

# THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST



Official Monthly Journal of the (USPS 808300) Society for Czechoslovak Philately, Inc.

Silver Award Interphil '76 — Silver Award Capex '78 — Silver-Bronze Praga '78

A.P.S. Unit 18

S.P.A. Branch 284

Vol. XLV

September 1983

No. 7, Whole No. 432

## POSTAL STATIONERY ERROR FOUND

By Wolfgang Fritzsche

Czechoslovakia's 1983 postal stationery emission program started with a real bang. On January 20, 1983 a 6 Kčs envelope for airmail was issued to commemorate the 18th Carrier pigeon olympiad in Prague. But after 2 hours sales and after 400 envelopes had been sold, the sale was halted. A spelling error was discovered, but too late. The second edition with the correct spelling ČESKOSLOVENSKO appeared on January 27, 1983.



Gerhard Zimmer, Germany's dean of postal stationery collectors, wrote that he had circulated his first edition envelope amongst the members present at the last meeting of the "Berliner Ganssachen Sammler Verein," and although he had mentioned that an error exists, not one of the collectors of Czechoslovak stationery and none of the others were able to find anything wrong. It proves that our eyes are fixed on whole words when reading, and in cases of common words, "spelling" is not in one's mind. This may



To Mr. Vladimír Bubák  
22 Murray Hill Ct.,  
Kitchener, Ont.  
C a n a d a N2E 1N9

explain why the Czech printers and checkers did not discover this error during the printing process.

It is also reported that the Czech postal authorities have prohibited the reporting of the "misprint." Illustrations of both editions of the envelopes in question were furnished to the SPECIALIST by Vladimír Bubák — the entire normal envelope is shown and an enlargement of the spelling error "ČESKOSKOVENSKO."

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*Changes of address to the editorial office.*

## ELECTION OF SOCIETY DIRECTORS

The following members of the Society for Czechoslovak Philately have been nominated as candidates for the office of Director of the Society to serve a four (4) year term beginning January 1, 1984. All members are requested to vote for five (5) candidates. Those elected will form half of the Board of Directors, half being elected every two years.

You may use this page as your ballot if you choose, or simply write the names of the five candidates for whom you are voting on a sheet of paper to make your own ballot. Please write your membership number and signature at the bottom of the page in either case, and send it to Mr. Fred Deutsch, 9512 Meadow Grove, Burke, VA 22015, who has been designated as the official counter of ballots, so that it will be received not later than October 30, 1983. Results will be published in the December issue of the SPECIALIST.

**YOUR VOTE IS IMPORTANT TO THE FUTURE OF OUR SOCIETY!**

### CANDIDATES

857 Thomas M. Austin of San Jose, Costa Rica

Hradčany specialist and frequent exhibitor in the U.S. and abroad, winner of numerous awards. Attends most of Annual Convention meetings.

26 Wolfgang Fritzsche of Canandaiga, New York

Former Society Director and the only Circuit Manager the Society has had. Author of the Czechoslovakia section of the Higgins and Gage Postal Stationery Catalogue and frequent contributor to the SPECIALIST.

468 Joseph Janecka of Riverside, Illinois

Former President of the Society, Sokol and Music Sheet Specialist and award-winning exhibitor. Current President of Chicagoland First Czechoslovak Philatelic Club in America.

543 George Koplowitz of Brooklyn, New York

Former Society Director, prominent collector of Czechoslovakia and Scandinavia. Attends most Society conventions and exhibitions.

1111 Richard M. Major of Arlington, Virginia

Former Vice President and current Editor of the SPECIALIST. Prominent collector and lecturer on Military Mail and award-winning exhibitor.

1140 Edward J. Sabol of Woodbury, New Jersey

Former Society Secretary and Director. Prominent collector of a broad variety of themes and award-winning exhibitor. Philatelic author and active recruiter of new members.

975 Henry J. Samek of Paterson, New Jersey

Former Secretary-Treasurer, Director and Youth Membership Chairman. General collector of Czechoslovakia and organizer of the New Jersey Chapter of the Society.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Membership No. \_\_\_\_\_

**WENCESLAUS HOLLAR BOHEMUS**  
**— VÁCLAV HOLLAR —**  
**1607–1677**

By Gerald M. van Zanten

A brief outline of the life of Václav Hollar and the stamps issued by Czechoslovakia depicting some of his works.

To mark the 300th anniversary of his death in 1977, a number of exhibitions were staged and among publications, the book by Vladimír Denkstein took an honorable place.

An English translation of this excellent work appeared two years later, the book contains over a hundred of Hollar's drawings, all carefully reproduced.

Václav Hollar was born in Soukenická street, Prague's New Town, son of Jan Hollar of Prácheň and Marketa, nee Löwe von Löwengrün on 13 July 1607 at the beginning of one of the stormiest centuries in European history. The period of the art-loving eccentric, reclusive Emperor Rudolph II.

In those days Prague Castle was the Mecca for artists and adventurers from all over Europe.

Hollar's work is believed to be inspired by the Dutch etcher Aegidius Sadeler, a member of the Prague workshop.

The first plates ascribed to Hollar bear the date 1625. Two years later, at the age of 20 he left Prague for Frankfurt am Main in Germany, where he worked with copper engraver Mathias Merian. From him he learned much and acquired considerable skill and experience in his workshop and thus became an excellent master craftsman.

According to Denkstein, the author of the aforementioned book, Hollar's departure from Prague was motivated by his intense Protestant faith after the defeat of the Czech Estates following the battle of the White Mountain in 1620. It is interesting to note, however, that on his death he was buried as a Catholic, having been persuaded to convert to Catholicism under pressure from Antwerp Jesuits when he was living in that town.

He lived for several years in the Rhineland and had a modest workshop in Strasbourg, working for the printseller Jacob van der Heyden.

Several views of that city in a cycle of "Small Views" were issued, this also included Prague motifs; during this period he also visited Cologne.

In 1634 he travelled to Holland and had his first sight of the sea, a number of seascape drawings and etchings were a direct result of this visit.

In 1635 Hollar published a series of etchings in Cologne based on his drawings of the period 1627–1634; entitled VELMI PĚKNÉ OBRAZY NĚKOLIK MÍST.

The following year, after he published his REISBÜCHLEIN, which included portrait studies based on his own drawings, he met, and joined the service of the British collector and diplomat Thomas Howard Earl of Arundel in Cologne, who was in charge of a diplomatic mission to the Emperor Ferdinand II.

Hollar accompanied him on a seven month journey on his missions and made pictures of the cities he visited, among them Prague during July.

From this visit originated the "General View of Prague" from the Petřín slope, done in pen and ink with water color, measuring 120×279 mm. A detail of which was represented on the 1 Kčs value of the Art series set of 1981; 106,700 sheets of four were printed.

He remained in the Earl's household and made London his second home, where he became a tutor to the 19-year-old Prince of Wales, who later was crowned as King Charles II.

Between the years 1637–1644 he lived in the Earl's Palace on the bank of the river

Thames, from this period dates the beautiful cycle of "the Four Seasons," or London Seasons, represented by nubile female figures.

"SPRING," the first stamp in the Art series commencing issue in 1966. The original engraving was done in 1641 and measures 220×173 mm. The stamp was issued on 8 December in miniature sheet form with scroll work, the name Václav Hollar and the dates 1607–1677 in the centre gutter. A total of 85,050 sheets were issued.

In 1971 the same design appeared as a Black Print in a quantity of only 7,000.

"SUMMER" from the same cycle was represented in the Graphic Arts set of 1971 as the 1.60 Kčs value and the printing was 3,327,500.



All etchings from this series were representations of subjects from everyday life in allegorical disguise and were typically Dutch.

In 1641 Hollar married mistress Tracy, a lady in waiting to Countess Arundel in London on the 4th July.

Printed Matter



Mr.  
Gerald M. van  
Zanten  
P.O.Box 49.  
Napier  
New Zealand



The following year Hollar worked on in London in the service of the Duke of York, the future King James II.

From 1644–1652 Hollar lived in the Netherlands and during this period he revisited the Earl of Arundel in Antwerp.

From this period dates the "Lady with Fur Hat" which is represented in the 1972 Art set on the 1.40 Kčs value, of which 95,900 sheets of four were issued; the diameter of the original is 91 mm.

Printed Matter



Mr.  
Gerald M. van  
Zanten  
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New Zealand

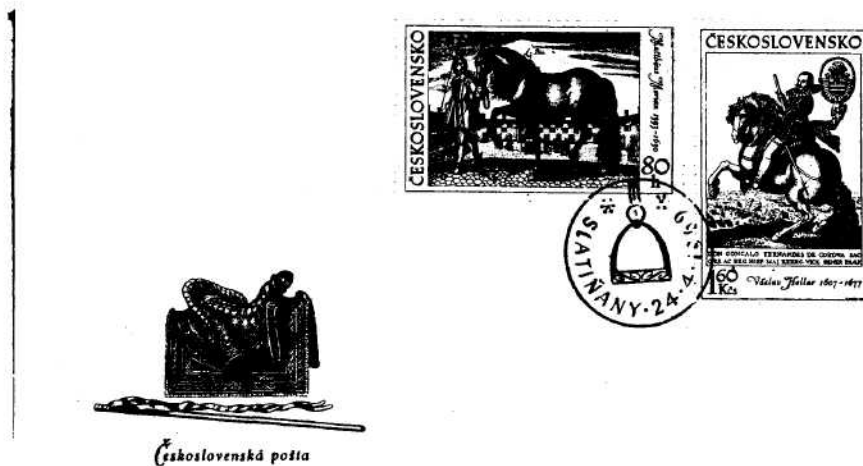


Also the "Self Portrait," the subject of the 2.60 Kčs in the 1977 Art set dates from this period, in this portrait the artist was aged 40; the original etching includes his coat of arms with an escutcheon showing a hill and two fleurs-de-lis set into the bottom of the elaborate baroque frame. The hill refers to Domazlice in Southern Bohemia, where a castle was traditionally said to belong to the Hollar family. Of this stamp 452,400 were issued; the measurement of the oval portrait in the original measures 139×100 mm.



In the same year the "Dutch-East India Merchantman" was executed, the original measuring 140×230 mm, a detail of which appeared on the 60 h value of ship engravings set issued on 21 July 1976, 5,065,000 copies of this stamp were issued.

"The Horse Rider" on the 1.60 Kčs value of a set on horses issued on the 24th April 1969 in a quantity of 3,012,500 was done in 1645, the original measurement of this engraving is 145×118 mm.



In 1652 Hollar moved to England again, where in 1655 his son, a gifted draughtsman, succumbed of the plague in London, Hollar's wife having died earlier. In the same year he married Honora, a young girl he had adopted during the plague.

In 1666 Hollar was appointed Scenographer Royal. In this capacity he was attached to an expedition bound for Tangier to draw views of the Rock and the Straits of Gibraltar. He stayed in Africa for a year and created 15 plates whilst there, this trip did not brighten the last years of his life. On the eventful return journey to Cadiz his ship was attacked by African pirates and narrowly escaped after a strenuous engagement.

In 1672 Hollar travelled around the North of England drawing buildings.

He died in poverty on 25 March 1677 in London, surrounded only by creditors.

Such was the end of the life of a great artist, whose work was an extensive and truthful chronicle of the times.

It was also in a sense a portrait of an artist, who signed his plates until the end of his life:

#### "WENCESLAUS HOLLAR BOHEMUS"

Czech stamps not mentioned in the above outlines are a set of two issued on the 5th December 1953 showing the engravers portrait. "Still Life with Hare" and "The Lion and the Mouse" which were the 60 h and 1 Kčs value of a set on hunting scenes in the Czechoslovak graphic art series issued on the 26th February 1975.

Let us hope this will not be the end of Václav Hollar's work on Czechoslovak stamps.

## THE MEDIEVAL CASTLE OF TRENČÍN, PEARL OF THE VÁH VALLEY

I guess that no inhabitant of Trenčín will be able to give an objective evaluation and description of Trenčín castle. After all, it is constantly in view and therefore holds nothing surprising to him. He does not realize the immense height of the rock on which it stands when the castle well's depth is more than 79 meters, hewn in the solid rock under the bastion. It was sunk by serfs in the 15th century, and cleaned by a team of divers in 1968–1970. They found that the well was connected with the Váh (crystal clear in those days) by a 10 meter horizontal tunnel. The divers brought out 10,500 various coins of 14 currencies from the well, as well as tools, pails, fragments of a wooden winch, stone cannon balls, chains and other objects which had been submerged for some four hundred years. They are now on display in the former chapel, along with a piece of cloth, part of the headgear of the well-diggers. The inhabitants are used to seeing the Matúš tower royally and majestically on the left bank of the river Váh, in the heart of the romantic Váh valley. They just accept the designation "the Pearl of the Váh Valley" as a matter of course without considering its meaning and significance. Those



who grew up in the shadow of the castle rock know a lot about it on one hand and very little on the other. For example just as all medieval castles, Trenčín Castle also had a dungeon. It was a 9 meters deep conical hole under the Royal Tower, into which the prisoners were lowered through a narrow opening. At present an exhibition of medieval justice has been installed in the tower, with Executioners' sword and torture instruments on display. We also know that as long ago as the time of the Roman provinces on the Danube in 179 A.D. a legion, led by Marcus Aurelius, forged its way to this spot. The sojourn of a Roman military unit at Trenčín is documented by a Latin inscription on the limestone rock, according to which 885 soldiers of the 2nd Legion camped, under the leadership of Legate Constance, on the territory now known as



Trenčín. The Latin inscription on the rock reads:

VICTORIAE AUGUSTORU(M)  
EXERCITUS, QUI LAUGARICIONE SEDIT  
MIL(ITES) LEGIONIS) II. DCCCLV  
MAXIMIANUS LEG(ATUS) LEG(IONIS)  
II. AD(IUTRICIS) CUR(AVIT)  
F(ACIENDUM).

The inscription was made on orders of one Maximianus, legate of the 2nd Auxiliary Roman Legion, in honor of the victorious imperial troops of the 2nd legion which had its garrison at Laugaricio. To understand the inscription we must go back into the past, to the time when the first Roman legions came to what is today Slovakia, to "protect" the interests of the Empire. The first presence of Roman soldiers on the middle Danube is recorded in the last years before anno Domini. They crossed the Danube to fight against the "barbarians" — their designation for the peoples north of the river. The fighting was not extensive at first, nothing more than local clashes. But by 168 A.D. it had become so fierce that it required the personal presence of the Roman emperors themselves, co-rulers Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Varus. The Romans made a deep incursion into Slovakia and stationed garrisons, estimated at a total strength of 20,000 legionnaires, in various places. One of the garrisons had its winter quarters in 179–180 A.D. near Trenčín, which the Romans called Laugaricio. In honor of their victory over the Quadi (one of the barbarian tribes) they cut the above quoted inscription into the face of the rock on which Trenčín castle was built centuries later. At the time when the inscription originated the castle rock rose directly from the waves of the Váh, this fact giving rise to the assumption, similarly as the location of the inscription, that the latter was hewn from a ship.



Here I like to refer to a number of philatelic items in connection with Trenčín:  
*First* comes the 5 h stamp issued on the 21st March 1960 as the lowest value in a set depicting Czechoslovak castles and showing in violet-blue the castle dominated by the Matúš tower on top of the rock; Pofis 1101.  
*Secondly* the same stamp appeared in 1964 on the occasion of a stamp exhibition held in Trenčín on a small card measuring  $7 \times 10\frac{1}{2}$  cm and inscribed:

I.OBLASTNA VYSTAVA  
POŠTOVÝCH ZNÁMOK  
"TRENČÍN 1964"

Above the 5 h stamp, below this are shown the dates of the exhibition:  
23.8.-5.9.1964

The stamp is cancelled by a pictorial cancel with the above text in a circle round the rock surmounted by the castle and the date 27 VIII 1964.

*Thirdly* an airmail envelope issued in 1979 with a 6 Kčs value showing Marcus Aurelius and two Roman coins in mauve and brown with the Name Československo in green underneath. The cachet showing the Latin inscription.

*Finally* a stamp was issued on 10 February 1982 with a value of 50 h as part of a 4 stamp set showing coats of arms, refer Pofis 2528.



MR  
GERALD M. van ZANTEN  
P. O. BOX 159  
NAPIER  
NEW ZEALAND

Back to the story; the Roman legions were ultimately withdrawn, and the inscription became overgrown by lichen and shrubbery. The first man who in 1854 ended the long centuries of oblivion and attempted to decipher and translate the inscription was the local priest and historian Ludwik Stárek from Bratislava. Because of poor legibility of the inscription, his translation was incorrect. The complete, exact translation was made much later by a Czech scholar, Academician Josef Dobiáš (1888-1972), who established that the inscription was done in 179-180 A.D. and found that Laugaricio was in fact the ancient town of Leukarist, which had appeared already on the first known map that included a part of today's Slovakia. All doubts about the correctness of Dobiáš's interpretation of the inscription were dispelled only in the 1950's when archaeologists discovered in Zama, in North Africa, a piece of blueish limestone, formerly the pedestal of a statue, built into a wall of a Byzantine fort. An inscription on the stone revealed details from the life of a censor in a town which the Romans called Diana Veteranorum. He was the commander of the 2nd auxiliary legion Marcus Valerius Maximianus and the inscription said he was "commanding officer of special forces wintering at Laugarcio."

Eighteen centuries have passed since the Roman inscription was carved into the Trenčín rock, and the weather and erosion have defaced it greatly. Its preservation received high priority. Having considered several alternatives experts reached the conclusion that the inscription must be preserved "in situ," and conserved, so as to give it maximum protection against further devastation. This has now skillfully been done by restorers from the Arts and Crafts Centre in Bratislava. Archaeologists have determined that the stone tower built in the 11th century withstood the Tartars. The Slovak nobleman Matúš Čák Trenčianský (1260–1321) built a castle next to the tower, and was the absolute ruler over almost all of Slovakia, quite independent of the king. After his death the castle passed into the possession of the Anjou family which enlarged it considerably. A gate, formerly formed by two towers, gives access to a courtyard, and to a bastion, originally a round tower in Gothic architecture. The guns emplaced there were aimed at the bridges across the river Váh. As late as in the 17th century, one arm of the river flowed directly under the bastion. Adjacent to it is a large room in which gunpowder was made, and a chapel now converted into an art gallery.

In 1790 the castle was gutted by a fire, after it had fallen into disrepair. In the second half of the 19th century the ruins were declared a protected monument, but it was only in 1949 that an extensive — even though only partial — reconstruction project was started and for the past several years, intensive renovation work has been going on in the castle, some of the workers having to perform hazardous feats not unlike those of movie stunt men. However the results of their work can be seen from a distance of several kilometers.

In the Middle Ages, defense requirements were the overriding concern. The owners and their guests had to dismount from their horses and descend from the coaches on the lower level of the castle complex, and have servants carry them to the residential quarters in litters. No intruder could ever hope to penetrate to the upper level, the defense system was impregnable. Throughout its history, the castle remained unconquered; only in 1520, its defenders surrendered to the besiegers under honorable terms. At that time, the castle belonged to the Hungarian king John, who was driven out of the country by Ferdinand of Habsburg.

Archaeologists have unearthed foundations of a Romanesque 11th century bastion. A long staircase — under which the castle jester lived — leads to four palaces, which are being reconstructed at present, and to the dominant of the complex, the Matúš Tower, visible from afar. It is 39 meters high, its base measures 12.5×12.5 meters and is built directly on the rock around the former Romanesque 11th century tower. This explains why the walls are up to 3.5 meters thick. There is a narrow, steep staircase in the tower, the first floor of which was used as a storehouse and a guardhouse. The second and third floors were living rooms, Matúš Čák had his study on the fourth floor, and the fifth floor room has a balcony which offers a magnificent view of the city and a large part of the Váh river valley.

The castle area is so large and made up of so many architecturally different buildings (L'udovít Palace, Barbara's Palace, Zápolský's Palace, the watchtower, the bastions, and so on), each of which requires almost complete renovation that the work is progressing very slowly. Some buildings have been re-roofed, for example L'udovít's Palace. The cracked walls of Barbara's Palace have been statically secured, the two-storeyed building having originated in 1430 when it featured a richly profiled portal of which only negligible traces have remained. The palace has also been given a new roof designed in the Gothic and Neo-Gothic styles in accordance with its original style. The whole silhouette of the castle has been conspicuously changed, acquiring firmer outlines and no longer giving the impression of a dumping ground. The "Pearl of the Váh Valley" stands out in all its beauty particularly when floodlit at night.

# THE GREAT DATES IN THE PHILATELIC HISTORY OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

By Roger Richet — Translated by Ann Vondra

The philatelic history of Czechoslovakia is as complex as its national and territorial history.

To clarify this statement we have listed the important dates which have a definite bearing on the various official and private issues, both national and local, which provide the attraction of this admirable country which has known the greatest of vicissitudes in the course of its national history.

Following is a list of the important dates of this history from the establishment of Czechoslovakia in 1918 to our own day.

- September 3, 1918: Creation of a provisional Czech government with the support and approval of the Allies.
- October 10, 1918: As a result of this action, the first manifestation of Czech nationhood — the local patriotic Czech overprint of Kralovice y Plzně (Kralowitz bei Pilsen, in German) and that of Rakonice, an extremely rare item.
- October 28, 1918: Surrender of the Austro-Hungarian army; accession to power to the Czech National Committee and proclamation of the Czechoslovak Republic.



- October 30, 1918: First local overprint of Hluboká-Marěš, followed by issues by Budějovice-Horner, Prague, Srobar, etc . . . while waiting for the first official overprinted stamps (Yvert 43-151).
- November 9, 1918: The Czech National Committee evolves into the first National Assembly.
- November 14, 1918: Proclamation by the Czech National Assembly of the fall of the Austrian House of Hapsburg.



- December 18, 1918: Issue of the first Czechoslovak stamp, at Prague: the Prague castle, 5 h. green, at ten in the morning, and the 10 h. red at 3 p.m. It was a delirious moment for Czech philatelists, and there was a general rush to post offices in the capital to get this first stamp of the new Czech state.
- February 28, 1919: Further use of any Austrian stamp (Bohemia and Moravia) or Hungarian (Slovakia) was forbidden throughout Czechoslovakia.
- June 28, 1919: Versailles Treaty with Germany.
- September 10, 1919: Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye with Austria.
- April–May, 1920: Plebiscite in Eastern Silesia giving the greater part of this region to Czechoslovakia.
- June 4, 1920: Treaty of Trianon with Hungary, which had been out of accord with Czechoslovakia since Nov. 11, 1918.
- May 30, 1934: Commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Battle of Lipany, which resulted in the loss of the independence of the Czech Kingdom of the Middle Ages: special cancellation of Kourim.
- December 21, 1934: Special issue in honor of the Centenary of the Czech national anthem "Kde Domov Můj?" (Where is my country?): Yvert 290–291. sheets 1 and 2; Pofis 281–284.



- November 14, 1937: Death of President Masaryk, first president of the Czechoslovak Republic: national mourning commemorated by numerous mourning issues.

*(to be continued)*

#### NEW MEMBERS

- 1395 CREMIN, Dennis, 250 Ivy Ave., Westbury, NY 11590  
 1396 BERGER, James R., 20 Franklin Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20901

#### CHANGES OF ADDRESS

- 1203 SVOBODA, Ludvik Z., 1476 S. Wheeling Circle, Aurora, CO 80012  
 1281 LEGGETT, Eric K., 44 Pratley Street, WoyWoy, NSW 2256, Australia  
 1375 PRIBIL, Donald, COMNAVSPEC WAR GROUP 2 US NAB Little Creek, Norfolk, VA 23521



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### AMONG OUR MEMBERS

Our new member, Genarino “Pete” Petracco, writes that his six-frame exhibit of Bohemia and Moravia won a Gold and the APS Research Certificate at GADSPEX in Gadsden, AL, July 15 and 16. Congratulations, Pete!

Society Treasurer, Ludvik Svoboda, has been promoted to O-6 — that’s full colonel to you non-military types. The *Lowry Airman* for July 26 featured a large write-up on Lou and his philatelic interests accompanied by a fine photo showing the new eagles on his shoulder boards.

We belatedly report the death of Earl Blinn, husband of our long-time member, Christine Blinn, and a fine dealer and collector in his own right. Our sincere sympathy to you, Christine.



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