

OFFICIAL PERFINS OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE (PART 1)

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Introduction:

During the first decade of the 20th century many Russian authorities used perfins (perforated initials). These perfins may be found both on postage and revenue stamps. In the latter case the stamps were affixed to a document and perfined after paying a certain tax or compensation for administrative governmental services. The intention of these canceling perfins was to prevent re-use of the stamp.

The official governmental Russian perfins form part of a still almost unknown collecting area. No catalogue of these perfins is available. With this article I want to start a survey of the official perfins found on Russian revenue stamps. As a start and for the time being I'm limiting myself to one type of official perfins, which can be called "**initials on cross**".



Fig. 1: various forms of official Russian perfins.

Figure 1 shows some different forms that we can find in the official perfins. The first stamp has a perfin that only shows the initials of the user: the district court of justice in Ekaterinoslav (Ekaterinoslav Okrug Sud). 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. This perfin L.O.S. is used by the court of justice from the district of Lodz (Lodz Okrug Sud). This form of official perfin we

typically find in revenue stamps. In this article I only describe this type of perfins. For convenience sake I have called this form the “**initials on cross**” perfin type.

On which revenue stamps can we find the perfins “initials on cross” ?

The perfins of this type can be found on 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).



Fig. 2: various Russian revenue stamps with official perfins.

The first two stamps on 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).



Fig. 3: revenue stamp of the town of Warsaw

A striking number of 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 stamp of 10 kopeks in the colours red on yellow 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 known by me. There’s an illustration of each perfin. Because of the 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 the initials of the perfin. In those cases I would be very pleased if members could provide me with supplementary information! Maybe you're just in the possession of that perfin on which the missing initials are visible. For that reason I have illustrated the incomplete perfins and written a description in the hope that someone can help me.

Cyrillic characters.

As usual for official Russian perfins the initials consist of Cyrillic characters. For readability I use in my text Latin characters to refer to the Cyrillic characters on the figures. 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 as a rule to respectively a form of administration or registration (Uch = uchrezdenii?), and usage by a district court of justice (O.S. = Okrug Sud).

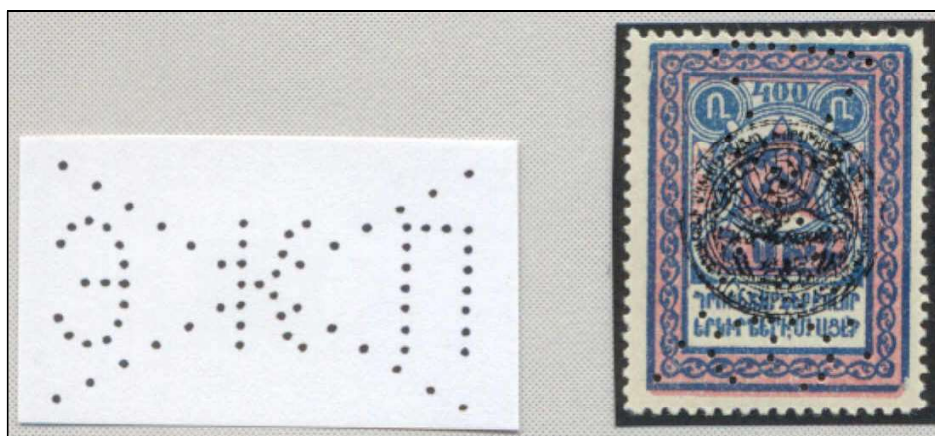


Figure 4: Perfin E.K.P.

The perfin E.K.P. (see Figure 4), was used by the Chamber of Finance in the Armenian capital Erivan. The characters stand for: **E**rivanskaya **K**azennaya **P**alata. As well as the usage of this perfin on Russian revenue stamps it was also used from 1919 onwards on stamps of the then independent republic of Armenia. Such a stamp is shown in Figure 4.

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

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



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



Figure 6: Perfin I E R U S Uch

Figure 6 shows a perfin I E R U S Uch, which has 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. (see Figure 7), was used by the court of justice in the district of Kamenets Podolsk. In Tsarist Russia, Kamenets Podolsk was the center of the province of Podolskaya. Nowadays it is a town in the district of Khmel'nitsky in the republic of Ukraine. The perfin also exist on 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.

[Ed:- The second and concluding part of this article will be published in Bulletin 348. Dick Scheper, can be contacted at Hogeland 1, 2264 JX Leidschendam, The Netherlands or by e-mail dick.scheper@planet.nl]