
A Perfin from Armenia

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In the recent private Perfin Auction #21 conducted by Bob Szymanski, a perfinned Armenian stamp appeared as lot #216. Pictured is Armenia old Scott #273, one of a set of 10 that was printed by the Chassepot Printing Works in Paris. This set was ordered by the First Dashnak (Nationalist) Government of Armenia early in 1920. The first printing of this issue was delivered to Yerevan (Erivan) in November 1920, but not in time to be issued before the resignation of the government on December 2, 1920. The first printing that was delivered was small. The second, larger printing was refused due to lack of foreign currency to pay for it.

The stamp in question is a 25ruble value, the inland letter rate in November 1920. It reads ARMENIA at the bottom and Armenian Republic (in Armenian) at the top. It also bears a hammer and sickle over Mount Ararat, which was the coat of arms of the Armenian SSR, formed on November 29, 1920. This first Armenian SSR existed until February 18, 1921, when it was ousted by the Second Dashnak regime. This second Dashnak regime only lasted a few days since the Armenian SSR returned on April 2, 1921. This Armenian SSR then became part of the Transcaucasian SFSR on March 12, 1922 and was subsequently incorporated into the USSR on December 30, 1922.



It is my presumption that the handstamped Chassepot issue came into use during the first Armenian SSR, where it was used as a fiscal. The Second Dashnak government did not make use of them as postage (no longer available?), but continued overprinting Czarist stamps.

The perfin appears to be a common fiscal type use in the Czarist regime. It is a cross pattern, possibly inspired by the Czarist naval ensign. It reads in Russian letters: “Ye” (revan) “K” (ontara=office) and “P” (. . .). I do not have a clue what the “P” may represent. A 5ruble (#270) fiscal is known, but it has no perfin. It is thought that some perfins in Russia were used as cancellations. Could this be one?

[Perfin Club member Dick Scheper (#3311) offers the following information. The perfin E.K.P. (Ե.Կ.Ս.) was used by the Chamber of Finance in the Armenian capital of Yerevan. The characters stand for: Erivanskaya Kazennaya Palata. Besides the usage of this perfin in Russian revenue stamps, it is also used from 1919 onward in stamps of the then independent republic of Armenia.]

