

Forerunners

In German philately, a forerunner (vorlaufer) refers to a stamp used in a regional interest that pre-dates stamps that would normally be issued for use in that regional interest.

This presentation exhibits examples from two such areas of German philately: German offices in Turkey (specifically, Constantinople) and the Free State of Danzig.

Turkey

Germany (i.e., the North German Confederation) set up offices in Constantinople on March 1, 1870 but did not formally issue stamps for use there until January 25, 1884. In the interim, regular stamps of the North German Confederation superseded by stamps of the German Reich were used there. These stamps are differentiated from others only by their Constantinople postmark. Although not extremely rare considering their long period of use (nearly 14 years), stamps with a Constantinople postmark are surprisingly difficult to find "in the wild". Shown are Scott numbers:



14
12/09/1874



19
08/09/1878



30
02/11/1876



34
12/30/1879



35
12/11/1872



36
04/25/1898

Danzig (Gdansk)

Danzig became the West Prussian provincial capital in 1814 and remained part of Germany until the end of WWI. See Scott-numbered examples below.



4
03/09/1872



48
12/17/1895



83
04/03/1916

On January 10, 1920, Danzig became a “free state” under Polish control and protected by the League of Nations in accordance with provisions in the Treaty of Versailles although German stamps continued to be used there until June 13, 1920. In effect, however, the population was predominantly German as was local authority. From the perspective of Danzig (and German postal history), German stamps used during the period between January 1, 1920 and June 13, 1920 (in particular, Scott 81 – 96) are the forerunners of stamps that would later serve Danzig postal use, which were initially just overprinted issues of the same basic Germania series.

The following forerunner examples illustrate the fact that the same cancellation devices continued to be used during this interim and that, except for the date falling within the proscribed 6-month date range, there is nothing but the date of the postmark itself to differentiate the status of these stamps as “forerunners”, which are collected as both belonging to Germany and to Poland.



83
04/06/1920



106*
05/20/1920



91
06/09/1920

* Not listed in Michel as a forerunner but the date states otherwise.