

the Perfins of HUNGARY

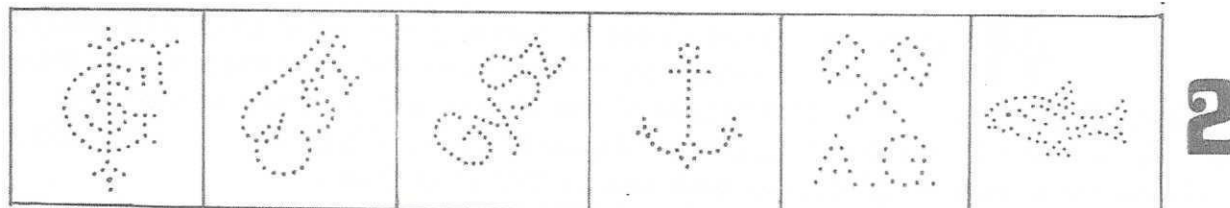
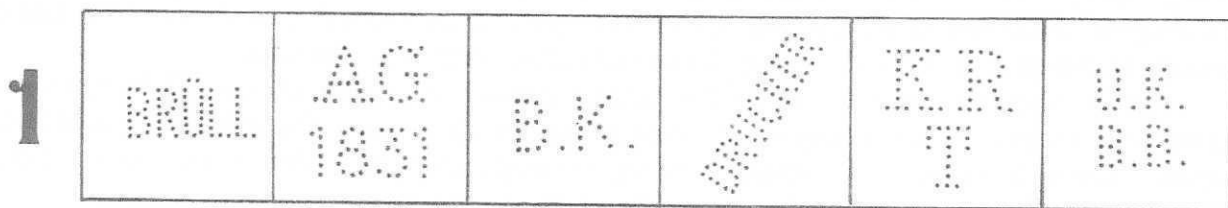
by Vojtech Maxa

Although the first Hungarian stamps were issued in 1871, Hungary was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until World War I. The decree of April 4, 1877, by which the Austrian Ministry of Trade in Vienna authorized the use of Perfins in Austria, was considered equally valid for the Hungarian part of the Empire. This decree (see *Perfins Bulletin*, February 1972) must be regarded as the beginning point in any study of Hungarian Perfins.

The earliest Hungarian Perfin known to me was used on 23 June 1887. I have a copy of the BRULL design (see Figure 1) with a cancellation of that date. Please remember when reading Hungarian cancellations that the year is first, then the month--usually an abbreviated word--and finally the day.

After four years of collecting Hungarian Perfins, I have been able to register nearly 400 different patterns. The total number of Hungarian Perfins probably approaches 500.

Hungarian Perfins easily fall into two groups. Perfins from 1880 to 1930 generally are the products of precise perforators manufactured either in Germany or Austria. With few exceptions, they are of unimaginative design. Most are simple letters or monograms (Figures 1 and 2).



Beginning about 1930, perforators of local origin came into use. The patterns they produced are rather crude with holes further apart and irregularly spaced. Apparently local perforator designers knew very little about draughtsmanship (Figure 3).

Hungarian perforators were usually of the single-head type. Few had a double head. There was one great curiosity: a ten-head perforator used by the Assecurazione Generali Insurance Company, whose die read A. G. /1831.

The use of Perfins ended in Hungary sometime in the 1950's. I know of no decree forbidding their use. It seems likely they gradually faded from use with the introduction of postage meters. Perfins can also be found on fiscal stamps of the same 1880 to 1950 period.

Hungary fought with the German Reich during World War I and after 1918 it lost much of the territory it once occupied. These losses can be divided into three parts:

- The Northern Territory, the so-called Upper Land, which went to Czechoslovakia;
- The Eastern Territory, Transylvania, which went to Rumania; and
- The Southwestern Part, Croatia, which went to Yugoslavia.

In the Upper Land, Perfins are known from Pozsony (now Bratislava), Kassa (Košice), Losoncz (Lučenec), Dioszeg (Filakovo), and Zsolna (Žilina).

In Transylvania, Perfins were used in Arad, Temesvar (Timisoara), and Brasso (Brasov).

In Croatia, Perfins are known from Fiume (Rijeka), Sziszak (Sušak), and Zagrab (Zagreb).

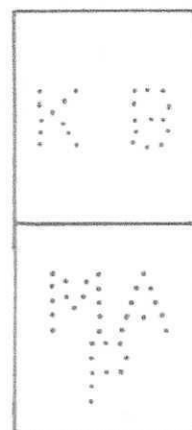
The majority of the Hungarian patterns used in these towns between 1880 and 1918 can be found after 1918 on the stamps of Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia.

In 1938, Hungary once again occupied foreign territories: part of Southern Slovakia and the whole of the eastern province of Czechoslovakia. As far as I know, only one Perfin appeared on the newly introduced Hungarian stamps: F. S. belonging to Messrs Fleischer and Schriger, ironmongers in Košice (Kassa), which is listed as #F-49 in the Czechoslovak Perfins Catalog.

Bear in mind the rather complicated political development of Hungary when trying to locate on contemporary maps the towns where Hungarian Perfins were used. Keep in mind also when looking through Czech, Rumanian, and Yugoslav stamps that Hungarian Perfins may turn up on those.

Hungary has always been a rather poor agricultural country with the majority of its industry and business concentrated in the capital, Budapest. Over 80 percent of the Hungarian Perfins come from Budapest. A few are known from Gyor and Szeged. Towns like Barcz, Czegléd, Gyoma, Kismarton, and Nagy Szaben had one or two dies each.

Collectors often come across stamps perforated with three holes forming a small triangle. It must be stressed that these are not Perfins in the real sense of the word in that they did not belong to any private firm or public department. They were part of a complicated and rather clumsy official scheme introduced in the early 1920's by the Post Office to prevent speculation on sheets of unused stamps. The scheme was fully described by Mr. L. S. Etre in the Perfins Bulletin of March 1971.



3

It should be noted, incidentally, that stamps punched with three holes were also privately perforated. Collectors should be careful not to confuse these three additional holes in Perfins with extra holes characterizing another die.

Mr. Ettore also writes about the AUT Perfin used in 1906-1907 in the semi-automatic experimental machine for mailing registered letters at the Budapest General Post Office. This is an official Perfin, but it is a very scarce item. Another official Perfin consists of three holes in a horizontal row punched into a 20-forint 1957 airmail stamp, but little is known of the real purpose of this perforation.

As far as I know, Perfins are not seriously studied and not even widely collected in Hungary. I published an article about them in the Hungarian stamp magazine Filatelia Szemle in April 1972 but I received only one letter and that was from a collector who had barely two dozen Perfins from his own country.

This lack of interest in Perfins is general among Central European stamp collectors who have been under the strong influence of Austrian and German philatelic writers. For nearly a century these writers condemned at every opportunity "stamps with holes in them" as being fit only for the wastepaper basket. This negative outlook toward Perfins persists and only a few enthusiasts can be found in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Poland, Rumania, and Soviet Russia.

Despite this lack of interest on the part of the Hungarians themselves, it is my intention to prepare a catalog of the Perfins of Hungary. This is, of course, no easy task. To collect and register all the existing dies is not the most difficult part. The real trouble starts when one tries to identify the owners of the Perfins.

I have been lucky to receive generous help from many Perfins collectors in the United States and in other countries; they have sent me new dies and even some new identifications. I appreciate this help. But more help is needed. Until now hardly 10 percent of the Hungarian Perfins have been identified (see the list below). If the catalog is ever to become a reality, we must substantially increase the number of identifications.

If you have even one Hungarian Perfin identification which is not on the list below (or which is not in agreement with the list below), please contact me. The original covers will be returned promptly. If you do not wish to send the originals, a Xerox copy of the cover with an additional drawing of the Perfin will be very helpful. By sharing the information you have, you will help advance the knowledge of Hungarian Perfins and you will speed the publication of another catalog.

HUNGARIAN PERFINS IDENTIFIED

Pattern	User
AEG	Allgemeine Elektrizitat Gesellschaft, Budapest
A. G. /1831	Assecurazione Generali Insurance Company, Budapest
A. K.	Apollo Kaolaj Oil Refinery, Poszony
A. M.	Anglo-Magyar Bank, Budapest
A. O. B.	Anglo-Osterreichische Bank, Budapest

HUNGARIAN PERFINs IDENTIFIED, continued

Pattern	User
CH	International Harvester Company, Budapest
Cz. H. M.	Czegledi Hengermalom R. T. Flour Mill, Czegled
D. C. Gy.	Dioszeg Sugar Mill, Dioszeg
G. St.	Gebroder Stollwerck Chocolate Factory, Poszony
H. H.	Heinrich Haggermann Flour Mill, Budapest
K B	Pesti Magyar Kereskelemi Bank (Hungarian Commerce Bank in Pest) Budapest
K. F. é T.	Khumayer F. & Company, Trimmings Manufacturer, Poszony
K. J.	Kremenezky J., Electric Lamps Factory, Budapest
K. L.	Kallai Lajos, Budapest
M. A.	Molnar Arthur, Banker, Budapest
M. Á. H.	Magyar Altalanos Hitelbank (United Hungarian Credit Bank) Budapest
MAT	Magyar Altalanos Takarekpeztar (United Hungarian Savings Bank) Budapest
M. Ö.	Mauthner O, wholesale trade in seeds, Budapest
R. A. /1838	Riunioni Adriatica Insurance Company, Budapest
S. A. /H. J.	Saxlehner Andreas Hunyadi Janos (mineral water), Budapest
T. J. F.	Tausky J. Sons, ready made clothing, Poszony
U és S	Ulmann & Seligmann, international transporters, Budapest
VCO	Vacuum Oil Company, Budapest
WBV	Winer Bank-Verein, Budapest

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