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## TELL

## The First Two Airmail Stamps of Switzerland

by Giovanni Balimann

In the July 2020 issue of "Tell", George Struble published an interesting article on Switzerland's first two airmail stamps. However, on page 16 it contains a passage that is not correct:

*"After the 1919 airmail service, leftover 50-rappen stamps could be used for airmail surcharges or a number of other services, like registration fees, but not for ordinary postage. No such order was given for the 30-rappen stamps; they could be used for anything. The difference*

*was not universally understood; Fig. 12 shows a cover whose attempted use of the airmail stamp was erroneously marked invalid. On the other hand, after March 1, 1923, when the overprinted stamps were invalid, use on mail was often accepted."*

The first two airmail stamps were never valid for franking ordinary mail, neither for postage (Figure 1) nor for additional services such as "registered mail". This was not only pointed out when they were issued, but again in 1919 with ordinance No. 137 of 13 November 1919, when airmail was discontinued (Figure 2). This ordinance stated:

**Airmail**

*The Swiss airmail service has ceased operations since 31 October. The airmail stamps remaining at the post offices will not be withdrawn, but all remaining stocks are to be used to cover the postage for bulk mail (on form No. 225) and used up as quickly as possible. Where this cannot be carried out immediately at smaller post offices, an exchange must be arranged. The airmail stamps may not be used for franking ordinary mail, but they can be sold to the public uncancelled for collection purposes as long as stocks last.*

Figure 1 - Invalid use of 50 centimes airmail stamp, Zürich to Cormondrèche, 12 May 1919.

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# Beware Also of Certain Certificates

by Roberto Lopez

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I know this title destabilizes you, because we keep advising to certify rare and expensive items. By these few lines, I would like to show you that the experts can also be wrong, and that their task is not always easy, because counterfeiters are inventive, and sometimes very good.

The piece illustrated is a vertical pair (left) of the "Rayon dark blue" (SBK No 15I) with, obviously, the framed cross and a "P.P." cancellation of district VIII (Zurich). These are types 6 and 14 of a sheet of 40 stamps.

I translate excerpts for you from the certificates and please pay attention to the dates which are mentioned in bold. The following certificate dated **January 7, 2015** tells us the following, I quote:

*"This pair was submitted to me by a buyer after the **May 2014** Corinphila sale to confirm authenticity. I have reviewed the piece and am not persuaded that the cross framing is fake, because it is below the stamp. The comparison with other pieces from the same types does not allow the conclusion that it is a falsification."*

The expert obviously took pains given the description. The second certificate dates from **July 29, 2014** (this six months before the first and two months after the sale by Corinphila) and we can read this text, I quote:

*"Rayon without frame of the cross, type 6 and 14 from a sheet of 40 stamps. The frames are largely drawn: the shape and their position are not identical to the originals. The frame color is a little lighter than the rest of the black ink. The frames are not printed by lithography but they are drawn".*

You should know one important thing: one of the experts is also a dealer and the other expert is a great collector. I'll leave it up to you to guess who wrote which certificate.

So, yes, it is absolutely necessary to certify rare pieces of significant value. No, you should not submit your pieces to just anyone. Yes, ask your colleagues.

Nevertheless: "erarre humanum est, perseverare diabo, in other words "To err is human, to persevere [in one's error] is diabolical." +

## Randy L. Neil Award to George Struble For Best Article of 2021 in *The Philatelic Exhibitor*



The selection team of Tim Bartshe and John Hotchner has chosen the winners for 2021 articles in *The Philatelic Exhibitor*. The Randy L. Neil Award for the best *TPE* article goes to George Struble for "Toward a Better Experience with Virtual Exhibits" in the first quarter issue. The Randy L. Neil Award was created by the American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors Board in 2007.

George is an avid exhibitor and promoter of exhibiting. His article addresses how to improve the virtual experience, especially for viewers and show committees. It proposes discussions based on what is best for the viewer, but also addressed how show committees can mount better shows with less work. Virtual exhibiting existed before the pandemic, but it became the only option while things were shut down. This mode of exhibiting is not going away and will remain important long after the pandemic is gone. +



Detail images of top stamp and lower stamp of pair.

