
Official Perfins of the Russian Empire

Dick Scheper (#3311); Translation by Steve Netten

Introduction

During the first decade of the 20th century many Russian authorities used perfins (perforated initials). These perfins may be found both in stamps and in revenues. In the latter case the stamps were affixed to a document and perforated after paying a certain tax or a compensation for administrative governmental services. The intent of the perfin was to prevent reuse of the stamp.

The official governmental Russian perfins form part of a still almost unknown collecting domain. A catalogue of these perfins is not available. With this article I want to make a start on surveying the official perfins in Russian revenue stamps. For this first attempt I'm limiting discussion to one type of official perfins: the type "initials on a cross".

Figure 1 shows some different types that we can find in the official perfins.



Figure 1: Various forms of official Russian perfins.

The first stamp has a perfin that only shows the initials of the user: the district Court of Justice in Ekaterinoslav (**E**katerinoslav **O**krug **S**ud).

The second stamp shows a perfin with both characters and numbers: M.P. / 6. This perfin was used by branch-office No.6 of the Head Post Office in Moscow. The characters M.P. stand for Moskva Pochtamt. This form of official perfin is only found in postage stamps.

The third stamp shows the initials of the user against a background of a perforated (Andreas) cross. The perfin L.O.S. is used by the Court of Justice from the district of Lodz (**L**odz **O**krug **S**ud). This form of official perfin is mostly found in revenue stamps. In this article I describe only the latter perfins. For convenience I have called this format the "Initials on a Cross" perfin type.

In Which Revenue Stamps Can we Find the Perfins "Initials on a Cross"?

The perfins of this type can be found in a large number of different revenue stamps. Figure 2 shows some often found stamps. For those who are interested in a complete survey of Russian revenue stamps I call attention to the publication "Russian revenues" by J. Barefoot (2004).



Figure 2: Various Russian revenue stamps with official perfins.

The first two stamps in Figure 2 are tax-stamps of 5 kopeks (1887) and 75 kopeks (1907). The other two stamps are intended for use by judicial authorities: 25 kopeks and 5 roubles (1891).



Figure 3: Revenue stamp of the town of Warsaw.

A striking number of the Russian official perfins can be found in stamps for municipal taxes of the town of Warsaw. The stamp shows the municipal coat of arms with the picture of a mermaid - see Figure 3. This red on yellow 10 kopek stamp was used from 1886 until 1918.

Summary of the Different Perfins

In the rest of this article I give in alphabetical order a summary of the Russian official perfins of the initial on cross type as far as I know them. There's a picture of each perfin. Because of the

The perfin E.K.P. was used by the Chamber of Finance in the Armenian capital, Erivan. The characters stand for: Erivanskaya Kazennaya Palata. Besides the use of this perfin in Russian revenue stamps it is also used from 1919 onwards in stamps of the then independent republic of Armenia. Such a stamp is shown in Figure 4.

length of some perfins more than one stamp is needed to get a good impression of the complete perfin.

For a number of perfins I'm not in possession of sufficient stock to be able to read all initials of the perfin. In those cases I would be very pleased if anyone could provide me with supplementary information!

Maybe you're just in the possession of that perfin in which the missing initials are visible. For that reason I have also pictured incomplete perfins and written a description of them in the hope that you could be of help to me.

Cyrillic Characters

As usual for official Russian perfins the initials consist of Cyrillic characters. For readability reasons I use in my text Latin characters to refer to the Cyrillic characters in the pictures. Comparing the different perfins, note that most perfins end with the character(s) Uch or OS - in Cyrillic character(s) respectively Y 'inverted h' and O.C. These initials point respectively to a form of administration or registration (Uch = uchrezdeni?), or usage by a district Court of Justice (O.S. = Okrug Sud).

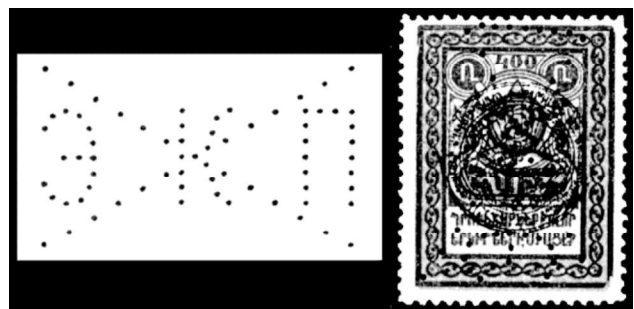


Figure 4: Perfin E.K.P.

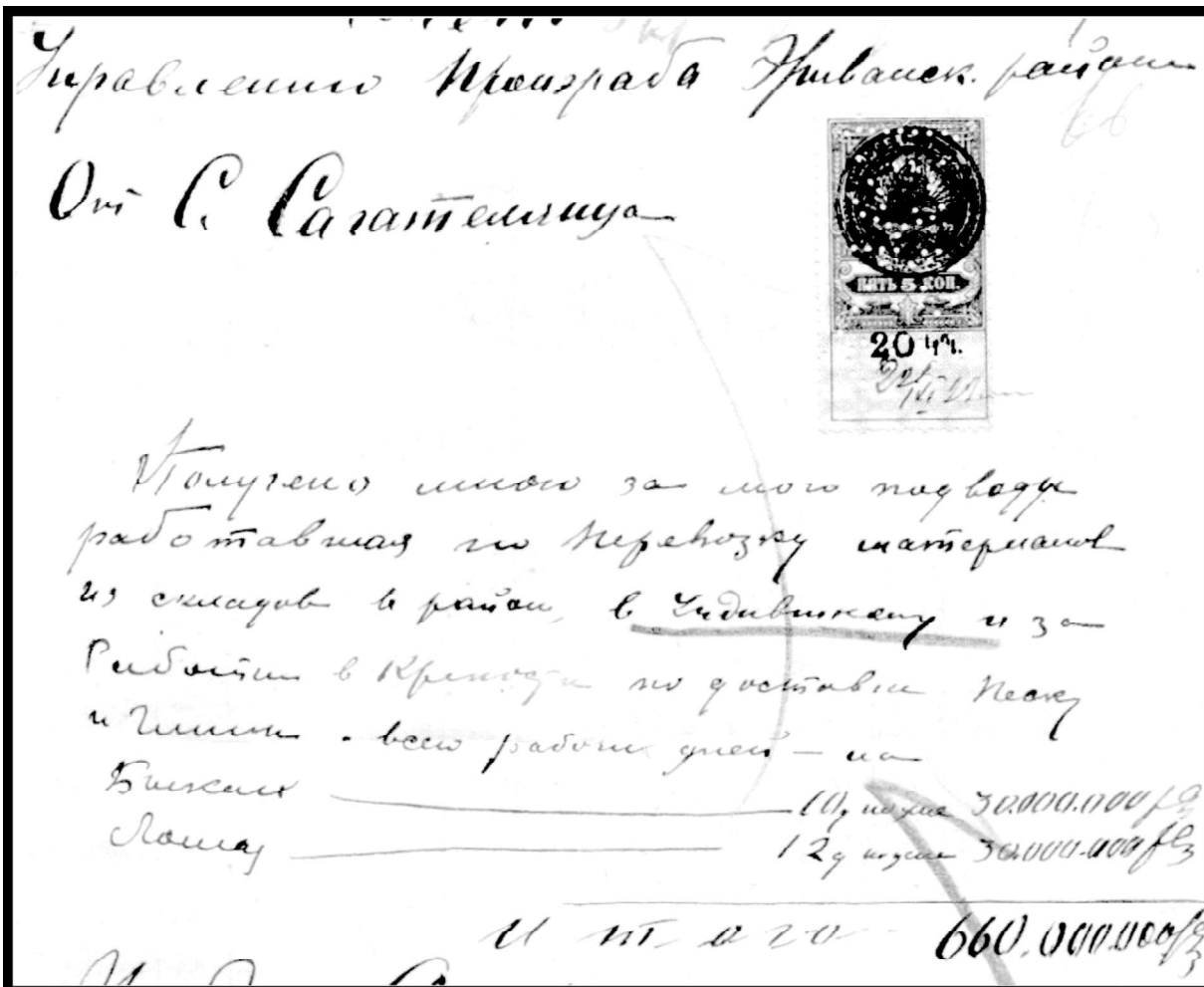


Figure 5: Part of a document with perfin E.K.P.

Figure 5 shows part of a document with the perfin E.K.P. This document from the inflation period concerns a bill of 660,000,000(!) roubles for the delivery of sand and loam. According to this document they have been working:

- with oxen: 10 days for 30,000,000 roubles a day;
- with horses: 12 days for 30,000,000 roubles a day.



Figure 6: Perfin IERUS Uch

The pictured perfin IERUS Uch shows the very early Cyrillic character 'I' which I have never seen in another perfin. The character 'I' could also be a part of "H" or "N" but on the stamp no blind perfs of other initials are to be seen. We are waiting for information concerning the user.

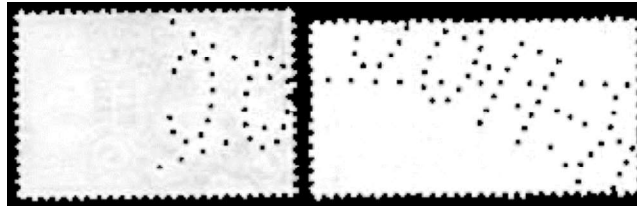


Figure 7: Perfin K.P.O.S.

The perfin K.P.O.S. was used by the Court of Justice in the district of Kamenets Podolsk. In Tsarist Russia, Kamenets Podolsk was the centre of the province of Podolskaya. Nowadays it is a town in the district of Khmel'nitsky in the Republic

of Ukraine.

The perfins also exist in revenues (tax stamps) of Ukraine. An example is shown in Figure 8.

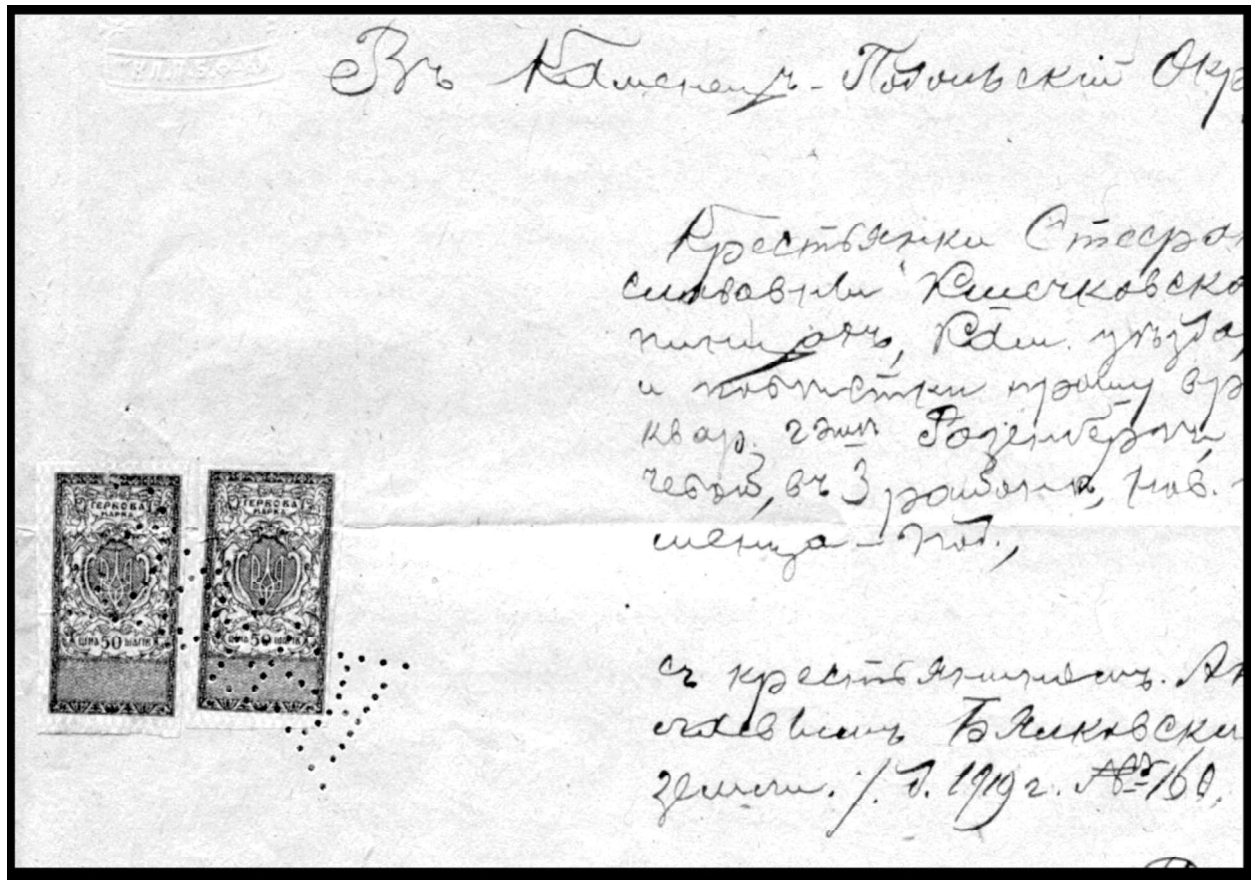


Figure 8: Part of a document with the (Ukrainian) perfin K.P.O.S.

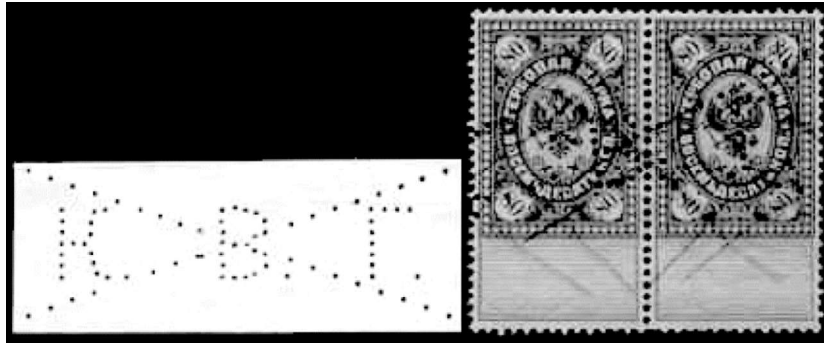


Figure 9: Perfin K.V.G.

The perfin K.V.G. is, until now, the only Russian perfin in revenues that ends with the letter G. This perfin may have been used by an organ of a Russian province (Gubernya)? I have seen this perfin in tax stamps issued in 1887 and 1907.

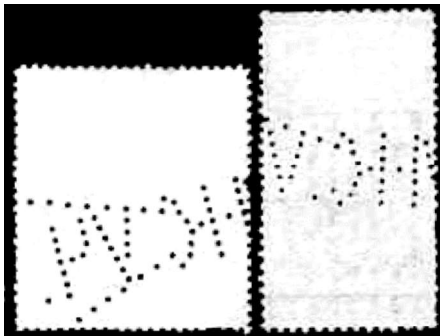


Figure 10: Perfin ...K Uch.

Regarding the perfin ...K Uch I only know this last part of this perfin. The character before the Cyrillic "K" shows part of a diagonal line, so that probably the Cyrillic letter "I" or "M" is involved. In view of the position of the character "K" - still next to the point of intersection of the crossing lines - I suppose that there may even be 3 characters before the "K".

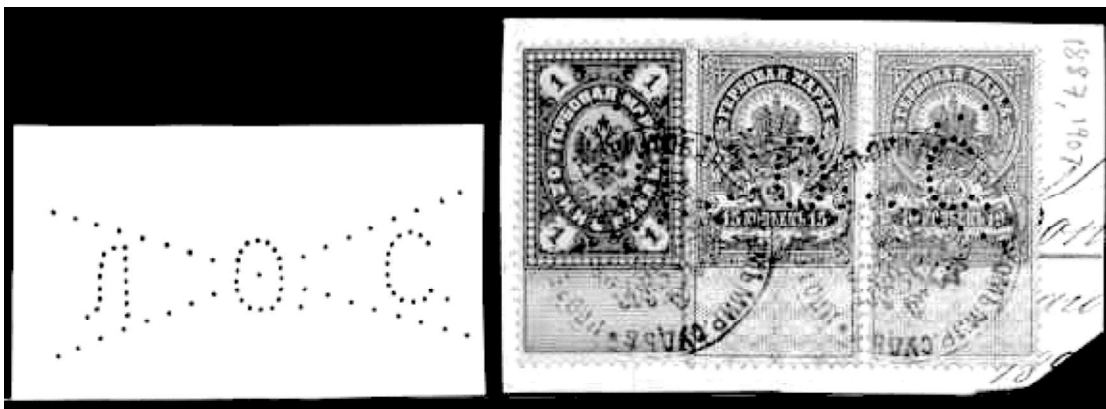


Figure 11: Perfin L.O.S.

The perfin L.O.S. was used by the Court of Justice of the district of Lodz in Poland. At that time Poland was part of the Russian Empire. In Figure

11 you can see the perfin in a combination of tax-stamps from 1887 and 1907.

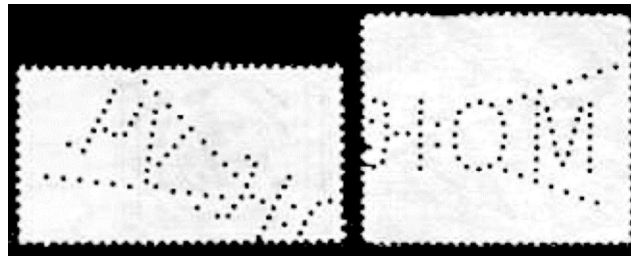


Figure 12: Perfin MOK Uch.

The perfin MOK Uch is likely to have been used by a registration office of a district organization in the Polish town of Warsaw. I have this perfin both in common Russian tax-stamps (1887) and in stamps for municipal taxes of Warsaw. For the time being I assume that the letter “O” stands for Okrug (district) and the “K” for Kontora (office).

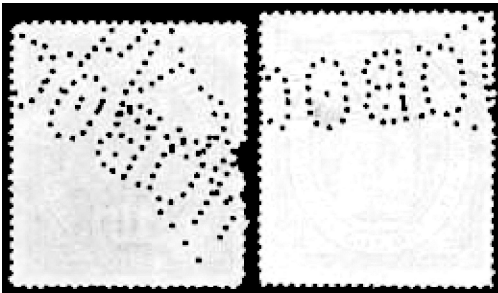


Figure 13: Perfin NOVOS Uch.

In the perfin NOVOS Uch, the letters O and S presumably represent “Court of Justice of the district” (see also other perfins with these initials). Also in this case we perhaps have to deal with an organization established in Warsaw, because these perfins have also been found in the tax-stamps of the city of Warsaw. (see Figure 3).

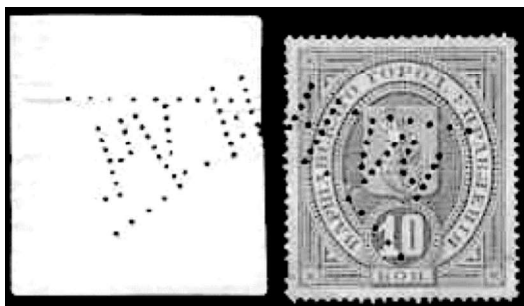


Figure 14: Perfin ...N Uch.

In view of the position of the letter “N” in between the crossing lines of the perfin ...N Uch, it looks like only two characters of this perfin are missing. This perfin is also found in stamps for municipal taxes of Warsaw.



Figure 15: Perfin ...OLS Uch.

Also, the perfin ...OLS Uch is found in tax-stamps of the town of Warsaw. I suppose that one character is missing in the pictured perfin. *Is anyone in possession of a stamp with the first part of this perfin ?*

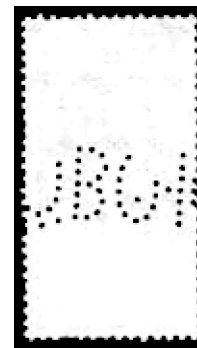


Figure 16: Perfin ...OVON...

The perfin ...OVON... I only know it in a Russian tax-stamp of 1887. The Figure makes clear that more stamps are needed to judge how many characters of the perfin are missing.

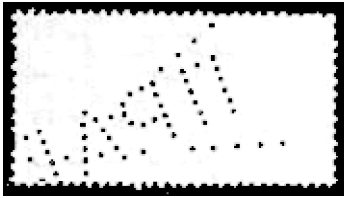


Figure 17: Perfin PRA...

The perfin PRA... is found in a Russian tax-stamp of 1907. Taking into account the placing of the first 3 characters - exactly before the point of intersection of both lines - I suspect that there still are 3 characters missing. Based on the picture the fourth letter could be a Cyrillic “G” or “P”. Apart from that, I assume that also with this perfin it’s not a question of one word but the initials of several words, because that is the case with all

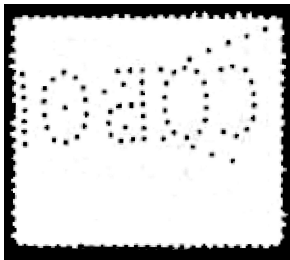


Figure 18: Perfin SOBO...

perfins of this type of which the user is known.

The perfin SOBO..., I have only found it on a 10 kopek tax-stamp of Warsaw. The two lines cross exactly in the middle of the second letter “O” so it is nearly certain that 3 characters of the pictured perfin are missing. *Does anyone have a perfin with the remaining characters ?*



Figure 19: Perfin VOS (type 1)

The perfin V O S is found in two types. Type 1 has the 3 letters close together and there are no perfin holes between the letters. Type 2 (see Figure 20) shows more space between the letters and also parts of perforated crosslines are visible in between the letters. The perfin VOS (type 1) I have on tax-stamps of 1887/1888. The perfin was used by the Court of Justice of the Vologda district.

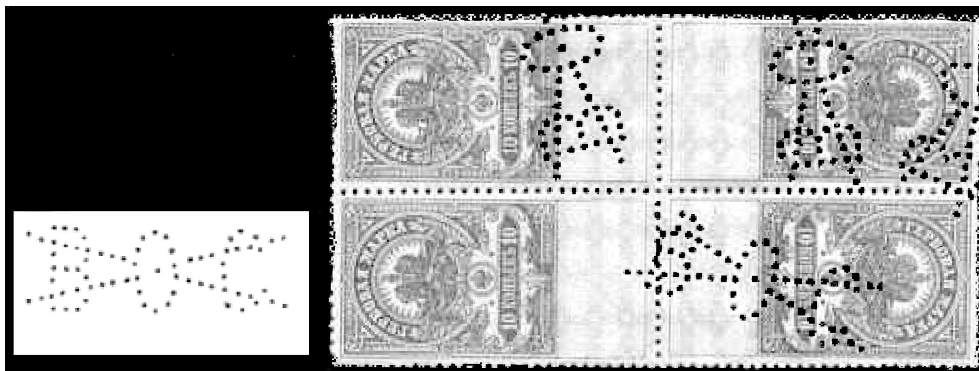


Figure 20: Perfin VOS (type 2)

The user of the perfin VOS (type 2) was the Court of Justice in the district of Vinnitsa. This perfin can be found in tax-stamps of 1907 and in special revenue stamps of the courts.

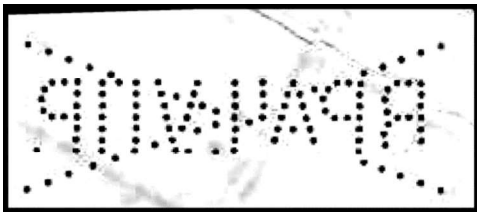


Figure 21: Perfin VRACH UPR.

The perfin VRACH UPR. was used by the Medical Administration in Warsaw. The perfin is found in general Russian tax-stamps as well as in stamps for municipal taxes of Warsaw.

Figure 22 shows a beautiful document with a three-color mixed franking with these different tax-stamps.



Figure 22: part of a document with the perfin VRACH UPR. of the Medical Administration in Warsaw.

Conclusion

I am well aware that this summary is far from complete. Based on my own collection I wanted to present a start in compiling the information on a part of this collecting area. I would very much appreciate help from readers to extend this summary.

I have noticed that collectors of this kind of revenues often keep them separately, at the back of the book, until there is a reason to do something with them. Maybe this article could be that reason.

I am asking for assistance from readers by reporting unknown data in this category of official

Russian perfins. Each report of supplemental information about the perfins shown in this article will be highly appreciated by me.

All information about Russian perfins - single or on document - not included in this summary is naturally welcome.

I kindly look forward to your information and/or scan:

dick.scheper@planet.nl

or

Dick Scheper
Hogeland 1,
2264 JX Leidschendam
The Netherlands