A Newsletter from Africa - #4
Eritrea and the Horn of Africa

Brain Dennis (#2581) in collaboration with Enrico Bertazzoli

The Horn of Africa currently comprises the independent countries of Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somaliland. However, the region has a typical history of British, Italian, and French colonization. It is not at first sight an area with much interest to the perfin collector. The African Section of the World Perfins Catalog published by the Perfins Club notes only two perfins. However, I became interested when I obtained one not on the list and then noted that the Perfins of Italy Catalog, published by the Perfins Catalog of the Netherlands, noted two other patterns different from those in the Perfins Club list. There are also cancellations from this region. Thanks to the information and advice from Mr. Enrico Bartazzoli, it is possible to collate information from the two catalogs and from his and my collections to gives a more comprehensive picture of the perfins and cancellations of the Horn of Africa.

Thus far we can list six documented commercial perfins from Eritrea, and the PAGATO cancellation which s well recorded as a "PAID" cancel on telegraph forms from Asmara, Eritrea. This pattern has an interesting history and is well written up in a recent issue (December 2004) of the Perfin Society Bulletin and earlier articles in the "OverPrinter." In addition, I have a date cancel from Ethiopia, from where I am not aware of any perfins. I also have a 3 mm punch hole cancel from the Somaliland Protectorates on a KEVII [Ed.: King Edward VII] stamp It seems to have some purple (fiscal?) smudging. Who knows, it may prove similar to the 'customs' cancellations from Zanzibar?

The perfins from this region are few and scarce, but do have interest and there are more than we previously recognized. There may yet be more, especially from Eritrea, as Italian investment there in the 1930s was substantial.

Please check your collections –from 1893 – 1930 Eritrea used Italian stamps overprinted either 'Eritrea' or 'Colonia Eritrea.' Beginning later in 1930 Eritrea began issuing its own stamps. The PAGOTA cancel is known from 1950 and 1951 during the British Administration period.

If you can add to, or comment on this list, please contact me at bdennius@mwen.co.za or 28 Pyracantha St., Heldervue Somerset West, 7130 South Africa.

P.S. "Missing Perfin? There was a "16.L" perfin used by the British Regiment, the 16th Lancers, in India in the late 1890's. This is well documented by Magnus Werner. However, this regiment later served in South Africa, in the Boer War, from 1900 to 1904.The Africa Catalogue notes this perfin was used on a Cape of Good Hope stamp but I have never seen it or an actual recorded example. Can anyone confirm they have it or have seen this interesting perfin? It could also potentially occur on Orange Free State and Transvaal stamps. Please contact me with any information (and if there are any duplicates for sale/swap?")

The Perfins of Eritrea.

Eritrea 1	Eritrea 2	Eritrea 3	Eritrea 4	Eritrea 5
A G	G A	B.N.	B.N./C.	B.R.
Eritrea 6	Eritrea - Telegram Cancel			
C I	PAGATO			
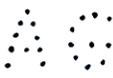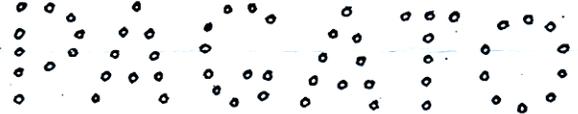
No		User.	Reference*.	Notes.
1	"A G"	Assicurazioni Generali	"A16" in A * (1933)	Round "G".
2	"A G"	- do - , Asmara.	D * Issue of 1932	Straight Back "G".
3	"B.N."	Banca Nazionale	"B45 " in A* issues of 1895-1899	Identical to B45 pattern used in Rome
4.	"B.N./C.	Banca Coloniale di Credito, Asmara.	"A1" in B: C* & D* Issues of 1903- 1935	
5.	"B.R."	Banco di Roma, Asmara	Info from C*. 1938	Identical to B69 in A*
6.	"CI"	Credito Italiano?	B*	Identical to CI 66Ab in A*. Used in Milan by this bank
7.	"PAGATO"	Public Telegraph Service, Asmara.	E and D* 1951 – 1952	Fiscal use to cancel pre-paid telegrams.

* Reference
   A. Perfins of Italy. Perfin Club Nederland
   B. World Perfins Catalogue, African Section. Perfins Club
   C. Collection. Mr Enrico Bertazzoli.
   D. Collection. Brian Dennis
   E. Articles in Perfin Society Bulletin (Dec 2004) and from the OverPrinter of
       Feb 1982, Jan 1994 and Jan 1995.

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