

11.1 POSTAL RATES - OCCUPIED TERRITORIES - 1919-21

11.1.1 Introduction

The occupation of former Hungarian territory in the aftermath of WWI, despite the requirements of the Entente nations that until treaties had been signed and put into place, led to local deviations from the contemporary Hungarian rates for various reasons, but particularly because:

1. local postal directorates lost communication and hence supplies from the head offices in Budapest, and thus had to become self-reliant and had to raise charges to maintain services;
2. local occupying administrations started to impose their own currencies, devaluing the Hungarian *Korona*;
3. different inflationary factors occurred in different areas.

A consequence is that formal records are missing or non-existent, and thus the local postal rates have often had to be determined from existing mail and the charges made. Unfortunately, the picture can be badly skewed by philatelically contrived mail with stamps used that are more than the actual charge, so care is needed. The following tables of charges have been published after such studies over many years, and need to be treated with caution, but provide an indicator for the collector.

11.1.2 Baranya

The Serbian occupied area of Baranya is perhaps the best known area in this category. It was occupied from October 1918 until the coming into force of the Treaty of Trianon on 20.08.1921, at which point postal rates reverted immediately the extant Hungarian rates. Andor Hodobay's postal stationery catalogue gives the following table of data:

Table 1: Serbian occupation of Baranya (*costs in fillér*)

Date	20 g inland letter		Postcard inland	Foreign		Registration fee	Express fee	
	Local	Distance		Letter, 20g	Postcard		Baranya	Elsewhere
15.06.1918	15	20	10	25	10*	25	60	
05.05.1919	15	20	10	25	15	45	120	
01.10.1919	-	50	30	50	30	100	200	1,000
01.04.1920	60	60	40	100	40	100	120	
01.05.1920	-	100?	60	100	40	100	120	
01.02.1921	-	100?	60	250?	100	250	250	
01.07.1921								
20.08.1921	100	100	60	250	100	250	300	

Note: The first line of this table represents the war-time postal rates up to the point of occupation in late October 1918. The last line represents the general Hungarian rate immediately after the coming into force of the Treaty of Trianon.

* Hodobay states 15 *fillér*, but this does not accord with the absence of war tax on postcards.

For more detail on the financial background to the situation in Baranya the reader is referred to an article by Ettre in *Stamps of Hungary*, No. 124, March 1996.

11.1.2 Bánát and Bácska

From an article by Robert Lauer in *Stamps of Hungary* no. 243, December 2025, Hungarian postal tariffs continued to be used throughout the area occupied by the Serbian military. Baja, being located in Bács-Bodrog county, was part of the Temesvár Postal Directorate, which was responsible for the four counties that made up the Bánát and Bácska. The severing of any relationship with the General Postal Directorate in Budapest also meant that the Temesvár Postal Directorate was on its own from a financial perspective – its own revenue was the only source of funds for paying its employees. With its coffers empty, the Temesvár Postal Directorate decided to increase the postal tariffs for the four counties under its administration effective from 1 July 1919. Table 2 sets out these ‘Temesvár’ postal rates.

Table 2: The Temesvár Postal Directorate tariffs from 1 July 1919

	Inland Rates	Foreign Rates
Postcards	30 <i>f</i>	30 <i>f</i>
Letters/PSLC	50 <i>f</i>	75 <i>f</i>
+ per additional 20 gr	20 <i>f</i>	25 <i>f</i> *
Printed Matter	10 <i>f</i>	15 <i>f</i>
Registration	1 <i>K</i>	75 <i>f</i>
Express	2 <i>K</i>	1 <i>K</i>

* The 25 *fillér* rate for each additional 20 grams for foreign letters has been inferred from an actual registered mailing.

By the autumn of 1919, stocks of Hungarian stamps were running extremely low and in November/December 1919, the SHS Kingdom postal authorities started to supply post offices in the Serbian occupied Bánát and the Bácska with postage stamps from the Chainbreaker series that was originally issued for Slovenia. While there are no definitive sources with respect to when the Temesvár Postal Directorate tariffs were replaced by those of the SHS Kingdom, it would appear that this occurred on 15.03.1919 [references 1 to 5]. Tables 3 and 4 set out the SHS Kingdom postal tariffs that replaced those of Temesvár Postal Directorate.

Table 3: The SHS Kingdom inland postal tariffs, 1919-1922

	<i>fillér</i> = <i>vinar</i> = $\frac{1}{4}$ <i>para</i>		<i>para</i> /Dinar
	1 July 1919 – 15 May 1920	16 May 1920 – 30 April 1921	1 May 1921 – 24 September 1922
Postcards	15 <i>f</i>	15 <i>p</i>	25 <i>p</i>
Letters/PSLC	30 <i>f</i>	25 <i>p</i>	50 <i>p</i>
+ per additional 20 gr	30 <i>f</i>	15 <i>p</i>	25 <i>p</i>
Printed Matter	10 <i>f</i>	5 <i>p</i>	10 <i>p</i>
Registration	60 <i>f</i>	20 <i>p</i>	1 <i>D</i>
Express	1 <i>K</i>	60 <i>p</i>	1 <i>D</i>

Table 4: The SHS Kingdom foreign postal tariffs, 1919-1922

	<i>fillér = vinar = ¼ para</i>		<i>para/Dinar</i>
	30 August 1919 – 31 May 1920	1 June 1920 – 30 March 1921	1 April 1921 – 24 September 1922
Postcards	30 <i>f</i>	20 <i>p</i>	50 <i>p</i>
Letters/PSLC	75 <i>f</i>	50 <i>p</i>	1 <i>D</i>
+ per additional 20 gr	45 <i>f</i>	30 <i>p</i>	50 <i>p</i>
Printed Matter	15 <i>f</i>	10 <i>p</i>	20 <i>p</i>
Registration	75 <i>f</i>	50 <i>p</i>	1 <i>D</i>
Express	?	60 <i>p</i>	2 <i>D</i>

On 16.05.1920, new SHS Kingdom inland postal rates went into effect in the Serbian occupied Bánát and Bácska, and on 01.06.1920 new SHS Kingdom foreign postal rates came into force. These new postal rates were denominated in Serbian *Dinar/para* and were converted into the currencies of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire at a rate of 1 *Dinar* = 4 *Korona*. Inland rates applied to mail to: Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria until 31.01.1921; to Czechoslovakia until 01.06.1920; and to Romania until 01.08.1919.

- [1] Lauer, R., 'The postal history of Baja in southern Hungary 1918-21', *Jugopošta*, December 2022, no.144.
- [2] Lauer, R., 'The use of Hungarian stamps, postal stationery and postal rates in the Banat and Bačka, 1919 – 1921', *Jugopošta*, December 2024 no.152.
- [3] Lauer, R., 'The Postal History of Baja in South Hungary, 1918-21', *The News of Hungarian Philately*, July-September 2022, vol.53, no.3.
- [4] Lauer, R., 'The Postal History of the Bánát and Bácska (South Hungary), 1918-1920', *The News of Hungarian Philately*, January-March 2024, vol.55, no.1.
- [5] Lauer, R., 'The Postal History of the Bánát and Bácska (South Hungary), 1918-1920: an Addendum', *The News of Hungarian Philately*, January-March 2025, vol.56, no.1.

11.1.3 Romanian occupation of apportioned Banat

The Banat had been occupied by Serbia since November 1918, but French forces managed the partition of the region between the Serbia and Romania in July 1919. Serbian forces evacuated the principal city of Temesvár on 26.07.1919, and a Romanian administration was set up on 28.07.1919 with Romanian sovereignty confirmed by the Treaty of Trianon on 04.06.1920.

It is likely that until the Romanian occupation, the postal rates were as shown as in Table 2, and probably stayed the same until integrated into Romania in 1920. The overprinted stamps issued in August 1919 had values equivalent to those given in Table 2.

11.1.4 Romanian occupied Transylvania

Immediately upon occupation in late 1918 there was evidence of a continuation of Hungarian postal rates. When Hungarian stamps were gathered up and overprinted in Cluj/Kolozsvár and Oradea/Nagyvárad from August 1919, there was just a conversion from *filler* and *Korona* to *bani* and *Lei*, suggesting no significance in value. The only exception was the revaluing of the 20 *f* postal stationery letter card to 15 *bani*. This appears to correlate with the Romania postal rate for letters not just locally, but also for everywhere internally until 30.06.1920, after which they increased significantly. Table 5 gives a summary of the main postal rates taken from Marinescu's rate book [1].

Table 5: Principal internal postal rates in Romania from 1918 [1]

	Postal rate from, in <i>Lei</i>					
	01.06.1918	01.07.1920	01.08.1920	01.04.1922	01.04.1922	01.01.1926
Local letter, 20g	0.15	0.50	0.30	0.50	1.00	3.00
Each addit'l 20g	0.15		0.25	0.50	0.50	1.00
Distance letter, 20 g	0.15	0.50	0.30	0.50	1.00	3.00
Each addit'l 20g	0.15		0.25	0.50	0.50	1.00
Postcard	0.10	0.25	0.20	0.50	0.50	1.00
Printed matter, 50 g	0.05*	0.10	0.10	0.50	0.25	0.50
Each addit'l 50 g	0.05*	0.10	0.10	0.50	0.25	0.50
Newspaper	0.01	-	0.03	0.05	0.05	0.10
Each addit'l 50 g	0.01	-	0.03	0.05	0.05	0.10
Business papers, 250 g	0.05**	-	0.50 a	1.00 b	1.00 b	3.00
Each addit'l 50 g	0.05*	-	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.50
Samples, 100 g	0.10**	0.50	0.50	1.00	1.00	2.00
Each addit'l 50 g	0.05*	-	0.10	0.50	0.50	0.50
Printed matter for the blind, each 500 g	-	-	-	0.25	0.25	0.50 c
Registration	0.25	-	1.00	3.00	3.00	6.00
Acknowledgement of receipt	0.25	-	1.00	3.00	3.00	6.00

*: 100 g; **: 200 g; a: 100 g; b: 150 g; c: 1000 g

Table 6: Principal external postal rates of Romania from 01.01.1921 [2]

	Postal rate from, in <i>Lei</i>				
	01.01.1921	01.01.1922	20.02.1922	15.05.1923	01.09.1924
Letter, 20g	2.00	3.00	3.00	6.00	10.00
Each addit'l 20g	1.20	1.50	1.50	3.00	5.00
Postcard	1.00	1.80	2.00	4.00	6.00
Printed matter, 50 g	0.40	0.60	0.60	1.00	2.00
Each addit'l 50 g	0.40	0.60	0.60	1.00	2.00
Printed matter for the blind, each 500g	-	0.30*	0.30	0.50	1.00
Newspapers, each 50 g	0.10	0.60	0.60	1.00	2.00

* Steps of 50 g, later raised by UPU regulations to 500 g

[1] Marinescu, C., *Tarifele, Taxele și Gratuițiile Poștale în România 1841-2008* Vol.1, Table 59, p129, self-published.