

KOUWENBERG, K.
The pioneers of Dutch philately - Part I
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Translation produced for Brian J. Birch
33 Boar's Head Avenue, Standish, Wigan, WN6 OBH, UK
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THE PIONEERS OF DUTCH PHILATELY - PART I

After this introduction, which is 10 pages long, on page 11 we find a list of the abbreviations used in the *Vade-Mecum* [Manual]. The actual Manual starts on page 13. It is divided into Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia. Illustration 4 gives us the division of the countries.

Included are not only the stamps, but also stamped envelopes. In those days, a country was not complete without all postal cards, stamped envelopes, etc. A good idea that, sadly enough, got lost around the turn of the century. (Of course, not by the "Po -and- Poërs". Translator's note: I do not know what this means.) Also the unofficial stamped envelopes are mentioned. Under England, it is mentioned that those of Smith Elder & Co. are not official. Also not missing are the Hamburg Ships, the Penny Post and City Express stamps. The manual does not say much about The Netherlands. Only numbers 1, 2 and 3 are mentioned, together with the law of April 12th 1850, the Royal decree of November 12th 1851 and the issue date: January 1st 1852.

That the Manual is a first step in unexplored territory is proven by, for instance, the section on Moldavia. Here are mentioned a 5 para black, a 40 para blue, a 62 para green and an 80 para red. Quite a bit is missing here, while the 62 para green is a questionable item. Also, with the chapter on Asia we are soon finished. Ceylon, Luzon (meaning the Philippines) and East India is all that are mentioned. With Mauritius the Post Office issue is, of course, missing but also, the Post Paid's are not mentioned. It starts with the sitting Britannia. North America covers most of the pages. Seven pages are used under the subheading "Private Posts". The Manual finishes with an alphabetical index.

While the Dannenfelser Manual is not without mistakes, and in comparison with a modern catalogue, is very primitive, we cannot underestimate its importance. It has shown many collectors the way, and was used as a guideline for starting their collection and is an important cornerstone in the development of Dutch philately.

As we can discern from the title page (see illustration 2, page 83), the manual is not an original work by Dannenfelser. It is a translation from the French, of a catalogue by J.-B. Moens. The oldest edition of this I found in E. D. Bacon's *Catalogue of the Philatelic Library of the Earl of Crawford*, London, 1911. John K. Tiffany does not mention the manual at all in his *The Philatelic Library*, 1874. Anderson, in his listing in **The Philatelic Record**, in 1885, does not mention it either. Suppantschitsch and Otto Rommel mention the manual without any details. Bacon is, as far as I know, the first one to mention that the manual is a translation of the second edition of the *Manuel du Collectionneur de Timbres-Poste* by J.-B. Moens. In the later publications, for instance, by Mrs. Van Heerdt-Kolff, we find this is repeated.

This idea is not right. How Bacon came to that conclusion, I could not figure out. He had enough sources for comparison. The Crawford Library contains all philatelic literature that had appeared before 1900. In spite of that, Bacon made a mistake.

In illustration 5, you see the title page of the second edition of the manual by Moens pictured. The little crown seen does not belong to it. It is pasted on it by one of the previous owners.

When we compare this title page with the manual (illus. 2, page 83), they look the same. But if we open the books, then we see immediately that the introduction of the Dannenfelser manual is missing in the manual by Moens. In addition, comparing illus. 6, being the part on Brunswick from the Moens manual with illus. 4, being the same part of the manual, we can see a very clear difference. We can deduce from this that the *Vade-Mecum* is not a translation of the second edition of the manual by J.-B. Moens.

Of what then? Of course, from one of the many editions of this manual. If we could compare all of the editions, we could find the answer fast by comparison. But the literature we are discussing here is very rare, even rarer than a Post Office Mauritius, and so the obstacles make it impossible. We have to find another way.

The second edition of Moens' manual is dated January, 1862. A year later, in his publication **Le Timbre Poste**, in the issue of January 15th, 1863 of the first year of publication, Moens writes an article under the title, "Un mot sur l'origine de Timbre Poste". The "Un mot sur..." is almost word for word the same as the introduction in the Dannenfelser manual: "Origin of Postage Stamps". If we look up the issue of March 1st, 1863 of **The Stamp Collector's Magazine** and also the first issue of the **Magazin für Briefmarken-Sammler** of May 1st, 1863, then we can see in both issues, under "Book review", a discussion of the third edition of the manual by Moens. From this book review, it's very obvious that the article, "Un mot sur..." not only appears in **Le Timbre Poste**, but also in the introduction of the third edition of the manual. So we can accept that the *Vade-Mecum* is a translation of the third edition of Moens' manual.

By reading the aforementioned publications, the name of the comedian Alphonse Esquiros suddenly shows up as, it seems what we today call a journalist. Moens acknowledges in the second volume (1864) of **Le Timbre Poste** that his "Un mot sur l'origine de Timbre Poste" was stolen from a work by Mr. Esquiros entitled "Angleterre et la vie Anglaise". Further **Das Magazin für Briefmarken-Sammler** reports a juicy detail that the traveller in the work by Esquiros is not Rowland Hill but a certain Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

The Dannenfelser manual is now very rare. The Dutch collector, as mentioned before, has never shown much interest in philatelic publications. Over the years, rare editions have

disappeared without a trace from libraries. Two libraries burned during the last war. Happily, we still have two copies of the manual. One is found in the “Bondsbibliotheek”. It was a donation from the former library of the “Nederl. Verg. Van Postzegelverzamelers”. The library of the I. V. “Philatelica” has a second copy, donor unknown. The first possessor was Joris van der Hagen, Lange Voorhout 31, den Haag. A third copy was in possession of Victor Suppantchitsch. After his death, it became property of “The Collectors Club” in New York, together with the rest of his library, and the copy is still there. A fourth copy belongs to the so-called Crawford Library in the British Museum. It is property of the British people and untouchable for the collector. Only if you travel to London, can you carefully take a peek at it. There was a fifth copy in the library of the “Internationale Philatelistische-Verein Dresden”. This gigantic library, which had almost all the rarities from the years 1860-1880 was destroyed in the last war.

With certainty we can say that there are still four copies of this, at one time, very popular manual. The writer of this article has contacted many, but not all of the philatelic libraries, so it's not impossible that one or two copies will surface and it's not impossible that some copies are still held in private hands.

What value do these four copies have? As much as a nine cent with missing value, of which 20 exist?

Dear librarians, be thrifty with your possessions, even though almost nobody seems interested.

(to be continued)

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