

Perfin Catalog from the Territory of Czechoslovakia

adapted from translation of Introduction to 1987 catalog by Maxa, Fejtek, Janaček
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Introduction

The authors of this catalog are expressing their sincere thanks to all the perfin collectors in Czechoslovakia and elsewhere, who through their discoveries, knowledge, and their suggestions enabled us to prepare a new enlarged edition of the perfin catalog from the territory of Czechoslovakia. The pivotal merit for the realization of this manual goes to the committee KF-0065 and its chairman Vladimír Dražan because, without the support of the club and its financial help, it would have been impossible to publish this rigorous edition. We believe that the officers of KF-0065 have shown how even a small group of philatelists can contribute to the enrichment of our knowledge and to its increase in popularity among stamp collectors.

Preface

Five years have elapsed since the last - the third - edition of the Perfin Catalog from the Territory of Czechoslovakia was issued. We decided to prepare the 4th edition -- not only because the last edition of the catalog was completely out of print for a long time -- but mainly because we had in the past few years markedly progressed in the identification and recognition of Czechoslovak perfins. We are assuming that in about five years we will prepare a new edition and in the interim - according to need - will issue supplements with new discoveries, additions or corrections. Although we have made great progress in the study of our perfins, it is far from being finalized. Therefore, we would welcome users of the catalog to make us aware of any discrepancies in information contained in the catalog which they discover while studying the perfins in their own collections.

The arrangement of the new edition differs from the previous one. We have lowered the number of perfins on each page to seven, and all the needed information has been concentrated in one place. We consider this layout to be a standard and would even like to produce several previously published perfin catalogs of European countries in this same way.

While making the choice of selecting a new catalog organization, we were faced with the problem of whether we should keep the existing numbering system or change the numbering within the catalog. We opted for the second solution because we thought that the new format demanded it. Supplements (i.e. newly discovered perfins) will be numbered so that each new perfin will get a decimal number within alphabetical order (e.g. B14 , B 14.5, B15, etc.)

This catalog contains all the perfins discovered to date which were used since 1870 by companies and enterprises within the territory of the Czechoslovak Republic (borders as of September 1, 1938. A number of perfins -- which came into existence after 1970 and which were created by various philatelic clubs -- are mentioned separately (see page 172) because, strictly speaking, they do not belong among the company perfins.

This catalog includes 1,209 perfins. Of these, 617 perfins were positively identified (60%) and another 242 (23.5%) indirectly identified. In total, therefore, we are aware of the identity of 859 users of perfins (83.5%), while the users of the other 170 perfins (16.5%) remain unidentified. The perfins are organized using the time-tested alphabetical system where each new beginning letter starts on the right page. If you place the catalog into an A5 format ring binder, this will make it simpler to insert additional sheets.

The illustrations of all perfins were taken from originals. When comparing an illustration with a perfined stamp which has a monogram with a perpendicular axis or symmetry (e.g. perfins A1, O1, etc.), it is necessary to try both possibilities to ascertain that the perfin matches the drawing exactly.

To the right of the drawing of each perfin is listed the catalog number and entry of the monogram's components. An oblique line (/) indicates that the letters after it lie on the next line of the monogram.

If a letter abbreviation of Č, R, U, M, Pl, P, or N follows, it identifies the occurrence of a perfin on a stamp of a different country. These are recorded chronologically. The index of the abbreviations is located at the end of this Preface (page 4).

Some perfins have a symbol of X/2, X/5, X/6, X/9, X/10 located immediately after the letter that shows it occurs of the stamps of a different issuing country. This signifies that we are looking at a multiperfin; that is, a perfin made by a machine with 2, 5, 6, 9, or 10 monograms on the die face. In such cases it is possible that a perfin, which you want to identify, will not exactly match the drawing since multiperfins often differ from each other.

In most cases we know how all of the multiperfins look. Therefore, on pages 173-182 you will find their drawings. The machines with 10 monograms had all their perfins placed in one row. In our catalog -- due to the page set-up -- we illustrate them in two rows. An exception is made for perfins F62 F.S. and S65 S.Z. where the first one [an X/6 multiperfin] was organized in two rows (3x2) and the second one [an X/9] into three rows (3x3). The individual types of the multiperfins are numbered so that the basic catalog number is complemented by a Roman numeral indicating its type. If the individual drawings of the various types of multiperfins do not have perpendicular lines between them and the numbers signifying the types are not in brackets, it means that we were able to reconstruct the location of the monograms on the die face (the distances and the sequence of types correspond to the actual die order). If the individual types are separated by perpendicular lines and the numbers signifying the types are in brackets, it indicates that the reconstruction is incomplete (i.e. we are aware of the form of the various types but not their sequence on the die face nor the distance between the individual monograms). Only by finding larger units of stamps (strips or blocks) will we be able to ascertain this information.

The two years that are listed next indicate the period of time during which the perfin was used. A clarification is necessary for these dates of circulation. No official information exists as to when any perfin was put into circulation, because neither the Austrian, Hungarian, nor the Czechoslovak postal administrations required that a company obtain a permit to use perfins. Consequently we can ascertain the dates of circulation only through the study of philatelic materials. Even the postal cancellation is not very helpful because the date is often unreadable or is missing (it was printed off the stamp). The only guideline remaining is the issue date of the stamp and the date when the stamp became invalid for postal use. We are well aware that such time frames for the usage of the perfins are inaccurate, especially for those where we are in possession of only one or a few examples. However, any other possible way to determine the period of circulation does not exist and this data can only be perfected through further study.

The majority of perfins associated with a place of business in the Czech lands (on Austrian stamps) and in Slovakia (on Hungarian stamps) but which did not appear on Czechoslovak stamps are found to have 1918 as the final year of circulation. We have to recognize that the company using the perfin could have gone out of business during WWI - or even before it - or that the perfin could have been withdrawn from use before this time. At the same time, some perfins used on Austrian and Hungarian stamps could appear on Czechoslovak stamps after October 28, 1918 -- although we have not found any. This is a great opportunity for an interesting and useful study.

We would like to make you aware that the end of circulation of Czechoslovak companies on the stamps of the Protectorate [P], of Germany [N], or of Hungary [M] is shown as 1944. However, it is certain that these perfins were used on the stamps of postal administrations even at the beginning of 1945 through the liberation on April/May 1945. We are beginning the perfins of the stamps of the liberated Czechoslovak Republic with the year 1945 even though they can only occur beginning with mail submitted at the end of May or beginning of June 1945.

We now provide some additional information for some special situations.

The symbol [%] indicates that we are aware that the perfin is incomplete -- during use one or more of the perforation pins was broken (sometimes the perforating machine was repaired and the broken pins were replaced). It was not possible to include in this catalog the description of the process of how the machine was damaged and then repaired. Individual studies of this area will be periodically published in our bulletin PERFINY.

The symbol [=] indicates that the perfin originates from a machine for coil stamps that did both the applying of the perfin to the stamps as well as gluing it onto the postal item. These stamps are always cut off in the horizontal perforation positions. To this date we have no proof that these machines were used in Czechoslovakia after October 28, 1918.

The symbol [§] indicates that the particular perfin was also found on revenue stamps. The symbol [z] indicates that the perfin is also found on postal stationery (postal cards, package dispatch slip, or money order). In such cases the postal stationery itself is perforated, not just the stamp that is applied to the item.

The symbols PC and SO indicate that the perfin has appeared on the overprinted stamps POŠTA ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ 1919 and S.O. 1920.

We would like to remind the catalog users that all the information presented here represents the extent of our knowledge about Czechoslovak perfins to the end of 1986. It is understandable that further study will provide new information.

The last piece of information on the top line is the relative value of the perfin. On the basis of our wide research we were able to ascertain the relative values of the individual perfins. The most common perfins have the value A, the scarcest perfins have the value F (see the table on page 4 of the Preface).

We recommend to collectors that they exchange perfins of the same value. The perfins in the valuation group A have a value of 0.50 through 1.00 Kc depending on the quality of the perforated stamp. On the other hand, a perfin with the A value on the 1000h Hradčany stamp, the 5.00Kc St. Wenceslas or an air mail stamp will have much greater value than the same perfin on a common stamp valued at 0.50 or 1.00Kc.

Under the basic information about every perfin, data is shown regarding regarding its user. First, the name of the owner of the firm or the enterprise. The translation of a foreign language text is shown in brackets. A cross [+] in front of the identification data indicates that the information was obtained with the help of identifying stationery (i.e. an envelope or postal card with the name and address of the sender [owner] of the perfin). In the case where the identification information is not marked with a cross, the identification is indirect - gained with the help of various address listings [i.e. telephone book, city business directory]. In the situation when the headquarters of the firm was in a location with no post office, we have shown the name of the community and the postal address. Next, follows as detailed a description, as possible, of the business activities of the user of the perfin. This is, in most cases, taken from a commercial address listing (Trh Československy [Czechoslovak Market], 1932 edition). However, it is possible that over time for certain users the activity of the firm, its address or its address listing changed.

In the upper right corner is information as to the founding or incorporation of the firm or enterprise. In certain cases this date may indicate when the firm could begin using perfins (In Austria-Hungary perfins were introduced in 1877).

In the bottom left corner is the name of the post office for the location of the user of the perfin -- the "domicile". In most cases we find the cancellation of this post office on the perfined stamp. For various reasons one can find also different cancellations. This can be explained by the firm having branches in various cities (when they are known, they are listed) or the firm was sending return envelopes or cards with an attached perfined stamp to enable an easier placement of an order by the customer. The perfin would be canceled at the post office of the customer. In other cases, this can be a stamp from a newspaper shipment (in Austria and the Czechoslovak Republic they were canceled at the delivery location) or from a misuse of a company's perfin for private correspondence. The domiciles of perfins used in Austria-Hungary, through October 28, 1918, are listed in two languages with the Czech or Slovak title always listed first. If the current name of the community differs from the one formerly used, it is listed in brackets.

We assume that the advantage of the newly issued catalog is that it contains almost all information concentrated in one location. We have tried to show in this Preface which areas we can and must search for new information and new facts to improve the quality of the catalog. To all the collectors who will help us in this regard with even the smallest piece of information, we would like to thank you in advance.

Prague, December 1986

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Abbreviations Used

- T. - factory
- P. - enterprise
- V. - wholesale
- R - Austria until 1918
- U - Hungary until 1918
- Pl - Poland 1918-1920
- Č - Czechoslovakia until 1938
- M - Hungary 1938-1945
- N - Germany 1938-1945
- P - Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia 1939-1945
- Čs - Czechoslovakia after 1945

Relative Value of Perfins

- A - more than 200 pieces known
- B - 100-199 pieces known
- C - 50 -99 pieces known
- D - 20 -49 pieces known
- E - 5-19 pieces known
- F - 4 Or less pieces known