each denomination, at face in 1868. He used a large quantity of the ½p as wallpaper in his store, and therefore this denomination became the best one of the three *unused*, especially with original gum. While of the 1p and 2p sufficient quantities in singles and multiples with gum are available and a number of full sheets are still known, the ½p is far from plentiful, and blocks with original gum are not easy to find. We know of only one full sheet of this denomination, of which the margins were partly trimmed; it did not come from the remainders but was bought by a collector during the period of use.

In sharp contrast to the sufficient supply of unused stamps, the Ionian Islands stamps

belong to the most difficult ones in *used* condition. Of the about 700,000 letters mailed between May 15, 1859 and December 31, 1863, only about 22,000 to 24,000 were franked with stamps, which accounts for the total of about 30,000 stamps of all denominations together having been used for franking purposes. According to experience, about 4% of commercially used classic stamps have survived and have come into the possession of collectors and dealers, therefore we can assume that about 1200 used Ionian Islands stamps have survived. But of this small quantity, an estimated 75% were cancelled by crayon or pen strokes and only about 25% by postmarks. As only the latter can be proven to be genuinely used copies, especially when they are off cover, not more than about 300 copies of all three denominations together are available for the collectors of used stamps, which fact places used Ionian Islands stamps among the rarest stamps of Europe. The 1p stamp is the least rare one in used condition, while the ½p is much rarer and the 2p the rarest denomination. Of used multiples, cancelled by a postmark, we know only pairs of all three denominations, and we doubt that strips or blocks exist.

On *entires*, all Ionian Islands stamps are rare. Although cancellation by crayon or pen stroke is regular, *entires* with manuscript cancellation are unpopular and considered



Fig. 113

undesirable, although they are often sufficiently documented by a corresponding postmark alongside the stamp and by rate as well as by arrival and transit markings to be considered genuine without any reservation. Stamps on entires, cancelled by a postmark — sometimes in addition to a crayon or pen cancellation — are real rarities, and we doubt that more than sixty covers of this kind have been preserved. We estimate that about 35 of these covers are franked with the blue 1p stamp alone, another 15 with 1p blue plus ½p yellow; only few other frankings are known, among them the famous cover with two copies of each value (Fig. 113). The rarest denomination on cover is the red 2p. The ½p is the second rarest, but it is mostly used in combination with the 1p. Alone it is only known used in pair or two singles for the 1p rate, but it is not known used singly on entire, as obviously no ½p rate existed.

Of the *Austrian stamps* used at Corfu, the least rare is the 15s of the 1863 issue, followed at a considerable distance by the 10s of the same issue. Of other values, only a copy of the 2s is known, but the 3s and 5s also may exist. We have not seen stamps of the 1864 issue, perf. 9½, used at Corfu; it seems certain that they were never issued at Corfu, but as they were issued at other Levant post offices during 1864, occasional use at Corfu seems possible, although none is recorded. Of entires with Austrian stamps cancelled at Corfu, less than a dozen seem to have survived, all of them except one with 15s stamps, the one having a pair of 10s stamps as postage. They are all addressed to

Trieste or Constantinople. The majority of such covers originated in Corfu (Fig. 114), but we know two covers which were mailed at Leukos and show the Ionian LEUKAS postmark alongside the stamps (Fig. 115). All such covers are rarities and valued highly.

Due to the relatively ample supply of unused stamps, there exist no good *Forgeries* of the Ionian Islands stamps. The known examples, recess-printed or lithographed, are rather crude reproductions, especially the latter, and should not even fool a beginner. But the scarcity of used stamps has led to a large number of *Fakes*, by applying faked cancellations on unused copies. Such faked cancellations are either imitations of genuine postmarks, sometimes showing the town name misspelled, or pure phantasy. These fakes are often very well made and sometimes look rather convincing. No collector should buy any used Ionian Islands stamps without having them checked by a competent expert committee. The fakers, aware of the fact that the collectors prefer to acquire Ionian Islands stamps on entires, have supplied a considerable number of fakes, usually by affixing unused stamps to a stampless cover of the right period — they are plentiful — and applying a faked cancellation. Such faked covers are sometimes very expertly made and therefore considerably more dangerous than the fakes off cover. But the stampless covers used for these fakes have certain characteristics which help the expert to distinguish between good and bad even when the fakers have succeeded in making perfect imitations of the necessary cancellations. No knowledgeable collector will buy



Fig. 114

Fig. 115



a Ionian Islands cover which is not accompanied by the certificate of a qualified expert committee. If he neglects this normal precaution, it is his own fault if he has faked covers of this kind in his collection.

The first *postmarks* were used in the Ionian Islands during the rule of the Republic of Venice. Only one postmark is known from that period and only in a small number of examples, showing the arms of the republic — the lion of St. Mare — in an octagonal frame, with CEFA at left and LONIA at right. The known copies are from 1714. Most of the letters during the Venetian rule left the islands without postmark and received only in Venice one of the origin markings used on letters arriving there by sea. For a period of ninety years after that lonely Venetian postmark, which is rare, no postmarks seem to have been used on the islands. Only during the Napoleonic Wars were postmarks generally introduced in the islands. First, under Russian rule, a circular postmark inscribed POSTA SETTINSULARE CORFU was used, beginning in 1804. The use of this postmark was continued when the French took over, until 1813, but new straight line town postmarks stamped on the cover in addition to it. They are known used between 1808 and 1813. They are recorded from CEFALONIA, CORFU, PAXO and SANTA MAURA. When the British took over gradually between 1809 and 1814, they discontinued the use of the Russian and French postmarks. New double circle postmarks were introduced, for Corfu with the inscription ISOLE IONIE, for the other islands reading ISOLA DI CEFALONIA, ISOLA DI CERIGO, ISOLA D'ITACA, ISOLA DI SANTA MAURA and ISOLA DI ZANTE, the first ones appearing as early as 1811. Only Paxo made an exception, it used a single circle type POSTA DELL'ISOLA DI PAXO. A double circle marking inscribed LUXURI DI CEFALONIA is also known on few letters, but we have no information concerning its purpose. In 1825, a new type of Ionian postmark started to appear, for the first time including a date indication, day, month and year. Corfu obtained this type in 1825, the other post offices in 1829 or 1830. They were ovals with the date in the center, the town name being placed in a ribbon on the top of the oval. Such postmarks are known from all seven islands, CEFALONIA, CERIGO, CORFU, ITACA, PAXO, STA. MAURA and ZANTE. In Corfu and Cephalonia, special types of postmarks were in use simultaneously, in the former an oval with the arms of the Ionian Islands in the center and the inscription OFFICIO DELLA POSTE GENERALE CORFU, in the latter a double circle with the arms of the island (Cephalus and his dog) in the center and the inscription OFFICIO DELLA POSTE DE CEFALONIA. Another new type was introduced in 1845, but in Corfu only, namely a small double circle with ornaments at bottom and the date, including year, in the center. Up to that time, all postmarks had only Italian town names, and the date indications were in the same language. This started to change in 1853, when Greek inscriptions began to appear on the postmarks. Two post offices received such postmarks in the oval type

LONIA, ISOLA DI CERIGO, ISOLA D'ITACA, ISOLA DI SANTA MAURA and ISOLA DI ZANTE, the first ones appearing as early as 1811. Only Paxo made an exception, it used a single circle type POSTA DELL'ISOLA DI PAXO. A double circle marking inscribed LUXURI DI CEFALONIA is also known on few letters, but we have no information concerning its purpose. In 1825, a new type of Ionian postmark started to appear, for the first time including a date indication, day, month and year. Corfu obtained this type in 1825, the other post offices in 1829 or 1830. They were ovals with the date in the center, the town name being placed in a ribbon on the top of the oval. Such postmarks are known from all seven islands, CEFALONIA, CERIGO, CORFU, ITACA, PAXO, STA. MAURA and ZANTE. In Corfu and Cephalonia, special types of postmarks were in use simultaneously, in the former an oval with the arms of the Ionian Islands in the center and the inscription OFFICIO DELLA POSTE GENERALE CORFU, in the latter a double circle with the arms of the island (Cephalus and his dog) in the center and the inscription OFFICIO DELLA POSTE DE CEFALONIA. Another new type was introduced in 1845, but in Corfu only, namely a small double circle with ornaments at bottom and the date, including year, in the center. Up to that time, all postmarks had only Italian town names, and the date indications were in the same language. This started to change in 1853, when Greek inscriptions began to appear on the postmarks. Two post offices received such postmarks in the oval type



of 1825, inscribed in Greek ZAKYNTHOS and KEPHALLENIA. The former was replaced in 1854 by a large double circle with the same inscription and ornaments at bottom, a type very similar to the contemporary postmarks of Greece. Eventually, small double circle postmarks with ornaments at bottom appeared between 1859 and 1861 for three more post offices, namely ITHAKA, KYTHERA and LEUKAS, the town name being in Greek on all three. Only Corfu and Paxo retained the postmarks with Italian inscriptions until the end of the Ionian Islands stamp period in 1864.

Special markings were in use for paid letters, starting at Corfu as early as 1819, during the French occupation. A rectangular FRANCA was introduced at that time and continued in use after the British took over. Other post offices introduced such markings between 1821 and 1829. They were ovals or rectangles inscribed FRANCA, the former being known from Corfu, Ithaka and Santa Maura, the latter from Cephalonia, Paxo and Zante. A FRANCA marking in a double lined rectangle with obliquely shaped corners is reported from Cerigo. These paid markings remained in use to the end of the Ionian Islands stamp period. They were used on domestic as well as on foreign mail. For domestic mail, a new type was introduced in 1835, a small double circle inscribed POSTA PAGATA, which is known used in Corfu, Ithaka, Santa Maura and Paxo. In 1853 and 1855 respectively, Cephalonia and Zante introduced paid markings with the Greek letters D and P at opposite ends of a small oval, which for Zante had an additional oval in the center. These markings were used for domestic mail only and the amount paid marked with crayon or pen in their center. On letters from Corfu to foreign countries, several P. D. markings can be found used occasionally, but it seems uncertain whether they were used there or applied by a foreign post office. At the three largest post offices, special markings for paid mail to foreign countries were introduced in 1844. They were made in London and show a circle topped by a crown. The inscription reads PAID AT CEPHALONIA, PAID AT CORFU and PAID AT ZANTE respectively. These "crowned circle" markings remained in use until the end of the British rule.

There existed special markings for official

mail, which paid no postage, but it seems that these markings were not applied by the post offices but by the government agencies where such mail originated. During the stamp period registered letters received a rectangular marking with Greek inscription which is always so indistinct that the meaning of the inscription has not been ascertained. A straight line RECOM. marking of the type which was in use in Austria and at the Austrian post offices abroad occasionally can be found, but it was probably applied by the Austrian post office at Corfu.

The Ionian Islands post offices used their regular postmarks also as arrival markings. They were placed on the face of the letters, so that domestic letters usually show two postmarks on the face, that of the mailing post office and that of the delivery post office. This fact has confused some authors, so that they have assigned several additional markings to the wrong post offices.

Some authors were also mystified by other markings, sometimes found on letters originating in the Ionian Islands, for which they could not find a proper explanation. In all cases which we could investigate, the markings in question were not Ionian Islands markings but applied by foreign post offices. This is especially true for the straight line marking "Jonia", which is an Austrian origin marking, applied by the Austrian border post office, as well as straight lines DA CORFU and LEVANTE, which were stamped on mail arriving at Trieste by ships from or via Corfu.

The color of the Ionian Islands postmarks was black during the Venetian and Russian period, during the French occupation first black, later also red. During the British rule, there seems to have been no regulation in regard to the color of the postmarks and we find them applied, seemingly without any system, in black, red, blue or green.

When postage stamps were introduced on May 15, 1859, no specific provision seems to have been made how the stamps should be cancelled. Generally, the post offices used the black crayon, which was employed to note the rate on the letters, also for the cancellation of the stamps, either in the form of crossed or of parallel lines. In some cases, pen strokes were used for the same purpose. The pre-stamp period town postmarks were stamped alongside the stamps in all these cases. Only the three largest post

offices also used a second method of cancellation, by employing one of their postmarks for that purpose. At Corfu, the oval FRANCA postmark was the main one used as canceller; the small double circle town postmark occurs much less frequently. Only occasionally two P. D. markings, one in Italics, the other in thick and rather worn Roman letters, were employed to cancel stamps. In Cephalonia, the oval town postmark with Greek inscription was the principal one used as canceller, much less frequently the boxed FRANCA marking. In Zante, the large ornamented double circle with Greek inscription served in the majority of cases for the same purpose, while only occasionally the boxed FRANCA marking was used as canceller. Of the smaller post offices, only St. Maura used its oval town postmark occasionally also as canceller. Of special markings, the boxed registration marking as well as the Austrian RECOM. can on rare occasions also be found used as cancellers. We have never seen other cancellations than the above ones and also no postmarks of Cerigo, Ithaka or Paxo on stamps. Often we find the stamps with double cancellation, by crayon or pen strokes in addition to a postmark.

The color of the cancellations on the Ionian Islands stamps was black or blue, as an exception also red, which color was mostly used for cancellations with the P. D. markings.

For letters for which postage was paid in cash, the same system as in the pre-stamp period continued. Domestic letters received either the double circle POSTA PAGATA or the oval with Greek D and P, in the center of which the paid postage was marked in manuscript. These handstamps were used only on domestic covers for which postage was paid in cash, and Ionian Islands stamps found on covers with such paid markings are faked, the stamps either not belonging on the cover and/or having faked cancellation. Contrariwise, the FRANCA markings which were used on all foreign mail now can be found on domestic and foreign letters regardless of whether postage was paid in stamps or in cash.

The British 1p stamps which were used on soldiers' and sailors' mail usually were cancelled only on arrival in England. As an exception, we know the PAID AT CORFU, which has not been found on Ionian Islands stamps, used on the contemporary 1p of

Great Britain.

The Ionian Islands postmarks were continued in use when Greece took over, but only insofar as they had Greek inscriptions. They are known alongside the stamps, which were cancelled by newly introduced numeral cancellers, but as exceptions also were used as cancellers on Greek stamps.

The Austrian post office at Corfu had no postmark of its own before 1864. We occasionally find the oval marking of the Lloyd agency inscribed AGENZIA DEL LLOYD AUSTRIACO CORFU on pre-stamp covers. When the Austrian soldi stamps were introduced at the Corfu post office in 1864, they were either cancelled by the small double circle CORFU postmark of the Ionian post office, in black or, much rarer, in red (Fig. 115), or by the oval seal of the Austrian Consulate General at Corfu in black, inscribed I. R. CONSOLATE GENERALE IN CORFU, with the double-headed eagle of the Austrian coat of arms in the center (Fig. 114). Only in 1874, when the Austrian post office was again dealing only with transit mail, did it receive a postmark of its own, a single circle CORFU, which can be found as transit marking on the reverse side of covers, but which is also known in a few cases used as canceller, probably on stamps which escaped cancellation by the mailing post offices.

The Ionian Islands are one of those countries which a collector can complete very easily. The *Scott Catalog* prices the three denominations together at \$20.00 unused, therefore within the reach of even a small collector. It is much more difficult to get these three stamps used, especially when the collector, as he certainly should, will take only postmarked copies which are certified as genuine by a qualified expert committee. The *Scott Catalog* prices the 1p and 2p equally high at \$50.00, the 1/2p slightly higher, at \$60.00. The collector will soon find out that by far the easiest to obtain is the 1p. Much harder to obtain are used 1/2p and this denomination should be priced about twice as high as the 1p. Genuinely cancelled 2p are the rarest and a valuation three times as high as that of the 1p would not even fully take care of this great difference in rarity. On cover, all Ionian Islands stamps are rarities. Even the 1p on cover will fetch ten times catalog price, and the 1/2p — which is only known in multiple frankings or to-

gether with other values — will sell considerably higher. Only a few covers are known with the 2p and a perfect and unquestionable cover with this stamp will not be too difficult to sell at a four figure price.

In regard to *Philatelic Literature*, the Kohl Handbook is outstanding by providing an excellent monograph which is still up-to-date, except for small details. Unfortunately, no English translation has been published, and the collector who does not read German will have to rely on scattered articles in the English language philatelic press which supply only meager information. Especially about the stamps and their use little has been published; most authors have concentrated on the postmarks, of which more material is available. This lack of adequate literature is not felt by the average collector, due to the fact that the Ionian Islands are an unpopular country par excellence. The unused stamps are so easy to obtain that they have never attracted much interest, and used stamps are not only difficult to expertize but also hard to obtain at all. The largest collection of Ionian Islands covers, which was broken up only recently, contained less than two dozen covers with postmarked Ionian Islands stamps, and it seems doubtful that a similar collection can ever be assembled again, as the cover material is now scattered in several large general cover collections. If we consider the great rarity of Ionian Islands covers it must be surprising that the above mentioned collection sold at auction for less than \$10,000, which figure shows on the one hand how cheap rarities can be bought when they belong to an unpopular country, and on the other hand that an enterprising collector of means should be able to assemble for a relatively small amount the biggest collection of such an interesting country only because most collectors are afraid to "invest" in a country which is difficult to expertize and which they must buy on the basis of confidence in the experts in the field. For a collector who has the money to buy them and who has studied them so that he can form his own opinion, the Ionian Islands are a magnificent classic field. A collection of its stamps and postmarks can compete successfully with that of any other country where equally rare and interesting stamps exist.

(Next: XXIII, Italy)

## MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

● The next issue of the *MERCURY STAMP JOURNAL* is scheduled for May 1959.

● Moving to our new location brought us a large number of good wishes by letter, wire and cable, as well as gifts of flowers etc. for our new office. We appreciate this thoughtfulness and want to thank everyone who has contributed to this welcome in our new premises.

● Bound Volume IV, containing Nos. 37 to 48 and index, is now available. Price \$5.00, post free. Bound Volume III (Nos. 25 to 36 and index) also can be supplied at the same price as long as it lasts. Bound Volumes I and II are out of print, but when moving to our new location we found a few sets of unbound Volume I. They are offered at \$5.00, post free. Of back numbers, only Nos. 12, 26, 30 to 39 and 41 to 48 are still available, at 25c each. We will be thankful for the return of all other numbers. Especially needed, to complete volumes, are Nos. 2, 4, 5, 6, 15, 17, 21 and 40; we will send upon request any other two numbers for the return of each of these numbers.

● Our editor will leave New York for a trip to Europe on May 13, 1959. He intends to visit London (May 19 to 21 and again July 1 to 13), Hamburg (during the "Interposta", May 21 to 31), Hanover (June 1, 2), Frankfurt-Wiesbaden (June 3, 4), Munich (June 5 to 7), Vienna (June 7 to 19), Switzerland, staying in Zurich, Basel, Bern, Luzern, Geneva and Lausanne (June 19 to 25) and Paris (June 25 to 30). Return to New York on July 19, 1959. Of the other partners, Herbert J. Bloch will join our editor at Hamburg and generally travel with him on the same schedule, returning to New York also on July 19. John H. Powell will sail for Europe on April 24 and will also be present at Hamburg during the Interposta, otherwise follow an independent schedule and return to New York only on October 5. Inquiries and requests for appointments should be made to our New York office before May 1. The definite itinerary and the European addresses at which our partners will be available during their stay will be published in the next issue.

● Our office will be closed for all business and no mail of any kind can be answered

MERCURY STAMP JOURNAL