

The Sub-Carpathian Messenger

Newsletter of the Study Circle
for the Postal History of the Carpatho-Ukraine

Number 7 - September 2009



The main post office in Užhorod (about 1920)

About us and the Newsletter

The Study Circle is a loose group of persons who are interested in the postal (and general) history of the area known as Kárpátalja in Hungarian, as Podkarpatská Rus during the First Czechoslovak Republic, which had a short day of independence as Carpatho Ukraine, and later was integrated into the Ukrainian SSR in the Soviet Union as the 'Zakarpatskaja Oblast'. Since 1991 it is ЗАКАРПАТТЯ, the westernmost administrative district in the Ukraine.

The Newsletter came out of a meeting of a few collectors during the PRAHA 2008, its first number appeared in November 2008. Since then it has been growing steadily. We aim to produce between four and six numbers per year (if input allows) but do not promise regular publication intervals.

Change in distribution method

With the (much appreciated !) help of John Lechtanski we have found a public place where we can store all issues of our Newsletter - at no cost which is even better than expected.

Since #006 you can view and download each issue (including the "old" ones) from the Web address:

<http://www.docstoc.com/collection/128/The-Sub-Carpathian-Messenger>

For downloading you will need to register with DocStoc which again is free of charge. If you encounter some problems with access to the mentioned web site, please let us know.

For those who have no Internet access and/or no e-mail, the distribution method will stay the same: you will receive a colour print-out by air/surface mail as you did in the past.

In future everybody can freely access the uploaded numbers of the Newsletter but the notification service will be limited to the members of the Study Circle. So joining us still has some advantage.

Congratulations to Tønnes Ore for a well-deserved **Gold medal** at the FEPA exhibition in Sofia, Bulgaria (Postal History of Carpatho Ukraine – 8 frames, 91 points). And we send our warm welcome to Bob KOCHTUBAJDA (Canada) and Paul KRAUS (Israel).

Rules and Regulations

All articles in the Newsletter carrying the name of an author are the sole responsibility of this author and should not be taken to represent the common opinion of the Study Circle. Such articles are, if not marked otherwise, copyrighted by the respective author. Free use within the Study Circle is granted.

Participation in the Study Circle is not bound to a formal membership and does not include the duty to pay a membership fee. There is a **moral** obligation to support the Newsletter from time to time by sending some article, some interesting piece of information, some question, some answer or whatever.

We will "print" everything even only loosely connected with our subject of interest so any contribution is certainly welcome. Please send it (as Word 2003 document, graphical elements in JPEG, 300 dpi) to our editor's e-mail address (kb@aatc.at). His postal address is:

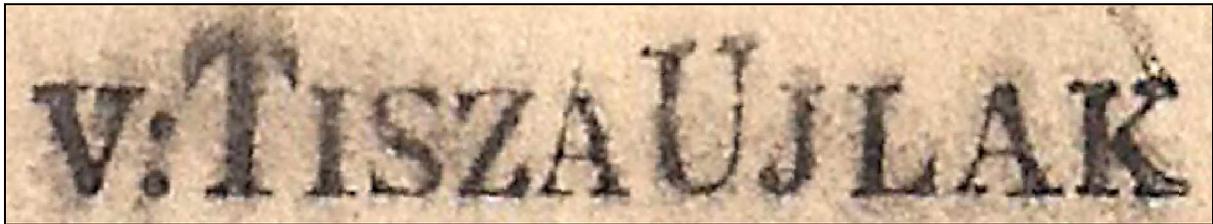
Dr. Helmut Kobelbauer
Untergrossau 81, A-8261 Sinabelkirchen, Austria / Europe

Helmut Kobelbauer & Friends

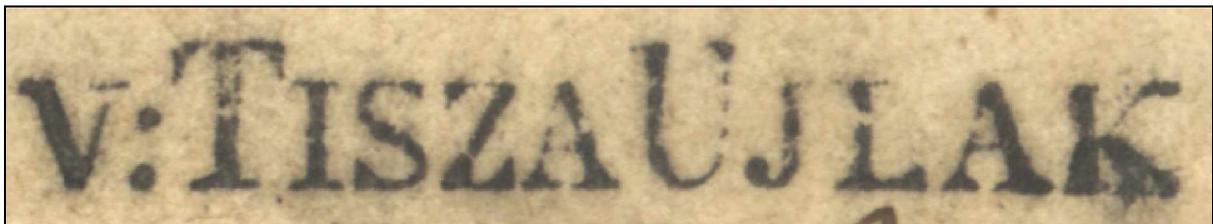
The second pre-stamp postmark of Tisza Ujlak

The following pictures show the second pre-stamp postmark of Tisza Ujlak as present in a number of collections. This post office was opened in 1836, and the postmark shown (according to literature) was used from 1838 to 1847, always appearing in black colour. These postmarks have been scanned with 600 or 1200 dpi and have been stored as bitmaps (file format BMP). Such pictures can be enlarged (within reason) without loss of detail. As far as we know (and hope), the shown postmarks are genuine.

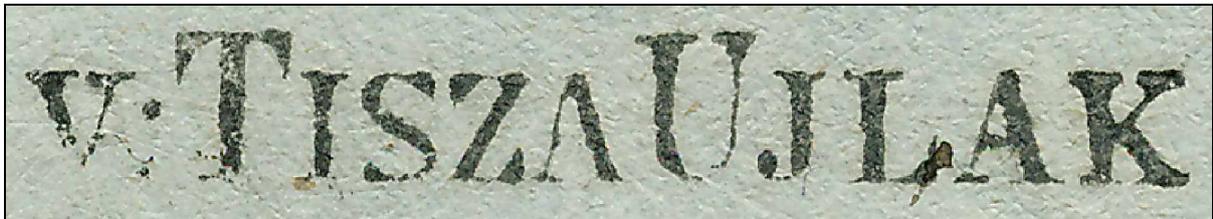
Please be aware that the pictures are not (exactly) to the same scale. This makes comparisons a bit difficult. Anyway, one has also to consider the letter (or cover) itself, the ink, the writing, the paper, and other components before making a judgement.



December 12, 1838 (collection J. Rompes)



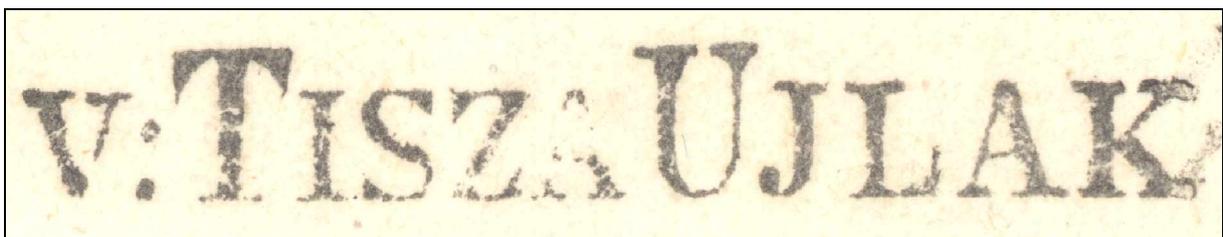
December 18, 1838 (collection T. Ore)



April 3, 1839 (collection J. Verleg)



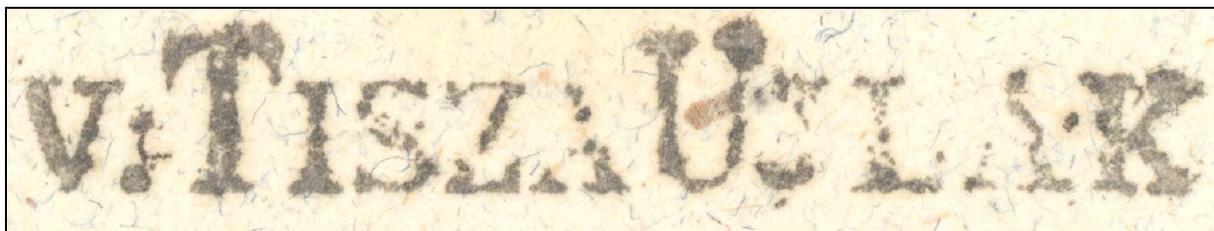
July 6, 1839 (collection H. Kobelbauer, ex Dr. Hanus)



August 21, 1839 (collection H. Kobelbauer, ex Ing. Müller, Dr. Jerger)



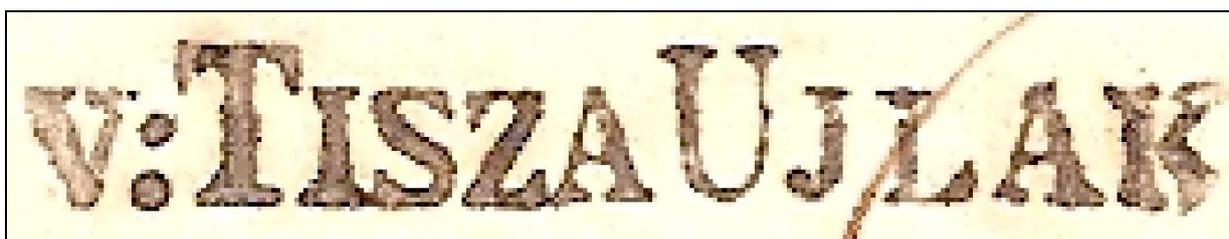
September 23, 1841 (collection J. Verleg - repaired postmark)



May 1843 (collection H. Kobelbauer, ex Dr. Simády)



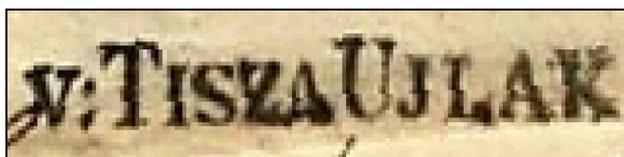
December 12, 1843 (collection T. Ore)



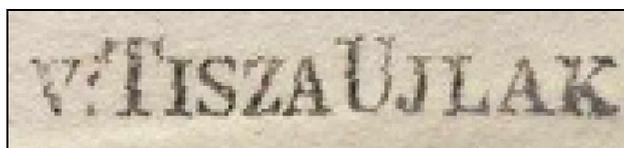
June 29, 1847 (collection J. Rompes)

Other pictures of the same postmark are available in EXPONET (www.exponent.info) from the respective collections of Otto Hornung (sheet 18 - 8/6/1839), Miroslav Blaha (sheet 14 - 1841), and the late Walter Rauch (sheet 14 - 1843).

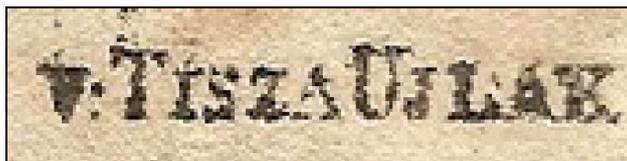
The pictures on EXPONET are only 300 dpi and JPEG, so in rather low optical resolution. Especially enlargening them for comparison is not really working - JPEG is a data format with compression and does not keep the original picture elements intact. Therefore the following pictures should not be taken as the base for a decision whether the shown postmark is genuine or fake.



August 6, 1839 (collection O. Hornung on EXPONET)

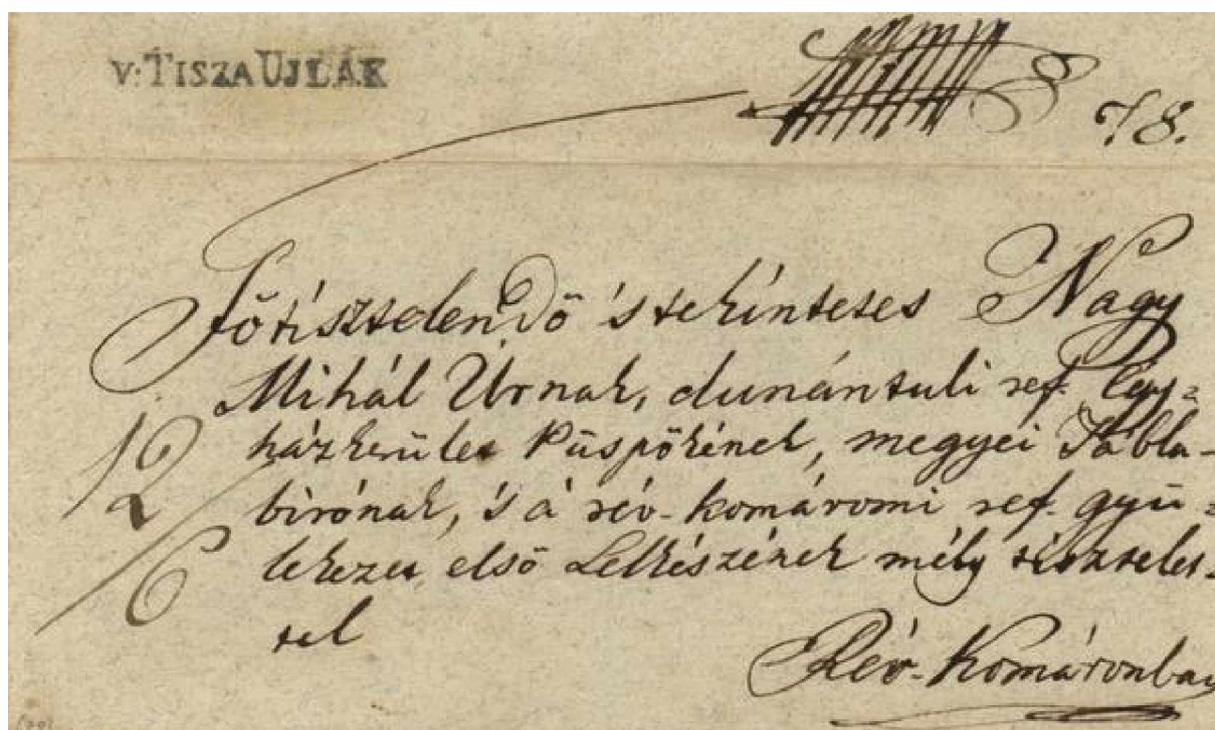


1841 (collection M. Blaha on EXPONET)



1843 (collection W. Rauch on EXPONET)

Since many pre-stamp postmarks from Hungary have come in doubt or, as some would say, have been found to be fakes, there is now the Gervay Foundation in Budapest which buys and preserves covers and letters which are considered to be dangerous fakes and forgeries. (You may study them at their premises but must not make copies or scans.) One example from Tisza Ujlak is in the respective collection:



From the Gervay Foundation: Forged postmark of Tisza Ujlak



Forgery from Gervay Foundation
(enlargened)

Both Jan Rompes and Jan Verleg pointed out that especially the letter "S" in "TISZA" is clearly different from the original.

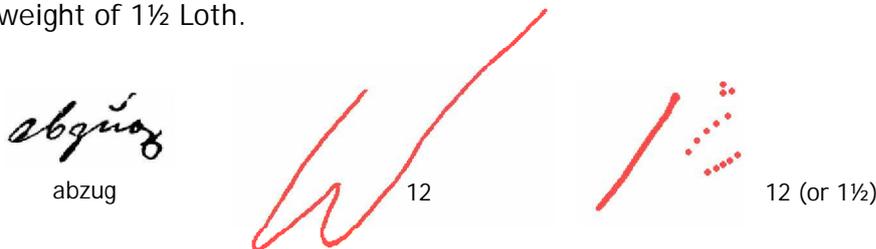
During the discussion after a presentation at the "Vindobona" club in Vienna the (Austrian) president of the (German) "Arbeitsgemeinschaft Ungarn", Karl Endrödi, mentioned that one large class of forgeries is usually recognizable because there the stamps are painted, not strikes of a (forged) metal canceller.

Challenging prephilatelic letters

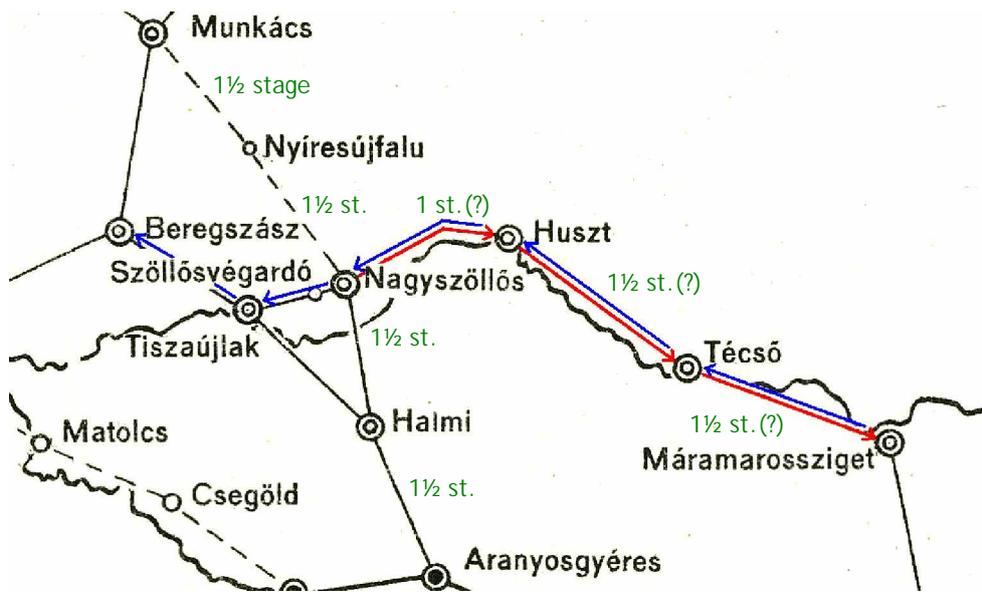
The analysis of prephilatelic letters from Carpatho-Ukraine rarely presents serious challenges to the postal historian. Letters to abroad are virtually non-existent, and the inland rates depending on distance and weight are well known. And from the 1830s the official letters normally went without any markings related to postage, as they were not paid in cash by the receiver. It is all the more interesting when one comes across letters which differ from the "normal", and I shall present two examples below.



The first letter is an official letter (hivatalból) from Nagy Szöllös dated November 23, 1831. It is addressed to (Máramaros-)Szigeth, but then redirected to Beregszász. The easy part is a clear tax figure '6' in red: The distance from Nagy Szöllös to Beregszász was less than three stages (Poststationen), which leads us to conclude that the letter weighed between 1 and 1½ Loth, as the postage for up to 3 stages was 2 Kreuzer per ½ Loth. So far so good - quite ordinary. But then comes the interesting part: Look closely, and you will see the remark 'abzug' in ink, and some red marks that seem to be (partly) erased. What looks like a 'W' is the customary shorthand way of writing '12'. To the left of it is a clear '1' and something which could be a '2', making another figure '12', or possibly a '½', indicating a weight of 1½ Loth.



This is what is called an 'Abzugsbrief' in German. The letter first travelled a distance of four stages (estimate - see below) to Szigeth, then back to Nagy Szöllös and then two(?) stages to Beregszász. Normally, a redirection did not lead to a reduced postage - in most cases it would increase. But in cases like this one where *the redirection meant sending the letter back on the same postal route*, the regulations allowed a reduction of the postage. So the postal employee wrote the word 'abzug' on the letter, erased the '12' which was the postage for 1-1½ Loth for the four stages to Szigeth, and wrote '6' instead. He made it difficult for us by trying to erase the old figure instead of following the normal procedure of crossing it out.



At this point, one remark should be made about the calculation of distances: Distances were measured in terms of *stages*, and a stage was the normal distance between the stations - "Poststationen", where there would be a possibility of changing horses and often a post office. The distance was normally around two "Postmeilen" or ca. 15 km. Attempts were made to distribute the stations evenly along the postal routes, but of course this was not always possible. In some cases the stretches between them were much longer than normal, and *in such cases the distance would be defined as one and a half, or even two, stages*. It seems that when such an "extra distance" applied, it was most often assigned to two adjacent stretches, to make the calculation easier (two real stretches then counted as three "official" stages). In old maps of the postal routes, a stage was normally indicated by a stroke through the line between the stations. Stretches that counted as 1½ stages, were shown by a "stroke and a half" - see the detail below of a map from the 1790s.



As an example, it can be seen from the map that the distance along the old route from Munkács to Szatmár(németi) via Nagy Szöllős would be counted as $1\frac{1}{2} + 1\frac{1}{2} + 1\frac{1}{2} + 1\frac{1}{2} + 1 = 7$ stages, and not 5 stages as one would believe from looking at the number of stations.

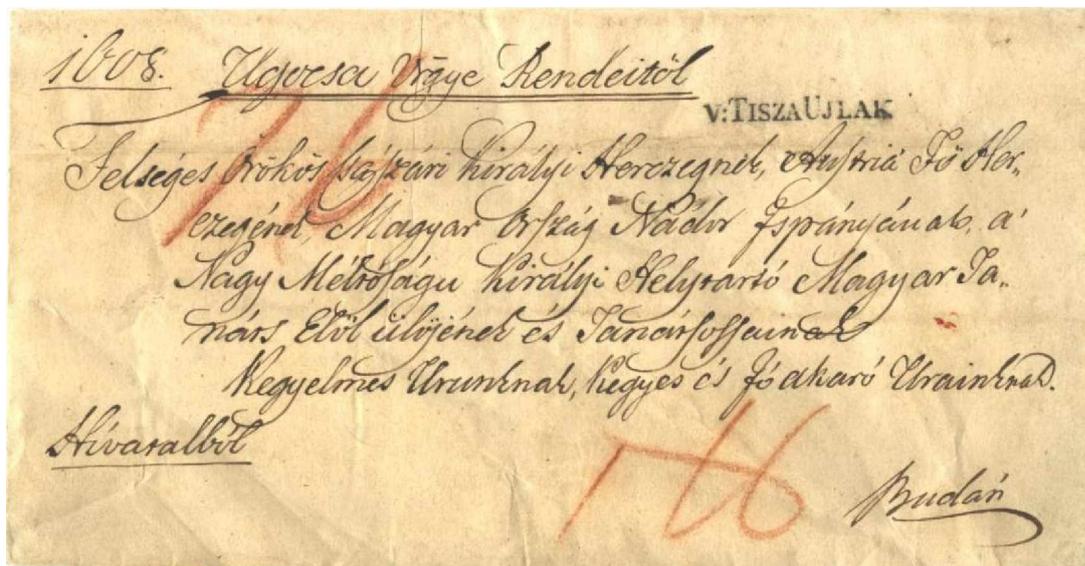
So in order to make a correct assessment of the number of stages one has to know

- (a) which route a letter would follow, and
- (b) the defined distance in terms of stages along the route.

The map in Bér-Makkai-Surányi's book can be a great help, but it gives no exact information about when the routes were opened (or closed), and also nothing about the stretches that counted as more than one stage.

Look again at the sketch showing the route N.Szöllős-M.Sziget-Beregszász above. Huszt-Tecső-M.Sziget looks like 2 stages, but knowing that both Munkács-Nyíresújfalu-N.Szöllős and N.Szöllős-Halmi-Aranyosgyéres counted as 3 each, I believe that Huszt-Tecső-M.Sziget also counted 3, so that the distance from N.Szöllős to M.Sziget was *four* stages, not three (hence the 12 Kr. postage). But until somebody digs up a map or a list with all official stage counts in the period 1817-1842, many of our calculations can be no more than *estimates*.

Now to the second letter, which is an official letter from Tisza-Ujlak to Buda dated December, 1838.



75%

It has the very unusual tax figure '76' in red, and also another mark which is quite unusual. What can we make out of this?

A closer look reveals that the lower marking is '1 lb' - the 'lb' written in the way which was customary at the time. This 'lb' symbol was so commonly used that it was also a typographic symbol: lb

But could the letter (with attachments) really have weighed one pound? It would be possible to send a one pound letter through the ordinary letter mail (Briefpost), but it would cost a small fortune. To be specific: 14 Kr. per ½ Loth up to ½ pound, 14 Kr. per Loth thereafter, i.e. $14 \times 32 + 14 \times 16 = 672 \text{ Kr.} = 11 \text{ Fl. } 12 \text{ Kr.}$

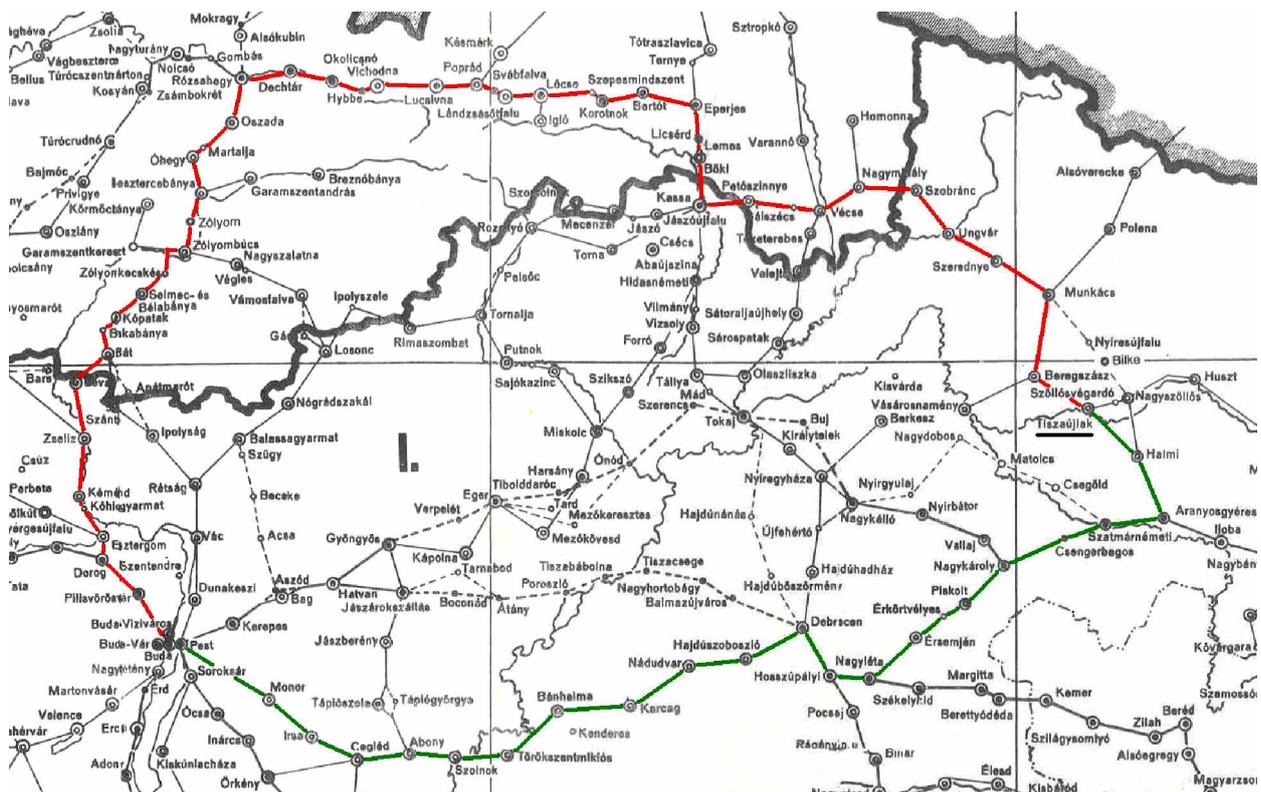
So we have to look to the the other part of the Imperial mail service: The *mail coach service* (Fahrpost). The Fahrpost was strictly separated from the Briefpost, and was concerned with the transport of persons, parcels and valuables (money letters). The Fahrpost rate system was also very different from that of the Briefpost. The Fahrpost was a slower service, as the coaches did not run very often, and did not service the less important places. But it was also much cheaper to send a one pound parcel with the Fahrpost than a one pound letter with the Briefpost!

The civil servant in Tisza-Ujlak obviously wanted to save money by sending his large pile of documents to Buda using the Fahrpost instead of the more normal way as letter(s) through the Briefpost.

One may wonder why such money saving actions are not found more often, but the answer is as follows: In order to avoid inappropriate competition between Fahrpost and Briefpost, there were special restrictions on the sending of *documents* via Fahrpost. The *minimum weight* of a document sending was *one pound*, and the ordinary fee was *doubled* for all sendings weighing less than five pounds.

The Fahrpost tariff from 1820 can be found in Kainbacher vol. I pp. 370-71, and it is also reproduced in Denes Czirik's book on the Fahrpost. The rate for one pound, 76-80 Postmeilen is 38 Kr., and doubling that (according to footnote C), you get the 76 Kr!

The only remaining question is whether it was as much as 76 Postmeilen (~570 km) from Tisza-Ujlak to Buda. Remember that the normal stage length was 2 Meilen, but that some stretches were longer. Using the Bér-Makkai-Surányi map we find that the shortest possible route, via Debrecen (shown in green below), would be at least 25 stages, or ca. 50 Meilen.



But we must assume that the Fahrpost did not always take the shortest route, as it had to service several important places in one round trip. One possible Fahrpost route in this case (shown in red) was through Kassa and then the main road Eperjes-Rózsahegy before turning south to Buda, which would amount to about 38 stages ≈ 76 Meilen.

It is challenges like these that makes postal history so enjoyable.

Helmut Kobelbauer

Registered letter from DOMBÓ - October 26, 1870

Gary S. Ryan wrote in his „Die Abstempelungen der ungarischen Postämter auf der ersten Ausgabe von Ungarn 1867 - 1871“ (page 233) that the post office in Dombó in the Máramaros County was opened March 7, 1870. He set the value of postmarks from this office in 1870 and 1871 to 900 points, i. e. equivalent to extremely rare.

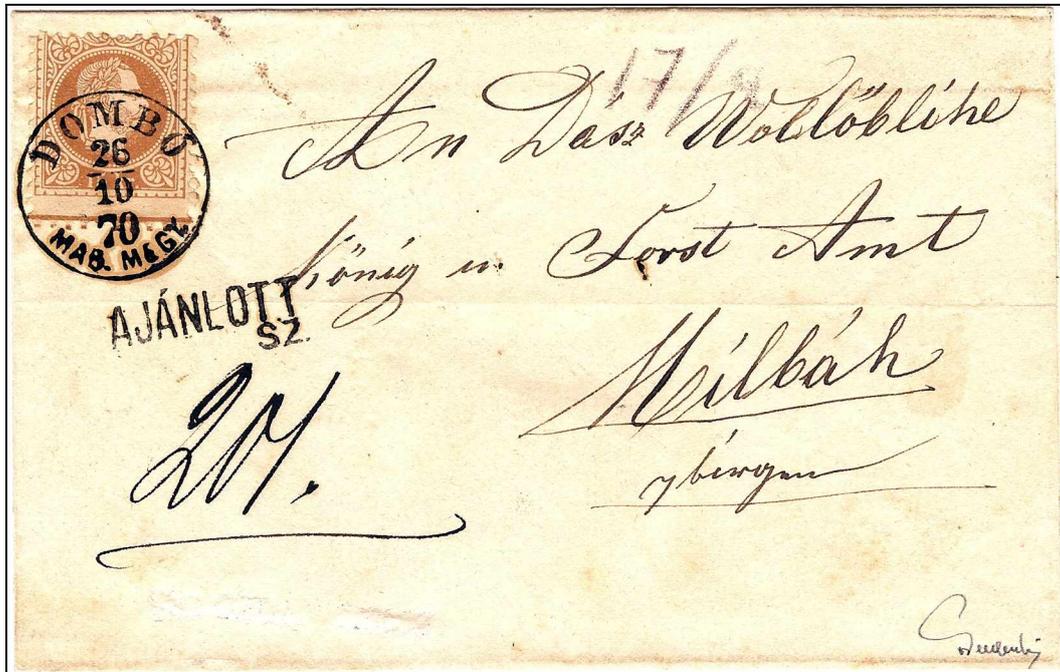


Fig. 1: Registered letter from Dombó, October 26, 1870, to Mühlenbach (Szászebes)



Fig. 1a: Reverse of cover with transit marks from Tecső (27/10), Nyiregyháza (29/10), and arrival mark from Szászebes (31/10 70)

This spectacular cover has found its home in the collection of our member Jakab András from Budapest who specializes in the use of the Austrian issues on Hungarian territory.

A detailed description of the piece can be found in the certificate by Dr. Ulrich Ferchenbauer, one of the leading experts for stamps and postmarks of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy:

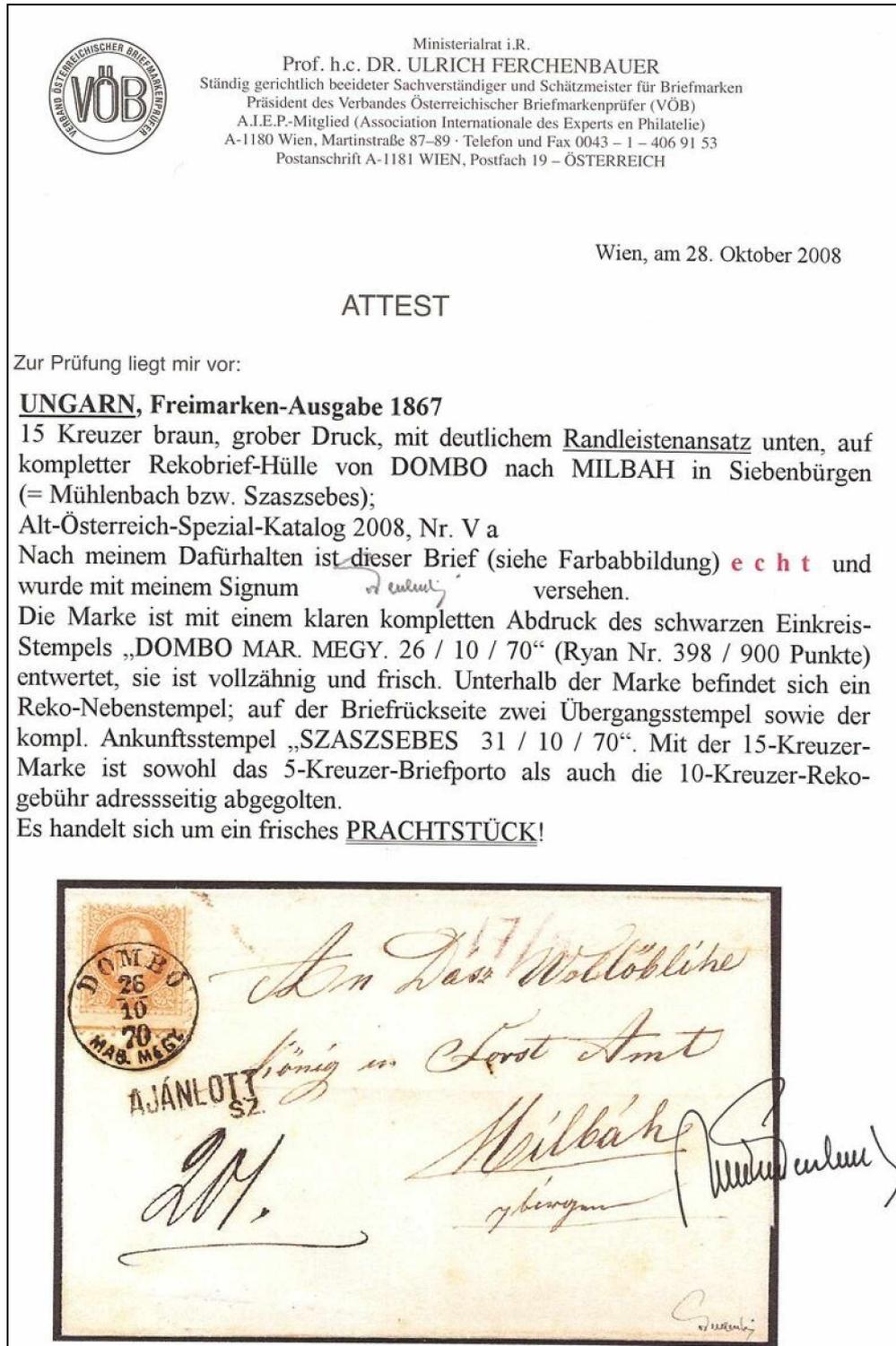


Fig. 2: Copy of the certificate by Dr. Ferchenbauer

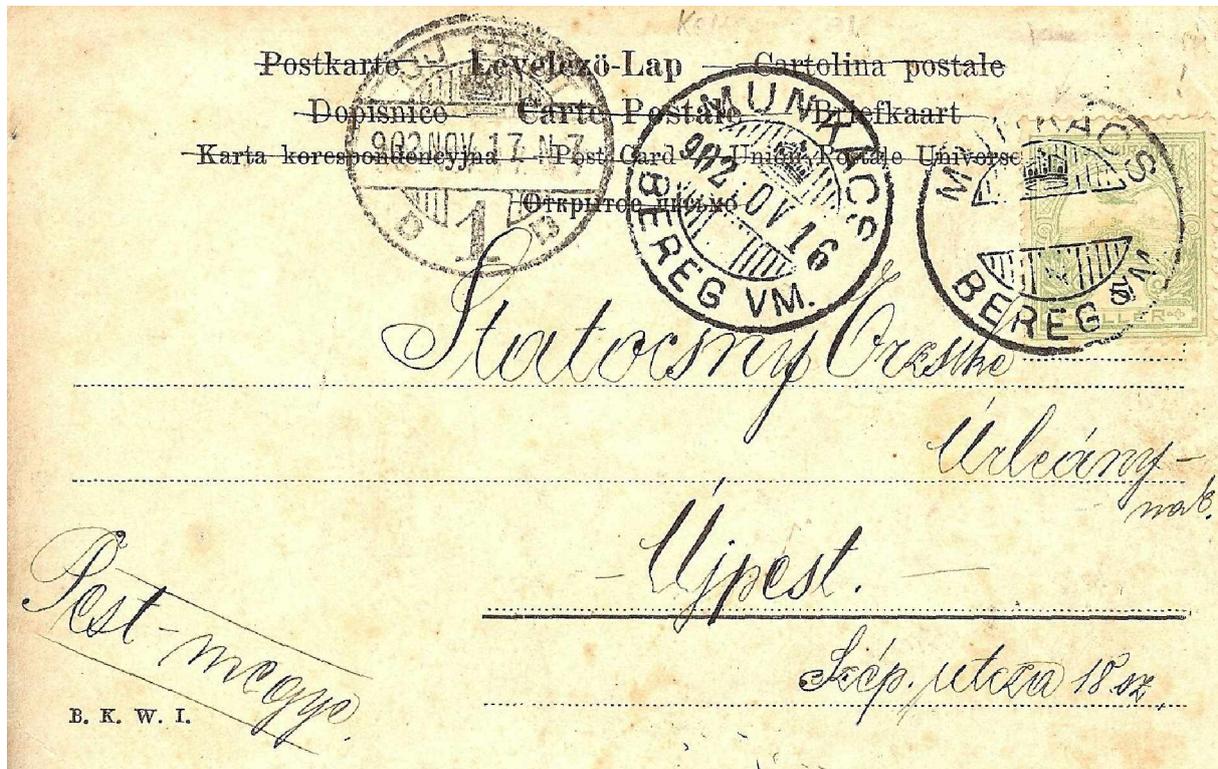
The 15 kr stamp (coarse perforation, with a clearly recognizable colour margin beneath) covers both the fee for the letter itself (5 kr) and for the registration (10 kr).

We can only congratulate Mr. Jakab - this is a top piece in top quality!

Seppo Laaksonen

A curious postcard from Munkács in 1902

The following postcard was sent from Munkács to Újpest in November 1902 and was correctly franked with a 5 fillér stamp of the Turul issue. This tariff was valid for both local and domestic cards, starting January 11, 1902.



Postcard from Munkács, November 16, 1902, to Újpest

When cancelling the stamp, the official used the regular „MUNKÁCS | BEREG VM.” postmark (recorded from 1892 to 1915 - see J. Verleg’s monography, page 29) but without date bridge. He noticed his error and cancelled the postcard a second time, using now the date bridge with „902 NOV 16” (but still forgetting to put in the day time marker „N” or „É”).

The card carries also the receiving postmark „UJ PEST | D 1 D” of „902 NOV. 17. N 7” which was - according to Márfai/Szép, page 391 - in use from 1901 to the end of the Hungarian Kingdom in 1918. Therefore the card was delivered to the receiver the day after it had been posted. It was probably transported with the railway along the line Munkács - Bátor - Csap and from there through Nyiregyháza to Budapest.

[Editor’s note:

The book with the marvellous title »Magyarország postahivatalainak és postaügynökségeinek hely-, keletbélyegzései (1871 - 1920)« (The Postmarks of the Hungarian Post Offices and Postal Agencies) by Márfai Árpád and Szép Endre is another valuable reference for the postal history of Hungary. It was published in Budapest in 1995 and is officially out of print but can usually be bought at some Hungarian auctions. It holds data from 6420 post offices and postal agencies on nearly 450 pages. For each place it also holds an indication to which state the location belonged when the book was prepared - sometimes very helpful when you just have the old name from some postmark and wonder where the place is now.]

Voloncs Gábor

Use of Czechoslovak stamps in Hungary

[From the Hungarian journal »Philatelica«, no. 86/1, pages 31 to 34; translated by Dipl.Ing. Nagy Gábor. We apologize for the bad quality of the pictures - already so in the original.]

It is a singular event in the Hungarian postal history that the Hungarian Royal Mail accepted the stamps of a foreign state for franking in Hungary. This exception occurred in 1938 at the re-annexation of the Felvidék (= Upper Hungary).

In those days of patriotic enthusiasm, because of the big quantity of machinations for a philatelic purpose and the lack of correct information the collectors did not attach great importance to the postal items franked with Czechoslovak stamps.

In the following text I will put some light on the distinction of postal items franked with Czechoslovak stamps from a postal history point of view to make the separation of machinations and authentic sendings easier.

The start of the Hungarian postal service

On November 2nd, 1938, the Vienna Arbitration gave to Hungary Czechoslovak territory of 11.928 square kilometres with a population of 869.299 on an ethnographic basis. Earlier, i. e. on October 11th, were handed over two settlements close to the border: Sátorajjá hely-Gyártelep (now *Slovenské Nové Mesto*) and Ipolyság (*Sahy*).

On the 5th of November the military forces marched in and at the same date the Hungarian post offices were opened because postal personnel and supplies arrived simultaneously with the military units. The new territories were put under military administration. By the side of each military administration command altogether four postal administration agencies were put in operation. On the 13th of October the Minister of Commerce and Transport had already ordered to set up the „Hungarian Royal Postal Administration of the Liberated Territories Budapest”.

On the re-annexed territories the postal administration did not introduce separate tariffs, hence the homeland tariffs were effective. In the post offices only Hungarian stamps were sold and it was prohibited to barter the Czechoslovak stamps into Hungarian stamps or any other legal tender.

Previously after the opening of the post offices at Sátorajjá hely-Gyártelep and Ipolyság the demand had been raised to allow the use of Czechoslovak stamps owned by the population for franking letters respectively cards. Originating from the idea that the population should be saved from any damage, the Hungarian Royal Mail in harmony with the military command permitted franking of letter mail through the use of Czechoslovak stamps.

The use of Czechoslovak stamps

The order concerning the use of Czechoslovak stamps was published on the 13th of October in the »Postai Rendeleték Tára« (*Bulletin of Postal Orders*) (P.R.T. 1938. 121. 146 / 4. sz.) and was effective with the opening of the new post offices. As the seizure of the territory was taking about 10 days, the opening of the 227 post offices was taking place within this period.

By the mentioned order mail from the Felvidék to the homeland was treated according to the *tariffs of the Czechoslovak post if it was franked with Czechoslovak stamps*:

		Czechoslovak tariffs (in halerů)	
		local mail	domestic mail
Postcard		50	50
Letter up to	50 g	60	100
	100 g	110	160
	250 g	200	250
	500 g	250	300
	1000 g	300	400
Printed matter up to	50 g		20
	150 g		50
	250 g		80
	500 g		150
	1000 g		200
	2000 g		300
Samples up to	100 g		40
	250 g		80
	500 g		150
	1000 g		200

The tariffs for express and registered mail were not mentioned but by the Czechoslovak tariffs both were 200 halerů.

Sometimes such items may occur which were normally forwarded by the Hungarian post.

The postal administration also tolerated the mixed use of Hungarian and Czechoslovak stamps but in this case *the Hungarian tariffs were effective*. The exchange rate was

$$100 \text{ halerů} = 14 \text{ fillér}$$



Fig. 1

Fig. 1 shows a postcard mailed at Munkács and franked according to Czechoslovak tariffs. Fig. 2 shows a similar franked letter mailed from Kassa. Fig. 3 shows a card with mixed franking. The 50 halerů correspond to 7 fillér, the card is adequately franked (10 fillér).



Fig. 2

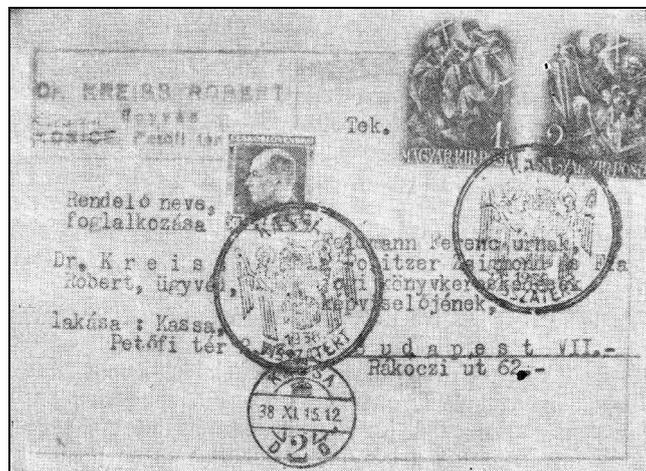


Fig. 3

Mail from the Felvidék arriving without franking or franked insufficiently in the first period was forwarded against simple franking. On the 15th of October a new order repeated that on sendings arriving with Czechoslovak stamps a supplementary fee should not be applied. It is remarkable that before the 15th of October on sendings arriving from the post office of Ipolyság the stamps were not cancelled but the cancellation was placed besides the stamp.

The forwarding of *parcels* was starting at the very early period between the homeland and the returned territories. The weight was limited to 5 kilograms, with no regard of the distance until the tariffs were fixed. The parcel tariffs were 30 fillér up to 1 kilogram and 40 fillér up to 5 kilograms. As the Czechoslovak stamps were not sold in the post offices, such stamps may not occur on parcel bills.

The advantage of the franking by Czechoslovakian stamps was terminated by the order of November 19th, 1938 (P.R.T. 1938. 128. 140/A 10. sz.). On sendings arriving after this date postage due stamps were applied (such a postcard can be seen in Fig. 4).

This unfairly neglected part of our postal history is the more interesting because the advantage of franking by Czechoslovak stamps was possible only for 5 to 13 days (except in the Ipolyság post office where it was allowed for more than a month). Such mail with adequate franking is really scarce. Sometimes mail may occur from bigger towns with special cancellations. The really scarce items are from smaller settlements cancelled by date can-

cellations or cancelled by provisional marks. On the forwarded letters we may generally find an arrival cancellation. On postcards this was not usual, consequently postcards with adequate franking may be regarded as original items which may be justified by the text on them.



Fig. 4

The following Czechoslovak stamps were allowed for use (Zumstein number and in bracket the Czechoslovak catalogue number):

248 (221), 249 (222), 250 (223), 251 (224), 252 (225), 300 (271), 302 (275), 303 (276), 304 (277), 305 (278), 306 (279), 307 (280), 308 (281), 309 (282), 310 (283), 311 (284), 314 (273), 324 (296), 325 (297), 331 (300), 332 (301), 333 (302), 334 (303), A 335 (A 304), 336 (305), 337 (306), 338 (307), 339 (308), 340 (309), 341 (310), 342 (311), 343 (312), 344 (313), 345 (314).

To investigate which stamp's use was more or less frequent is a task of the future.

The vertical middle gutter pairs of stamps Nr. 345 (314) were overprinted in *Budapest* by stamp dealers with the text „Kassa - We are Hungarians again. 1938. nov. 11. - Kassa”. To avoid the legal consequences the text was printed in between the stamps. The stamps were put on envelopes mixed with Hungarian stamps and got cancelled in the main post office of Kassa on the day of the marching in. These letters are to be regarded as machinations and have no philatelic value (see Fig. 5).



Fig. 5

Finally it should be remarked that during the entry into Erdély in 1940 and the re-annexation of the South (Délvidék) in 1941 the Royal Hungarian Mail has not given such a grant. Mail franked with Romanian or Yugoslav stamps always was charged by postage due. The items which may occur with postal cancellations were produced on order, i. e. by favour.