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OTTO ROMMEL
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The considerable advances in the organic scientific development of philately in Germany can only be understood by tracing the large number of papers in this field back to their origin. This will show that in fact a relatively small number of men has shaped and produced the form and content of present-day German philately. One of the foremost places on the General Staff of this German philatelic army is occupied by the name of Otto Rommel.

The biographical data available to us yield the following facts: Otto Rommel was born on 2nd February 1854 in Hildburghausen in Saxe-Meiningen, where his father held a high juridical position. He turned towards his father's calling, and at the end of his law studies in 1877 he became a junior barrister, then Assessor, and in Autumn of the year 1885, Counsel to the Supreme Court of Thuringia in Jena. He gave up this post in the year 1891 so as to devote himself entirely to philately.

The beginnings of his interest in the hobby date back to his boyhood, and the foundation of his present extensive collection goes back to the year 1868. After his studies were behind him in 1877, he devoted himself with particular zeal to caring for and extending his collection, began to study the philatelic literature, and in 1883 began a connection with the Internationalen Philatelisten-Verein in Dresden. He soon realised a need for the reform of the entire field of collecting and began to publish, with some very well received articles, in the magazine of this Society. The name of the new author quickly gained such a reputation that at the end of 1883 when A. Koeppe of Barmen put out his then very popular album he asked for Rommel's opinion beforehand. Amongst other fine collections that Rommel assembled at this time was a collection of several thousand Peruvian stamps which he acquired from a young Peruvian named Joachim Halguers. This aroused his total interest as a researcher and the result of his work was his "Studies on the Postage Stamps of Peru". This appeared in 1890 and 1891 in **Postwerthzeichenkunde**, and was later published as a separate item. It is a pattern for the philately of this country to the present day. By 1st October 1890 Rommel's name as a philatelic writer was already so well known that he was offered, and accepted, the general editorship of **Postwerthzeichenkunde**. Then began a period of intense literary

activity. We will mention only the articles “Bamra” (published in translation by **The American Philatelist**), “Some remarks on forgeries of Baden”, “Cancellations on the postage stamps of Saxony”, and the pamphlet “Postage stamps of the Bergdorf region”,- two supplements to which have appeared. All his work showed a solid basic mastery of the subject.

His versatility and intelligence were also used to make valuable contributions to other magazines. Thus we encounter Rommel’s work from 1891 on in **Philatelistischen Börsencourier**, **Philatelistischen Rundschau**, and especially in the Leipzig **Illustrierten Briefmarken-Zeitung**. They are always distinguished performances of the first rank and many have been translated into foreign languages. We also take it as a special honour to number Rommel amongst our collaborators and direct our readers’ attention specially to his paper in our current issue.

The following of Rommel’s major works deserve particular attention:-

The 1892 edition of A. Larisch’s priced catalogue; his co-authorship of the second edition of the “Köppe-Albums”; and the excellent supplement to Kröttsch’s fine “Permanent-Sammelalbum”, in particular. All the German postal regions in this, with the exception of Schleswig-Holstein, Württemberg and Prussia, were from his pen.

Otto Rommel was a general collector with a special interest in German postage stamps. He also had an exceptionally rich collection of forgeries, along with an important library of philatelic catalogues, journals, pamphlets and compendia in all languages.

German philately looks with pride on this man, whose life we have sketched very briefly and whose personal qualities have extended the picture of an outstanding specialist in the most attractive way.

Otto Rommel is today still in the prime of life: may it be granted to him to carry out many more distinguished works in the field of philately.

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