

CATALOG OF PERFINS ON HRADČANY STAMPS

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Introduction

Perfins have been organizationally collected in Czechoslovakia for more than 45 years. Vojtech Maxa of Prague promoted their collection and was the author of several issued catalogs about perfins in Czechoslovakia. On the basis of their having been studied for a long time, knowledge about Czechoslovak perfins is at a high level, and there are a permanent circle of important collectors who are devoted to them.

We have been thinking, for some time now, about publishing a catalog about perfins on Hradčany stamps. Every philatelist knows that Hradčany stamps are exactly the true Czechoslovak philatelic classics and that a catalog documenting perfins on those stamps had been missing since the beginning.

This Catalog of Perfins on Hradčany Stamps is the result of the authors' several years of work and the cooperation of many notable collectors of perfins in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Collaborating on the catalog were not only notable collectors (Vl. Havel, Vl. Munzberger, J. Piša, Zd. Štohanzl, V. Trenčinsky, T. Kotek), but also many owners of smaller perfin collections who contributed with their knowledge and information, and we wish to thank them for their active contributions.

The information about individual perfins is updated to January 1, 2015, and compared with the 1987 catalog, lots of the information has changed or increased. Despite that, we believe that additional information that is not currently in the catalog will be discovered. We assume that an appendix to the catalog will be published at some time and possibly in a more distant time a new updated catalog. In the catalog there are currently 371(?) perfins on Hradčany stamps, which is about 35% of all Czechoslovak perfins. With a view to the relatively short validity of Hradčany stamps, this percentage is quite high. From the time of the use of Hradčany stamps, we find some additional perfins on other issues, but if they were not yet proven to be on Hradčany stamps, we do not show them.

Layout, arrangement, and numbering of the catalog

On each page there are normally six perfins, separated by a small gap for better clarity.

Numbering within the catalog is adopted from the last catalog (Catalog of Perfins from the Czechoslovak Lands, Maxa, Fejtek, Janeček from 1987). The numbering is organized alphabetically according to the first letter of the perfin's monogram - every letter has its own numerical series. Missing perfin numbers in the numerical series belong to perfins that do not occur on Hradčany stamps.

In comparing with the original numbering from the 1987 catalog, new additional perfins were discovered and were incorporated alphabetically in the place where they belonged. Since it was already decided in the past that the numbering in future catalogs was not going to change, the supplemental numbering of newly discovered perfins was to be assisted with the use of decimal commas. For example, behind perfin A16 comes A16,1 and then A17. This new numbering will also be in the new catalog of Czechoslovak perfins being prepared.

Given the fact that Hradčany stamps mostly have daily postal cancels from old Austria or possibly Hungary, the domicile is shown in Czech, Slovak/German, and Hungarian, in that order. During the use of different types of daily cancels at some post offices, the form of the domicile can differ slightly from the catalog.

Perfin entries in the catalog

On the left side of the entry is a drawing of the perfin in a scale of 1:1. When the perfin is laid on top of the drawing, the holes of the perfin must match perfectly. Some of the drawings in the catalog are taken from the "Maxa 1987" catalog, thus there is a small chance of insignificant inaccuracies in isolated cases.

In the first row to the right is the number of the perfin, then the monogram initials (a slash(/) means the initials which follow are below the previous ones), domicile (cancel of the post office from which the perfin owner mailed the correspondence -- the domicile does not have to be the same as the company's place of business), if we are dealing with a multi-perfin, there is a symbol, e.g., X/5. In the case where the perfin (in the time of its use on Hradčany stamps) is not complete or some holes are missing in it, then this fact is identified with the symbol %. If we are registering a verified envelope having Hradčany stamps with perfins, there is a symbol for an envelope [✉] at the end.

In the second line we have the company's name or name of the company's owner or the business. A plus sign (+) in front of the identification information means the identity of the firm was directly present on an identifying envelope from the time period of the perfin's usage.

The third line gives us the purpose of the business activities of the firm. A plus sign (+) means that the purpose of the business activities has been verified.

All of the above mentioned information is related to the time period when Hradčany stamps were used. Later changes (company name, owners, domicile, etc.) are not considered.

The next three lines apply to stamps N -- imperforate, Z -- perforated, SZ -- stamps with private perforation. Next in the three lines are shown the catalog numbers of stamps from the POFIS catalog on which the given perfin occurs. At the end of the line is shown a point value.

Point values in the catalog

At each perfin, the point values are once again separate for stamps that are imperforate (N), perforated (Z), or possibly with private perforation (SZ). With perforated stamps, we do not differentiate the type of perforation (in Czechoslovak stamp catalogs A through H). Of course, every collector can adjust his collection according to the perforation types.

Special attention is given to perfins on stamps with values that do not occur often, The rarest occurrence of perfins is on denominations of 1h and 1000h, then 120h and 75h. With these it is necessary to consider the addition to price of 30 or up to 80 points, sometimes even higher.

The current value of a point in the catalog is:

1 point = 0.10€ (2.50 Kč)

Prices shown in the catalog are for perfect perfins, with prices decreasing 10 to 50% for inferior quality.

The prices of the same perfins on stamps from different time periods can be quite different and are essentially quite lower than perfins on Hradčany stamps.

Perfin positions

With relation to the stamp image, there are 8 perfin positions possible. Most of the time whole sheets of stamps that were folded several times were perfined. That is why with larger blocks we encounter mirror-image perfin positions. Perfins pictured askew in the catalog were placed that way into the machine.

The positions of the perfins depended on the construction of the perfining machine and primarily on the haphazard activity of the operators. They did not always focus on the precise positioning of the perfin on a stamp, but rather their goal was the marking of the stamp with the perfin and thus preventing its eventual misuse.

From the viewpoint of appraisal, we consider all positions as equal, but if we have a choice, we prefer the basic position of the perfin.

Multi-perfins

Perfining machines that have multiple monograms on the punching head we call multi-perfined (they allow for the perfining of multiple stamps at the same time). In such a case it could happen that a perfin on a stamp that we are trying to verify might not match perfectly with the corresponding drawing in the catalog. How much multi-perfins differ from each other (more or less) often depends on the precision of the perfin's production. We indicate multi-perfins according to the number of monograms on the punching head, e.g., X/5, X/10.

It is easiest to identify a multi-perfin on strips of stamps (each monogram in a horizontal row has regular spacing) or on stamps of a larger size where the perfin is punched two or three times next to each other. To put together a drawing of the whole multi-perfin is quite difficult (it is necessary to determine not only the number of monograms in the punching head, but also their sequence and spacing which requires a great deal of material including several strips of stamps). Therefore, we do not include drawings of multi-perfins.

Quality of stamps with perfins

The evaluation of the quality of stamps with perfins follows the same rules as for other philatelic material. The stamp must have quality cuts with sufficiently wide margins. Perforated stamps must have perfect perforations. As much as possible, the image on the stamp must be well centered, and its color is not faded from that in the stamp catalog.

Perfins should be complete, with all of the holes perfectly cut with sharp edges, and with the best possible centering, but the position (up, down, left, right) does not matter. It is beneficial if the domicile and date are partially legible on the cancel used.

Achieving all of these requirements for quality are hard to reach for some perfins given their lesser occurrence. Perfins that are wrinkled, torn, not completely punched, or otherwise damaged have minimal value, but only serve for documentation or dating purposes.

Evaluation of identifying stationery

We evaluate identifying stationery [stationery of the perfin owner] not only according to which perforated stamp has been applied to it, but also if there is on it apart from the stated user of the perfin also the business function (possibly also its address), preferably on the front side. Envelopes with windows are less popular. We evaluate the whole appearance of the identifying stationery,

The value of common identifying stationery with regular perfins in standard quality is about 20 times the perfin value.

Stationery that is concurrent, mixed, registered, express, and others that are less common, we value several times more than the value of the same stationery without the perfin.

Postal dispatch note clippings

Very often we can find narrow, margin clippings (1/3) of different postal dispatch notes from discards where no sender or addressee is noted. Usually they have more perfins with higher values on them and cancels with the domicile and date clearly legible. The price of these clippings is the sum of the perfin's point value plus 10 points.

Postal card with Hradčany stamps (CDV)

Rarely we can find perfins that are perforated through Hradčany postal stationery. We include them in the catalogue even if we only know them as a cut-square of the stationery (the price of the cut-square is the price of the perfin plus 20 points).

Hradčany correspondence cards with perfins (CDV) occur more often than later ones (OR [Liberated Republic] 40h and 50h, possibly others), but given their popularity with collectors we evaluate them at least 400 points without verification and 600 or more points with identification.

Perfin forgeries

Now we have to warn of the possible forgeries that occur in the market especially with the rare perfins. On a suspicion of forgery, it is necessary to verify the perfin with an experienced collector.

Conclusion

Publication of this catalog is an effort to compile the occurrence of perfins on Hradčany stamps. Obviously, it is not possible to document every detail on this subject. We assume that additional information that is not part of the catalog will be found among individual collectors, so we would be happy if you would report newly found information to the authors by e-mail.

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[We are pleased to print this first English translation of the Introduction of KATALOG Perfinů na Známkách Hradčany with the permission of the authors.]