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N° 32

22/9/2024

Romania 1858 - 1940, stamps and postal history

**Romania-Austria DDSG Ship Mail:** Two uncanceled Romania Prince Carol 1869 10 bani indigo stamps (Mi. #22c) on a cover sent on 6/6/1871 from Galați (as indicated by a manuscript note inside with the date and town) to Vienna, Austria. The arrival marking "Wien 10/6" is on the reverse.

**This is a very interesting postal history item.** The sender franked the letter but did not deliver it to the post office or a P.O. box. Instead, he handed it directly to the DDSG ship in Galați, as indicated by the manuscript note "Galatz" at the top, written by the ship's clerk. Since April 1869, DDSG ships were only allowed to transport mail received directly from the Romanian Post in closed bags, which could explain why the stamps remained uncanceled.

Upon arrival in Vienna, it was noted that the letter was underpaid (20 bani instead of the required 25 bani rate) and it was taxed accordingly. The letter was treated as unfranked, and the value of the stamps was deducted from the total postage due. The fee for an unfranked letter was 20 kreuzer (equivalent to 50 bani, as 1 kr = 2.5 bani). The 20 bani stamps were valued at 8 kreuzer ("8x" noted near the stamp in blue pencil), resulting in a postage due of 12 kreuzer (also marked as "12" in blue pencil). The canceled "2" in blue, crossed out with a red pencil, may represent the missing 2 kreuzer (equivalent to 5 bani) of the franking.

**In my opinion, the item is genuine in all respects, and the two stamps belong to the cover.**



The stamps are creased at the top due to a horizontal fold in the cover. Otherwise, they are in fine condition. Unfortunately, the cover has the recipient's family name cut out and shows some surface abrasions.

**This is a rare item.** A similar example of "clandestine" mail was part of the Fritz Heimbüchler collection (ex Franz See) and is described in volume two of his handbook, on page 248. That item, however, was correctly franked, whereas **this item was taxed for insufficient postage, making it likely unique.**

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