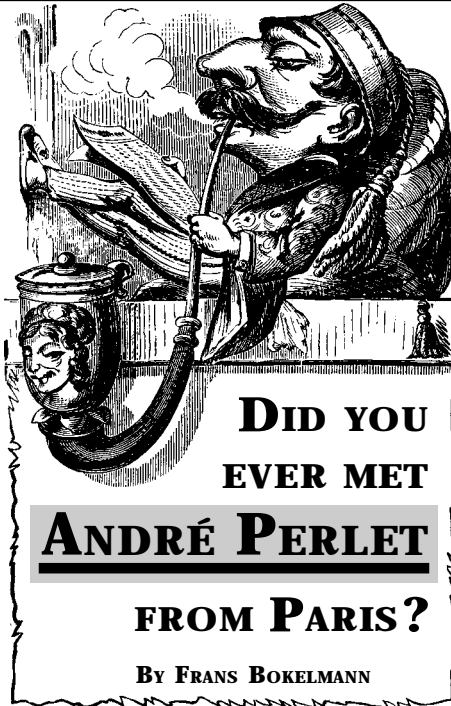


The first time I met André Perlet was about three years ago. In January 1998 at a market stall in The Hague I laid my hands on a dull postcard from Paris. The card had been sent on December 22, 1905, by a Mr. Perlet (Paris) to Mr. Kruyt (Amsterdam). The view was all too common, but the reverse was not boring at all.

Half of the address side was occupied by a list of twenty (20!) postcard collector clubs and societies from various countries, followed by "etc., etc." As if the itemized clubs represented merely a selection out of several dozens of memberships contracted by this Mr. Perlet. I still remember my first reaction while holding this card in my hand: "this guy must have had quite a imagination!". Nevertheless my interest had been awakened and I decided to find an answer to the dilemma: imagination or reality.

So I began to search through the few old postcard collector club magazines available to me. And gradually the balance tipped towards: reality. "Das Blaue Blatt" listed Mr. A. Perlet (50 Rue Molitor, Paris) as member 388 of "Wilhelmina" (Holland). The "Jolly Jokers" directory of 1911 listed Mr. A. Perlet as Jolly Joker number 700. The "Philatelic West" of September 1909 was even abundant in references: A. Perlet as foreign representative for the "Union Souvenir Card Exchange" (organized 1904, Denver), having renewed his membership - number 500 - of USCE and even signing an advertisement for APN (Association Philcartiste Nancéenne, France).

Having established the reality of several memberships of Perlet listed by himself, I set out for a second search: to locate more cards mailed out by Perlet. I was lucky and discovered a total of 13 Perlet cards so far. All 13 show listings of ppc club memberships. But even more important was the discovery that the listings are not always identical, but changing. After carefully comparing all information on the Perlet cards, five different "listing types" can be found. The postal mailing dates of the different cards make it possible to put it all into a chronological order. Now the Perlet membership lists show a gradual shifting of the ppc clubs. So, my initial hunch



came true. Perlet, the ppc club membership "accumulator" could be of great help in disentangling the complicated history of old picture postcard collector societies. For the time being five clusters of ppc club lists can be defined:

- Perlet club**
- List 1** was used ... **1905 - 1907**
- List 2** **1908**
- List 3** **1910**
- List 4** **1913 - 1914**
- List 5** **1918 - 1927**

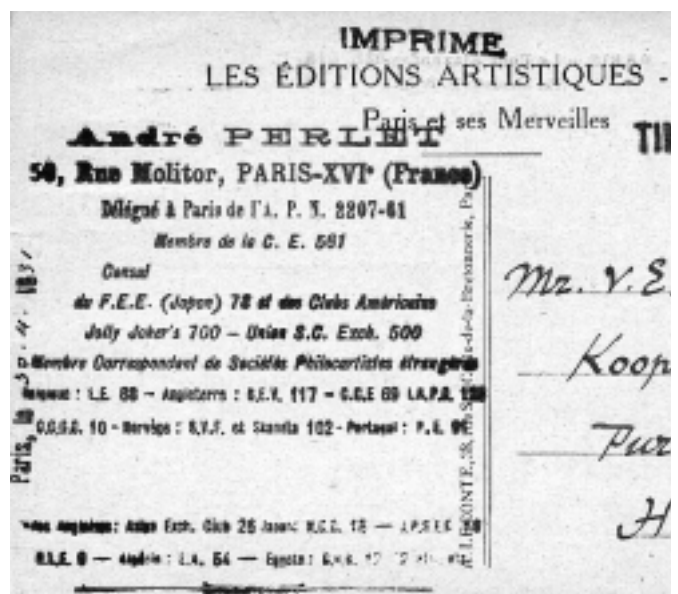
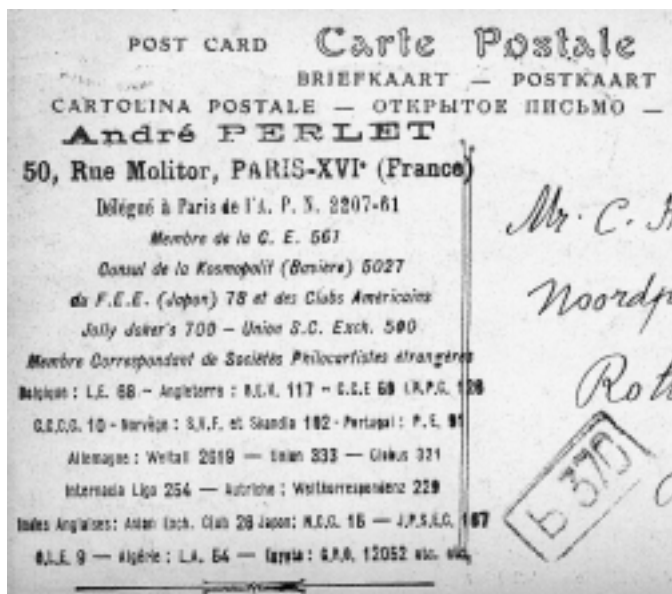
It is evident from this enumeration of clusters that this is just a beginning. More Perlet material is needed. For instance there are presently no cards postally used in 1909, 1911, 1912 and WWI years available for research. So, if you find any cards in your collection with the easy to recognize rubber stamps imprints of a Mr. André Perlet (see ills. below), please let me know. More cards with club membership information on could be most helpful for "fine-tuning" current research data.

To be honest, list 5 is identical with list 4, apart from all German and Austrian clubs removed. These ppc clubs had been chiselled away by Perlet during or immediately at the outbreak of the Great War. A significant detail as far as feelings are concerned. But also tell-tale for the development of André Perlet. He did not join new clubs after the year 1914. No new ones, but old ones gradually crossed out. Did he became old? Did he get wiser? Or could he spent less on memberships? Clubs out of business? Makes no sense guessing. We simply don't know (yet). For the purpose of research only lists 1 to 4 can be of use. The last Perlet card I know of, is dated May 30, 1931 (see ill. on next page). The only club mentioned on this card is the USCE. All others have disappeared. At least out of the life of André Perlet. So let us concentrate research on list periods 1 to 4.

But how can we use the Perlet material? First of all, A. Perlet always mentioned the country of origin with club initials. E.g. the "GRO". Nothing is known about this club. Only very few cards have surfaced so far, exchange between members of GRO. People with membership numbers in the 12 th, 13 th and 14,000 range. According to Perlet this club had its headquarters in Egypt. So, next time we are in Cairo, we better pay a visit to the municipal archives.... By the way, in the logo / vignet of GRO the words *Golden Rule* and *Gold Reich* are clearly made out, and the 'O' could stand for "Organisation". So the first steps are: *Golden Rule Organisation*.

Another example why the Perlet cards are really useful for ppc club research: according to club list 1, Perlet was member no. 333 of "I. Dresdner APSV" (Germany). In list 2 he is member 333 of "UNION APSV". And in list 4 André Perlet is found as member 333 of "UNION". All in Germany. Always the same membership number, making clear that the "First PPC Collector Club of Dresden" successively evolved into the "PPC Collector Club UNION", shortly later named "UNION" only.

New Zealand is mentioned only once, i.e. in club list 3 (1910). Sigla of the club: "MEC". Never found any sign of life of this society. Had it really ever existed? The answer



is YES. Only two weeks ago – and I am sure it has been Perlet who put my mind on the alert – I found a tiny advertisement in “Collector’s World” (1908) telling “... the N.Z. Collector is the bright up to date magazine of the only collectors club in Australasia: the **MUTUAL EXCHANGE CLUB**”. Another mystery solved. And André Perlet had been member no. 12 of this “remote” organization.

By now I am fully convinced that A. Perlet was not a lunatic or boaster just decorating his postcards with big rubber stamp imprints to show off. No, he had been a dedicated collector indeed. Investing plenty of time and money in his hobby. However, in some way he is deceiving us all the time. You may have got the idea that in these lines I have introduced André Perlet to you as an ardent picture postcard collector. **But... he did not collect ppc's!** No, his focus had been stamps! He found his way into the biggest and the smallest postcard collector / corespondance clubs and societies worldwide in order to obtain: **postage stamps**. Perlet always sent following message to new contacts, either in German or in French language: **“I will send you every card you desire; send me in return stamps, old or modern ones, but used only, not mint”**.

Whether André Perlet from Paris, France was a **PHILOCARTIST** or a **PHILATELIST** does not really matter when it comes to postcard history research. For us dedicated to postcards he will stay most helpful with his “synopsis” or summaries of collecting clubs at the beginning of the previous century.

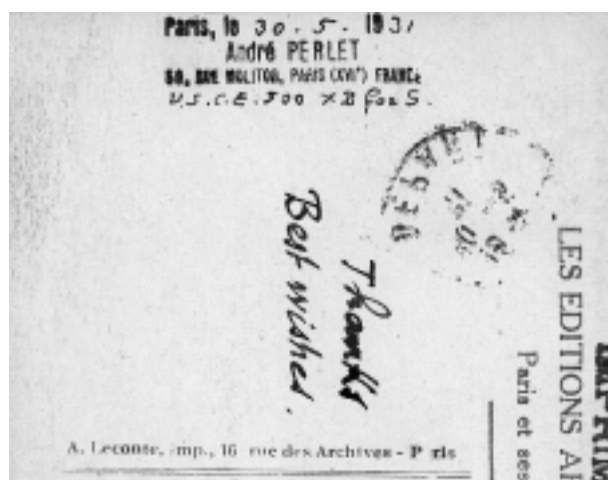
PS: I would like to thank the editor for his suggestions and the provided material.

Frans Bokelmann.



↑ Paris, Le Jardin des Tuileries (ND Photo), quite common card with Perlet’s message on picture side that he wants stamps only in exchange for postcards. P/u 1914.

➔ André Perlet’s so far last known sign of life / exchange correspondence dates from May 5, 1931. The once so impressive rubberstamped list of club memberships is gone. Only U.S.C.E. membership number 500 mentioned by hand.



A firm named “**European Post Card Bureau**” from Brussels, Belgium, distributed “Exchange-Cards” like this one illustrated here (discovered by Bob Conrich). This sample is printed in green ink and a bit cut on the right side. Although the term “Exchange” appears it is nothing but a sales offer. “Post Card views of Europe. Our cards are views in colors, of superior quality and general interest from all parts of Europe. 15 cards 50 ¢ postpaid”. In addition 10 “exchange cards” were included with every purchase. Guess all Exchange Cards had a individual number and the mention of “Series B” makes believe that there were also other series around. The address field shows clearly that this offer aimed entirely at the U.S. collector scene. Probably those collectors who distributed the exchange cards to other collectors, who again ordered from Belgium firm received a free card in return or so. Good marketing idea. Wonder when the “European Post Card Bureau” was in business. Think this card was distributed some time after 1906, when there were masses of cards around and surplus stock was cheap to purchase. Any other “Exchange Cards” around?

CARDS FROM FAR-AWAY PLACES

of pre-1905 origin, printed in Germany, are quite often found at fairs/auctions in very good to mint condition. Not postally used of course. Such cards published by German firms were on sale in Germany in ppc retail shops or by mail. Never been at the place shown on picture side. Okay, that is regular business. But it is interesting that also the prime printers and/or publishers sold their cards in minimum lots of sometimes 50 diff., mostly in lots of 100 and more directly to interested collectors in pre-1900 years. O. Zieher, München (publ.) Carl Garte, Leipzig (printer/publisher), Emil Garde, Frankfurt (publ.), J. Miesler, Berlin (printer/publisher), Bürger & Ottilie, Leipzig (printer/publisher), Kunstanstalt Lautz, Darmstadt (printer/publ.), are some only found in ppc collector publications dating from 1896-97. Who says that they sold only their own published cards to collectors only? Probably they have printed 100-200 additional cards of every customers order? To be sold separately to collectors, and without original publishers knowledge?

wiesbaden, in feinstufiger Chromoausführung à 10 Pf., 100 Stück 5 Mk.
Deutsche u. ausländische Postkarten zu Sammelzwecken.
 100 St. versch. Karten 5 Mk., 500 St. 20 Mk. in feinsten Ausführung.
 Postkarten-Alben für Sammler empfiehlt
Kunstanstalt Lautz, Darmstadt.