

Viewing A Feldman Rarities Sale

by John F. Dunn

On November 17, 2010 David Feldman Galleries conducted their latest Rarities of the World auction at their gallery in Geneva, Switzerland.

These semi-annual events present us with an opportunity to view a worldwide selection of rarities—and I do mean worldwide, because unlike many U.S. auctions, these Feldman sales contain the rare and unusual from the far reaches of the globe, not just U.S. wide margin graded singles.

One of the early lots in the auction was this unique “Kangaroo’s Missing Head” variety on the 1913-14 1d red Kangaroo issue, watermark Crown over A, perforated 12, used, shown with a normal stamp. The error is the result of an accident in the printing and not an error on the plate.



Enlarge pdf for a closer view

To make sure this was not a fake, the auctioneers subjected the stamp and a normal stamp to testing under the Raman microscope, described by the auctioneers as “the most accepted and credible test for this kind of expertisation.” The examination confirmed “...very similar fibers and ink stains on the (normal) reference stamp and the stamp without the kangaroo head. Close to the neck of the (error) stamp, no mechanical damage is visible, some fibers continue from the red neck to the white part.”

As presented by the auctioneers, “For its maiden appearance in public, we present it now at public auction on behalf of the family of its owner of over 60 years with a very modest estimation of only \$40,961 to \$68,269. It did not sell and was being offered post-sale for \$40,961.

(All prices reported here were converted from Euros to U.S. dollars at the rate prevailing on November 17 and

do not include the 19.5% “all-in” fee or Buyers’ Premium, shipping and handling, taxes, etc. that are added on to these hammer prices.)

The Orient Express still captures the imagination of people around the world, so this British Levant cover will be of special interest.



It bears a rare black “ORIENT EXPRESS” franking, along with the British Levant 40pa surcharge on a Great Britain 2d registration entire (with the imprint on the reverse. The black franking prepaid the faster service.

Both stamps are tied by a British P.O. Constantinople circular date stamp and show London red oval transit date-stamps (of “2 OC 89”). The lot also included an unused “Orient Express” adhesive with full original gum.

For those of us who knew him, we can recall in fondness that this cover was once part of the “Murder in Philately” exhibit of the late Reverend Charles Fitz. Estimated at \$3,413-4,779, it sold for \$3,562.



As explained in the lot description, “The first item to be encountered in the listings for ‘Canada’ in the SG, Scott or Yvert catalogues (and the ONLY item listed ahead of the first adhesive issue) is the entire im-

printed with 'Three Pence' in decorative border, used on April 7, 1851 (the date of the cds) to Toronto, with faint red Quebec transit of April 16 on reverse. Across the right end of the entire is the ms [manuscript] docketing, 'Letter R.W.Kelly April 1851'.

"The New Carlisle provisional has led a relatively sheltered existence, first mentioned in the *London Philatelist* at the end of the 19th century. Its first appearance at auction was as part of the famous Ferrary collection. When sold, it soon ended up in the hands of Maurice Burrus, where it remained for nearly 40 years. The Stanley Gibbons company bought the stamp from the Burrus sale, and soon understood the importance of what they now owned. Certificates from the 'Royal' and the BPA as a GENUINE POSTMASTER'S PROVISIONAL have been complemented by a recent certificate from Sismondo..."

"The UNIQUE item from the only known issue of a Canadian Postmaster's Provisional, this cover must rank as the top item of Canada and indispensable for any collection of Canada striving to be the best—or the most complete!"

Estimated at \$339,405-475,167, this fabulous cover realized \$383,572.

From Denmark comes this unique used* block of the 1851 2 Rigsbank Skilling First Issue. Discovered only during the 1980s in Denmark, and being from the Thiele printing (with typographed burelage).

(* Note: the only other blocks of the 2rbs known are the mint part-sheet in the Danish Postal Museum, plus two mint blocks of four.)



Described as "the 'foundation' item indispensable for an important exhibit collection of Classic Denmark," the block was estimated at \$135,672. It did not sell and was being offered at that price after the sale.

Germany States was represented by this Hamburg 1863 cover to London franked by the 9 schillings orange-yellow plus 2s red and 3s



Prussian blue, all tied by 4-bar cancels, the cover also with a red Hamburg / PD “keyhole” duplex dated June 29, 1863 and a red London Paid cds (June 30). A bit overdescribed as “A fantastic ‘world rarity’ suitable for display in the most rarified company!” it did not sell and was being offered at the low end of its \$51,590-57,020 presale estimate.

More superlatives: “One of the Greatest Rarities of Lombardy-Venetia” is the description given to this 1830 30 centesimi brown, type I on hand-made paper, vertical block of eight stamps plus two Andrea’s crosses at bottom, the stamps cancelled by manuscript Andrea’s crosses. This multiple comes from the unique sheet prepared by the Austrian authorities for archive purposes, most of which is now in the Austrian Postal Museum. It also did not sell and was being offered at the low end of its \$203,643-271,524 estimate range.



Also from Lombardy-Venetia is this non-denominated (3c) blue, type III, horizontal strip of three of the Newspaper issue. It did not sell and was being offered at the low end of its \$1,358-2,172 estimate range.



(As it turns out, the majority of the lots in this Rarities auction did not sell, including most of the lots I selected for viewing in advance of the auction. All of the lots that follow did not sell and were being offered after the auction at the low end of the presale estimate ranges given here.)

Also from an extensive Italian States section, we view



this cover with the 10c Arms issue on rose paper, in a strip of four, the second stamp from the left having the scarce “N” sideways in “CENT” at the bottom of the stamp.

This mourning cover (slightly refolded at left) from Carrara (5.8.58) to “Rimini per San Marino” is addressed to the “Capitano Reggente” (the ruler) of San Marino—Francesco Guidi Giorgi (who ruled during the second half of 1858). It was estimated at \$27,152-33,941.

Mauritius was represented by two covers, this being the more valuable of the two—at least it was estimated as such. Introduced as “The Finest ‘Post Paid’ Set on Cover”, it bears Early Intermediate Impressions of the 1848



1d dull vermilion and 2d deep dull blue, Sc. 3b and 4b, both with good to large even margins all round, rich deep color and clear sharp impressions, neatly tied by “3” in circles, the inland cover to Port Louis also with an octagonal boxed “Souillac DE 18 1851” and “MAURITIUS / DE 19 1855” crowned cds alongside.

As explained, on the Holcombe certificate, “The 3d. rate was a charge for a letter between branch offices (2d.) but

if the letter was to Port Louis and had to be delivered a further charge of 1d. was made. Such letters are extremely rare, especially so bearing the two different values.”

It was estimated at \$339,405-475,167.

I selected two Polish Levant lots from an extensive Levant Offices (in Turkish Empire) section. The first is this cover to Poznan, Poland, with the complete first issue placed at a diagonal, original



printing, tied by single-circle Polish Post cds (“9.X.20”). This was a late usage of this issue (the “P.P.C.” overprints—see next lot—were made in the same month, as stocks had run out). The cover was estimated at \$4,073-5,430.

The hand-painted picture postcard is a non-philatelic use of the rare “P.P.C.” overprints, bearing the 5 fenigi, 25f and 50f values, tied by single-circle Polish Post cds dated 2 XII 1920. It was sent Registered to Warsaw (the reverse, not shown, has a backstamp (16 XII 20) and circled “Wr 1” censor handstamp.



Described as “Perhaps the most outstanding, and certainly the most beautiful, item of the Polish Post Office in Constantinople, and a fantastic showpiece for the Levant Foreign Offices collector.” It was addressed to Wlodzimirz Rachmanoff, who went on to become a well-known philatelist and author. Estimated at \$10,862-16,291, it did not sell.



Presented next in this viewing is the Serbia 2 para red lilac brown on lilac grey, second printing (Michel 8xb), used on an August 13, 1866, Bosnian newspaper, tied by a distinctive framed NAPLACENO of the Karantin Raca border post office.

The newspaper was printed in Sarajevo, and thus had to bear a 2 para stamp for transmission in Serbia. The stamp is clearly tied to the newspaper, which probably bore an address label, traces of which appear at the top left. As described, “This franked newspaper is considered THE MOST IMPORTANT RARITY IN SERBIAN PHILATELY.” Estimated at \$40,729-67,881, it did not sell.

For this final lot in this viewing of the November 17, 2010 Feldman Rarities of the World Auction, I selected this Western Australia 1860 4d blue roulette that is partially rouletted at the right and the bottom of the stamp (arrows), with roulette cuts also being



described as “still visible at lower left”, although I do not see them. The only known used example, it was estimated at \$5,462-6,827 but did not sell. As mentioned earlier, unsold lots were offered after the auction at the low end of their estimate ranges, in this case, for \$5,462.

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