


<p><b>EARLY SOURCES OF PHILATELY</b>                  A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FRIST                  PROFESSIONAL PHILATELIC JOURNALS</p>		<p><b>Cultural Studies</b></p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> philately, stamp collecting, professional journal, history of civilisation, auxiliary sciences of history.</p>
<p><b>Balázs Kántás</b></p>	<p>Museologist-librarian-archivist, scientific advisor, Stamp Museum, Hungary</p>	
<p><b>Abstract</b></p> <p>Stamp collecting is not merely a hobby, but an interdisciplinary activity with its own rules, theoretical and historical context, and scientific—or at least quasi-scientific—nature. Philately is now not merely a field of collecting, but primarily an auxiliary science of history, since the postage stamp is not merely a collectible type of document, but a primary historical source. As a quasi-scientific field, philately also has its own specialized press, with professional journals dating back to the second half of the 19th century. This brief research article examines the early sources of philately—the first European philatelic journals of the 19th century—in a comparative context, seeking to situate the history of stamp collecting within a broader context of cultural studies and the history of civilization.</p>		

### INTRODUCITON – PHILATELY AS A DISCIPLINE

The history of stamp collecting is closely linked to the development of modern, primarily state-run postal services. When the first postage stamp appeared in Great Britain in 1840—the famous Black Penny bearing the portrait of Queen Victoria—it is unlikely that anyone could have imagined that within a few decades these tiny pieces of paper, these postal stamps, would become a passion for the masses. In the 1840s and 1850s, stamps were still used primarily for practical purposes, as securities proving payment of postal service fees, but it soon became customary for people—especially young people and intellectuals—to set aside the more special pieces. According to various historical studies, stamp collecting had already become widespread in Europe and North America by the 1860s, and organized frameworks for this fascinating activity soon emerged.

By the second half of the 19th century, stamp collecting had become a genuine craze affecting broad segments of the population. The rapidly expanding postal network and the ever-increasing variety of stamps issued by more and more countries offered a vast selection, which encouraged collecting and trading. It was at this time that the concept of “philately” itself emerged, which no longer meant merely collecting, but rather the systematic, informed study of stamps. Collectors increasingly focused on the different printing variations of stamps, their methods of use, their historical context, and even their economic value, expressed in monetary terms. By the end of the century, the first major stamp collections had been established, dealers and auctions had emerged, and philately had become one of the characteristic hobbies of bourgeois culture.

By the early 20th century, stamp collecting had evolved into an international phenomenon spanning countries. Clubs, associations, and professional organizations were established across

Europe, and lively exchange networks developed among collectors. By this time, philately had partly become a scholarly pursuit, as identifying stamps and determining their value required increasing expertise. Moreover, some researchers used stamps as historical sources, for example, to study state symbols, political changes, or economic processes. The classical era—roughly up to World War I, and in part perhaps extending to the interwar period—can be considered the “golden age” of philately, when the prestige and social acceptance of stamp collecting reached their peak.

From the very beginning, the rapidly developing philatelic trade press, which emerged alongside collecting activities, played a key role in this development. Philatelic journals are, in fact, almost as old as collecting itself: as early as the 1860s, publications appeared that featured news, descriptions, prices, and expert analyses related to individual stamps. These publications helped collectors identify postage stamps, recognize the forgeries that were already appearing at that time, understand market conditions, and organize their collections. The specialized press also fostered international connections, as collectors from different countries could read the same articles and discuss them with one another. From the very beginning, philatelic journals have thus not only accompanied but also actively shaped the development of stamp collecting, and to this day they remain one of the most important pillars and professional foundations of the collector’s work.

### **PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS IN THE WORLD IN GENERAL**

As for professional journals, the broader history of such publications is, in fact, linked to the emergence of modern scientific communication, with roots stretching all the way back to the 17th century. The first scientific journals—such as the French *Journal des sçavans* and the English *Philosophical Transactions* (both launched in 1665)—served primarily the purpose of enabling researchers in various disciplines to share their findings with one another as quickly and widely as possible. These early publications did not yet have the rigorous peer review or editorial process we recognize today, but even those times there was a growing need for scientific knowledge to be disseminated not in isolated manuscripts but in a regularly published, accessible form. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the number of academic journals increased significantly, particularly in Europe, in parallel with the institutionalization of academic life and the development of modern universities. Journals became increasingly specialized: separate journals were established for individual disciplines—such as history, medicine, or the natural sciences. This process contributed to the separation and professionalization of individual fields of study, as researchers could now publish and discuss their findings with one another in forums dedicated to their own disciplines. By the end of the 19th century, specialized journals had become central institutions and forums for debate in the scientific community, and a researcher’s prestige was increasingly determined by the journal in which they published their results and the feedback they received from leading figures in their field.

By the early 20th century, the fundamental operational model of modern academic journals—which remains influential to this day—had taken shape. Editorial oversight and the practice of peer review became increasingly common, ensuring the quality and credibility of publications. Journals served not only as platforms for publication but also formed the basis for the self-organization of scientific communities: they defined what constituted a relevant research topic and contributed to the formation of the identity of individual disciplines.

The significance of academic journals is evident on multiple levels. On the one hand, they enable the rapid and structured dissemination of scientific findings; on the other, they ensure the verification and archiving of information and results generated within the scientific context. Furthermore, they play a vital role in maintaining the network of scientific communication: through them, researchers connect with one another, respond to each other's work, and build upon existing knowledge. Journals are therefore not merely “publication platforms,” but active shapers and formers of the internal development of individual scientific fields.

Overall, it can be said that academic journals have been one of the most important infrastructures of scientific life from the very beginning. Without them, the dissemination of research results would be slower, more irregular, and less controllable. Modern scientific thought and collaboration would be unimaginable without them, as these publications provide the common platform through which knowledge is continuously expanded and renewed.

It is also worth noting here that the beginnings of stamp cataloguing are closely linked to the emergence of philately and the professionalization of stamp collecting in the second half of the 19th century. When stamp collecting became a mass hobby in the 1860s, collectors soon faced a fundamental problem: the rapidly growing volume and variety of stamps made the collection unmanageable for them. Consequently, reference books and catalogues were needed to identify the stamps. It was during this period that the first simple lists and catalogues appeared, which, though still in their infancy, attempted to systematize known stamp issues. Notable among these are the early German and French catalogues, as well as the directories emerging in the Anglo-Saxon world, which gradually became more detailed and soon began to include illustrations of individual philatelic items to ensure the clearest possible identification.

By the end of the 19th century, stamp catalogues had become essential tools of philately. Major, internationally used publications appeared, such as the British Stanley Gibbons, the American Scott Catalogue, and the German Senf catalogue. These not only listed the stamps but also organized them by country, issue, and even printing variations, and increasingly provided collector's prices as well. The catalogues thus served simultaneously as identification aids and as professional publications guiding the collector's market. It was during this period that the practice of assigning individual catalogue numbers to specific stamps emerged, a practice that remains the foundation of philatelic communication to this day.

The development of catalogizing contributed significantly to the professionalization of philately. Collectors no longer organized their materials solely according to their own individual systems and criteria, but could align with uniform, internationally accepted structures. This enabled the comparison of collections, the simplification of exchange and trade, and the more precise identification of rarities and variants. Catalogues were also tools for accumulating and synthesizing knowledge: each new edition updated and expanded existing knowledge, thus continuously reflecting the progress of philatelic research.

For collectors, therefore, the publication of catalogues marked a true turning point. With their help, a field that had previously been difficult to navigate and often chaotic became systematized and “readable.” Identifying stamps, recognizing missing items in a collection, and even setting collecting goals became much easier. It is no exaggeration to say that without cataloguing, philately could not have become a widely practiced activity with at least some scientific rigor. Early stamp catalogues were thus not merely tools, but fundamental shapers of collectors’ thinking and practice. The relationship between philatelic catalogues and specialized journals has been extremely close and mutually beneficial since the early days of collecting. While catalogues primarily served to organize and identify stamps and provide guidance on their prices and values, specialized journals were forums for communicating the latest information, news, and research findings. Articles published in journals often served as the basis for catalogue updates: new issues, rarities, printing errors, misprints, and certain variations of stamps were first documented in philatelic journals before taking their final form in the next edition of the continuously updated catalogues. At the same time, the catalogues provided a common language for the magazines’ readership—through catalogue numbers and classification principles, collectors could easily identify and compare the stamps presented, and they did not need a very high level of foreign language proficiency if they did not speak the language of the catalogue. This close interaction enabled philately to evolve not merely as a hobby, but increasingly as a scholarly and internationally accessible collecting practice, where the rapid dissemination of information and the uniformity of classification played a fundamental role in the development of the collecting community.

As it was mentioned earlier, the history of philatelic journals is almost as old as stamp collecting itself. Barely two decades after the introduction of postage stamps (1840, Penny Black), the first specialized journals appeared in the 1860s, primarily in England, France, and Germany. These early publications—such as the English *The Stamp-Collector’s Magazine* or, later, *The Philatelic Journal of Great Britain*—can be considered the “founding sources” of the modern philatelic press. Initially, these were more amateurish publications edited by enthusiastic collectors, featuring news, exchange notices, and basic descriptions, but they soon began to develop a more scholarly approach.

In the second half of the 19th century, philately rapidly became a mass hobby in Europe, and in parallel, the number of philatelic periodicals grew explosively. The literature emphasizes

that philatelic journals are almost as old as the practice of collecting itself and played a key role in the flow of information among collectors. These publications not only reported news but also established the language for describing stamps, systematized knowledge, and contributed to the creation of catalogues and standards. By the end of the 19th century, the philatelic press had thus become one of the foundational institutions of the collector community, and philately had risen to become a more or less scientific field, which today can best be classified under the history of science and technology, as well as cultural history.

Germany played a particularly important role in the professionalization of the philatelic trade press, where the developed infrastructure of book and newspaper publishing—above all, Leipzig’s central role—favoured the emergence of specialized journals. By the end of the 19th century, numerous significant philatelic journals were in circulation in the German-speaking world, including the *Illustriertes Briefmarken-Journal*, which holds historical significance in the history of specialized journals and stood out from the field with its large circulation and rich illustrations. German journals generally had a well-organized publishing infrastructure and maintained close ties with the stamp trade, which contributed to their professionalization. These journals no longer published merely hobbyist-level announcements or individual collectors’ opinions, but also detailed research findings, studies on postal history, and critical analyses.

By the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the philatelic trade press had evolved into an international network. Journals from different countries regularly cited one another, reprinted articles from each other, published full translations or press review-style summaries of announcements from sister journals, and disseminated new philatelic discoveries. This network enabled philately to gradually develop into a “quasi-scientific” discipline, one that at least possessed its own methodology and professional standards. The journals played an important role in exposing the increasingly widespread philatelic forgeries, documenting rare stamps, and making the entire, ever-expanding collector’s market more transparent.

The period before World War I can certainly be considered the golden age of philatelic journals. It was then that the structural and content model—regular publication, professional articles, news, advertisements, and illustrations—took shape, defining the genre and the field’s communication standards for a long time to come. During the interwar period, the journals continued to operate, though international relations were occasionally severed due to the increasingly frosty relations between certain states, and economic crises also affected their operations. World War II ultimately led to the discontinuation or transformation of many journals, and a new era began in philately. Overall, philatelic journals were not merely a side effect of stamp collecting, but represented one of its most important organizing forces. These journals created the informational and knowledge infrastructure without which philately could not have become a widely practiced, partly scholarly field of collecting.

## UNITED KINGDOM – THE STAMP COLLECTOR’S MAGAZINE

The British philatelic periodical *The Stamp Collector’s Magazine* was one of the earliest and most influential journals of 19th-century philately, launched in Great Britain in 1863 during a period of rapid growth in stamp collecting. According to philatelic history literature, this magazine was among the pioneering ventures of the philatelic press and played a significant role in transforming collecting into an organized, international activity that spanned nations and cultures. Through its regular publication and highly structured content, it contributed to the emergence of philately as a “quasi-scientific” field, meaning that collecting became more than just a hobby pursued and loved by many.

One of the key features of this distinguished British journal was the diversity and openness of its author community. Among its regular contributors was the first significant female philatelist, Adelaide Lucy Fenton, who used several pseudonyms. For example, she wrote under the name *Herbert Camoens*—she chose this pseudonym, which bore the name of the Portuguese poet, partly because it also incorporated the name of the Belgian stamp dealer Jean-Baptiste Moens—and she also published under the names *Fentonia*, *Celestina*, *Virginia*, and *SJV*, the latter referring to her home in Clifton, Bristol, St. John’s Villa. As a token of gratitude, the editor presented her with bound copies of the journal, which are now housed in the library of the Royal Philatelic Society in London, along with Fenton’s handwritten marginal notes. The magazine’s pages also featured the Scottish philatelist Peter Anderson, who published his first article here in May 1869 at the age of just sixteen and later became a prominent collector and specialist writer on Anglo-Saxon philately.

The magazine’s content was highly diverse: it presented new stamp issues, analysed their various printing variations in detail, addressed the identification of forgeries—which were already spreading at the time—and offered practical advice to collectors. Additionally, through its correspondence column, it provided an active forum for the international collecting community. This communication platform played a key role in helping philatelists develop a common vocabulary and methodology.

## BELGIQUE – LE TIMBRE-POSTE

The journal *Le Timbre-Poste*, was one of the earliest and most influential philatelic journals in continental Europe, launched by Jean-Baptiste Moens in Brussels in February 1863. Historical literature unanimously emphasizes that this was the first French-language philatelic journal, which, with its regular monthly publication, played an important role in the spread and institutionalization of stamp collecting in Europe. Its launch was closely linked to the process by which philately evolved into an international, organized community in the mid-19th century, marking the beginning of the hobby’s professionalization.

The content and spirit of the journal were fundamentally shaped by Moens's professional activities; he was not only an editor but also a prominent stamp dealer and philatelic researcher. The magazine provided detailed coverage of new stamp issues, their variants, and their characteristics; it addressed the issue of forgeries, which were already appearing at that time; and it served as an important source of information for collectors. However, it later emerged that Moens's brother-in-law, Louis François Hanciau, was actually responsible for a significant portion of the journal's literary and substantive content; though he worked behind the scenes, he nonetheless played a decisive role in shaping the journal's professional standards.

The journal's scope gradually expanded and evolved. In 1879, starting with Volume 17, a supplementary supplement titled *Le Timbre Fiscal* was published, which dealt with fiscal (duty or revenue) stamps. This supplement was fully integrated into the journal starting in January 1897, at which point it finally adopted the name *Le Timbre-Poste et Le Timbre Fiscal*. This expansion of scope clearly demonstrates that philately had by this time moved beyond classic postage stamps, and the spectrum of collecting had become increasingly broad, while fiscal philately began to emerge as an independent and respected field of collecting.

*Le Timbre-Poste* was published until 1900, when Moens retired. As a result, it was one of the longest-running early philatelic journals of its era. Its significance is evident in many respects: on the one hand, it contributed to the formation and professionalization of the French-speaking philatelic community; on the other hand, it played a key role in the international flow of information, the development of collecting standards, and the institutionalization of stamp collecting. The information published in the journal had not only scholarly but also economic impact, as it significantly influenced the valuation of individual stamps and the functioning of the emerging philatelic market, which increasingly operated according to its own rules.

Overall, *Le Timbre-Poste* can be regarded as one of the foundational institutions of the classical era of philately, as it not only reflected but also actively shaped collecting practices, contributed to the development of stamp classification and the emergence of professional discourse, and fostered lively connections among collectors in various countries. Through its long existence and international influence, it remained one of the most important milestones and key sources in the history of the philatelic press.

## ITALY - IL COLLEZIONISTA DI FRANCOBOLLI

The Italian journal called *Il Collezionista di Francobolli*, first issued in Turin in 1864, occupies a foundational place in the history of Italian philately as the earliest known specialized journal devoted to stamp collecting in the country. Its emergence must be understood within the broader European context of the early 1860s, when philately was rapidly evolving from a casual pastime into a more structured and increasingly systematized field of interest. Following the political unification of Italy in 1861 and the consolidation of a national postal system, the

conditions were particularly favourable for the development of a domestic philatelic culture, and this journal became one of its earliest expressions.

The periodical was primarily oriented toward collectors and dealers, reflecting the practical needs of a still-forming community. Its contents typically included notices of new stamp issues, basic descriptions of postage stamps and their varieties, price indications, and exchange advertisements. Such material, while modest by later standards, was essential at a time when no standardized catalogues or widely accepted classification systems yet existed in Italy. In this sense, *Il Collezionista di Francobolli* functioned not only as a professional medium but also as an early tool of knowledge organization, helping to shape the terminology and analytical frameworks that would later define philately as a semi-scientific discipline.

Another important aspect of the journal was its role in connecting Italian collectors to the wider European philatelic network. Although primarily national in focus, it operated within an emerging transnational exchange of information, influenced by earlier French and British publications and, in turn, contributing to the circulation of data about Italian issues abroad. This interplay between local and international perspectives was characteristic of early philatelic journalism and crucial for the standardization of collecting practices.

Despite its pioneering importance, the journal itself does not appear to have had a long lifespan or large circulation, which was typical of many early philatelic periodicals. Nevertheless, its historical significance lies precisely in its role as an initiator: it represents the moment when Italian philately began to articulate itself in print, moving beyond isolated collectors toward a more organized and communicative community. As such, *Il Collezionista di Francobolli* can be seen as both a product and a driver of the early institutionalization of philately in Italy, bridging the gap between amateur enthusiasm and the more formalized structures that would emerge in the later nineteenth century.

## SPAIN – EL INDICADOR DE LOS SELLOS

The development of philatelic journalism in Spain and Italy during the nineteenth century reveals both shared structural patterns and notable differences in the formation of collecting cultures in Southern Europe. In both countries, the emergence of specialized philatelic periodicals occurred slightly later than in the leading centres of Western Europe, such as France, Great Britain, and Belgium, where the first journals appeared already in the early 1860s. Nevertheless, Spain and Italy belonged to the broader first generation of philatelic publishing, reflecting the rapid diffusion of stamp collecting as a transnational cultural practice.

In Italy, the publication of the abovementioned journal *Il Collezionista di Francobolli* marked an early and relatively prompt adoption of philatelic journalism. Appearing only a few years after the pioneering French and British journals, the Italian periodical indicates that a structured collecting community had already begun to take shape shortly after the political

unification of the country in 1861. The journal played a formative role in establishing a national philatelic discourse, providing collectors with information on new issues, classifications, and market conditions. Its relatively early appearance suggests a strong receptivity to international influences and a comparatively integration into European philatelic networks.

In contrast, the Spanish case, exemplified by *El Indicador de los Sellos* (1870), reflects a slightly delayed but still significant engagement with philatelic journalism. Although Spain had introduced postage stamps earlier, in 1850, the development of a specialized press took more time. This delay can be linked to broader socio-cultural factors, including a less consolidated bourgeois public sphere and a slower institutionalization of hobbyist practices. When Spanish philatelic journals did emerge, they closely followed established European models, focusing on descriptive and practical content rather than analytical depth. The journal was published by a certain Eduardo Gilabert, of whom very few is known. A key similarity between the two countries lies in the functional role of their early journals. In both Spain and Italy, philatelic periodicals served primarily as instruments of communication and organization within still-emerging collecting communities. They disseminated basic knowledge, facilitated exchanges, and contributed to the gradual standardization of terminology and classification. At the same time, both national traditions remained strongly influenced by foreign models, particularly French publications, which acted as intermediaries of philatelic knowledge across Europe.

However, a notable difference can be observed in the pace and extent of integration into international networks. Italian philately appears to have aligned more rapidly with broader European developments, while Spanish philatelic journalism initially retained a somewhat more localized character. Despite this, both traditions eventually converged toward similar patterns of professionalization and internationalization by the late nineteenth century.

The first and only one single issue of the journal *El Indicador de los Sellos* was only a four-page, two-column publication, in which Eduardo Gilabert served as both editor and managing editor, and of which only a single issue was ever published. This first and only issue contains three distinct sections: in the first, the editor-in-chief himself addresses “...The Public...”, in order to justify, in some way, the need for “... this newspaper...” – as Mr. Gilabert himself defines it – since he states that there are many families in which at least one member, “...has the good taste to follow this fashion...”, in clear reference to stamp collecting, and especially given that all the others published at the time were written in a language other than Spanish. In the second section, the editor himself provides a detailed summary of the launch of the world’s first stamp in England, giving details of the “Penny Black”, and, as it features no illustration whatsoever, he strives to provide the reader with as much detail as possible about these early English stamps, the composition of the sheets, and even what Mr Gilabert calls “envelopes”, which are none other than what are known in philatelic jargon as “Mulready Envelopes”. It is clear that the magazine has little substance if we were to study it. With only a single copy, it is difficult to judge how positive or otherwise it was for Spanish philately, and not even the press of the time covered it as they

would have done with other more important magazines. Only two Spanish newspapers *La Igualdad* and *La República* are known to have devoted space to deal with the magazine, and they did so with identical or similar text. It is clear is that Spain's first philatelic magazine was launched with the ambition of continuing. Throughout the text on its first four pages, there is a clear intention that this issue should not be the only one. The magazine's editor himself is consistent in his view that this publication is necessary to assist Spanish philatelists, and not merely because of the language; he even refers to its "low cost", alluding to the modest price he set for it, with the possibility of it being sent throughout Spain, across the Atlantic – overseas – and even abroad. Unfortunately, the history of the Spanish philatelic trade press got off to a rocky start, as the first Spanish philatelic journal lasted for only a single issue. It is also known that the second Spanish philatelic magazine, published between February and March 1871 under the name *El Coleccionista de Sellos*, and which produced only four issues, owed its equally short-lived existence partly to the fierce criticism levelled at the magazine in various media outlets of the time.

In conclusion, the early philatelic press in Spain and Italy illustrates how a shared European hobby was adapted within different national contexts. While Italy demonstrates a relatively early and dynamic engagement, Spain reflects a more gradual process of adoption. Together, they highlight the diversity of pathways through which philately evolved from a popular pastime into a structured and increasingly knowledge-based field across Europe.

### **GERMANY – ILLUSTRIERSTES BRIEFMARKEN JOURNAL**

The German *Illustriertes Briefmarken-Journal*, or Illustrated Stamp Journal (IBJ), was one of the defining publications of philately's early, so-called "classical" era, closely intertwined with the European stamp-collecting movement that unfolded in the second half of the 19th century. The journal was launched on January 1, 1874, in Leipzig, which at the time was one of the centres of German book and newspaper publishing and effectively served as a stronghold of philately in the era. The first issue was officially published by H. Werninck & Company, as Richard Senf (1856–1941), who would later play a decisive role, was not yet of legal age at the time. Already in the same year, starting July 1, 1874 (with issue No. 7), Richard's older brother, Louis Senf (1853–1940), became the responsible publisher, and from May 1, 1881, the journal was published jointly under the name Gebrüder Senf, or Senf Brothers.

The magazine's development also clearly reflects the process of philately's institutionalization. In the early period, Alfred Moschkau served as editor; later, Theodor Haas oversaw the journal's technical content for a long time. Both were distinguished German philatelists and philatelic writers, leading experts of their time. The IBJ stood out early on for being richly illustrated compared to contemporary philatelic publications: reproductions, drawings, and detailed visual presentations of stamps allowed readers to examine even rare philatelic items in detail. This was particularly important in an era when, due to the lack of digital media and the very

limited financial resources of a significant portion of society, international collector networks and access to specific philatelic documents were far more restricted than they are today.

In terms of content, the magazine was extremely versatile. It regularly published news about new issues, detailed studies on the stamps and postal history of individual countries, and also addressed forgeries and how to recognize them. In addition, it featured market information, price lists, and collectors' experiences. Its international reach was strengthened by its close professional ties with other major philatelic journals, such as the British *The London Philatelist*, and through its articles, it actively participated in the international professional discourse—professional articles published in German were regularly cited in British and French professional forums, and the German journal also frequently reported on findings published in the British and French philatelic press.

The journal's popularity grew rapidly, and it had a significant impact on the European collecting community, primarily, of course, the German-speaking one. In the 1880s, its circulation rose dynamically: by the end of the first half of 1884, it was already being published in a run of about 5,000 copies; in 1886, it reached 10,000, and by 1891, it had grown to 17,500. Later, the highest circulation reached 30,000, which was considered outstanding for a philatelic journal of the era. Decades before World War I, this was the philatelic journal with the highest circulation in the German-speaking world. At that time, the magazine was published every two weeks, and by 1914 a total of 841 issues—of varying lengths—had been published.

The magazine's heyday lasted roughly from the 1890s until World War I. During this period, philately itself became increasingly professionalized: as I mentioned, catalogues, professional organizations, and increasingly standardized descriptive systems emerged. In this process, the *Illustriertes Briefmarken-Journal* served as an intermediary between amateur collectors and experts. It was both an educational magazine and a scholarly professional forum, contributing to the growing prestige of stamp collecting and the development of its methodology.

However, World War I also caused a disruption in the journal's development: the state of war between nations, the narrowing of international relations, and economic difficulties affected both the philatelic market and specialized journals. Although the journal continued to exist even after this, its former leading role gradually diminished. Eventually, publication ceased during World War II. Nevertheless, the journal's philatelic legacy has endured: the studies, illustrations, and documentation published in it remain important sources for philatelic research to this day, and the scholarly literature regards the journal as a professional forum that continues to hold value as a source and has fundamentally shaped the history of stamp collecting and philatelic research.

Overall, the *Illustriertes Briefmarken-Journal* was not merely a successful philatelic journal, but a key institution in the development of philately: it both reflected and shaped the process by which stamp collecting evolved from a pastime into a discipline with at least partial scientific aspirations by the end of the 19th century.

As for the history of the publisher of the journal described above, Gebrüder Senf was a Leipzig-based philatelic trading company and book publisher associated with the brothers Louis Senf (1853–1940) and Richard Senf (1856–1941), although they actually ran the business together for only nine years. Louis and Richard Senf were the sons of Johann Gottlob August Senf (1811–1878), a timber merchant who owned the house at Frankfurter Straße 38 (today Elsterstraße 48). The brothers had been collecting stamps since childhood and soon began organizing their collection. The younger Richard, at just 16 years old, began dealing in stamps from 1872 in his parents' home. This year was later considered the company's founding date, although the business was initially taken over by the older brother, Louis, starting in 1874, and it was not until April 1881 that they began operating jointly under the name Gebrüder Senf. The aforementioned *Illustriertes Briefmarken-Journal* was launched in 1874 and appeared twice a month. The journal was initially published by Louis (since he was of legal age), and from 1881 onward, both brothers published it jointly. The magazine's circulation reached as high as 30,000, making it the German philatelic journal with the largest circulation; it ceased publication only during World War II.

In 1890, Louis Senf withdrew from the company known as Gebrüder Senf, leaving Richard as the sole owner. Louis subsequently founded a stamp shop for his daughters, Katherine and Charlotte, which operated under the name *Zur Briefmarkenbörse*: from 1904 at Gewandgäßchen 1, and then from 1909 until its destruction during the war in 1943 at Universitätsstraße 18. One of Gebrüder Senf's most important publications was the stamp catalogue they edited and published themselves. Following earlier special catalogues published in the journal, the Gebrüder Senf illustrated postage stamp catalogue was also published in book form in 1892, which later became known among collectors simply as *\*Der Senf\**. This stamp catalogue saw several new editions in the first half of the 20th century, right up until the 1940s, as the editors and publishers continuously updated the technical information contained within.

The headquarters of the Gebrüder Senf company changed several times during its existence. After 1881, it operated at several addresses in the eastern part of Leipzig, primarily as a publishing and bookshop. From 1904, it was located at Augustusplatz 8, and from 1930, it was registered at Markt 9 (König-Albert-Haus), which also included the storefront at Barfußgäßchen 8. During this period, the business was already owned by Heinrich Neubauer. The business—in various forms—survived even during the socialist era following World War II, the period of the German Democratic Republic, and the years after the fall of communism, before finally closing permanently in 2008.

## **RUSSIA – MARKI**

The Russian philatelic journal *Marki*, first issued in St. Petersburg in 1883, represents a milestone in the institutionalization of philately within the Russian Empire. Although postage stamps had been introduced in Russia as early as 1857, the emergence of a specialized philatelic press occurred considerably later than in Western Europe. This delay reflects broader structural

differences, including the slower development of a bourgeois public sphere, limited access to international networks, and a more centralized cultural environment. As a result, *Marki* belongs to what may be described as the “second wave” of philatelic journalism, following the pioneering publications of France, Britain, and Belgium in the 1860s.

In its structure and content, *Marki* closely followed established Western European models. The journal regularly featured reports on new stamp issues, short descriptive notes on varieties, discussions of postal usage, and practical information for collectors, including exchange opportunities and price indications. However, compared to leading Western journals such as *Le Timbre-Poste* (1863) or *The Stamp Collector’s Magazine* (1863), *Marki* initially displayed a more modest analytical scope. While Western publications had already begun to engage in systematic cataloguing, detailed studies of printing techniques, and the identification of forgeries, the Russian journal tended to emphasize descriptive and informational content rather than in-depth analytical research, at least in its early phase.

Another important difference lies in the level of international integration. Western European journals operated within a dense transnational network of collectors, dealers, and correspondents, allowing for rapid information exchange and the early standardization of philatelic knowledge. In contrast, *Marki* functioned in a more peripheral position. Although it drew on foreign models and occasionally incorporated international information, its primary role was to cultivate a domestic philatelic audience and to introduce global collecting practices to Russian readers. In this sense, it acted as a mediator, translating and adapting an already developed philatelic discourse into a new cultural and linguistic context.

Despite these limitations, *Marki* played a crucial role in shaping Russian philately. It contributed to the formation of a shared terminology, encouraged the organization of collections according to emerging international standards, and helped integrate Russian material into the broader European philatelic narrative. Over time, such developments facilitated a gradual convergence between Russian and Western philatelic practices.

In conclusion, while *Marki* was not a pioneering journal in the chronological sense, its historical significance lies in its bridging function. It marks the point at which Russian philately began to participate more actively in the international exchange of knowledge, transforming a relatively isolated collecting practice into a more structured and globally connected field.

## **HUNGARY – UNGARISCHER BRIEFMARKEN-SAMMLER**

The Hungarian *Ungarischer Briefmarken-Sammler* (*the Hungarian Stamp Collector*), first probably published in Budapest in 1901 or 1902, is widely considered the first Hungarian philatelic journal and an important milestone in the institutional development of stamp collecting in Hungary. It was published in primarily German language by the prominent Hungarian philatelist and stamp trader Béla Szekula who later in his life as involved in producing many other dubious

stamp issues by the creation and issuing of local stamps - for example in Lucerne, Switzerland - and by overprinting existing stamps. The emergence of the journal came at a time when philately had already become a well-established and increasingly systematized field in Western Europe, particularly in countries such as France, Great Britain, and Germany. In this sense, the journal can be seen as part of a broader “second wave” of philatelic publishing, through which Central and Eastern European countries adopted and adapted already existing models of collecting and documentation. The choice of German as the language of publication was not incidental but strategic. It allowed the journal to reach a much wider audience, particularly in the German-speaking regions that formed the core of the international philatelic network in the late nineteenth century. As a result, the *Ungarischer Briefmarken-Sammler* was not limited to a domestic readership but addressed collectors, dealers, and researchers across Europe. Its content typically included descriptions of Hungarian and international stamp issues, market information, and material intended to facilitate exchange and trade.

In this sense, the journal illustrates a characteristic feature of early Hungarian philately: its strong integration into transnational, especially German-language, communication structures. Rather than emerging initially as a purely national philatelic culture expressed in Hungarian, the field developed within a multilingual and commercially oriented environment. The *Ungarischer Briefmarken-Sammler* therefore represents not only an important early philatelic publication, but also a key example of how linguistic choice shaped the dissemination of knowledge and the formation of collecting communities in nineteenth-century Europe.

The primary function of *Ungarischer Briefmarken-Sammler* was to serve a relatively small but growing community of Hungarian collectors. Its content reflected the practical needs of this audience: it included reports on newly issued stamps, descriptive notes on different issues and varieties, price information, and exchange advertisements. These elements were characteristic of early philatelic journals in general, but in the Hungarian context they had particular importance, as they helped to establish a shared framework for identifying, classifying, and evaluating stamps at a time when standardized catalogues were not yet widely available in the region.

Compared to leading Western European journals, the analytical depth of *Ungarischer Briefmarken-Sammler* was initially more limited. While British and German periodicals had already begun to publish detailed studies on printing techniques, forgeries, and postal history, the Hungarian journal focused more on introductory and descriptive material. Nevertheless, this should not be seen as a weakness but rather as a reflection of its developmental role: it functioned as an intermediary stage between informal collecting practices and a more advanced, research-oriented philatelic culture. Another important aspect of the journal was its role in integrating Hungarian philately into the broader European network. By adopting international terminology and reporting on foreign issues, it helped Hungarian collectors situate their activities within a global context. At the same time, it contributed to making Hungarian material more visible to foreign collectors, thereby facilitating cross-border exchanges and communication.

In conclusion, although *Ungarischer Briefmarken-Sammler* was not among the earliest and most important philatelic journals in Europe, its historical significance lies in its foundational role within Hungary, even if it was primarily published in German language. It helped transform stamp collecting from a loosely organized hobby into a more structured and communicative practice, laying the groundwork for later developments in Hungarian philatelic literature and research.

## CONCLUSIONS

In light of the above, we can say that stamp collecting, the development of stamp catalogizing, and the history of philatelic journals constitute an extremely complex and multifaceted field of research from a cultural-historical perspective. On the one hand, stamps and stamp collecting are important sources for the study of 19th-century bourgeois culture, modern consumer habits, and nation-state identities; on the other hand, catalogues and journals represent early examples of information systems, scholarly communication, and social networks.

The organizing function of catalogues, the scholarly and community-building role of professional journals, and the social and economic context of collecting enable philatelic research to be conducted today through a kind of integrated cultural studies approach: through the combined examination of historical, economic, artistic, communication-historical, and sociological aspects. This field thus offers insight into the development of everyday culture, scientific organization, and visual communication, while providing an opportunity for the interdisciplinary exploration of specific cultural practices, identities, and value systems. Stamps, as well as the related scholarly works, catalogues, and philatelic journals, are clearly of outstanding value as sources for research into both national and international history, particularly from a cultural-historical perspective. Stamps almost always reflect the political, economic, and cultural conditions of a given country, as they are primarily issued by state postal services: they depict, among other things, state symbols, portraits of monarchs, heads of state, and politicians, historical events, and the cultural treasures of the given state and nation; thus, their scholarly examination offers direct insight into contemporary social identity and the history of political communication.

Philatelic catalogues and specialized journals organize and interpret these valuable visual documents and track the history of their issuance, which makes it possible to reconstruct the creation and circulation of individual stamps. They are indispensable not only for collectors but also for historians, art historians, and cultural researchers: they document primary data, the chronology of issues, warnings regarding forgeries, and international market conditions, so the philatelic press serves as a source for cultural, economic, and political history alike. Therefore, research into philately is not merely an examination of the history of a hobby, but a valuable field for the complex, interdisciplinary exploration of historical, social, and cultural processes.

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