

POLONUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY



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Eightieth Anniversary of the First Postage Stamp Issue of Independent Poland in 1918



Scott's 11 to 14, the first postage stamp issue of independent Poland

Eighty years ago we saw Poland reborn in history. Upon the fall of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and the ending of the German occupation in 1918, Poland found herself a free country.

There was not time to design and make new postage stamps. The organizing postal authorities had to make use of whatever stamps were available, including those left behind by the former occupants. Luckily something happened back in 1915 that would affect this situation some three years later.

During World War I, after the Germans occupied Warsaw, they opened a post office in that city on September 20th, 1915. They approached the Citizens Committee of Warsaw (*Komisja Obywateli Miasta Warszawy*) to undertake the local delivery of mail that entered Warsaw by way of the German Post. On September 23rd the Citizens Committee activated a Local City Post. Its purpose was to deliver regular mail and the notifications of the arrival of registered letters and money orders which the addressee had to call for personally at the German Post Office.



The unissued "Monuments Set" of the Warsaw Local City Post.

In the discussions between the Citizens Committee and the German postal authorities on the operation of the Local City Post before it was activated, it was decided that for delivery of mail the Committee would collect payment by means of postage stamps. Two stamps were printed and issued, a 10 groszy on September 23rd and a 5 groszy on September 25th. These were then, later on, surcharged in different values as their need arose.

As these stamps were made up hurriedly, before the actual postal rates were established, they were not exactly the prettiest of stamps, and neither did their values conform with the current postal rates. An artistic "Monuments Set" was then designed by *Professor Edward Trojanowski* in late October, 1915. The 2 groszy brown showed the column of King Zygmunt the third, in Warsaw; the 6 groszy green showed a shield with a mermaid (syrena), the symbol of Warsaw; the 10 groszy red showed the Polish eagle; and the 20 groszy blue showed the monument of King Jan Sobieski, at Lazienki Palace in Lwow. All values had a buff-colored background. They were lithographed in the print shop of *Jan Cotty* in Warsaw.

The 2 groszy value was intended as postage on printed matter; the 6 groszy for money order notifications, postal cards, and ordinary letters; the 10 groszy for mail weighing more than 250 grams; and the 20 groszy for telegrams and special delivery letters.

On November 4, 1915, the Local City Post sent a written request to the German administration of Posts and Telegraphs, asking their permission to issue these stamps, and enclosing samples of finished printed copies. It was not until the middle of December that they received a negative reply. The Germans claimed that the administration did not see any need at all for the use of stamps by the Local City Post. They also ordered that the Local City Post discontinue the further use of stamps altogether, and to replace them with handstamped postmarks. As the unissued Monuments

Set was not needed, the stock of printed stamps was stored in a warehouse, where it lay for almost three years.

The first actual postage stamps of the new, independent, Poland appeared on November 17, 1918. They were the unissued stamps of the Warsaw Local City Post, the so-called Monuments Set, but overprinted with new values and the inscription "Poczta Polska":

5 fenigi on 2 gr. brown	10 fenigi on 6 gr. green
25 fenigi on 10 gr. red	50 fenigi on 20 gr. dark blue

In *Scott's* catalog we find these stamps listed as Nos. 11 to 14. They should really be Nos. 1 to 4. This issue is actually the first Postage stamp issue of independent Poland, Scott's Poland No. 1 was issued under Russian dominion.

To a Pole this issue has a certain sentimental value. For years people of this nation dreamed of being independent some day. They wanted to be on their own. We saw this feeling illustrated during the existence of the Warsaw Local City Post, when they designed and issued their own stamps. It must have been a premonition that caused them to store the unissued Monuments Set in 1915, the stamps that one day in 1918 were destined to be overprinted and used as the first official postage stamp issued of a free and independent Poland.

- Chester A. Schafer

(Author's Note: The writer found the Polish publication by "Ikaros" - "Polskie Znaki Pocztowe", Bialystok, 1935, especially helpful in learning the facts of this article.)

THOMAS J. GOBBY

1939 - 1997

Polonus lost a top notch collector in the passing of Thomas J. Gobby on December 8, 1997. He served as President, Chairman of the Polpex, and as a member of the jury at exhibitions. He contributed many articles to the Philatelic Press. When Polonus needed someone to translate Philatelic articles from Polish to English, Tom would call on his wife Elizabeth who was a professional translator. Tom was the son-in-law of the late Polonus member, George Jezioranski.



Tom worked for Talman Federal Savings and Loan Association which later became LaSalle Talman and is now LaSalle Bank FSB. He rose from clerk to Senior Vice-President for Community Relations. He was the producer and host of a weekly cable television show: "Chicago: Passport to the World."

Our deepest sympathy is extended to his widow Elizabeth and family on the loss of a valued member.

THE KOWEL ISSUE OF 1919

By DR. STANLEY KRONENBERG and DR. JAMES MAZEPA

In May 1919, during the Polish-Ukrainian War, the Polish Army occupied a part of Wołyńia which contained the towns: Łuck, Włodzimierz Wołyński, Dubno, Krzemieniec, Równo and Kowel. To manage this territory, the office of the 'General Commissioner of the Civilian Administration of the Eastern Territories' with headquarters in Łuck was established.

This area was at that time not under the jurisdiction of the Polish Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs, and civilian and military mails were sporadically transported by couriers of the civilian administration. Polish revenue stamps were at first used for the pre-payment of postage. On August 18, 1919, Ukrainian postage stamps were found by the Polish authorities in the Łuck post office and were overprinted into Polish stamps. These stamps were on sale at post offices, particularly in the Kowel post office, between August 20 and August 24 as was confirmed by British officers who were on duty in Poland at that time and freely purchased these overprinted stamps at the post office counter.

After the Polish Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs took over the area's postal services, it was soon discovered that the Civilian Commissioner did not have the authority to issue postage stamps and the overprinted stamps were declared illegal. They were withdrawn from sale, confiscated and invalidated. Most of these stamps were sold to the public and cancelled in the Kowel post office and for this reason philatelists call them 'The Kowel Issue' (Figure 1). Table 1 shows the complete listing of these stamps. No inverted or double overprints have been recorded. The 15-kopeck stamps exist with the overprint reading both upwards and downwards and it is difficult to say which is 'normal'. No overprinted postal cards are known.

Proofs of these overprints were unknown before 1962 when some were found in the estate of the former civilian administrator. These overprint proofs are on the Ukrainian stamps: 15 kop., Kiev II and on 20/14 kop. Kiev I issues. They are of the 30-fen type, hand-made by means of a rubber stamp with a watery violet ink. They are pasted on pieces of quadrilled paper and invalidated with the double-ring 'Łuck' cancellation with the date 25.IX 1919 across the central bridge. This cancellation was introduced at the time when the Polish Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs took over the postal responsibilities.

Other unlisted overprints made with the genuine overprinting devices exist, for example 30-fen. overprints in violet ink on 15-kopeck stamps and on 20/14 kop. stamps. Rather than being proofs, such overprints probably represent examples of unauthorized use of the overprinting devices.

The first listing of the Kowel stamps with numbers overprinted and numbers sold appeared in the Ikaros Polish catalogue in 1935, although earlier articles in *Filatelista* and *Gibbons Stamp Monthly* had brought them to the attention of collectors. The origin and usage of these stamps were described by Maciej Perzynski in *Filatelista* in 1959

and by Cecil Roberts in Rossica in 1964. The purpose of this work is to expand and complement these articles with our own study based on additional material. We believe this to be necessary due to errors and inaccuracies in the previously published articles and because numerous previously unidentified forgeries have been offered for sale to collectors. We have seen some stamps which bear the guarantee marks of prominent experts but are undoubtedly forged. It is our hope to clarify the state of confusion which surrounds these rare and interesting stamps.



Figure 1: Genuine 'Kowel' overprints

USAGE

The volume of mail at that time in Wołynia was very small and hence most covers with the Kowel stamps which have seen postal usage

are philatelically motivated. These covers are very rare and about twenty may exist today. Most are registered letters mailed to Poland or for local delivery and bear a two-line registry mark: 'R/No___/KOWEL'. They have a red, three-line censor's mark: 'Cenzura wojskowa/w kowlu/CENZOR II'. A similar mark but with 'CENZOR I' is also known. We have not seen either of these later two marks forged, though such forgeries may exist (Figures 2 and 3).



Figure 2: A cover from Kowel to Lublin on August 21, 1919

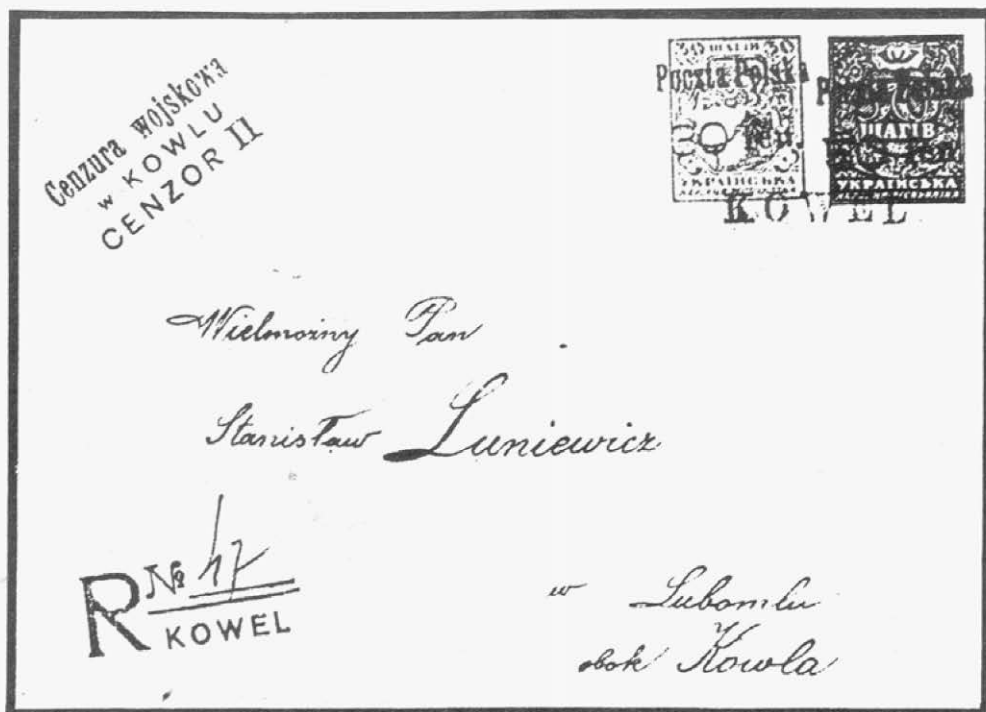


Figure 3: Registered mail to Lyuboml

(Continued on page 487-11)

Pope John Paul II Issues in 1996
(Except World Travels and 50th Anniversary
of Priestly Ordination)

By ARKADIUSZ WALINSKI

(CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS ISSUE)



250 Lire stamp — 63rd Travel to the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Austratia and Sri Lanka. January 11-21, 1995.

500 Lire stamp — 64th Travel to the Czech Republic and Poland, May 20-22, 1995.

750 Lire stamp — 65th Travel to Belgium, June 2-4, 1995.

1000 Lire Stamp — 66th Travel to Slovakia. June 30-July 3, 1995.

2000 Lire stamp — 67th Travel to Cameroon, South Africa and Kenya. September 14-20, 1995.



5000 Lire stamp — 68th Travel to the United States and United Nations in New York. October 4-9, 1995.

VATICAN:

Commemorative First Day of Issue Postmark.

First Day of Issue: November 20, 1996.

Travels of Pope John Paul II in 1995.

DIE EMISSIONIS /

* POSTE VATICANE + 20 Nov. 1996 *



POLAND: POSTAL CARD

First Day of Issue: August 18, 1996.

XII International Mariology Congress held in Czestochowa, August 18-24, 1996. 40 gr. imprinted stamp — icon of the Black Madonna of Czestochowa. Illustration on Card: Pope John Paul II and Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew I.



POLAND: POSTAL CARD

First Day of Issue: October 10, 1996.

National Farewell to the Statue of Our Lady of Fatima. 40 gr. imprinted stamp — Statue of Our Lady of Fatima. Illustration on card: Pope John Paul II with the Statue of our Lady of Fatima. Quote from Father Jerzy Popiełuszko: "Thank You, Mother for all who remain faithful to their conscience."



75th Apostolic Journey of Pope John Paul II to Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) APRIL 12—13, 1997

The Holy Father was able to make his long awaited Pastoral Visit to Sarajevo, the war-torn capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the weekend of April 12-13, 1997. He arrived at Sarajevo Airport on the afternoon of Saturday, April 12, and was greeted by authorities of Church and State. President Alija Izetbegovic welcomed the Pope in the name of the other members of the Presidency. Next stop was the

(Catholic) part of the Croat-Muslim Federation. Portrait of Pope John Paul II after the painting by D. Babic.

Sacred Heart of Jesus Cathedral, for the celebration of Vespers with the clergy, religious and seminarians.

On Sunday, April 13, the Holy Father met with the delegation of the Serbian-Orthodox community of Sarajevo led by the Metropolitan Nikolaj of Bosnia. The focal point of the Holy Father's trip was the Mass celebrated on Sunday morning in Kosevo Stadium with bishops, priests and the faithful of that city and the surrounding areas. Despite cold weather and intermittent snow, tens of thousands of faithful attended the solemn liturgy and heard the Pope plead for reconciliation and civil harmony. Later the Holy Father met members of Sarajevo's Islamic and Jewish communities. After farewell ceremonies at the airport, the Holy Father left for Rome.

Vatican; April 12, 1997:

Commemorative travel postmark in Latin.

Portrait of Pope John Paul II.

* IO. PAULVS II PACIFER SERRAIEVVM *

ADIT * POSTE VATICANE †12-13. APR.

1997. (John Paul II bringing peace to Sarajevo).



Bosnia and Herzegovina:

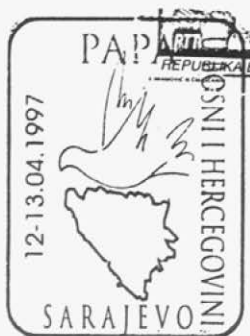
First Day of Issue: December 21, 1996:

Stamp issued in sheetlet containing four stamps in two tete-beche pairs. This stamp was issued by the Muslim part of the Croat-Muslim Federation. 500 dinar stamp — Pope John Paul II in mitre with the Pastoral Cross.

Bosnia and Herzegovina:

First Day of Issue: April 12, 1997.

3.60 Dinar stamp — printed in sheets of 20 stamps, also issued in blocks of four stamps. This stamp was issued for the Croatian



Sarajevo — December 21, 1996:

Commemorative First Day of Issue postmark.

PAPA IVAN PAVAO II / 71101 SARAJEVO PRVI DAN / NISTE SAMI / BOG JE / SA VAMA / 21.12.1996. (You are not alone — God is with you).

Kiseljak — April 12, 1997:

Commemorative First Day of Issue postmark.

71250 KISELJAK / PRVI DAN / 12.04.1997. / POHOD PAPA IVANA PAVLA II CRKVI U BiH / (Pope John Paul II visits the Church in Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Sarajevo — April 12-13, 1997:

Commemorative Postmark.

Map outline of Bosnia and Herzegovina with peace dove above.

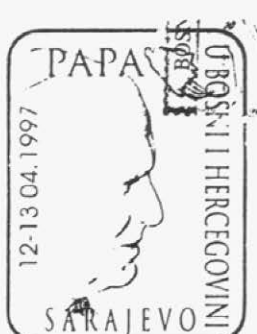
12-13.04.1997 / PAPA / U BOSNI I HERCEGOVINI / SARAJEVO (The Pope in Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Sarajevo — April 12-13, 1997:

Commemorative Postmark.

Sacred Heart Cathedral in Sarajevo.

12-13.04.1997 / PAPA / U BOSNI I HERCEGOVINI / SARAJEVO (The Pope in Bosnia and Herzegovina).



Sarajevo — April 12-13, 1997:

Commemorative postmark. Pope's clasped hands.

12-13.04.1997. PAPA / U BOSNI I HERCEGOVINI / SARAJEVO (The Pope in Bosnia and Herzegovina).

(TO BE CONTINUED)

The numbering of registered letters in the Kowel post office seems to have been random: for example, of two letters mailed on August 23, 1919 by one and the same person (according to the handwriting of the address and postmarked by one and the same clerk (handwriting of the date) one has the registration number 47 and the other 634. Another registered letter mailed on August 21, 1919 has the registration number 181.

Several philatelists lived in Kowel and in addition to letters which were forwarded by mail they arranged to have numerous stamps cancelled to order after affixing them on pieces of paper or on covers.

DESCRIPTION OF GENUINE STAMPS

In discussing the genuine stamps with Polish overprints we must consider first the characteristics of the basic stamps, then the characteristics of the overprints.

The Basic Ukrainian Stamps

The Ukrainian state had issued a set of definitive stamps with the

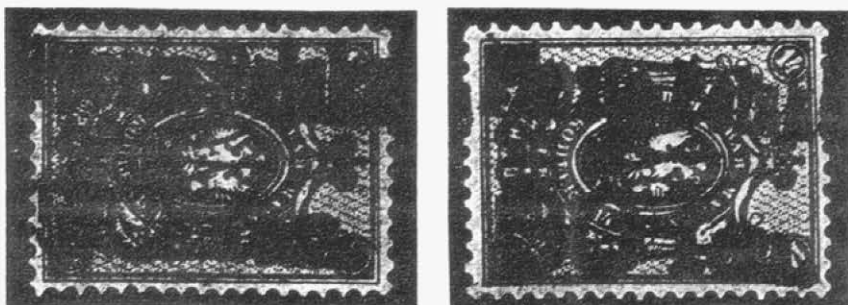


Figure 4: Russia 20/14 kop. blue and red with Ukrainian Kiev I Trident and with the Polish '50 fen' overprint

values: 10, 20, 30, 40 and 50 shahiv, and 20 hryven. Also, Russian stamps which were found in the Ukrainian post offices at the time of the revolution were overprinted with a Trident, the national symbol of the Ukraine, to convert them into Ukrainian stamps.

From the definitive set, only the 30 and the 50 shahiv and the 20 hryven exist with the Kowel overprints. The 30 shahiv was overprinted into 30 fen., the 50 shahiv and 20 hryven into 50 fen. Variations of color shades exist on all three stamps but they are not important enough to merit a separate listing except for the 30 shahiv, which exists in prussian blue and in ultramarine.

Of the Ukrainian stamps with the trident overprint, the 15 kopeck perforate and imperforate, 20/14 kopeck, and the one rouble imperforate were overprinted by the Polish authorities. Both 15-kopeck values come from sheets of 100 stamps, which are divided into four panes of 25 stamps (5x5). These were overprinted by the Ukrainians with a rubber handstamp which overprinted five stamps at a time in each horizontal row. This handstamp called Kiev IIa-e produced five distinctly different tridents. Thus, the Kowel overprints on these stamps can be found on any one of the five trident types designated as Kiev

IIa, IIb, IIc, IId, and IIe.

The one rouble stamps seen all have the Kiev IId trident. The 50 fen on 20/14 kop. (Figure 4) is the rarest of the Kowel stamps with only 20 reportedly having been made. This number is doubtful; the actual quantity of this value appears to be larger. Several Ukrainian stamps of the 20/14 value were used for the overprinting including Kiev I, Kiev IIa-e and Kiev III tridents. Other trident types may have been used on all these values, but these are the only ones recorded to date.

The Polish Overprints

There are two types of Polish overprints, both of which were made with rubber handstamps. The first was used only on the 30-shahiv value and reads: 'Poczta Polska/30 fen'. It is imprinted only in pink ink. The second overprint reads: 'Poczta Polska/50 fen' and was imprinted on all other Kowel values in violet ink. Exact measurements of these hand-made overprints are difficult to define since they depend upon the inking, pressure when applied, and the temperament of the imprinter. Thus only approximate measurements are given in Table 2. They come from measuring eleven genuine 30-fen and nineteen 50-fen stamps.

As the overprinting progressed, the rubber handstamps became worn causing slight changes in the design of the lettering. For example, the 'P' in 'Poczta' in both overprint types lost its small rounded serif on the top. The overprints often extend beyond the dimensions of the stamps, particularly in the case of the Kopeck values. In some cases, parts of the overprint are weakly imprinted and are difficult or impossible to see, all of which adds to the difficulty of expertization. The 20 hryven stamp is coated on its surface with a shiny, lacquer-like layer. This resulted in a poor adhesion of the ink of the overprint on this value; it is often spotty, weak and appears paler when compared with overprints on other denominations.



Figure 5: Genuine overprints.



Figure 5. (continued) Genuine overprints.

Single stamps of all denominations are most often seen. Pairs and particularly blocks are scarce (Figure 5).

Genuine and Forged Cancellations

Along with the overprinting devices the authorities prepared a one-line rubber postmark. 'KOWEL'. It was used to cancel the Kowel stamps: the date of the mailing was written in with a pencil by the postmaster, a similar postmark: 'LUCK' also exists. Letters exist with the circular postmark: 'Frontowa Poczta Polowa No. 16' with a date bridge (Figure 6) but the authenticity of its usage cannot be assured. The same applies to the postmark: 'Fr. Poczta Polowa *19*' without a date bridge.

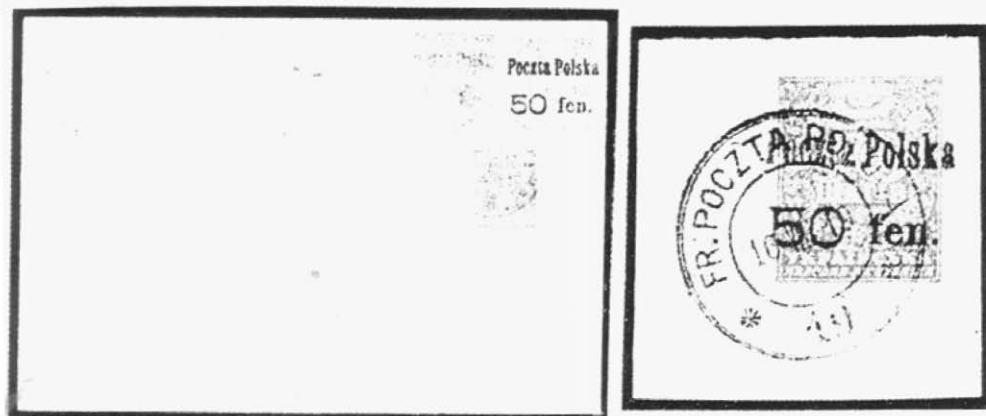


Figure 6:(a) A cover to Kowel postmarked FRONTOWA PO CZTA POLOWA *NO. 16*, dated August 20, 1919 and (b) the postmark FR. PO CZTA POLOWA *19*, dated August 16, 1919.

According to our findings only the rubber stamp 'KOWEL' in a

straight line 28.4 x 4.5 mm was imitated and was used to cancel stamps with forged overprints. Forged cancellations have essentially the same overall dimensions as genuine cancellations. Figure 7 shows the genuine cancellation (top) and two forgeries (center and bottom). Genuine cancellations of this type were imprinted in violet, blue or (rarely) red ink, we have seen forgeries in blue, violet and in a mixture of blue and violet resulting from the switching of ink pads without cleaning the fake cancelling device. Genuine cancellations are imprinted very neatly; the lettering has sharp appearing edges and clear details. Forged cancellations appear unsharp and often with a spotty distribution of ink. The cancellation depicted in 'Polskie Znaki Pocztowe' (reference 3) on the left side of the bottom of the page is genuine; the cancellation shown there on the right side is a forgery as is the overprint.

An easily visible characteristic of the forged cancellation are the right side serifs in 'E' and in 'L'. The right border lines of these serifs are vertical in genuine cancellations but are slanted in forgeries. In most genuine cancellations, the letters 'E' and 'L' are positioned somewhat lower than the preceding letters of 'KOWEL'.



Figure 7: Genuine straight-line 'KOWEL' cancellation on the top and its forgeries (center and bottom).



Figure 8: Some of the forgeries of both '30 fen.' and '50 fen.' overprints have pronounced serifs of the 'P' in 'Pocza'. Several varieties exist. In genuine overprints the 'P' has no serif in both kinds of overprints or the serif is small and rounded.



Figure 9: The ending of 'Polska' in a genuine 50 fen. overprint.



Top: The 's' has a wrong shape



Centre: The 'k' has a wrong shape



Bottom: The 'a' has a wrong shape

Figure 10: 'Polska' in three types of forged '50 fen' overprints.

Forged Versus Genuine Polish Overprints

Having studied 38 stamps with forged overprints, we came to the following general conclusions which apply to all types of the observed forgeries:

1. All overprints on stamps other than those listed in Table 1 (except for some 'proofs' in violet ink mentioned above) and all deviations from normal overprints (e.g. double overprints) are made with forged overprinting devices.
2. We observed at least three types of fake '30 fen' overprints and five types of fake '50 fen' overprints; other types may exist. We guess that these different types of forgeries originated probably from only one or two sources. The differences among the different types may have been caused by 'improvements' in one or more rubber stamps.

3. All forgeries of the '30 fen' overprints have the following common characteristics. The height of 'O' in '30' measured 5.7-6.0 mm (only 5.1-5.4 mm in originals); The height of 'F' in 'Fen' measures 4.5-4.6 mm (4.0-4.2mm in originals); The height of 'EN' in 'FEN' measures 3.2-3.4 mm (2.7-2.8mm in originals).
4. In all forgeries of '50 Fen' overprints the height of 'O' in '50 Fen' measures 4.8-5.1 mm (5.5-5.9 mm in originals).

Table 1
The 'Kowel' Issue

'RUCH' Catalogue Number	The Basic Ukrainian Stamp	Polish Overprint	Reported Number of Overprinted Stamps	Reported Number of Stamps Sold to the Public
1a (N 238)	50 shahiv, Michel Nr 3a, prussian blue, imperforate	Poczta Polska 30 fen (pink)	4900	800
1b (N 238)	50 shahiv, Michel Nr 3b, ultra- marine, imperforate	Poczta Polska 30 fen (pink)		
2 (N 239)	Russia, 15 kop. Brown lilac/blue, perforate, Michel Nr 72. With the Ukrainian overprint: Michel Nr 16	Poczta Polska 50 fen (violet)	650	325
3 (N 240)	Same as N 239 but imperforate	Poczta Polska 50 fen (violet)		
4 (N 241)	Russia, 20/14 kop. Blue/red Michel Nr 108, perforate. With the Ukrainian overprint: Michel Nr 28	Poczta Polska 50 fen (violet)	20	10
5 (N 242)	50 shahiv, red, imperforate, Michel Nr 5.	Poczta Polska 50 fen (violet)	8680	1090
6 (N 243)	Russia, 1 rouble, brown/orange, imperforate, Michel Nr 121. With Ukrainian overprint: Michel Nr 39.	Poczta Polska 50 fen (violet)	500	250
7 (N 244)	20 hryven, orange/green, imperforate, Michel Nr 66.	Poczta Polska 50 fen (violet)	220	110

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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