



## Early Associations with Meccano

In 1912 Märklin was the distributor for Meccano on the European continent, in France e.g. through their subsidiary "Maerklin Freres et Cie". Between 1911-1913 Märklin made 60 000 clockwork - motors for Meccano indicating Hornby and Märklin had a good relationship. Hornby tried to work together with Märklin in middle and eastern Europe. In Berlin in 1910 Hornby founded a distribution-company called "Meccano-Gesellschaft m.b.H." (= Meccano private limited company.). In Göppingen Märklin made parts for the Meccano sets. These sets had Meccano and Märklin trademarks (Meccano-Märklin-Metallbaukasten). At the start of the war in 1914 all rights and trademarks of foreign companies fell to the German Reich. On the 15th of August 1915 Märklin acquired the trademarks and rights of Meccano in Germany. During the war Märklin only sold stock parts, because they produced war material in Göppingen.

## After the First World War

From 1919, Märklin produced their own metal construction sets. It was like Meccano, but made in Göppingen and sold as "Märklin Metallbaukasten" to distinguish from the old name of Märklin-Meccano. The tin parts were black, the gears, nuts and bolts were made of brass, and the wheels were made of brass plated tin. The boxes were made of black cardboard with a green-yellow-black label. For a short time the boxes were green inside, like Meccano, but changed to dark red, which they remained up to 1940 (the end of the black series). The sets were numbered #0 through to #6. The two biggest sets #5 & #6 were supplied in cardboard or in a wooden box with a lock and key. The "Trademark" was a big crane with a boy at the side. The letters on the label and the manual were the same as the Meccano letters. Initially the models in the manuals were similar to the prewar models of Märklin-Meccano, but the number of models increased. You could get clockwork motors, 2 speed, 2 forward and reverse with 3 output axles. Electric motors were initially 220V AC, but since 1925 have been 20V AC. You could buy 2 strong steam engines, which could operate in both horizontal or vertical positions. They had supplement sets in the program for transport plants, bridges and clocks. The number of spare parts that could be purchased separately increased from about 75 parts in the beginning, to more than 260 parts in 1934, plus 20 for electrical sets and more than 100 coloured parts. The prices ranged from 2 Pfennig to 1.80 ReichsMark. For comparison: My father was a young teacher, earned 60 RM a month, the smallest Mercedes-Benz was about 6000RM. From 1930 and later Märklin and Meccano diverged because of the different parts they developed. For the first time in 1929 Märklin produced coloured parts: blue (wheels, round sheets), red (rectangular sheets, string-wheels), green (strips, angle girders) and black (small tin) parts and small parts in brass. Until 1940 Märklin produced both black and coloured parts. After the war you could only get coloured parts in the same colour scheme. The years 1930 to 1940 were the pinnacle for Märklin Metallbaukasten, 18 basic and 16 supplement sets. The number of parts in the sets increased. In 1930 about 700 parts or more, were in the biggest set #6. In 1932 Elex started. Elex was a set with parts for electrical and magnetic experiments. The sets were compatible with the construction sets. They were in the catalogue till 1962, only the electrical motor #1072 was sold still in the 1970's. In 1933 Marbi started. Marbi was low-priced and not coloured, but the same specifications: 1/2" as Märklin/Meccano. Marbi was sold till the beginning of the war. In 1939 Märklin produced "Märklin Minex". Like the step in the model-railways from scale 0 to scale HO (Half O) they produced a half scale construction kit. The distance between the holes in a strip was 1/4", but the diameter of the hole was the same as Meccano/Märklin. So you could combine both systems. The parts were mostly made of aluminum, some wheels were made of a cheap plastic(?). New were sheet metal parts in aluminium and rubber tires. Minex production stopped during the war (1940).

## After the Second World War

After the war Minex was not produced. Only the sheet metal parts made of aluminum and coloured blue and the rubber tires were adopted by the standard construction kit. Toy production stopped until 1947 when Märklin started with a new construction kit program. The basic sets now had new numbers (#99 - #105). New also were the rubber tires and the blue facing sheet metal parts. The volume of the boxes grew bigger and the number of part decreased. For larger part numbers Märklin counted the fixing clamps in the part list. Elex was still in the program. The boxes were dark green on the outside, and light green-yellow on the inside.