

# Austro-Hungarian Issue, 1867 – 150 years of Austro-Hungarian Compromise

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Coronation of Francis Joseph I and Elisabeth Amalie at Matthias Church, Buda, 8 June 1867.

*No other stamp issue is so closely linked with the history of Austria and Hungary as the 1867 issue.*

As a result of losing the wars of 1859 and 1866, the Austrian Empire was weakened in its foreign policy and domestic politics. As a result, in 1867 the monarchy was divided between Austria and Hungary. Hungary became a separate state with independent legislation and administration, including its postal administration. Therefore on 9 April 1867 an order was placed with the Austrian State Printing House to design a new stamp series. It was to comprise a neutral stamp design and a uniform value designation in order to be accepted in both halves of the empire. The result was the '1867 issue' with the head of the joint monarch Franz-Josef, who ruled in Austria as Emperor and in Hungary as King. The denomination 'kr' stood for both the currency units 'kreuzer' and 'krajczar'.

The '1867 issue' was only valid in Hungary for about four years until 31 July 1871, but in Austria for over seventeen years until 31 October 1884.

*This collection documents the use of the '1867 issue' (essays, proofs, inland mail, foreign mail, postal stationery, printed matter, money orders, etc.).*



# Austro-Hungarian Issue, 1867 – 150 years of Austro-Hungarian Compromise

No other stamp issue is so closely linked with the history of Austria and Hungary as the 1867 issue.

As a result of losing the wars of 1859 and 1866, the empire was weakened not only in its foreign policy but also in domestic politics.

In this situation Hungary increasingly pushed for a new relationship between Austria and Hungary, and thus for a degree of independence.

In order to maintain internal peace, Austria was ready to make major concessions.

These negotiations culminated in the so called „Settlement“ between Austria und Hungary.

On 17 February 1867, a “K. K. Dekret” (Imperial and Royal Decree) divided the monarchy between Austria and Hungary - the Austrian Empire and the Kingdom of Hungary. Hungary became a separate state with independent legislation and administration, including its postal administration.

Austria and Hungary established their own ministries. However, those responsible for the security of the new dual monarchy remained joint ministries; these being the Imperial and Royal Ministry of the Imperial House and the Foreign, Finance and War ministries.

Thus, the current stamps of the 1863-64 issue, with the eagle from the Austrian Imperial Coat of Arms, were no longer

suitable and Hungary vigorously urged for a new stamp issue.

As the separation of the postal service in the Hungarian half of the Empire was decided on 1 May 1867, on 9 April 1867 an order had already been given to the Austrian State Printing House to design a new stamp and newspaper stamp issue, and on 9 May 1867 three proofs were submitted. Hungary did not yet have a suitable stamp printing company, and so they agreed to the creation and printing of new stamps by the Austrian State Printing House.

Although there was no need also to produce new stamps in Austria, it was decided to introduce these stamps as well.

On 10 May the printing order went to the State Printing House. In Hungary, 1 June 1867 was the date of issue of the new stamp series with the values 2 to 15kr, as well as 3kr, 5kr, 10kr, 15kr and 25kr postal stationery envelopes.

On 1 September 1867 values of 25kr and, later, 50 kreuzer were added to the new series. Because large stocks of the ‘Eagle’ issue of 1863 first had to be used up, the new stamps did not reach post offices in Austria until the end of June.

The period of validity was very different in the two halves of the empire. It ended in Hungary after 4 years and 2 months on 31 July 1871.

In Austria, the issue was valid for 17 years and 4 months until 31.10.1884.

## The seven values of the stamp issue



1873,14. August, all seven values of issue 1867 as complete set franking, together 110 kr on front cover from the De Bernardy correspondence from VIENNA to LONDON as a letter from the 8<sup>th</sup> weight category, red chalk mark „64“ (cruiser) for eightfold further franco.

In my introduction I described the historical background to the creation of this issue and its significance for Austria and Hungary.

My collecting activities mainly refer to the Austrian Empire. Therefore, the use of this issue in Hungary, which differs only by cancellations from the Hungarian postal area, is neglected.



## The stamp design

The stamp design was deliberately kept neutral in order to be accepted in both halves of the empire. In the centre of the design is the head of the monarch, the Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary, surrounded by ornaments. The currency designation with the abbreviation “kr.” applied to both the Austrian kreuzer and the Hungarian krajczár.

There was disagreement regarding the design of the 50kr value, which had a slightly different design. It appeared neutral and harmless in the proofs, but in the final version the Austrian Imperial crown was over the head of the monarch.

In Hungary they were “not amused” and the 50kr stamp was initially boycotted, but eventually it was used at the three largest post offices in Hungary, Pest, Buda and Pozsony. From May 1870 this value was also used at other post offices, but almost exclusively for the money order service (by office staff) and was thus “hidden” from the public.



Master die proof without value



Final die proof for the 5kr



Final die proof for the 25kr



Vienna Rathaus



7 August; 2 kr + 10 kr + 15 kr + 50 kr on a registered letter from VIENNA via SUEZ to ADEN  
Four-colour franking

## The printing

Machine-made paper was used for printing, which until early 1874 was “thick and soft” and had a rough surface. The roller that pressed the paper on to the printing plate was covered with a textile fabric. As long as it was new and not soiled, the textile structure could also be seen in the stamp design (meshed medallion). Stamps printed on this paper are called “coarse print” stamps. Previously, the term “coarse beard” was used.



Coarse print

Fine print

From 1874 a new paper, which was thinner, smooth and hard, was used for printing the stamps, initially the 5kr stamp. The covering of the pressure roller was changed and no longer appeared in the stamp design. Over the years, all the values were printed in this way, according to demand. Stamps produced in this way are called “fine print” stamps, formerly “fine beard”.

The stocks of the 25 and 50 kreuzer stamps with coarse printing were so large that the production of these stamps in fine print was only done late in the printing. The first appearance of 25kr stamps in fine print is found around 1878, the 50kr stamps only from 1880.



1873, 18 August; 2 x 3 kr + 15 kr + 5 x 50 kr on a registered letter of the tenth weight step from VIENNA to PARIS, all the stamps on the front

## The usage of the highest values

When the 25kr and 50kr stamps were supplied to post office counters in Austria on 1 September 1867, these two values were used mainly for foreign frankings, to France until 1.1.1876 and to Great Britain until 1870. They can also be found used for frankings to America and other overseas states and colonies. In contrast they are rarely used for domestic frankings, the 50kr being extremely rare thus.

Only when, from 1 May 1870, the payment for money order fees was to be done exclusively in stamps, did the highest values come into wider use for this postal service. From this time, the vast majority of the two high values were used for the money order service.

With the introduction of the Berne Postal Treaty on 1 July 1875, the 25 and 50 kreuzer stamps were very rarely used on letters. The unified and much lower fees for international mail and the entry of more and more countries and colonies to the Universal Postal Union led to increasingly rare usage of the high values. Only in the case of heavier weight steps and for mail sent to countries that did not yet belong to the Universal Postal Union was franking occasionally done using the “fine print” high values.

On the other hand, for the Post Office’s money order service with high amounts being transferred, the “fine print” high values came into use, though not frequently.

On the basis of the “fine print” high values that exist today, both loose stamps and franked covers, it can be estimated that more than 90% of the usage was for the money order service. On the other hand, less than 10% of the usage was on letter mail, predominantly international mail and, to a lesser extent, domestic mail.

When the stamps were issued in 1867 there were about 2,000 post offices in Austria, while at the end of the period of validity in 1884 the number had grown to 4,200.



Graz, Castle Hill



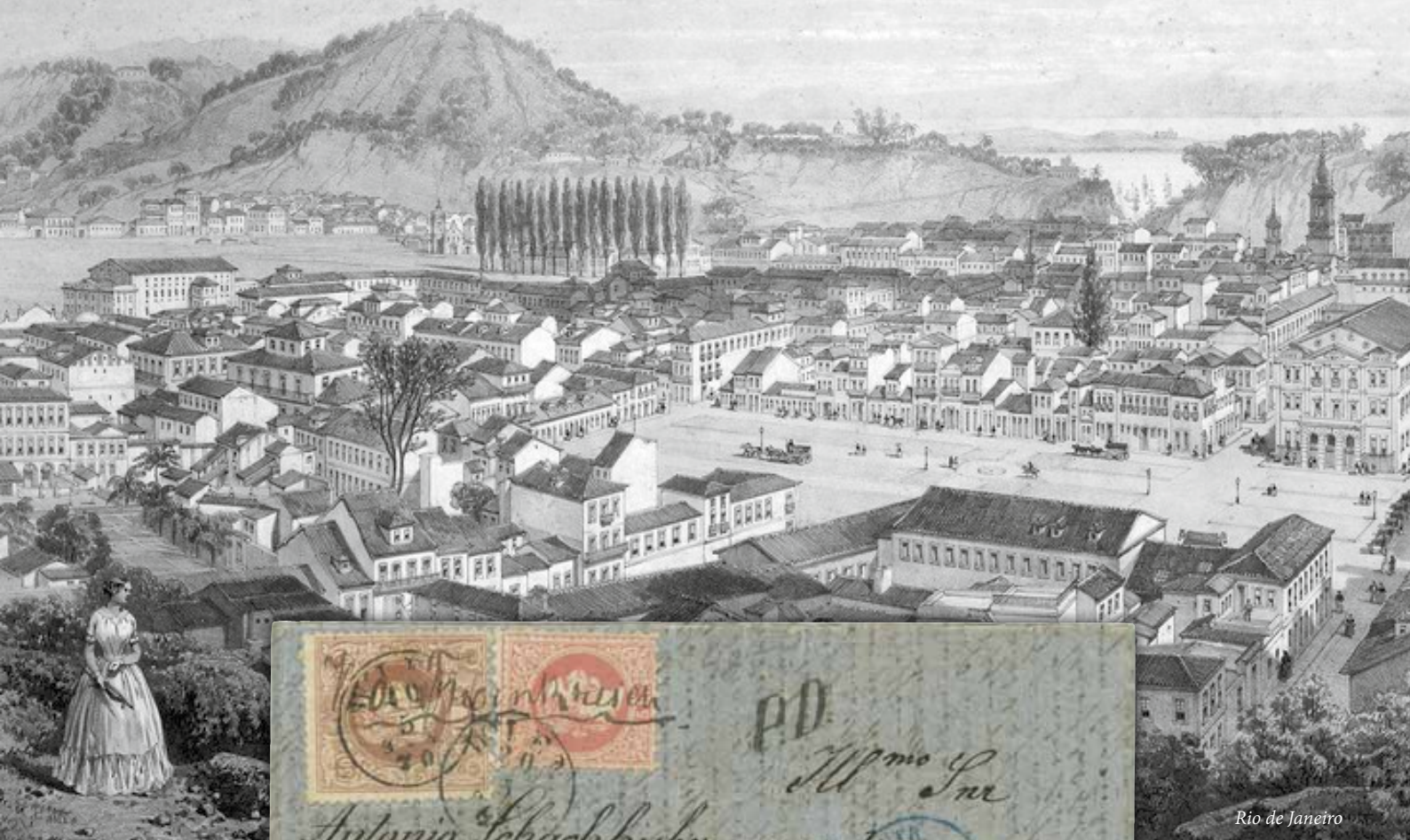
1883, 12 March; 2 kr postal stationery card + strip of three of the 2 kr from GRAZ to SAN JOSÉ DE COSTA in COSTA RICA, from the Otto Graf Mayerle correspondence

## Different rates on different postal routes



Vienna, Wiener Prater

1869, 4 June: 2 kr + 5 kr + 15 kr + 50 kr as the correct 72 kreuzer franking on a letter from VIENNA via PRUSSIA and ENGLAND to RIO DE JANEIRO  
Four-colour franking



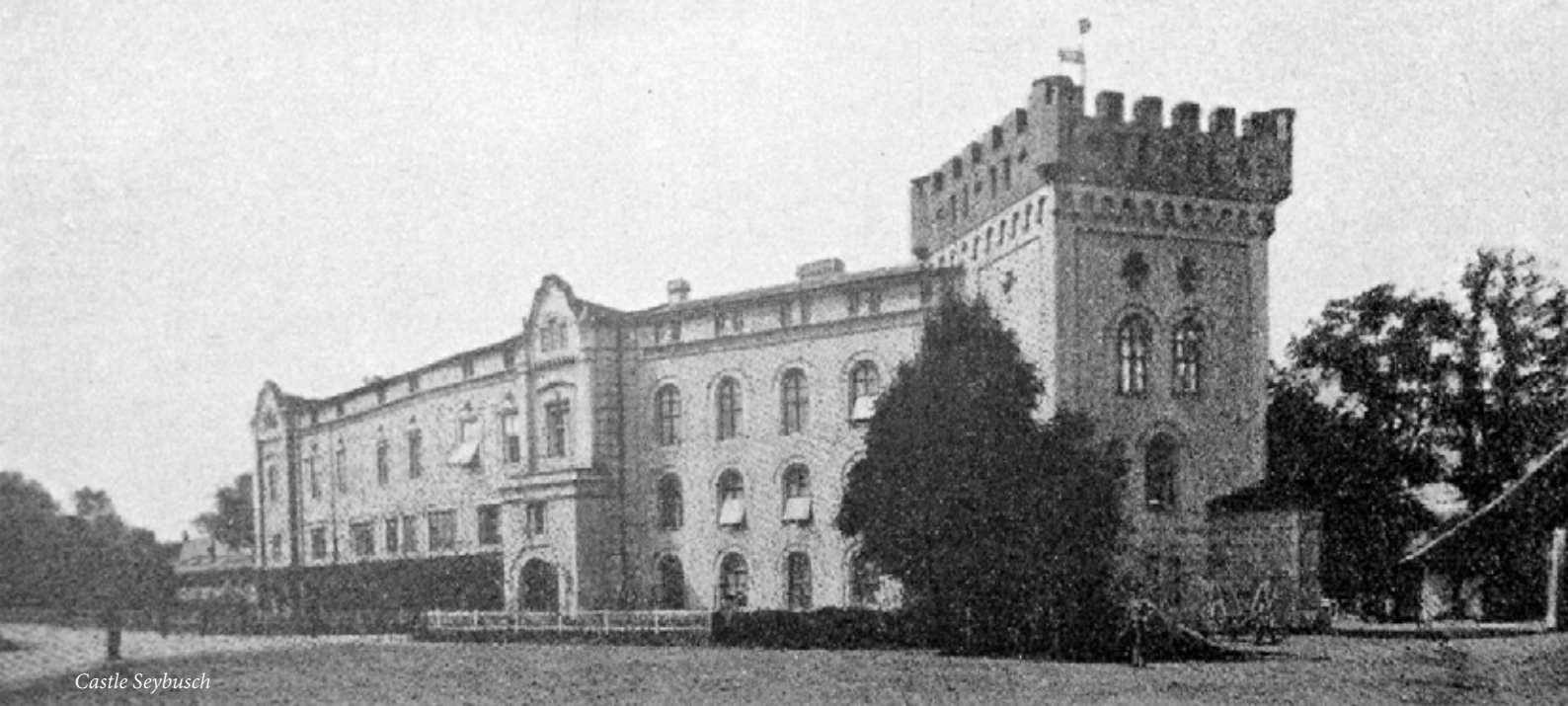
Rio de Janeiro



1870, 10 May: 5 kr + 50 kr as the correct 55 kreuzer franking  
from VIENNA via FRANCE to RIO DE JANEIRO  
The route "via Frankreich" handwritten above the stamps



1869, 26 December; 3 x 50 kr + 2 x 3 kr + 10 kr + 50 kr on the back, making up the 216 kreuzer rate for a letter of the third weight step (up to 3 loth) from VIENNA via ENGLAND to MEXICO



Castle Seybusch



1874, 8 October; 3 kr + 5 kr + 4 x 10 kr = 48 kr franking on a letter from SEYBUSCH via BRINDISI and ADEN to ZANZIBAR

## During the period of use of the 1867 stamp issue the following were introduced in Austria

- 1867 Introduction of cancellations indicating the year
- 1867 Introduction of money orders with the relevant forms
- 1868 Introduction of “thimble” postmarks
- 1868 The rural postal service was first introduced on a trial basis at Enns (Lower Austria) with its own rural postmen and rural mailbox postmarks, which were in use until 1873
- 1869 Inland postcards
- 1870 Postal stationery for inland money orders together with major tariff reform
- 1871 Introduction of bilingual postmarks
- 1871 Cash on delivery cards
- 1872 Newspaper wrappers
- 1873 Introduction of grams for weight
- 1873 Abolition of rural mail and rural mailbox postmarks
- 1875 Postal stationery for foreign money orders
- 1875 Pneumatic tube postal stationery. The pneumatic postal service came under the telegraph administration rather than the postal administration; these two administrations were only merged on 1.1.1884 to form the Post and Telegraph Administration
- 1880 Reply-paid postcards, also Universal Postal Union postcards
- 1882 Postal savings cards
- 1882 Money orders for payment of tax
- 1882 Postal mandates, postal mandate letters and money orders







*Ubrinder: Ferdinand Meyer, Koenigsplatz, Austerlitz, Barmen.*

*W F i s e b o l t s Registered.  
Wellborn*

RECOMMANDIT  
133  
RECOMMANDIT



*Sidney P. Cowen*

*care of the Cape of Good Hope Bank  
via England.*

Vom Auslande  
über Bahnpost 21  
Eingeschrieben.

*Kimberley.  
Diamonds-fields.  
South-Africa.*



1879, 12 May; a franking of 134 kr on a registered letter from VIENNA via England to KIMBERLEY