

# Lambda Philatelic Journal

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"LAMBDA PHILATELIC JOURNAL" is the official publication of the Gay and Lesbian History on Stamps Study Unit. Yearly subscription rate, including membership in the Study Unit, is \$5.00 (overseas \$7.00), single copies are \$1.50.

We look forward to hearing from you, our readers and members, for comments, ideas and articles for future issues.

We encourage advertising and correspondence between readers regarding their philatelic interests.

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## HOW TO ENHANCE YOUR COLLECTION ON GAY THEMES

by Giorgio Migliavacca<sup>1</sup>

Collectors of gay themes have found an invaluable source of information in the catalog and checklist published a few years ago by Paul Hennefeld; this source is constantly updated in articles and new listings in this journal. However, the goal of any respectable thematic (or topical) collection is to cover as extensively and as exhaustively as possible the chosen theme (or topic).

By now, most of us are pretty aware that adhesive stamps alone cannot accomplish this task. Adding special postmarks, maximum cards and maybe some postal history items will enhance tremendously any collection. There are points in a thematic collection that you will not be able to illustrate with stamps alone.

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Giornata Leopardiana

15 - 9 - 76

Annullo Speciale

F.A.I.P.



*Giacomo Leopardi, one of the greatest Italian poets, is reported by more than one biographer as having had homosexual inclinations. In fact, one of his maids was constantly baffled by the great commotion that was taking place in his bedroom when he slept with a (male) friend. Leopardi appeared on an Italian stamp issued in 1932 (Scott #273); the postmark illustrated here shows a more realistic portrait of the poet and was adopted for a special seminar on his literature.*

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<sup>1</sup>GLHS member Giorgio Migliavacca is an internationally recognized philatelic author, researcher and juror. He most recently gave a lecture on the "Romance of Stamps" at the Eighth Annual British Virgin Islands Medical Conference.

GLHS has no official position on what materials are properly or preferably part of a collection or exhibit on gay and lesbian history.

Pier Paolo Pasolini, the Italian poet, writer, film director, cannot be represented in a thematic collection with an adhesive stamp; though deserving of a philatelic commemoration he is (probably) too much of a modern figure to receive such an honour. Of course, we all know that there is more to it than that: the dramatic circumstances in which he died, his very extroversive attitude toward being gay, his movies representing gay life as a leit-motiv, the dismissal from teaching in a public school when he was very young and last, but not least, his political beliefs. A very interesting contemporary figure indeed and one whom we would like to include in a thematic collection. But since no stamps were issued for him, we are inclined to discard him. Don't give up. There are many ways to illustrate Pasolini philatelically speaking. And as you will understand, ways that will permit you to say much more than just with one single stamp.

Pasolini was born in Bologna, Italy in 1922. I believe that even in the United States it is not difficult to find a cover with Italian stamps and with a postmark of 1922 from Bologna. In any case, an Italian stamps pen-pal will find it very easy to help you. Some of Pasolini's books received important literary awards and special postmarks were used for the occasion in both countries. A bit of homework and research will help you and you may be surprised that one eminent figure that you thought you could not illustrate in your collection will take up quite a few pages.



Joh. W. v. Goethe auf den Trümmern von Rom in der Campagna  
Zeichnung im Goethe-Nationalmuseum zu Weimar

*This old maximum card helps the collector to show where the portrait on the stamp is taken from. Goethe is portrayed here in the Roman Campagna surrounded by Egyptian, Roman and Greek relics. This detail may become a link to discuss Goethe from a different angle. Besides, the stamp is canceled by an appropriately "matching" postmark.*



Goethe again. The same portrait but this time with some dramatic changes in his surroundings. The metermark can be appropriately used in a thematic collection. However, this specific metermark has a very bad flaw. The postal rate is "000" which gives it no postal value and as a consequence very little philatelic value. When using metermarks in your collection make sure that they represent an actual post rate.

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The life of Pasolini ended tragically. We know that he went to the Termini railway station in Rome and he picked up a teenager. The boy killed him in a brutal manner. This tragic circumstance can be easily illustrated by a very common postmark of ROMA-TERMINI.

How many other gay people can you illustrate in your collection without stamps issued for them? Well, let me list a few: Horace Walpole, Fritz Krupp, Somerset Maugham, Noel Coward, T.E. Lawrence, Jean Genet, etc., just to name a few.

France and Italy are undeniably among the most progressive countries in topical collecting and exhibiting. In Spain, Germany and in the U.S., I have been noticing that topical collectors tend to prefer postally used covers. The demand stems from the belief that juries are inclined to give higher points to collections which include postally used covers instead of first day covers. While this may be true of old and very old issues, it is untrue of recent issues. In my view and that of many outstanding European jurors, a first day cover with a "matching" postmark is by far preferable to a cover with the same issue postally used and postmarked "Anywhere."

I have been amused by seeing collectors making up registered FDC's to emphasize they were postally used--isn't that funny? I am pretty aware that collectors are bit confused and adequate information should be publicized by philatelic journals; jurors, too, must clearly say what they mean by "postally used" without confusing the poor collector.

In a recent issue of Topical Time, I read a review criticizing the editor of a small magazine just because he mentioned some issues of Bernera. Curiously enough, the same issue of Topical Time included at least two large ads publicizing issues of Bernera and the like. Of course readers are entitled to be confused under such circumstances. The same happened recently with the editor of a large British magazine who rejected an article on modern issues of the British Virgin

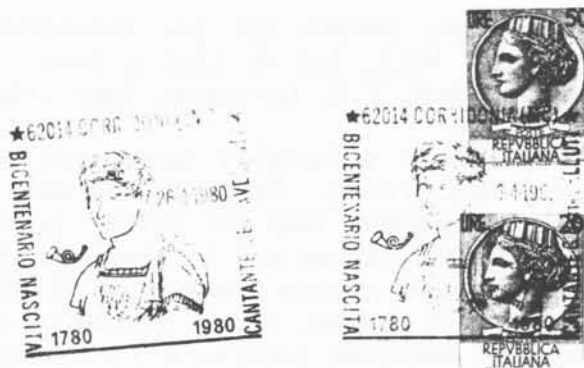
Islands on the grounds that their issues were "speculative" ones. One wonders, then, why the same editor is accepting advertisements of really speculative stamp issues; in some instances the stamps advertised were not even stamps. One is really left to wonder: does the left hand know what the right hand is doing?

Another point to ponder is that only "one" collector out of 1,000 exhibits his collection. In the United States, collectors are inclined (influenced) to include imperfs and deluxe stuff while in Europe, such material is generally scorned and unless it is "classic" (old) material, European jurors are far from impressed by imperfs and deluxe. In my opinion many collectors are better advised to complete their collections with special postmarks, stationery, etc.

I take it for granted that everybody knows that cacheted covers and the like add absolutely nothing to a topical collection. In the eyes of a juror (I mean a knowledgeable juror) it is important that the stamp is properly postmarked with a matching postmark illustrating the same topic. A pretty cachet adds absolutely nothing to the topical philatelic value of a cover. A cachet, unless it's one of the rare oldies, has no postal relevance and as a consequence no philatelic relevance to the topic displayed. Let's not forget that we collect stamps and not artistic cachets. This is my opinion and that of many collectors and jurors but, of course, I am much aware that other collectors have differing opinions.

Maximum cards are useful if their use is limited and not overbearing. They accomplish their task best when used to illustrate a small detail in the stamp design: to enhance it and to bring it to the viewer's attention.

STAMPE



Dott. ITALO ROBETTI

C.so Stati Uniti, 15 - Tel. 53.33.92  
10128 TORINO

*Giobatta Velluti was a famous opera singer in the 1700's. No adhesive stamps have been issued to commemorate him. A primadonna himself, he impersonated several female roles on stage. The only way to include Velluti in a thematic collection is by using the special postmark shown here.*

An article published in the Italian "Notiziario Tematico CIFT" (N. 59, October 1981) stressed similar points discussed at an FIAF meeting in Buenos Aires (October 31, 1980); I quote: "Postally used covers must have a postmark that has a clear connection with the topic." "Illustrated covers (that is to say FDCs or cacheted covers) will have no philatelic value for their illustration and the only relevant thing is the postmark. In any case a cover without cachets is recommended." "Proofs-Essays-Artist Proofs- and deluxe can be included (in a topical collection) in a MINIMAL quantity."

Furthermore I would like to quote the opinion of a noted topical juror ("Notiziario Tematico CIFT" No. 34, September 1976, page 12): "Imperf stamps with identical subject of perf ones are generally banned by FIP; besides, they are USELESS in a topical collection as they add nothing new that cannot be illustrated by the same perf stamp." According to the same gentleman, Nino Barberis, the insistent presence of imperfs in a topical exhibit detracts points. Emil Bayle and Michele Picardi, in the same periodical (No. 20, October 1973): "FDCs with loud flamboyant cachets overshadow the really important philatelic/postal aspect (Stamp and Postmark) of the cover." Both authors/jurors agree that special cancellations are preferable on PLAIN white covers and, interestingly, come to this conclusion: "Truly postally used covers or cards are preferable to FDCs but this shall not be a rule otherwise you have to give the majority of the most interesting (and useful) postmarks."

Año  
Internacional  
del  
Niño




S. F. C.

*Giraffes have appeared on quite a few adhesive stamps but rarely on postmarks. Using this postmark in your collection shows to the juror the depth of your research.*



FDC: FAIP *Olympia*



Lately there has been an inflation of Raphael stamps. The 1963 San Marino issue on FDC would be a nice addition to your collection. But you can do better, see next illustration.

FIRST DAY COVER



Raff. Sanzio AUTORITRATTO

OLIMPIA



Yes, you can do better by eliminating the set of stamps or even the FDC and use this special event postmark. Please note the "matching points:"

- a) same portrait on stamp and postmark
- b) same portrait on the cachet
- c) same year of the issued stamps

LAMBDA PHILATELIC JOURNAL  
 CUMULATIVE INDEX (THROUGH VOL. 4)

	Vol.	No.	Page
Alger, Horatio, Jr.	1	1	2
American Numismatic Society (letter)	1	3	10
AMERIPEX '86, travel plans	4	4	11
Andersen, Hans Christian	4	3	3-7
American Topical Association charter	2	3	7
	4	1	9
	4	3	1-2
Bazzi, Giovanni Antonio, "Il Sodoma"	3	2	2-3
Books of interest	2	4	5
British Gay Philatelic Society	2	3	1-6
	3	1	7-8
	3	2	6
	3	4	10
Britten, Benjamin (cancellation)	3	1	9
Cachet making	3	3	2-3
Cather, Willa	2	1	1-2
Collectors Club of San Francisco, press release	4	1	8
Dickinson, Emily	1	2	1-4
Exhibit awards	2	2	8
	3	2	1
	3	4	10
	4	1	1
	4	2	9
	4	4	10
Exhibiting	2	4	1
First day cover making (Lambda Stamps)	1	3	1-6
GLHS			
anniversary	3	1	9
handbook addenda and corrections	3	2	addendum
	4	1	9-end
letter from the president (status report)	3	2	7
	4	4	1
origin	1	1	2
social events	3	4	10
Gay and lesbian history on stamps			
non-Scott issues	4	2	1
overview	1	1	3
	1	2	4-6
	1	3	7-8
	2	1	8
Gay Pride Week (cancellation)	2	4	5
Gay Veterans Association (cachet)	3	4	1
Gertrude Stein Philatelic Society			
covers	2	3	7
	4	2	6-8
	4	3	8-11
	4	4	12-13
general information	4	2	5/9
press release	4	1	7



Gordon, Charles George (cancellation)	3	1	9
Greek Homosexuality on Stamps			
culture and history	3	4	2-9
mythology	2	2	2-7
Hickok, Lorena	3	3	4-7
Lesbians on stamps (handbook addendum)	4	1	addendum
Loti, Pierre	4	2	2-4
Lyautey, Louis-Hubert-Gonzalve	3	1	2-6
Mann, Thomas	4	1	2-6
Nelligan, Emile	3	4	10
Przhevalsky, Nicolai	2	1	3-7
Rimbaud, Arthur	1	2	7
Roosevelt, Eleanor	3	3	4-7
S.A.G.E. (cachet)	4	4	10
Scott Publishing Company (letter)	1	3	9
Sodoma, see Bazzi			
Spellman, Francis Cardinal	3	3	7
Stamp designs	4	1	1
	4	4	11
Tchaikovsky, Peter	2	3	2-5
Verlaine, Paul	1	2	7
Walker, Mary	1	3	11
Want list for gay and lesbian history	4	4	1-9
Wilde, Oscar	2	4	2-4

*Lambda  
STAMPS Inc*  
3:2

#### NOTICES

(Members and subscribers may place a notice free in the Journal. Of course, we wouldn't refuse a small contribution to help subsidize reproduction and mailing expenses.)

Wanted: U.S. 867 (Walt Whitman) first day covers, cachets and covers with fancy cancellations. Drop a line to E.S. Centeno, 102 Library Lane, Simsbury, CT 06070.

I want to buy pre-1930 picture postcards, views preferred. I also need puzzle cards and Halloween cards. Write first. Daniel Herzog, 645 Irvington Avenue, Newark, NJ 07106.

Interested in corresponding on the topic of Greek homosexuals portrayed on stamps and Greek homosexuality portrayed on stamps. Michael G. Goetsch, 1502 E. 118th Street, Cleveland, OH 44106.

Militaria, POW's, Disinfected Mail, Preadhesives, Thematic Covers, Gay Covers, Stamps, Postmarks. We are liquidating a very large stock accumulated over 30 years. Specify clearly your interest. We buy, too. British Virgin Islands bought and sold. The Admiralty, Box 704, Road Town, Tortola, British Virgin Islands.

Wanted: postcards, gay-related, franked or otherwise. Also, Canal Zone, Danish W. Indies, Hawaii and Alaska, golden era only. Purchase, trade or whatever! G. Rusnak, P.O. Box 27308, Los Angeles, CA 90027.

\*\* LAST LICK \*\*

Some Historical Gossip

Jim Kepner, curator of the International Gay and Lesbian Archives in Hollywood sent these notes on some of our subjects:

"CARVER lived with Austin Curtis, his successor, in a clearly intimate relationship for several years. Biographies do not specifically mention the subject as such, but describe conversations in which Curtis treated Carver as an absent-minded husband. Biographies usually limit themselves (Holt et al.) to discrete phrases like 'he never showed interest in the fairer sex,' but mention his fondness for playing flossy female roles in high school and college plays (in Iowa). A Black scandal mag, Jet, in 1955 mention his predilection for fondling the butts of male students, and I have heard this from a couple of his student's sons. A student of Dr. Curtis' said that Carver had found an additional use for peanut oil which wasn't publicly advertised.

"LORCA is well enough known [but] I can't recall specific sources. His flaunting of his gayness was one of the reasons the Spanish Insurgents gave for shooting him, and reactionaries in Latin America have twice protested memorials to Lorca on grounds of his homosexuality (reported in Time Magazine—I can't find the reference). Critics say that his writings contained many references by double entendre, but they don't translate.

"Just after HAMMARSKJOLD's death, both Look and Time directly referred to this secret homosexual life, but his biographies have been discrete. His post-humous Markings and Jottings contain passages which I find strongly homoerotic. Others see nothing there. His gayness certainly was not public."

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Some Books Available

The sale flyers from remainder outlets such as Barnes & Noble, Publishers Central Bureau, Marlboro, etc. frequently have discounted stocks of some of our reference sources. B & N, 126 Fifth Ave., NY, NY 10011-5666 is currently listing Rowse, Homosexuals in History, \$6.95; Martin Greif, The Gay Book of Days, \$12.95; and Kenneth Dover, Greek Homosexuality, \$9.95. Add \$2.50 for postage or just write for a catalogue to get on their mailing list. PCB's address is One Champion Ave., Avenel, NJ 07001-9987. The best source of out-of-print gay books is Elysian Fields, Booksellers, 80-50 Baxter Ave., Suite 339, Elmhurst, NY 11373, \$2.00 for catalogue.

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Credit Due

GLHS member Michael Goetsch was the author of the article on Hans Christian Andersen which appeared in the Fall 1985 issue of the journal under the name Thomas E. Ross III. It takes courage for a high school student to be openly gay.

Recent Awards

Paul Hennefeld's exhibit "Alternate Lifestyles of Famous People," which won a vermeil award in Sarasota in 1985 received only a silver-bronze at SARAPEX '86. No reason for the difference was given. The collection won a gold at BEPEX, a regional show in Montvale, NY, February 28 to March 2; a vermeil at SANDICAL, a national show in San Diego, March 22-23; and a vermeil at ROMPEX in Denver, May 9-11. The collection was also on exhibit at BLOOMPEX '86, a regional show in Bloomfield, NJ, April 19-20.



15½P



PHILATELIC MUSIC CIRCLE

A cancellation and cachet in honor of gay British composer, Benjamin Britten, who died in 1976. Britten's long-time lover, tenor Peter Pears, died on April 4, 1986.