

The Stamps of Baranya

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edited and annotated by
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*Translated from Hungarian by
Anthony Müller*

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Translator's and editors' notes within the text are given in italics, within square brackets. Translator's expansions of the original text are given in normal font, also within square brackets.

Significant additional insights on the issues of Baranya have accrued over the 60 years since the edition translated here was published. Annotations presenting some these insights and providing new, color illustrations supplementing the black and white originals have been included throughout the text in boxes such as this one. Their content is the authored by and the responsibility of the annotators, and not of the original author.

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Of the occupation issues, those of Debrecen and Szeged have been worked up in detail and have appeared in the form of small monographs. Over the years, articles on Baranya's stamps have appeared in various periodicals, but until now this material has not gone to press in a complete and comprehensive way. The most extensive of these articles was the study of Jozsef Joszt, but this remained unfinished and did not embrace the totality of the material. We therefore fill the breach, when we contribute the present work-up of the stamps of Baranya.

Baranya I Issue

Serb forces occupied Pécs and Baranya on November 15th, 1918. The occupation had no consequence from a philatelic point of view. The Post and Telegraph Office of Pécs continued to be supplied from Budapest. Thus, there was no need to overprint stamps.

A wide variety of explanations have been put forth concerning the origin of the overprints. Some maintain that they were created for speculation; others claim that the Serbs wanted

to take the stamps and wanted to overprint them with “S.H.S.” According to another version, the post office did not receive adequate supply from Budapest, etc. etc. All this is assumption. The real reason for the overprints requires the understanding of several circumstances.

In the seventh month of the occupation, the occupying military authority decreed that all currency in circulation be stamped and that, from then on, the Yugoslav crown was the [only] accepted currency.

The consequence of this action was that in occupied Pécs and Baranya, postage stamps could only be purchased using these stamped Yugoslav crowns. Consider also that at that time, the communism was already raging in Hungary and that so-called “white money” was in circulation. It was effectively worthless, except for the purchase of postage stamps. Further, there was an appreciable difference in value between the “white money” and the Yugoslav crown, and a natural smuggling and black market in postage stamps evolved. Hungarian stamps remained in circulation in the occupied territory, without any designation or markings. Therefore Hungarian stamps were smuggled by the sheet from the area of Csonka to the occupied territory. As a result, the postal income of Pécs and of the Baranya region fell to a minimum. Everyone used the smuggled and cheaply obtainable stamps. The postal authorities of Pécs recognized the problem and slowly concluded that if they do not act quickly, they would not even be able to pay their employees.

There was yet another reason for the need to create the overprints. To illuminate this, we present the following article from the Pécs paper *Dun nt *l* for April 18, 1919:

“A new kind of stamp in Pécs

Pécs, 1919 April 17

The postal administration of Pécs acquires its various stamp stocks from Budapest. There are some types of stamps that are consumed rapidly. According to custom, these are

replenished regularly, if not monthly. These stamps include, among others, the 45 fillér registered and the 105 fillér express-registered letter stamps. The termination of rail service with unoccupied areas has put the postal administration in the difficult position of not having been able to resupply stamp stocks from Budapest for months. Stamps are almost impossible to get in town, which is particularly unpleasant because the countryside also gets its stamps from Pécs.

The postal administration has decided that it will attempt to reduce the intensity of the stamp shortage by reintroducing the previously withdrawn Turul-design stamps. They further decided that the stamp denominations least used currently would be revalued to the denominations most used. Such stamps are, for example, those used for registered and express-registered letters.”

As is apparent from the article, on the one hand the poor transportation conditions did not allow the Pécs postal administration to be resupplied. On the other, the struggling Hungarian post under the communist government of the time also suffered from stamp shortages, because it did not have enough paper for its presses, because the continually changing political situation constantly disrupted production and because the citizens of Budapest and of the countryside bought up stamps to get rid of worthless “white money”. Therefor barely any of the limited production [of Budapest] got to the Pécs administration. Conversely, there had been large quantities of unpopular stamps and turul-design stamps removed from sale. The revaluation and reissue of these stamps became an obvious necessity.

By the end of March 1919, the postal administration of Pécs had already proposed to the Hungarian “popular” government that they authorize (for the reasons above) the overprinting and issue of the stamps on hand.

Directive number 7155 satisfying the request, issued on 30 March 1919 and appearing in the registry of *Postal and Telegraph Directives of the Hungarian Soviet Republic* [P&TRT] on 3 April, stated:

“I authorize the Pécs Postal and Telegraph Administration to take from its supply the 2 fillér postage stamps and revalue them to 105 fillér, the 5 and 15 fillér stamps to 45 fillér and the 2 fillér postage due stamps to 40 fillér and to add the overprint of “Transdanubian occupation 1919” to each. I also authorize them to reissue at their original denominations the 6, 50, 60, 70 and 80 fillér turul design stamps which have been already withdrawn from use, also with the “Transdanubian occupation 1919” overprint.”

The Pécs postal administration prepared a trial printing, of the text above in red, on a few 2 fillér stamps. They showed these, along with the directive above, to the Serbian authorities. The text did not please the headquarters of the occupying forces, who declared that they would not authorize the proposed text for political reasons, but that they would have no objection if “Baranya 1919” were overprinted. Note that a commission was established to select the final form of the overprint, to determine how the overprint would be applied and to supervise the overprinting.

The commission, which was initially authorized to issue only nine overprinted stamps, decided to revalue many more. Considering that the Pécs postal administration remained in Hungarian hands within Baranya county, they did not want to acknowledge the authority of the Bolshevik administration [in Budapest]. Their decision to overprint the entire stamp supply at hand was a demonstration of this rebellion. The [communist] directorate in Budapest only learned of this much later, as is clear from the 7 June order appearing in the *Official Journal of the Post, Telegraph and Telephone of the Hungarian Soviet Republic* 14 June 1919 issue, number 13.171, which stated:

“With respect to Directive 7155, which appeared in number 28 of this year’s P&TRT, I inform the post offices that

the Pécs Postal and Telegraph Administration began on 5 May of this year to put into circulation the stamps listed below at their unaltered values, overprinted "Baranya 1919" rather than with the authorized overprint "Transdanubian occupation 1919": 2, 3, 5, 6, 15, 35, 40 fillér harvester; 6, 50, 60, 70, 80 fillér turul; 10, 20, 25 fillér King Károly portrait; 40 fillér Queen Zita; 50, 75, 80 fillér and 1, 2, 3, 5 and 10 korona parliament; 10, 15 and 50 fillér war relief; and, finally, the 2, 10 and 20 fillér postage due. The 5 and 15 fillér, as well as the 2 fillér harvester stamps were in part also overprinted with 45 fillér."



The Pécs Main Post Office

Preparation for overprinting began in April. Gyula Miklósi, industrial artist and city engineer, prepared the artistic models [designs] of the overprints. Unfortunately, these were not realized, because of the primitive facilities at the printer and the urgency of the project.

[Rather,] the overprint was prepared by hand in quarter sheets; that is in panels of 25 stamps. Stereotypes set [composed] from these were used to cast press plates. These were welded up to create the 100-stamp sheet-size press plates. Several such plates were prepared, so the overprinting could be done on several presses at once.

The conditions of the times are reflected in the article below, which appeared in the *Dunántúl* newspaper on 6 May 1919, the day of the overprinted stamps were issued:

“They Released the Overprinted Stamps Today

This morning they began to issue the stamps overprinted “Baranya 1919” at the main post office. This resulted in great liveliness in the glass-topped hall of the main post office. Long double lines had already formed at the stamp sales windows by 8AM. They waited impatiently, but with the perseverance of those in a bread line. In fact, the subject was not bread, but a commodity of almost equal value. Men, women, official stamp dealers, passionate collectors, businessmen, and youths milled about not just from noon but all day long, in the domed hall...

The overprinting was done by the Pécs Literature and Book Press Stock Company (Pécsi Irodalmi és Könyvnyomdai Részvénytársaság) ...

From the 28 different overprinted varieties, the postal authorities assembled collections consisting of 1236 stamps. The face value of a collection is 827 korona 80 filler.

The collection contains

- 40 former 2 fillér stamps,*
- 20 value altered 5 fillér stamps,*
- 100 5 fillér stamps retaining their old value,*
- 20 stamps with 45 fillér revaluing 15 fillér stamps,*
- 20 of these retaining the old 15 fillér value,*
- 20 2 fillér stamps,*
- 40 2 fillér postage due stamps,*
- 100 6 fillér stamps,*
- 60 50 fillér stamps,*
- 40 70 fillér with red overprints,*
- 40 70 fillér with black overprints,*
- 100 6 fillér stamps,*
- 60 3 fillér stamps,*
- 20 6 fillér stamps,*
- 100 King Károly portrait 10 fillér stamps,*
- 8 King Károly portrait 20 fillér stamps,*
- 20 25 fillér stamps,*
- 20 40 fillér Queen Zita stamps,*
- 40 50 fillér stamps,*
- 40 70 fillér stamps,*
- 40 80 fillér stamps,*
- 40 3 korona stamps,*
- 20 5 korona stamps,*
- 8 1 korona stamps,*
- 30 10 fillér postage due stamps, and*
- 30 20 fillér postage due stamps.*

[This totals 1076 stamps and 26 varieties, which is inconsistent with the text above.]

Such collections have been sent to each post office. The price of a half collection was 413K 90f, a quarter collection 206K 95f. Simultaneous with the issuing of these stamps was the

beginning of the bourse [secondary market]. Bidding began and by the afternoon the price of the 827K 80f face-value collection had jumped to 3000 korona. But sellers were reticent to part with their holdings, since they anticipate prices to rise further.”

Thus read the *Dunántúl* paper. Obviously, it had not yet become common knowledge that some of the rarer issues were not included in the collection.

The fact that the stamp set released during the first days [of the overprint issue] was not complete, soon became known to the public. The news of the issue also spread rapidly overseas, so that the celebrity of the issue outgrew local proportions. This is evident from subsequent news. In the 11 May 1919 edition of *Dunántúl* appeared:

“THE CELEBRITY OF BARANYA

The stamps overprinted “Baranya 1919” are historical documents. They are a reminder of the exceptional times during which Baranya lies isolated from the world while surrounded by the world-shaking events. This circumstance lends value to the historical importance of the stamps just issued...

The postal authorities overprinted 4 million 700 thousand stamps all together.

The lowest production was of the Zita stamps, and among those, the ones already overprinted by the Hungarian Soviet Republic. These are also the most valuable ones. Speculation has driven their price up to 80 korona each.

It is interesting that as soon as the news of the overprints spread, a consortium was established by financiers of Pécs, Eszék and Fiume. The consortium offered the postal authorities to take the entire 4,700,000 piece, 2,000,000 korona issue at a price twice the face value, and take responsibility for getting them to the people. Naturally, the postal authorities could not accept this offer. The consortium was nevertheless tenacious

and finally made [another] offer of 10,000,000 [korona]. This too was rejected.

Post offices in the countryside naturally received smaller quantities of the overprints...

In order to be able to pay the April salaries of its officials and employees, the postal administration has already borrowed 700,000 korona worth of treasury notes [tickets] from the city. After May salaries [are paid], little of these assets remain for June. In order to assure government income that sustains the salaries of officials, post offices were naturally the first to get collections to sell...

Only the point of sale at the main post office provided stamps to private citizens, and this was limited to 10 or 15 korona of value. In this way anyone could get them, if they had the time and nervous temperament to wait until their turn came in line...

Today, the postal administration has completely stopped issuing collections. Starting on Monday, stamps will not even be available at the point of sale at the main post office. Starting Monday, the post office will only give out stamps if they are immediately applied to letters to be sent and they are canceled on site with the postal canceler. If for no other reason, this arrangement was necessary because the supply was so heavily depleted that none remains for rural post offices or for in-house use.

The values of the 4,7000,000 korona [sic] face value issue of the Pécs postal administration is already worth 68 to 70 million korona. This is contrasted to the benefit derived buy the post office, which is limited to only the small increase in face value of some of the overprinted stamps, over the original face value. Under these circumstances, the Post can not be accused of gouging.”

The arrangement that stamps could only be applied to letters at the post office had its own tribulations. Given that stamps were unavailable at tobacconists, or other traditional sources, everyone needing to mail a letter was required to go to the main post office and only there could they mail the letter. This gave rise to many complaints. Merchants and companies wanted to convince the postal administration to issue new stamps of original design showing the coat of arms of Baranya County. These they ought to produce in the required amounts, and thus remedy the situation. But this did not come to pass. The stamp purchasing fever subsided first. People no longer thronged the main post office and, by the end of May, the postal administration was issuing small numbers of stamps to the public once again.

The overprinting of stamps was officially ended on the 10th of May. On 17 May the original type set and the stereotype plates were destroyed by the supervising commission, in the presence of the print shop managers.

The Quantities of Baranya I Stamps

Much information about the numbers of the different stamps overprinted has appeared in various philatelic publications, catalogs, and even in the daily papers of Pécs. There is more or less agreement among them. Below we will list the Pécs postal administration's 11 July 1919 official record of issued numbers of "Baranya 1919" overprinted stamps, witnessed by Lajos Solti, chief counsel and the director of the Pécs postal administration and bearing the administration's official seal.

Turul Stamps

6 fillér, olive brown , red overprint	45,300
50 fillér, scarlet, blue paper, black overprint	231,800
60 fillér, green, salmon paper, black overprint	54,300
70 fillér, brown, green underprinting, black overprint	181,500
70 fillér, brown, green underprinting, red overprint	20,000
80 fillér, violet, red overprint	12,500

War Relief Stamps

50 fillér, scarlet, blue paper, black overprint	4,850
10 fillér, red, black overprint	127,400
15 fillér, violet, black overprint	109,200

Special Delivery Stamps

105 on 2 fillér, black overprint	34,500
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Harvester Stamps

2 fillér, yellowish brown, red overprint	256,700
2 fillér, yellowish brown, black overprint	9,200
3 fillér, deep violet, , black overprint	109,000
3 fillér, deep violet, red overprint	50,400
5 fillér, green, red overprint	277,800
5 fillér, green, black overprint	49,400
6 fillér, bluish green, black overprint	23,000
6 fillér, bluish green, red overprint	18,900
15 fillér, violet, black overprint	120,200
20 fillér, brown, black overprint	2,000
25 fillér, blue, black overprint	12,700
35 fillér, chocolate brown, black overprint	7,000
40 fillér, olive green, black overprint	2,000

Parliament Stamps

50 fillér, deep violet, black overprint	19,300
75 fillér, blue, black overprint	103,300
80 fillér, green, black overprint	63,200
1 korona, red, black overprint	72,100
2 korona, yellowish brown, black overprint	64,450
3 korona, violet/gray, black overprint	61,800
5 korona, brown, black overprint	31,000
10 korona, bright violet, black overprint	10,200

King Károly Stamps

10 fillér, red, black overprint	557,000
20 fillér, brown, black overprint	475,800
25 fillér, blue, red overprint	36,300

25 fillér, blue, black overprint 26,900

Queen Zita Stamps

40 fillér, green, black overprint 19,200

40 fillér, green, red overprint 3,100

Revalued Harvester Stamps

45 on 2 fillér, black overprint 119,800

45 on 5 fillér, black overprint 450,000

45 on 15 fillér, black overprint 500,000

Köztársaság Stamps

2 fillér, harvester, black overprint 13,000

45 on 2 fillér, harvester, black overprint 20,000

45 on 2 fillér, harvester, black overprint 90,000

40 fillér, Queen Zita, red overprint 2,000

40 fillér, Queen Zita, black overprint 500

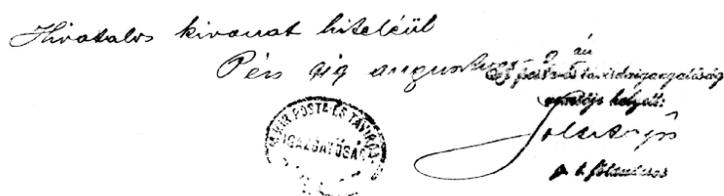
Postage Due Stamps

2 fillér, green/red, black overprint 10,500

10 fillér, green/red, black overprint 31,100

20 fillér, green/red, black overprint 25,000

40 on 2 fillér, black overprint 26,900



Only these [49] values were issued officially and therefor are the only ones that should appear in the catalog [of Baranya stamps]. Clearly, the statistics above do not make a distinction between printing methods and, similarly, color

variations are also lumped together. The degree of rarity of these distinctions will eventually determine pricing.

Now we wish to address the subject of often mis-catalogued stamps. In fact, one test printed sheet of the 20f King Károly stamp was prepared with red overprinting, but this count increased to three sheets. Since the red overprint was not visible on the brown stamp, subsequent sheets were overprinted in black. Further, a few additional examples have found the light of day, which were overprinted on values in private hands, against wishes of the commission. These values were not even present in supply available to the post office. While it is a fact that these were prepared with the genuine overprints, since they were never sold by the postal administration (as is clear from the information above), they can not even be called test printings. Thus they can be called essays, at best.

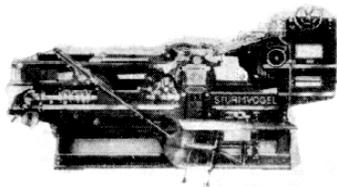
These manufactured rarities found themselves in “safe hands” even before the official overprints were put into circulation. In the most part, they were held by the Eszék consortium. After 20 years they have begun to appear [on the market] here and there. The true specialized collector who also collects curiosities can place them in his collection, particularly since they are extremely inexpensive relative to their rarity.

These values, which appear as trial printings in the official record of the postal administration, where the following:

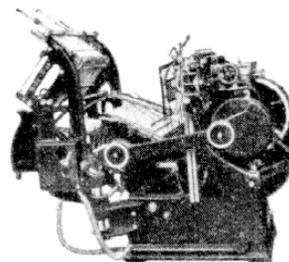
45 on 15 fillér, King Károly, black overprint	2600
2 fillér, turul, red overprint	600
2 fillér, harvester Köztársaság, red overprint	400
50 fillér, Queen Zita, red overprint	100
60 fillér, turul, white paper, red overprint	80
60 fillér, turul, white paper, black overprint	50
40 fillér, Queen Zita Köztársaság, overprint from the postage due stamps in black, in vertical position	100
20 fillér, brown King Károly, red overprint	300

Only the latter (and of those, only 100) can be truly considered a test printing. The Michel catalog assigns roman numerals to them and very appropriately notes that only the 20f King Károly can be considered a test printing. On the other hand, the pricing is completely erroneous, as can be seen from the production quantities listed above. This is because a stamp which exist in only 100 copies can not be valued at 20 marks, no matter what kind of a test printing it may be, but must be valued at appreciably more.

In the following section we will address the particularities of the various overprints, differences in type and characteristics of the two printing methods (using automatic quick presses and pedal-initiated presses). We will do this because, first, this information has not yet been worked up in this way and, second, because the differences in overprints provide a point of reference for the identification of forgeries. There are, in fact, some types of stamps that were produced with only one type of overprint. The forger, not knowing this, used another type, making the forgery easier to detect. In addition, we will present the two shades of red overprinting, carmine and cinnabar red, and on which stamps they appear.



Quick Press



Pedal Press

There has been appreciable confusion in the translation of “gyorssajtó” and “tégelysajtó”, the terms used by Szabó-Antal to describe the two printing presses. After considerable research¹, we have opted to describe them as “automatic quick

¹ A.B. Müller, C. K★halmi and C. Brainard, The Presses of Baranya, The News of Hungarian Philately 32, 2 (2001) p.4-5.

press” (or simply “quick press”) and “pedal-initiated press” (or simply “pedal press”) respectively.

As we have mentioned earlier, several presses were run at the same time, due to the urgency of completing the overprinting. It was accomplished with two types of presses, namely quick and pedal presses. The two types of resulting imprints differed significantly from each other. Below, we present enlargements of the imprints resulting from the two press types for a single overprint type [style]. This is unnecessary with the other overprint types since they are produced only on a single type of press. As can be seen from the figure, the overprints from the quick press are sharp, clean edged, soot-black, and do not (or barely) press out on the backside of the stamp. The over-



Pedal press

Quick press

prints of the pedal press are grayish black, appreciably broader, with the edges of the letters having darker borders, and the printing presses through appreciably to the back of the stamp. The red overprint was also done on several machines, so the mixture of the ink was not constant either. For this reason, two color shades were produced: one carmine and the other cinnabar.



Pedal press

Quick press



Pedal-initiated Press

The impressions made by the pedal-initiated presses appear to have been created under greater pressure than those of quick presses. The ink appears to have been “squeezed out” from below the type face, and to have accumulated along the edges (silhouette) of the characters, leaving the middle of strokes lighter and grayer than the edges. The resulting overprints appear fatter, serifs are less distinct, strokes comprising the letters are thicker and wider, and there is appreciable infilling in closed loops. These characteristics appear in different degrees in different examples.



Automatic Quick Press

The impressions made by the automatic quick presses appear to have been created under a lower pressure than those of the pedal presses. The ink appears dark black, evenly distributed throughout the printed surface of each letter. The resulting overprints appear to be made up of thinner letters, serifs are distinct, strokes comprising the letters are crisp and well-defined, and the closed loops of letters are clear and open. These characteristics appear to be fairly uniform among overprints printed on the quick presses, but under inking can cause light impressions and skipping.