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POSTAGE METER IMPRESSIONS OF POLAND*

By Werner Simon

Postage meter machines were regularly used in Poland since May 1927. Impressions with earlier dates are known; they are samples submitted to the Universal Postal Union like the one in the writer's collection dated 16IX26.

Poland has never manufactured a postage meter of her own, as all of them were imported, being of British, German and Swiss make.

The earliest meters were the British Midgets manufactured by the Universal Postal Frankers Ltd. of London, which printed either three or five denominations. In 1935 the omnidenominational model "Universal Multi-value" of the same manufacture was introduced to the Polish market.

The German machines are Franco-typ C meters distributed by the Franco-typ G.m.b.H. of Berlin. They were used in Poland since 1930 and like the British Multi-Value model, printed any denomination.

Another omni-denominational model, the Hasler F.22, was produced by the Hasler A.G. of Berne, Switzerland, and used in Poland since October 4, 1930.

The Midgets

The Midgets are known in three different designs, two of which are basically alike, as only the Polish eagle differs in size and style. The eagle in type 1a is small and its tail closed; type 1b shows a larger eagle whose tail is open with three feathers extended to both right and left (Ill. 3). Type 2 (Ill. 2) is of a different design which contains the denomination in the lower right and left corners

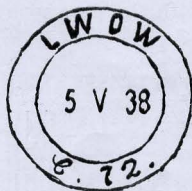


1a



1b

Ill. 3



Type 2

Ill. 2



Type 1b

Ill. 1

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while types 1a and 1b show it in all
four corners of the frank (Ill. 1).

In all Polish meter impressions the machine number appears at the bottom of the town mark as well as in the frank itself. It consists of a figure preceded by a letter. Letter A indicates the first hundred, letter B the second, C the third and D the fourth hundred of machines as the numbers run up to 99 only and start over at 1 preceded by the next following letter of the alphabet. These letters should not be confused with type designations as they are not indicative of any type. While originally type 1a was confined to meter numbers A1 to B7, type 1b to meter numbers B8 to C12, and type 2 to all following meters, this system has been confused by various later changes. For instance machines A2, 50, 81, 97, 98, B2, 6 can also be found in type 1b; meters A81, B66, B87 also exist in type 2. These are only examples of the existing varieties and it is of special interest that A81 exists in all three possible types. A little over 300 different machines of the Midget type were in use as the numbers ran into the D series.

Ordinarily the letter forming part of the machine number appears in script on the franks of types 1a and 1b. A few meters in the A series have been found with A in printed type and it is possible that just one denomination uses the printed A while the other values of the same machine have the A in script. On all three types, 1a, 1b and 2, the town mark letters appear in script.

The following denominations are known:

Type 1a: 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 40, 50, 55, 60, 65, 75, 80, 90 Gr., 1, 1.10 Zl.

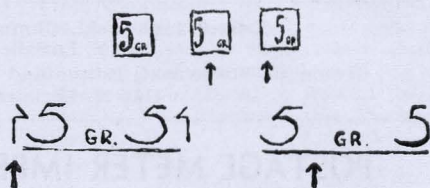
Type 1b: 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 50, 60, 65, 75, 90 Gr., 1, 1.10 Zl.

Type 2: 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 50, 60, 75 Gr., 1, 1.10, 1.20 Zl.

On several impressions of all three types indications can be found that

the denomination was changed. Especially 5 Gr. values were often produced by removing the zero on a 50 Gr. value, or by removing the first figure of a 15, 25 or any value ending with 5 (Ill. 4). The blank space in front or behind the 5 betrays the change. However, alterations on other denominations can also be detected, usually by the different shape of the numerals which look sometimes rather oddly.

All Midgets could be equipped with



Ill. 4

slogans which appear at the left of the town mark. The use of slogans was only optional and quite a few impressions without slogan can be found. An interesting item is meter A32 on which the slogan appears inverted; apparently on purpose as usually several frank impressions had to be printed in order to obtain the correct postage which mostly necessitated that some of them, including town mark and slogan, are printed upside down in the lower left hand corner of the envelope. Since the slogan was already inverted in the machine it thus appeared in correct position on the envelope.

Universal Multi-Value (Ill. 5)

The numbering of this model started within the D series following right behind the Midgets. While most machines show the D in the town mark in script some of them used the printed type. The town mark consists of a double circle with the date printed in large figures and the month



Ill. 5



Ill. 6

being shown in Roman numerals. Town mark and frank are about 1.5 cm. apart. Machine D63 was equipped with a number consisting of five figures which recorded each impression. This number appeared above the town mark which for this purpose was moved somewhat below.

The machines are equipped to print either 3 or 4 figures of value. Two styles of the 3 figure type can be found, namely, 000 and +00.

Francotyp

This German model used the same frank design as the Universal Multi-Value although the eagle is a little different from machine FA 017 onwards. While the Multi-Value and the early Francotyp eagle is only more or less outlined, the later eagle shows his feathers and appears shaded.

Francotyp impressions can be recognized by the machine number letters FA and FB and besides the town mark is farther apart from the frank, the distance measuring approximately 5 cm. The month in the date appears in Arabian figures and a record number consisting of 4 figures shows up in the upper part of the space between frank and town mark.

Although ordinarily machine numbers should run up to FA 99 and then change to FB 1, FA numbers over 100 have been found, but FB numbers are also in existence. An explanation for this inconsistency is not known. The machine number in the town mark consists always of 3 figures so that low numbers are preceded by one or two zeros like 002 or 015. Various arrangements can be found like F.A.017, FA-002, or FA.026, etc.

Slogans are optional but were often

used. They appear usually in the space between town mark and frank, but sometimes also at the left and underneath the town mark.

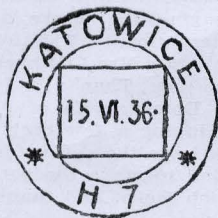
The denomination may consist of 3 or 4 figures, reading 000 or +000.

The writer's collection contains a Francotyp specimen impression in an unusual design (Ill. 6) which has not been seen on a regularly postally used envelope. The interesting fact is that the impression contains the word "DOP-LATA" at the bottom, which indicates that the meter was supposed to be a Postage Due frank. Whether this due meter is only an essay or was actually used is a question that cannot be answered at the present.

Another interesting specimen impression in the writer's collection is Francotyp FA-084 in the usual design used at Gdansk by the British and Polish Trade Bank. As we know the Polish post office at Gdansk, which was the Free City of Danzig, used Polish stamps with special overprint "Port Gdansk." In other words this meter FA-084 is the only meter which bears the regular Polish design but should be catalogued under "Port Gdansk" or "Used abroad."

Hasler

The Hasler F.22 machine produced an impression of an unusually large design (Ill. 7). The frank alone measures approximately 3.5x4 cm. and with the slogan which may appear at the left of the town mark the whole impression measures up to 14 cm. Slogans can also be found in the space between town mark and frank below the record number which consisted of 5 figures. On machine H 10 the record number was moved to the lower part of the interspace in order to obtain



30271



Hasler
Ill. 7

room for the slogan which is printed also above the town mark and at its left.

The machine numbers are preceded by the letter H and the numbers did not run very high as apparently not very many Hasler machines were installed.

The town mark has the form of a double circle with a square inside the inner circle. The month appears in Roman figures and dots are visible behind day, month and year. All machines print 3 figures of value of which the first is an 8-pointed star.

Machine H 11 was equipped with a smaller frank measuring 2.9x3.2 cm. only (Ill. 8). This smaller size was



small Hasler

Ill. 8

probably caused by the fact that the owner of the machine used chiefly window envelopes so that not sufficient space was left to print the regular large Hasler frank.

The writer would be interested to learn whether any postage meters have been used since the occupation of Poland and what became of the various machines which were used up to outbreak of the war. Most likely their use was discontinued.

This 'n' That

Christmas Party—Polonus Juniors December 11, 1942

Santa Claus will have to get an early start this year if he intends to be present at the Christmas Party for the Junior members of the Polonus Philatelic Society, to be held at the December 11th meeting at 1062 N. Ashland Ave. Arrangements have already been concluded to make this event a gala party, long to be remembered by our junior members.

Polonus Auction

Roman Reinowski announces that in conjunction with POLPEX 1943, an Auction will be held on March 13, 1943, at the club rooms of the Society. The tremendous success of the first Auction held last year leads Roman to believe even finer material will be offered.

Lots should be in the hands of the Auction Manager, Roman Reinowski, not later than January 8, 1943, for listing in January Issue of the BULLETIN. Commission on sales will be 15%. A minimum of 15 cents per lot will be charged in those cases where the sale does not exceed \$1.00.

Send your material to Roman Reinowski, 1939 S. Highland Ave., Berwyn, Illinois.

Tattling

Dr. Leonard Sluzynski, recently packed up his belongings—closed his office and joined the Armed Forces of the United States. It is Captain Sluzynski, now.

Dr. L. P. Kozakiewicz gave his talk on Polish Locals at the Beeba on Nov. 13th, instead of Nov. 27, as previously announced. The tremendous fund of information possessed by Doc Kozy amazed all of his audience. Fakes, fantasies, speculative issues, mint, used and on cover, were in Doc's collection. So were the genuine. He even told us how to distinguish between them. And now comes the pleasant surprise. Dr. Kozakiewicz's talk will be published in the BULLETIN, every word of what he said, replete with illustrations.

Thanks, a million Doctor for making this information available to the collectors of the stamps of Poland.

In traditional Polish style Polonus entertained its many, many friends at the Beeba, climaxing the weeks activities of International Philatelic Week. Chester and Mrs. Mikucki, really do a nice job. Thanks a lot. However, Helen Domar, wife of our president comes in for a few orchids too. She let Jack have the coffee, and worked all evening to make the party a success. Nice job Helen and thanks.

Members are reminded that at the January 8, 1943, meeting officers for the coming year will be nominated. Arrange to be present at this most important meeting.