

*Victor Suppantschitsch*  
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**VICTOR SUPPANTSCHITSCH.**

Nobody has a better claim to open the series of biographies relating to philatelic literature in our paper than Victor Suppantschitsch, the old master of Austrian philately. Not only within the boundaries of our Austria, but far beyond them, especially where young people turn to philately, Victor Suppantschitsch has been recognised and honoured for decades for his services as a leading light of philately. In view of the interest thus attaching to this man an account of his life will - we are quite sure - be of interest to our readers.

Victor Suppantschitsch was born on 31 October 1836, the son of a merchant at Laibach in Carniola (Krain), and completed his studies at the high School of his native town in the year 1857.

After an extended study tour through Bavaria, Wurttemberg, Baden, Switzerland and Italy, he devoted himself to juridical studies in Vienna.

He entered State service in the year 1862, became an Assistant in 1869, Substitute Public Prosecutor in the County Court at Laibach in 1873, District Judge in Adelsburg in 1874. He stayed in this post till 1883. In this year Suppantschitsch was named Counsel to the Supreme Court in Klagenfurt, and in 1886 he became Counsel to the Supreme Court in Graz, a distinguished position which he occupies to the present day. Moreover, in 1887 he became Chairman of the Appeals Court for Styria, Carinthia, Carniola and the Küstenland, and in the year 1889 he was given the honorary post of President of the Arbitration Board by the Workmen's Insurance Institute for Styria and Carinthia.

Suppantschitsch was incited towards collecting when he inherited a small stamp collection from his deceased brother in the year 1863. He took to it with joy and affection, set up exchanges with collectors all over the world, improved his philatelic knowledge by reading the **Magazin für Briefmarkensammler**, published at that time by Zschiesche and Köder in Leipzig, and was soon known as a collector over wide circles.

His activities as a writer on the subject of philately began in the year 1870. From then on he published a large number of Technical articles in **Wiener Illustrierten Briefmarkenzeitung**, the later **Weltpost**, **Union Dresden**, **Germania**, **Wiener Briefmarkenzeitung**,

**Erdballmerkur, Postwertzeichenkunde, Philatelistische Börsen Courier, Globus Berlin,** and many other specialist journals on this and the other side of the black-gold boundary (i.e. Austrian frontier).

With Ferdinand Meyer, of unforgettable memory, he had such a close tie of friendship that Meyer's death almost persuaded him to say farewell to philately. Fortunately he did not go so far; he did indeed get rid of the important collection he had built up chiefly by exchanging Austrian stamps, and devoted himself instead exclusively to literary activity. His first work, *Leitfaden der Philatelie* [*Guidelines to Philately*], was published in 1880. Basically it remains valuable today, and will remain so as long as philately exists. It is a work of imperishable value, in other words the alpha and omega of philately. As soon as it was published by Eduard Wartig, it found ready acceptance and attracted the most favourable attention to its author. It was distinguished by the award of the bronze medal in the year 1881 by the Société Française de Timbrologie in Paris.

In the following year, Moriz Schauenburg of Lahr published his *Weltbriefmarken-Album* [*World Stamp Album*], along with a number of smaller albums for beginners. In the year 1888 the same firm published his large patented *Permanent-Weltbriefmarken-Album* [*Permanent World Stamp Album*] in six large quarto volumes. In July 1892 he began to publish the large and well-known sections of his *Bibliographie der deutschen philatelistischen Literatur seit ihrem Beginne bis 1891* [*Bibliography of the German Philatelic Literature from its Beginning to 1891*.] This is distinguished by the depth of learning of its author. It is to consist of sixteen sections and the thirteenth has recently appeared. The first thirteen sections contain the history of the philatelic literature in a minuteness of detail never achieved before. In February of this year he began a work which is not yet finished but will be a considerable addition to philately. It is entitled *Versuch einer Bibliographie der fremdsprachigen Literatur Europas seit ihrem Beginne bis 1891* [*Attempt at a Bibliography of the Foreign-Language Literature of Europe from its Beginning to 1891*.]

Victor Suppantšitsch has the distinction of being the first person to show the importance of literature to philately in its correct light, and of opening the way for a knowledge of the philatelic literature, as he was the first authority in Europe in the field of understanding of the philatelic literature.

Also, he has unquestionably the largest philatelic library in Europe, even if we consider those belonging to the Dresdener Inter. Philatelisten-Verein, the Friedel'schen Museums in Unter-Döbling by Vienna, and the Société Française de Timbrologie of Paris. Its catalogue lists over 2000 items, amongst which for example, are more than 750 complete volumes of philatelic journals.

His services to philately have been recognised by honorary membership of the Hamburger Philatelisten-Club (1877), the Inner-österr. Philatelisten Clubs of Graz (1888), and the Schüler-Vereins of Bruchsaal (1891).

Moreover, he officiated as Foreman of the panel of judges of the First International Postage Stamp Exhibition held in Vienna in the year 1890, and received commendation on all sides.

We will conclude by mentioning, that Supreme Court Counsellor Suppantšitsch has given the most friendly welcome to our undertaking and has very kindly agreed to give his help. We

can only express the wish that he will have many years yet to devote his outstanding services to philately.

**END**