

1954

THE MORITZ VON SCHWIND ISSUE, 21 JANUARY 1954.



The first stamp of 1954 was one of the series of portrait commemorative issues which has become such a feature of modern Austrian philately. This one was issued on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the birth of the famous artist Moritz Ludwig von Schwind (1804-1871); an artist who had already been portrayed on a stamp in 1932. There is an obvious similarity between the 24gr+24gr purple stamp designed by R. Junk and engraved by F. Lorber for issue on 21 November 1932, and this 1S50g slate-lilac stamp which was both designed and engraved by F. Lorber for issue on 21 January 1954. It is also an astonishing example of continuity in the person of Professor Ferdinand Lorber over a period of 22 years spanning a war!

The 1954 stamp was printed by recess in an impression of 900,000 stamps and comb-perforated 14¼:13¾. There is a constant plate error on the 33rd stamp of each sheet; a coloured spot to the left of the ear. It is of interest to note that whilst the 1932 stamp had a plain background to the head, the background to the 1954 stamp depicts a group of figures from the painting "Dance of the Elves" in the Munich Schack gallery

THE KARL VON ROKITANSKY ISSUE, 19 FEBRUARY 1954.

Either by design or by coincidence, the second stamp issued in 1954 was also a portrait commemorative stamp which had a parallel during the First Austrian Republic. The 150th anniversary of the birth of the famous surgeon, Karl Freiherr von Rokitansky (born on 19 February 1804 in Königgrätz in Bohemia, died on 23 July 1878 in Vienna) was commemorated by the appearance of a 1S50g deep reddish violet stamp on 19 February 1954. The previous occasion on which Karl von Rokitansky had been portrayed upon an Austrian stamp was on 5 December 1937 when the 12gr+12gr blackish brown value of the "Austrian Doctors" set depicted him.



The 1954 stamp was designed by Professor Vinzenz Gordon, engraved by Professor Ferdinand Lorber and recess printed by the Austrian State Printing Works in an impression of 900,000 stamps, comb perforated 14¼:13½. There is a recognised plate error with the 36th stamp on the plate where the beard on the left cheek is joined to the collar.

THE AVALANCHE FUND ISSUE, 19 FEBRUARY 1954.



A specially overprinted and surcharged stamp was issued on 19 February 1954 to raise money for the relief of the victims of contemporary avalanche disasters. The basic stamp was the 2 schilling value of the 1945-47 Landscapes Set with the colour changed from blue grey to slate blue.

This particular stamp depicts St. Christoph am Arlberg located near the scene of the disasters which were very heavy during that winter. More than a hundred people died in the avalanche in Schruns and in Blons in the Vorarlberg. At both places the avalanche struck with terrible suddenness. Its speed was put at sixty miles an hour and the snow cleaved through the timber houses like an express train. The cause of the avalanches was a freak weather sequence. First, snow high in the Alps was melted by the sun, and then the slopes were given a covering of ice by the return of cold weather. New snow piled up on this ice - and thundered down to the villages, sweeping everything in its path.

In addition to imposing the letters and numerals, the original numerals of values were removed and replaced by rosettes. The stamp was printed as previously, comb perforated 14¼:13¾ and issued in an impression of 3 million. There are several recognised plate errors, all being damage to the characters in the overprint.

THE HEALTH SERVICE FUND SET, 13 MARCH 1954.

This set was issued on 13 March 1954 to raise funds, through its surcharge, for social welfare work. The designs, by Franz Mynni, were selected to cover most of the usual aspects of any health service. The whole set was printed in recess by the Austrian State Printing Works and comb perforated 14¼:13¾.



30gr+10gr deep reddish violet. A teenaged youth lies in bed, stripped and exposed to the sun-ray lamp. Engraved by Walter Hörwarter; 680,000 printed.

70gr+15gr deep brown. A pathologist in a white laboratory coat, seated at a bench looking down a microscope. Engraved by Friedrich Teubel; 680,000 printed.

1S+25gr deep blue. Mother-care; exemplified by a young mother with a baby on her knee and a kneeling child. Engraved by Friedrich Teubel; 680,000 printed.



45gr+35gr deep bluish green. A modern operating room is shown with a nurse in the background, operating table and lamps. Engraved by Friedrich Teubel; 650,000 printed.

50gr+35gr brown-carmin. A naked baby being weighed on a scale, to exemplify post natal care. Engraved by Walter Hörwarter; 580,000 printed.

2S40gr+60gr brown-purple. A red cross in the top left corner stresses that this is a Red Cross nurse who is making out her report against the background of a waiting ambulance. Engraved by Walter Hörwarter; 580,000 printed.

THE ESPERANTO STAMP, 5 JUNE 1954.



The international language known as Esperanto was invented by Dr Ludwig Lazarus Zamenhof (1859-1917) who published it in 1887 under the pseudonym "Linguo Internacia de la Doktoro Esperanto" (International Language by Dr Hopeful). Phonetically spelt, Esperanto has about 2,500 word-roots with 30 word-forming prefixes and suffixes, logically applied. It found its first adherents in Czarist Russia and thence spread to the Scandinavian countries and to Central Europe. In 1904, Dr Zamenhof attended the initial meeting of Austrian Esperantists in Vienna and this led to the foundation of the first Association of

German speaking Esperantists in Austria. It was thus appropriate that the Austrian Post office should issue a special 1S emerald and sepia stamp on 5 June 1954 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Esperanto Movement in Austria. The stamp is inscribed on three sides of the margin: "50 JAROJ / ESPERANTO MOVADO / EN

AUSTRIO". This stamp, depicting the international Esperanto symbol, the green star, set entwined in a wreath with two types of leaves, was designed by Professor Ernst Schrom, engraved by Georg Wimmer and printed by recess (frame) and typography (star) by the Austrian State Printing Works. 2 million stamps were printed, perforated 13½:14¼.

THE AUER VON WELSBACH ISSUE, 4 AUGUST 1954.



For the third time in 1954, a portrait stamp was issued on 4 August 1954 which depicted someone already so honoured during the First Austrian Republic (in the 1936 Austrian Inventors set). This time the stamp appeared to mark the 25th anniversary of the death of the famous Austrian inventor; Dr Carl Auer Ritter von Welsbach (1858-1929). This 1S deep violet-blue stamp was designed by Professor Vinzenz Gordon, engraved by Professor Ferdinand Lorber and recess printed in an impression of 900,000 pieces (comb perforated 14¼:13½). A plate error occurs on the 9th stamp of each sheet where the C in "WELSBACH" is cut through in colour.

THE ROTTMAYR VON ROSENBRUNN ISSUE, 4 AUGUST 1954.

This 1S deep bluish-green portrait was issued on 4 August 1954 to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the birth of Johann Michael Rottmayr von Rosenbrunn (1654-1730); a famous court painter to Leopold I, Joseph I and Charles VI. The stamp was designed by Professor Vinzenz Gordon, engraved by Professor Ferdinand Lorber and recess printed by the Austrian State Printing Works in an impression of 900,000 pieces; comb perforated 14¼:13½.



Johann Michael Rottmayr was born on 11th December at Laufen near Salzburg. The boy served in the choir of the Abbey of Michelbeuern and then, in 1675, he entered the private academy of Carlo Lotto in Venice where he stayed for 13 years. The first appointment as a court painter came in 1689 to the Archbishop of Salzburg; then in 1696 he went to Vienna where his paintings of historical subjects in the style of the German school brought him to the attention of Leopold I who made him his court painter. On 21st July 1704 he was given the title "von Rosenbrunn" whilst later Charles VI made him his personal painter. His chief works are to be found in the Residence at Salzburg, in the castle of Frain in Moravia, in Schönbrunn, at Melk, in the Liechtenstein Palace, in the Karlskirche, and in the Klosterburg. He died in Vienna on 25th October 1730.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH MUSIC ISSUE, 2 OCTOBER 1954.



This 1S deep brown stamp was issued on 2 October 1954 to honour the Second International Congress of Catholic Church Music which took place in Vienna from 2 to 10 October 1954. The stamp depicts the great organ-known as the Bruckner Organ of the Monastery of St. Florian in Upper Austria. In front of the organ may be seen a small winged angel blowing a trumpet. This stamp was designed by Alfred Chmielowski, engraved by Professor Hans Ranzoni the Younger and printed in recess by the State Printing Works in an impression of 2 million pieces; comb perforated 14¼:13½. A special cancellation was in use for the period of the congress, showing in a large circle the profile of the head of Pope St. Pius X who was mainly responsible for the restoration of the correct music to the liturgy.

THE CHRISTMAS ISSUE, 30 NOVEMBER 1954.



With a typical lack of inventiveness, the Austrian Post Office re-issued the Christmas 1953 stamp on 30 November 1954, merely changing the colour from deep myrtle-green to blue. The impression of two million stamps was also the same as with the previous stamp; perf 14¼:13¾. However, this 1954 issue has constant plate errors: on the 23rd stamp of each sheet there is a coloured spot in the U of REPUBLIK; and on the 33rd stamp the R of REPUBLIK has a coloured spot at bottom right.

THE STAMP DAY ISSUE, 4 DECEMBER 1954.

For the stamp day issue of 4 December 1954, the Austrian Post Office selected the rather unusual design of the “Ulmer Ordinari” passing along the Danube in front of the Abbey of Melk. This somewhat primitive vessel, propelled partly by oars, first started to provide a regular (thus “ordinary”) service along the Danube between Regensburg in Bavaria and Vienna on 24 March 1696. Starting from Ulm in Württemberg it carried both passengers and mail, thus providing the first regular mail service on the river. Also called the “Ulmer Schachtel” (a box or case), this large river barge provided its service as the principal means of conveyance of mail, passengers and freight, from the 13th to the beginning of the 19th centuries.



This 1S+25gr deep grey-green was designed by Professor Ernst Schrom, engraved by Georg Wimmer and recess printed by the Austrian State Printing Works in an impression of 470,000 pieces, comb perforated 13½:14¼. The special postmark (Würth 1954 No. 48) which was used for the “Day of the Postage Stamp” from 4 to 6 December 1954 in Vienna, also depicted the “Ulmer Ordinari” passing before the Abbey of Melk, but in a somewhat different arrangement. The designs of both stamp and postmark were based upon views in contemporary prints.

THE STATE PRINTING WORKS ISSUE, 18 DECEMBER 1954



The last stamp of 1954 was issued on 18 December 1954 to celebrate both the 150th anniversary of the existence of the Austrian State Printing Works and the 250th anniversary of the first publication of the “Wiener Zeitung”. A complicated design showing the Arms of the Republic (Eagle with red-white-red barred shield) is superimposed on a background of the State Printing Works' former exhibition rooms in Vienna. Shown symmetrically beneath the Arms are reproductions of the front page of the “Wienerisches Diarium” ([its first issue: 1](#)) and the modern “Wiener Zeitung” ([latest year-on-line: 2](#)). The latter newspaper, which sprang from the former, claims to be the oldest regular publication in the world, being only interrupted by the Nazi Anschluss and re-established after the end of the war in mid-1945. It is a general newspaper, owned by the Republic of Austria and appears seven days a week ([3](#)), carrying a range of cultural supplements. [*Editor's Note: this was true in 1980, when the above notes were written; by mid-2023 it may not be the case any longer.*]

(1) <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=wrz&datum=17030808&seite=1&zoom=33>

(2) <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=wrz&datum=19521218&seite=1&zoom=33>

(3) <https://www.wienerzeitung.at>

The 1S brown-black and pale vermilion stamp was designed by Alfred Chmielowski; engraved by Rudolf Toth and printed mainly in recess with the red of the frame and shield by typography; comb perforated 13½:14¼. The impression consisted of 2 million stamps. The Austrian State Printing Works later used this design, after

removing the value (1S) and changing the appearance of the eagle slightly, as an advertising mini-sheet at the Liechtenstein Postage Stamp Exhibition LIBA 1972.

