

Philatelic cards and covers: Stamp dealer Otto Bickel, Germany

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Many have seen “exotic” letters like this one offered for sale to a rather high price:



Who was Otto Bickel? – translated from German (<http://www.e-archiv.li/print/31000.pdf>):

Bickel Otto, German stamp dealer 1862-1946

* November 4, 1862 in Eppingen (Baden), † July 5, 1946 in Munich. ∞ 1892 Leonie Berger, a son. In 1890 he opened the first stamp shop in Munich. Author of numerous articles on philately. His specialties were Albania, **Iceland**, Crete, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Montenegro and San Marino. Repeated changes of residence, numerous trips with stamps business.

From 1903 definitely living in Munich. 1911-1920 repeated visits to Liechtenstein. His business survived both World wars, but things didn't go as smoothly after 1920. In 1946 he died in poor conditions.

Mail to Mr. Bickel and another well-known person Paul Kiderlen, whom we will return to in a later article, are discussed by present FIP President Mr Bernie Beston back in 2005 in *POSTAL STATIONERY COLLECTOR Volume 11 No 2 & 3: Issue No 42 & 43 August and November 2005 - "MESSRS. KIDERLEN & BICKEL - FRIENDS OR FOE."*

From this article we quote and show illustrations below:

"Otto Bickel erroneously referred to as "Bichel", the anglicized version of Bickel. He was born in Effingen, Baden on 4 November 1862. In 1892 following his marriage he moved to San Marino where he commenced to deal in postage stamps. It is probable that he had been a stamp dealer in Baden also. He issued press releases to collectors around the world and franked his mail with the stamps of San Marino.

Otto Bickel moved around as mentioned but in his "Icelandic period" which from covers known to us seems to have commenced around 1900 and at this time he lived in Wolfratshausen near Munich:



Registered cover to Mr. Otto Bickel.
Reykjavik 12-2-1900.

Heavily overfranked with 100 aur stamp more than covering the postage 1st or 2nd or maybe even 3rd class letter (up to 60 grams), 20, 40 or 60 aur, + reg. fee 16 aur.

There are not many Otto Bickel covers/cars with Icelandic stamps from before 1902.

Also most covers from Iceland were preprinted

There are many examples from Iceland from 1902-03 and later – here from our copy-collections – and then to his new address near Berlin:



These 3 covers are like the first cover shown above in the introduction posted the same day and cancelled Reykjavik 5-12-1902.

The postage is 50 aur, 45 aur, 150 aur and 56 aur, respectively.

With Reg fee 15 aur and 20, 40, 60, 80, or 100 aur for letters up to 20, 40, 60, 80 or 100 grams, the correct franking would be 35, 55, 75, 95 or 115 aur.

Clearly, all these covers are made to receive high values in used condition. They are all philatelic.

Bernie Beston's purpose and argument in his article are relevant for collectors of Iceland too:

"The question for postal stationery collectors is whether such material as produced by these and other dealers is so scarce that without it, usage in the Exhibit is deficient? Or are other



The following cards, all stamped Reykjavik 19-02-1906 are philatelic usages. They are correctly franked with UPU postcard postage 10 aur (2 x 5 aur Christian IX) as the 1 GILDI overprinted stamp on the postal stationery counted zero (these cards were invalid in terms of postage from January 1st 1904 but could be used as ordinary postcards with no value as shown here).



References: Above and photos from e-bay, IslandsKontakt, Rapport and auction catalogues.

This is the first part of a series of articles on philatelic covers and card from Iceland. Next article will be on Paul Kiderlen.