



THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST



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an Incorporated Non-Profit Organization
Winner of Numerous Philatelic Literature Awards

A.P.S. Unit 18

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No. 5, Whole No. 587

PHILADELPHIA NATIONAL STAMP EXHIBITION (PNSE) 1-3 OCTOBER

This year's annual Society Board Meeting and general membership meeting will take place at PNSE 2004 on 1-3 October (Friday-Sunday).

PNSE is being held at the Valley Forge Convention Center in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania just off I-76 about 15 miles WNW of Philadelphia. It will be open 11 AM - 6 PM on Friday, 10 AM - 6 PM on Saturday, and 10 AM - 4 PM on Sunday. The exhibition hotel (which is co-located with the convention center) is the Radisson Valley Forge Hotel, 1160 First Avenue, Valley Forge, PA 19406, 610-337-2000, on the Internet at www.radisson.com/kingofprussiapa. The show rate is \$109. The PNSE information can be found at <http://home.att.net/~pnse>.

Society schedule is: board meeting -- Thursday, Sept 30, 1:30; general Society membership meeting (including a presentation "Getting Started in Exhibiting") -- Saturday, Oct 2, 1:15; Society awards breakfast -- Sunday morning, Oct 3. Check in at our Society table for the latest information on times and places for these events.

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MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Here is a list of all benefits to which S.C.P. members in good standing are entitled.

1. A sales circuit is operated by H. Alan Hoover. The circuit itself has been fully written up in the May/June 2004 SPECIALIST. For complete details, contact H. Alan Hoover, 6070 Poplar Spring Dr., Norcross, GA 30092, or e-mail: h.alan.hoover@mail.com
2. A book sales division is run by Savoy Horvath. Ads listing philatelic books for sale appear regularly in the SPECIALIST. For further information, contact Savoy Horvath, S8207 - US Hwy 61, Readstown, WI 54652-7056, or email: canclcek@mwt.net
3. A Society library is housed with Mark Wilson, librarian. For inquiries on borrowing books, buying past SPECIALISTS or making book donations, contact Mark Wilson, 316 Devland Drive, Winchester, VA 22603, or e-mail: sclibrary@knihtisk.org
4. An expertization committee operates under the direction of Ludvik Z. Svoboda. Depending on the nature or substance of the item to be expertized, he will direct you to the appropriate source for expertization. Please contact Ludvik Z. Svoboda, 4766 S. Helena Way, Aurora, CO 80015, or email: LouSvoboda@comcast.net
5. THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST is the official bi-monthly publication of the Society. For inquiries on obtaining back issues, contributing original articles, advertising rates, and bound copies, contact Ludvik Z. Svoboda (see address/e-mail above).
6. The Society has a web site (www.czechoslovakphilately.com) on the Internet where you can find Society information on Membership, History, Education, Auctions, Exhibits and much more. The site is maintained by Jaroslav Verner, 8602 Ewing Dr., Bethesda, MD 20817-3846, or email: sibpost@starpower.net

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THE COURIER POST IN BOHEMIA

(The Taxis's and Other Families in the
Postal Organization of Bohemia)

The Postal History of Bohemia

by Piero Santangelo

trans. by Peter Z. Kleskovic

The mail during the Middle Ages was transported by couriers that were hired and paid on an individual transaction basis -- kings, the bishop of Prague, some monasteries, the guild of store owners, and some cities and bureaus had their own couriers. During the Hussite war (between about 1420 and 1430) the circumstances got considerably worse -- the transport of the mail was like that at the beginning of the Middle Ages -- and only gradually approached the European standard of service of the time.

Regular postal service was introduced in Bohemia in 1526 in conjunction with the election of Ferdinand I as the Czech king -- the first route was from Vienna to Prague. During the reign of this king, the postal service in Bohemia started to reach the European standards. The route from Vienna to Prague originally had three stops -- and messages were transmitted relatively quickly. The creation of permanent postal stations that were serving the couriers by providing exchange horses came about in 1527.

Emperor Maximilian I -- after his 1477 marriage to Mary of Burgundy --



Figure 1: The front of the Thurn-Taxis Palace in Prague, Malá Strana, 120 Letenská street. The seat of the Senate of the Czech Republic. After the 2002 flood the building was renovated.

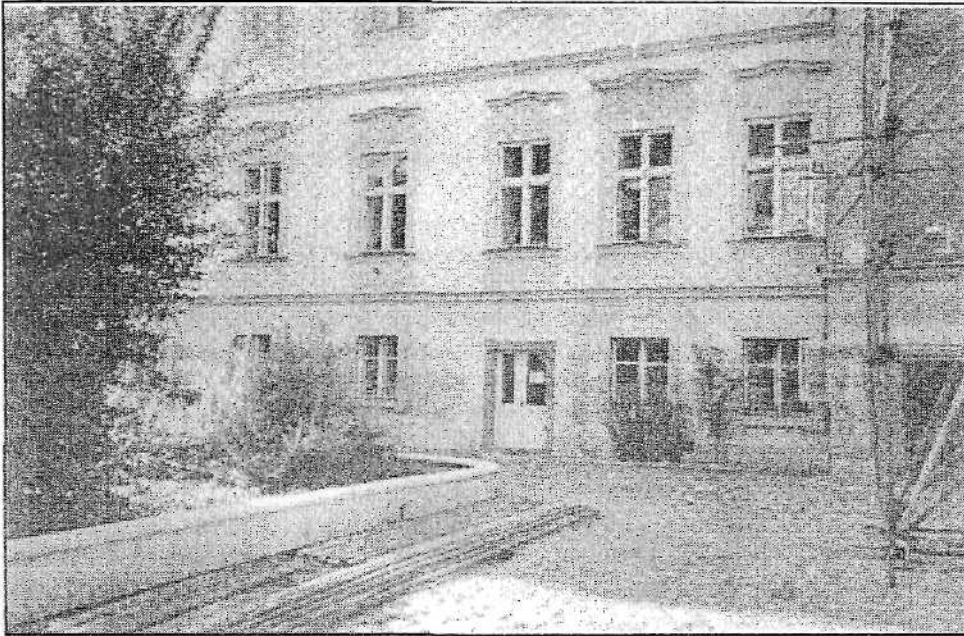


Figure 2: A section of the inner court of the palace during the renovation work.

became the ruler of an enormous empire -- consisting of Austria, Germany, Spain, Netherlands and a large part of Italy. This large empire required a quick exchange of messages and correspondence. Thus, on March 1, 1500 in Gent, Phillip I (the son of Maximilian I) named Francis of Taxis "*capitaine et maitre des nos postes*" [captain and master of our postal service]. Thus was founded the distinguished era of the Taxis family in the European postal service. The Taxis family -- Tasso in Italian -- were originally from the area around the northern Italian city of Bergamo.

The first postmaster of Prague was Ambrose of Taxis -- the uncle of Anthony of Taxis. It was Anthony who was appointed by Ferdinand to develop the postal system. After Ambrose came Christopher who was, however, in 1564 deposed due to his debts, and who also was subsequently imprisoned for a while in the White Tower of Prague castle. Then the office was taken over by Martin, to whom was assigned also the very important postal service in Jesenici u Prahy [Jesenice near Prague] on the main route south to České Budějovice (Budweis).

During the reign of Rudolph II the transport of people was added -- and thus, additional revenues were realized through toll charges. Consequently it was the Taxis who began to transport people via postal stagecoach for a fee, and thus arose the worldwide use of the term "taxi" to describe the use of a for-hire vehicle to transport people.

After the Battle of White Mountain (1620), beginning in 1622, Ferdinand Prugger from Gruenberg took over the postal service in Prague and received this office from Vice-Regent Lichtenstein. Under his direction the network of postal routes was significantly expanded:

Prague - Vienna via Tábor
Prague - Augsburg via Plzeň
Prague - Dresden via Ustí nad Labem [Aussig]
Prague - Vratislav [Breslau] was divided into six courier segments: Prague -
Nymburk - Nový Bydžov - Náchod - Klodzko - Frankenstein - Vratislav [Breslau]
At the beginning of their route the courier received a letter of safe conduct on which
was noted the times for their arrival.

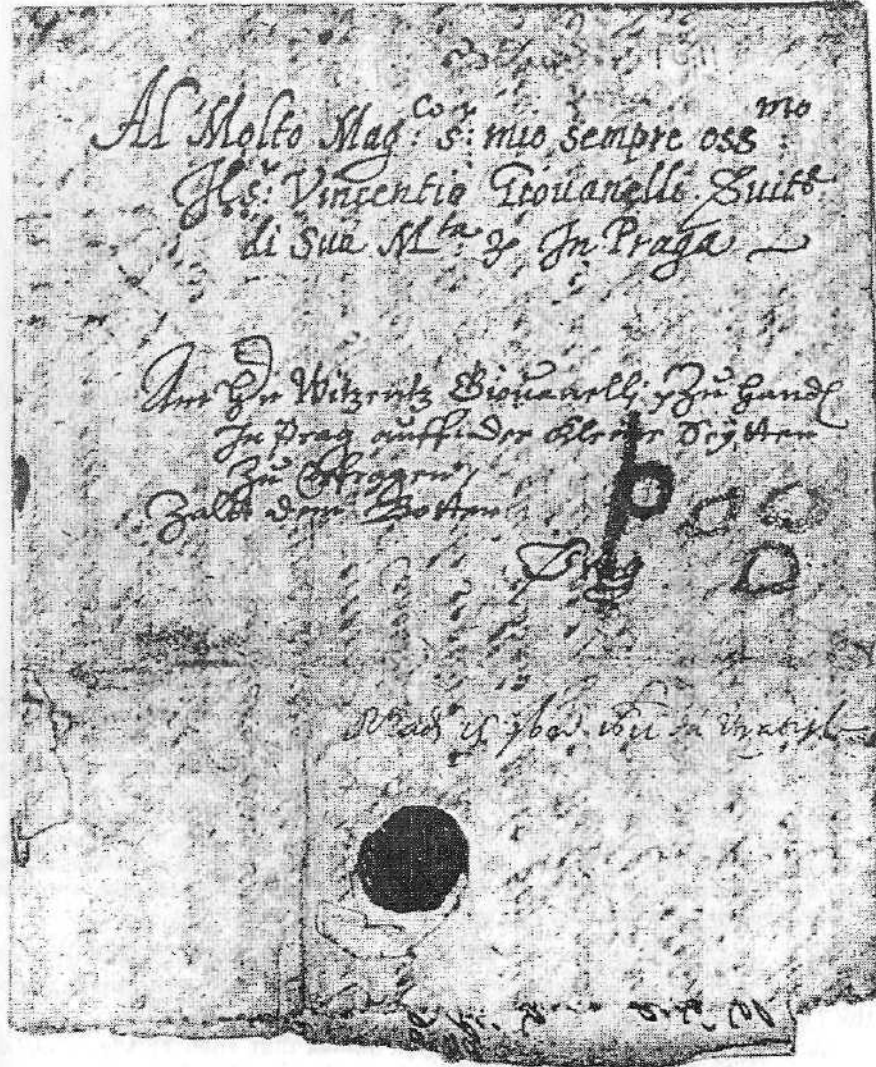


Figure 3: A letter from Bratislava to Prague, dated November 8, 1611, mailed via the Taxis postal service, marked "franca" at the top. Inside, the letter had still another annotation of its shipment date, which had to be corroborated.

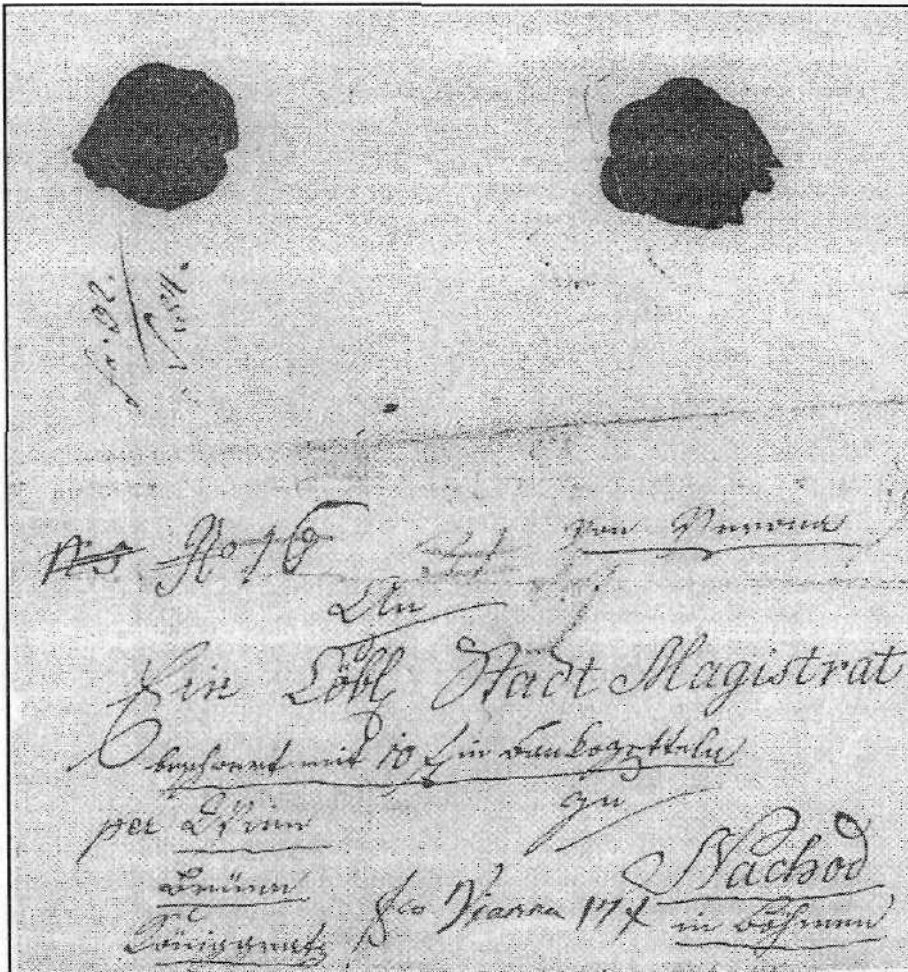


Figure 4: "Verona, 3 December 1800" is the date on a folded letter, having the address of the Magistrate of the city of Náchod, in NE Bohemia, near the Polish border. Beside the address there is also written the route which the letter was to traverse -- Vienna - Bmo - Hradec Králové, as well as the markings of the Vienna postal fees. Besides these, two seals are included. One belongs to the Governor of Verona and has the Hapsburg emblem. In Verona, at that time, there was an unusual political situation. It was occupied by the Hapsburgs in 1798, and at the peace treaty of Luneville, the territory was divided up between Austria (the left side of the Adige river) and France (the right side of the Adige river). This situation lasted until 1805, when after the Tilsit agreement the Verona territory became a part of Napoleon's Italy.

It is worth noting that the field post was established in 1633 by General Waldstein to service the military's needs -- this was especially true during the period of the Thirty Year's War (1618-1648).

In 1663, Emperor Leopold I issued a decree that ensured the safety of the courier routes. At that time the network of postal routes headed in four directions: Dresden, Silesia, Vienna, and the Czech Kingdom.

From the end of the Thirty Year's War until the 18th century, Prague's Chief Postmaster was always a member of the Wobner family. The Prague Post Office building was located at that time and until 1742 at Maltézská Square -- and to this day its location carries the name "U Staré Pošty" [at the old post office].

In addition, during the reign of Karl IV -- at the beginning of the 18th century -- new routes were established, among which was one in the direction of Chomutov and Teplice.

In 1722 Empress Maria Theresa established the State postal service, by which action she instigated the expansion of the postal service. Her son -- Joseph II -- also continued this effort. There were many more post offices established, new regulations were introduced, and a Department for the Control of Expenses was created.

A postal collection office was opened on Celetná Street in the Old Town, and the Jewish Ghetto also had its own collection office.

In 1751, the following 13 postal routes emanated from Prague:

- Prague - Brussels via Plzeň, Nuremberg, Frankfurt, Cologne
- Prague - Paris via Nuremberg, Strasbourg, Luneville, Chalons
- Prague - Venice via Budějovice, Linz, Salzburg, Innsbruck, Bressanone, Trento, Verona
- Prague - Copenhagen via Budyn, Lovosice, Ustí, Dresden, Leipzig, Hamburg
- Prague - Venice via Kolin, Jihlava, Znojmo, Vienna, Graz, Ljubljana
- Prague - Berlin via Dresden
- Prague - Munich in Bavaria via Ratisbon (Regensburg)
- Prague - Augsburg via Ratisbon
- Prague - Freiburg via Ratisbon in Ulm
- Prague - Warsaw via Hradec Kralové and Vratislav
- Prague - Cheb (Egger) via Plzeň
- Prague - Karlovy Vary (Karlsbad)
- Prague - Brno via Znojmo

It is also necessary to mention the Paar (*de Paar*) family which conducted a long standing battle with the Taxis family -- beginning in 1636 -- for the monopoly of the postal service in Europe. This dispute lasted until 1770 at which time Marie Antoinette (of France) made her definitive decision for the Paar family. This decision began the gradual end of the celebrated Taxis family era of European postal service development.

Finally, it is necessary to mention an employee of the Austrian postal service, Kristian Crusie, who in 1798 developed the first postal lexicon in which he enumerated all of the Empire's post offices of that era. This lexicon became the basis of all future postal registers.

References:

- JUDr. Otto Kučera -- *Pošta a Telegraf*, published in Prague 1913. Publisher: F. Šimáček
 PHDr. Emanuel Poche -- *Prahou Krok za Krokem*, published in Prague 1985. Publisher: Panorama.

COMPLETE PLATING OF PLATE I, HRADČANY 1H

by Frank Garancovsky

Collectors of Czechoslovakia, the First Republic, enjoy the variety presented in its stamps, postal stationery, and the general services covers. Some even venture into the area of tabs (or coupons) with their varying sheet position layouts. It is only then that their interest is piqued to the Hradčany issues.

Hradčany specialized collecting has a huge following since it affords yet another variety of specialization, that of plating any particular stamp in the series. Plating, briefly, is locating a plate flaw or error within a stamp (that is documented as such by an authoritative source) and associating it with a specific plate position on a particular plate. Thus, while owning complete sheets of any value is extremely helpful, it is not necessary. Although plating is more sophisticated collecting, it still feels very rewarding to find a plate variety -- thereby enriching one's holdings by one stamp that ordinarily would be considered just another duplicate.

Dealers at local stamp shows have many copies of the Hradčany mint or used. A mint stamp naturally is easy to plate. On the other hand a postally used copy may be difficult to plate since a cancellation might obliterate an area where one would expect to find a flaw. Prices are very reasonable and usually successfully negotiated for a lower price when buying several copies. The Ebay Auctions often offer single-valued used Hradčany stamps in bulk. Mint Hradčany stamps in bulk have become rare offerings with the exception of the individual rare stamp.

The Society Library is a good place to start a search into plating varieties. The plating information printed in early *Specialists* is found at various times in rather complete detail. The guide in this article is formatted following the example by John Velek published in the *Specialist* following its publication in the November 1953 issue of the *American Philatelist*. That article presented in text and cropped photos the 3h value of the first issue in all 100 positions and detailed the flaws and location of each.

There have been other values described by Mr. Velek, by Evald Larsen, by C.J. Pearce with William G. Ludlow, and by a host of other authors who had plated various values at one time or another. Collectors specializing in the Hradčany issues have been recently apprised of a new source for information regarding the plating of this series by Alfons Mucha. Our Society Librarian, Dr. Mark Wilson -- through his *Knihtisk* publications -- has been translating and publishing the entire series of the Hradčany studies with the permission of the authors and license from the Larsen estate. Portions of each study are available FREE for viewing at www.knihtisk.org, or for sale in hard copy and disk format through: info@knihtisk.org. [See the Jul/Aug 2004 issue, "KNIHTISK, Czech Philatelic Publications in English", pg 10, for ordering details and prices.] My presentation on the Plate I of the 1h value is geared for the collectors with no computer access and is more definitive in scope as per the early *Specialist* authors John Velek, Evald Larsen, and others.

Information is the key to successful plating. I hope that this guide will help you in your specialized Hradčany collecting. Enjoy!

Position 1. There is a colored dot on the 'C' of CESKO.
The sun is in the shape of an oval.



Position 2. There is a very faint colored dot above the second right spire. There is heavy colored dot between the second right spire and the right branch.



Position 3. There is a colored dot over the second right spire.



Position 4. There is a colored dot on the 'E' of CESKO.
There is another colored dot on the 'V' of SLOVENSKA.



Position 5. There is a colored dot to the left of the central spire. There is a colored dot on the value tablet outline to the figure of the value. There is a colored dot in the white frame line under the 'L' of SLOVENSKA.



Position 6. There is a colored dot in the 'P' and 'S' of POSTA.



Position 7. There is a white dot under the accent of 'C' in CESKO. The 'O' is broken at the top left in SLOVENSKA.
 * There is a black dot at far right within the sun.



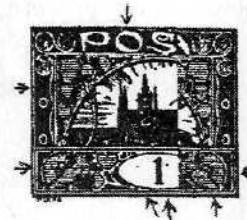
Position 8. There is a colored dot in the 'P' of POSTA. There is a 3mm horizontal line over the sun at upper left.



Position 9. There is a colored dot below the margin frame line and the left edge of the value oval.



Position 10. There is small colored dot to the right of the second left spire. There is a small colored dot in the center of the right dove's tail fan.
 * There is a small dot 4mm left of numeral '1' and one at right of the numeral.



Position 11. There is a large colored line or dot in 'O' of POSTA. There is a colored dot in the large linden leaf of the left group. There is a colored dot over the top of the spire of the central tower. There are colored dots in the 'S,L,V' of SLOVENSKA and another colored dot on the third scroll of the right hand frame corner.



Position 12. There are two colored dots in 'O' of POSTA. There are dots in the 'S and O' of CESKO, and a break in the frame line over the 'K' of CESKO.



Position 13. There is a colored dot on the wing of the left dove. There is a colored dot on the 'S' of SLOVENSKA.



Position 14. There is a white dot over the 'C' of ČESKO.



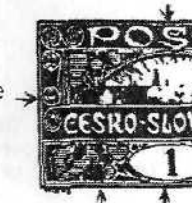
Position 15. There is a small colored dot outside the frame line above the 'P' of POSTA.



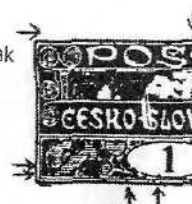
Position 16. There is a dot in the 'O' of POSTA. There is a colored dot in the fifth (lowest) leaf of the right group of linden leaves.



Position 17. There is a colored dot high up in line of the fourth left tower. There is a very faint colored dot in the first white space of the small bush.



Position 18. There is a colored dot on the frame line at the top between the 'S' and 'T' of POSTA. There is a dot on the value tablet, below and left of the figure value, and a break to the left on the value oval.



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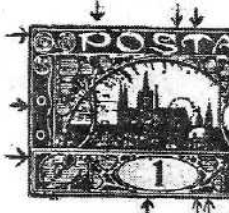
Position 19. There is a colored dot in 'P' of POSTA. There is a large colored dot between the second right spire and the right branch. There is a colored dot in 'S' of SLOVENSKA.



Position 20. There is a thickened frame line over the 'S' of POSTA. There is a colored dot in the upper right leg of 'K' in CESKO.



Position 21. Broken upper loop of 'P' of POSTA. There is a colored dot at left in the sun and a colored dot on the tip of the first right tower. There is a colored dot to the left of the figure of value in and on the oval of the value tablet. There is a large colored dot in the bush in line with the second right hand spire.



Position 22. The frame of value tablet is broken at the top. There is a heavy colored dot on line of the sun. There is a colored dot in 'S' of SLOVENSKA at far left.



Position 23. There is a heavy colored dot in the large bush in line with the central tower. There is a colored dot on outer frame line over 'O' of POSTA. There is a gap in the sun line to the right of the roof.



Position 24. The last dot in the sun line at bottom right is out of alignment. There is a faint colored dot at the extreme tip of the large bush in line with the central tower; * The broken wing as that of a bird in flight in the largest vertical section of the large bush.



Position 25. There is a white scratch above the second spiral at lower left border. There is a white dot on the inside of the 'L' of SLOVENSKA.



Position 26. There is a heavy colored dot above and to the right of the central and fourth tower below the 'S' of POSTA. There is a small colored dot in the second portion of the small bush.



Position 27. There is an extra dot on the outer sun line at about 11 o'clock position.



Position 28. There is a gap in the start of the sun line at left. There is a colored dot or line on the right side of the second right tower.



Position 29. There is a colored stroke or line attached to the first left spire and a colored dot just below it and just above the horizon.



Position 30. There is a colored dot atop the 'A' of POSTA. There is a colored dot on the right scroll in line with the bushes at left.

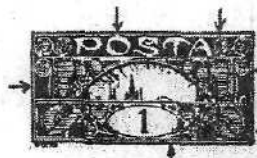


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Position 31. There is a colored dot over the second right spire. There is a colored dot on the 'E,A' of SLOVENSKA. There is a colored dot in and on the value tablet to the left. There is a colored dot in the top left heart.



Position 32. There is a colored dot in and on the oval tablet at right. There is a colored dot to the right of the second left spire. There is a scratch diagonally in the large linden leaf in the upper right corner.



Position 33. There is a faint colored dot at the tip of the small left bush, and another in the tip of the large bush at the center.

* There is a faint colored dot on the right side about midway of the numeral 1.



Position 34. There is a colored dot near the top left of the 'E' in SLOVENSKA.



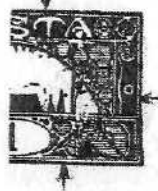
Position 35. There is a colored dot under the foot of the figure of the value.



Position 36. There is a colored dot at left and midway in the 'E' of SLOVENSKA.



Position 37. There is a heavy colored dot between the second right tower and the branch. There is an extra colored dot at the right side in the sun (at about 14:45).



Position 38. There is a colored dot in the value tablet at the far right.



Position 39. There is a colored dot or short line on the right of the second right spire. There is a cloud line just off the second left spire at the top.



Position 40. The outer top right frame at the corner is thick.



Position 41. There is a colored dot on the serif of the figure 1. There is a colored dot in the tip of the left bush. There is a colored dot in the center of the top left heart. There is a large colored dot to the left of the first left spire.



Position 42. There is a colored dot in the bottom of the first left scroll, Another in the large linden leaf in the left group. There is a colored dot in the value tablet over the figure of the value and another in the 'C' of CESKO near the bottom. There is a colored dot in wing of the left dove on the lower line of small tail fan.



(To be continued)

CZECH PHILATELIC PERTURBATIONS II

by Ludvik Svoboda

We have now received an official response from Lumír Brendl, President, Union of Czech Philatelists (SČF), to the communal letters sent to him by the four foreign Czechoslovak philatelic societies [see Jul/Aug 2004 SPECIALIST, pg 23] expressing concerns over the state of expertization of Czechoslovak philatelic materials and encouraging that actions be taken to remedy the inconsistencies.

The response came in two forms, a transmittal letter and its attachment ("Decision") in Czech and an English translation of the Decision. After having had the two versions of the Decision compared, it was felt that the differences in the two language versions did not affect the substance of the documents. We are therefore publishing here an exact copy of the received English translation of the Decision [**bold and underlined** text is in the original]:

"DECISION OF THE UNION OF CZECH PHILATELISTS (SČF) IN THE CASE OF COUNTERFEIT CZECHOSLOVAK ENTIRES

A member of the SČF Commission of Experts published several examples of counterfeit Czechoslovak entires in the *FILATELIE Monthly* Nr. 4/April 2003. The counterfeits were signed as genuine ones by members of the SČF Commission of Experts and AIEP members, Mr. Jan Karásek and Mr. Pavel Pittermann. The counterfeits were offered for sale in the David Feldman November 2003 Auction by Mr. Ludvík Pytlíček, member of the SČF Presidium and a FIP exhibitor.

To investigate this case as soon as possible, the Presidium of the SČF **immediately** (i.e. in April 2003) nominated a **special commission** chaired by the SČF vice-president Josef Běloubek. During the year 2003 the Commission studied and evaluated all the facts and aspects of the case as **published in *FILATELIE Monthly***. The final report of the Commission of the Presidium of the SČF concerning counterfeit Czechoslovak entires was agreed in December 2003. On its basis, on December 29, 2003, the **SČF Executive Committee decided like this:**

- 1) to suspend temporarily the activities of the Commission of Experts of the SČF, effective immediately
- 2) to suspend the activities of its chairman Pavel Pittermann
- 3) not to renew the contract with Pavel Pittermann as Director of the Testing Laboratory of the SČF
- 4) to elaborate **new Statutes** of the Commission of Experts of the SČF

It was unanimously decided that for the period of the temporary suspension of the activities of the SČF Commission of Experts, the Secretary of the SČF, member of the SČF Presidium, member of the Executive Committee and an SČF expert Mr. Jaroslav Maleček, will organize expertization services. It's good to know that according to the SČF Statutes, registered by the Ministry of Interior (Home Office) of the Czech Republic, "the SČF Commission of Experts IS AN ADVISORY BODY to the SČF President and the Executive Committee of the SČF".

Total evaluation of the counterfeit Czechoslovak entires scandal was published in *FILATELIE Monthly* Nr. 4/2004 by its editor who effectively cooperated on it with

several SČF experts and with expert of the Union of Slovak Philatelists.

Considering all the published pieces and with respect to the summarising article in *FILATELIE Monthly* Nr. [4]/2004, the Societies of collectors of Czechoslovak postage stamps in The Netherlands, Great Britain, Germany and the USA sent a common letter, dated April 27, 2004, to the Union of Czech Philatelists. In the letter they asked the President and the Secretary of the SČF to solute [*sic* solve] the scandal quickly and clearly and promised their help and cooperation. The seriousness of the situation was also underlined in the article published in *ArGe Tschechoslowakei News/June 2004* (pp. 5-6, and the "Pressemitteilung").

With respect to this very serious case damaging the reputation of the Czechoslovak and the Czech philately at home and abroad, **the 8th session of the Presidium of the SČF** held in Žďár nad Sázavou on May 22nd, 2004 was fully informed about the steps taken. (The SČF Presidium is "the highest decisive organ in between the Congresses").

The SČF Presidium **decided as follows:**

- a) to approve the abolition of the SČF Commission of Experts whose activities were temporarily suspended and to establish a **new Commission**
- b) to approve the abolition of the Testing Laboratory of the SČF
- c) to approve **the amended Statutes of the Commission of Experts of the SČF**
- d) to withdraw Mr. Pavel Pittermann from his position of the member of the SČF Executive Committee
- e) to oblige the SČF President and the Secretary to tell Mr. Ludvík Pytlíček and Mr. Pavel Pittermann they both have lost the confidence of the Presidium of the SČF and to ask them to resign as members of the SČF Presidium
- f) to oblige the SČF President and the Secretary to write a letter to the chairman of the local club Nr. 05-16 in Semily and ask him to call a meeting of local club members that should decide by voting about Mr. Ludvík Pytlíček's further remaining a member of the SČF.

All the documents, records, the final report of the Commission of the Presidium of the SČF and **all the articles published in *FILATELIE Monthly* in the years 2003 and 2004** have been deposited at the SČF Secretariat office in Prague.

On June 12th, 2004, the Executive Committee of the SČF dealt with the conclusions approved by the SČF Presidium on May 22nd, 2004. According to the new Statutes of the SČF Commission of Experts, **a new board was nominated** and a new Commission will be formed. To protect stamp collectors and exhibitors from counterfeits of the Czechoslovak and Czech philatelic material, **both the SČF and the Commission of Experts of the SČF will cooperate** with Czech philatelists specializing in Czechoslovak and Czech philatelic material, with members of the SČF Society of Collectors of Czechoslovak stamps, as well as with foreign Societies of collectors of Czechoslovak stamps. We hope in regular exchange of information and experience in the field of FAKES and FORGERIES.

The SČF President is considering further steps which should be taken in this case (to inform the Czech Police, among others).

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

The Executive Committee of the SČF has also decided that Mr. Ludvík Pytlíček will take part at WSC Singapore 2004 ONLY AS A PRIVATE PERSON and not on behalf of the Union of Czech Philatelists. The Organizing Committee of the WSC 2004 in Singapore will be informed about it.

Lumír Brendl
SČF President

Jaroslav Maleček
SČF Secretary

Prague, June 12, 2004

Note: This Decision of the SČF was approved by members of the Executive Committee on June 12, 2004. The English version will be sent as an official SČF response to Presidents of all four Societies of Collectors of Czechoslovak Postage Stamps, i.e. to:

Mrs. Lindy Bosworth, Great Britain
Mr. Hans van Dooremalen, The Netherlands
Herrn Hartmut Liebermann, Germany
Mr. Tom Cossaboom, The United States of America

And also to:

Mr. Koh Seow Chuan, FIP, President
Mr. Patrick Pearson, FIP Commission for fight against forgeries, Chairman
Mr. Pedro Vaz Pereira, FEPA, President"

Based upon the actions described in the Decision statement above, I believe that the Union of Czech Philatelists has taken the needed first steps to resolve this crisis, should be applauded for their quick actions, and encouraged to investigate ways to ensure restitution to anyone damaged as a result of the expertization system failures.

Subsequent to the actions described in the Decision above, the Czech press learned of the situation, and the following article appeared in the July 1, 2004 issue of *The Prague Post* (it was also picked up by other media such as *Gibbons Stamp Monthly* and Czech television). It is reprinted here with the permission of the managing editor of *The Prague Post*, Mark Nessmith (www.praguepost.com).

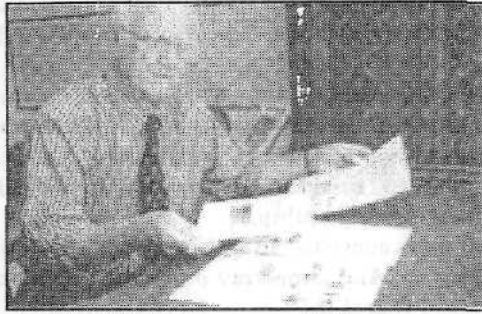
STAMP COLLECTOR CAN'T LICK FRAUD CHARGES

Philatelists call for action as counterfeit scandal widens

by Vanessa Bulkacz

With a collection of Czechoslovak stamps that's won 16 international gold medals, what philatelist wouldn't envy Ludvík Pytlíček?

But although he claims to have the biggest collection of Czechoslovak stamps



Ludvík Pytlíček shows papers that he says prove the authenticity of his stamps.

in the world, valued at more than 100 million Kč (\$3.8 million), Pytlíček's situation right now is as sticky as the gum on the back of a stamp. He is at the center of an international counterfeit scandal that he says is "an attempt to hurt me" prior to the upcoming World Stamp Championships in Singapore.

The controversy began following a 2003 auction sale gone wrong. In the wake of that and a later deal, Pytlíček and another Czech stamp expert face punitive actions from the Union of Czech Philatelists.

At a Brno auction in April 2003, Pytlíček sold a Czech collector a booklet of Czechoslovak airmail stamps from the 1930s for 10,000 Kč. Shortly thereafter, *Filatelie* magazine published several examples of counterfeit Czechoslovak entries, including many like those Pytlíček had sold in Brno. The sale was voided, the money returned to the buyer, and the suspect stamps returned to Pytlíček. The presidium of the Union of Czech Philatelists then nominated a special commission to investigate the alleged forgeries, according to an official statement the union released to international collectors of Czechoslovak stamps in mid-June.

Pytlíček said many of the more than 20,000 registered stamp collectors in the Czech Republic collect and trade stamps for investment purposes, giving his competitors motivation to attack him above and beyond mere pride. The value and quality of his collection has caused such jealousy that his competitors are attempting to denigrate him with accusations of premeditated fraud, he said.

Hopeful of vindicating his name and his collection, Pytlíček enlisted the services of Pavel Pittermann, director of the Union of Czech Philatelists' Testing Laboratory, and Jan Karásek, another certified Czechoslovak stamp expert. Both men determined that the stamps were, in fact, legitimate. Feeling exonerated, Pytlíček sold the same set of stamps for 4,600 Kč to an international buyer last November at an auction in Geneva. That buyer had the booklet examined by yet another Czech stamp expert, František Beneš, who then stated, "The clipping is clearly a fraud," taking Pytlíček back to square one.

Official condemnation

Four international societies of collectors of Czechoslovak postage stamps, representing collectors from the UK, the Netherlands, Germany and the United States, sent a letter to the Union of Czech Philatelists' April 27 to demand an official statement regarding the affair. In their official response, dated June 12, the union maintained, "The [special] commission studied and evaluated all the facts and aspects of the case," agreed the stamps were counterfeit, and promised action against the experts involved.

The president of the union, Lumír Brendl, told *The Prague Post* that Pytlíček

is out of luck. "It is my opinion, and the opinion of the executive board of the Union of Czech Philatelists, that Mr. Pytlíček offered pieces of his collection in Geneva that were not genuine, even though they had been approved by Czech experts," Brendl said.

In the letter the union vowed to abolish its Commission of Experts and testing Laboratory and to establish a new commission. It also said it would withdraw Pittermann from his position on its executive committee and called for the resignations of Pytlíček and Pittermann from the union. Union members will call for a vote to determine the future of Pytlíček's membership.

For his part in the scandal, Pittermann is contrite. In a statement, he wrote, "I believed the opinions of two other experts . . . And joined my own brand without a detailed check. It was unprofessional and I regret it."

Pytlíček continues to deny any wrongdoing, blaming the scandal on infighting and competitiveness in the philatelic community. "This is all a result of expert rivalry. There is fierce competition between the experts," he said. "One acknowledges it and the second one attacks the acknowledgement, saying it is not true. Their motivation is that one wants to be better than the other one."

Despite his assertions, when Pytlíček attends the upcoming invitation-only 2004 World Stamp Championships in Singapore, he may only attend as a private individual and will not be allowed to represent the Union of Czech Philatelists. Meanwhile, the union's June 12 letter states that in an attempt to counteract possible damage to "the reputation of Czechoslovak and Czech philately at home and abroad," they are considering further steps, including informing the Czech police.

[Ed. Note: Please see Savoy Horvath's personal comments on the above events in the Philatelic News and Views column of this issue.]

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STAMP DESIGNER VLADIMÍR KOVÁŘÍK: THE MASTER OF THE PERFORATED UNIVERSE

by Miroslav Chytrý

trans. by Peter Z. Kleskovic

It is already five years since Vladimír Kovářík, a distinguished Czech artist, painter, graphic, and illustrator passed away. He died on July 6, 1999.

Due to his lifelong achievements, he should be included among the classics of Czech graphic art. His development of stamp designs is an outstanding jewel of his artistic career. He certainly greatly contributed to the fact that Czechoslovak stamps were highly appreciated in the philatelic world, and that they were valued not only from the philatelic point of view, but also due to their artistic creativity.

Vladimír Kovářík expressed his relationship to the postage stamp in these words:

"Myself, I am not a philatelist, however, I have a very close relationship to a stamp, as a piece of the graphic art. My art teacher at college -- UMPRUM -- was Professor Jaroslav Benda,

the author of the famous Carrier Pigeon stamp that was one of the first Czechoslovak stamps issued immediately after those from Alfons Mucha.

We were fortunate that at the birth of the Czechoslovak postage stamp, but also in the years later, there were such artists as Alfons Mucha, B.H. Brunner, Max Švabinský and many others. They all set their goals very high right from the beginning.

And when I painted or made graphics, I had my two special loves: illustrations and stamps. Jaroslav Benda was a true-blue pedagogue, and on top of that, he had an assistant, Antonin Strnadl, an exceptional art master-teacher. These two were a right pair of teachers -- a wonderful symbiosis for the education of young students. I followed in the steps of my dear teacher as well as his assistant and had a close friendship with both of them. *A good and real friendship is something very special."*

This final confession of Vladimír Kovářik was originally expressed by John Amos Comenius, another Czech patriot and a great *Teacher of Nations* in the 17th century.

Vladimír Kovářik created his first stamp in 1949 [Sc 384/Pof 476 -- 9th Meeting of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Fig. 1] and the last one in 1994 [Sc 2928/Pof 48 -- 120th Anniversary of the UPU, Fig. 2]. He created more than one hundred postage stamp designs with a great variety of thematic subjects. He was constantly searching for new possibilities of expression, while remaining true to the original subject. He was able to accurately convey an idea and theme on that small format of a stamp. His stamps are works of art of high quality and were often appreciated overseas. His stamp, for example, won the Grand Prix at the Biennial of postage stamps in Argentina.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

The creative orientation of Vladimír Kovářik was impressive. He not only illustrated a great many books, he also designed paper currency for various nations. His paintings, as well as his graphic work, confirm his tireless search with a trend towards his own artistic expression. He was always striving for a truthful expression in all his work, and from that emanated his deep love for his country and for his native land of Moravia.

Vladimír Kovářik left us, however, both of his sons, who are artists in their own names. Pavel Kovářik is an engraver, also in the philatelic field. Several Czech stamps were already engraved by him [including the last stamp that his father designed, Sc 2928/Pof 48 -- 120th Anniversary of the UPU]. Vladimír Kovářik, Jr., is an advertising artist and his graphics are of the same high artistic quality.

THE CZECHOSLOVAK MILITARY COMMAND IN TRIEST DURING 1918-1919

by Piero Santangelo
trans. by Peter Kleskovic

At the end of the military conflict there were a great number of Czechoslovak prisoners in Italy. At that time, Jan Šeba (who reported to the Czechoslovak Delegation in Rome) agreed with E. Beneš (the then Czechoslovak Minister of War) on the possibility of using these forces for the eventual intervention in Slovakia. In agreement with the Italian authorities, it was decided to create regiments of Territorial Militia from these prisoners of war.

The concentration camps were located in the cities of Avezzano, Foligno, and Gallarate. From them were formed 43 regiments of Territorial Militia, one assault regiment, two other regiments, and four groups of Bohemian Germans. Besides these units, they also created ten groups of older soldiers destined for duty in Triest. Their responsibility was the control and escort of trains destined for Bohemia.

Triest was a city with an important harbor and where a Czechoslovak Military Command was established with the important responsibility to coordinate the return



Figure 1: Letter sent from Triest Central, 14.7.1919 to Toušim, bearing cancels of the postal censor Trieste No. 23 and the courier service censor.

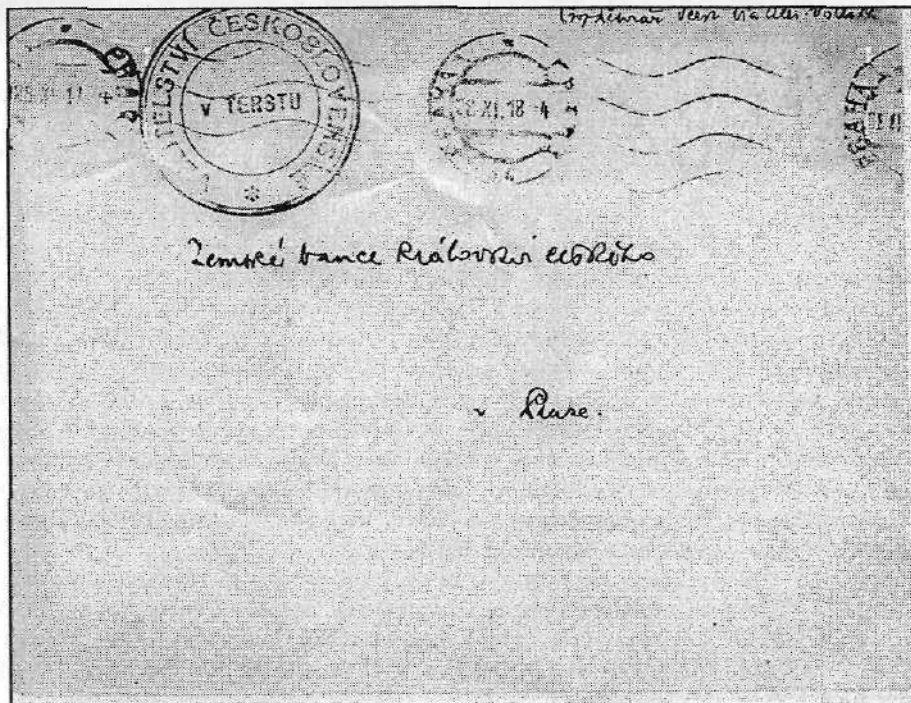


Figure 2: Letter from Trieste addressed to Prague, postmarked by the Czechoslovak Headquarters in Trieste, transmitted by the Czechoslovak Courier Service, Prague Post Office cancel 28.11.18. It must be emphasized that this letter was dispatched in the first days of the Headquarter's settlement.

of Czechoslovak legionnaires from Siberia to their homeland. These soldiers were returning via ocean along the coasts of the Far East, India, and Egypt, then through the Suez Canal into the Mediterranean Sea, and finally via train on the continent.

The vanguard of the actual evacuation was the transportation of the Czechoslovak invalids and older soldiers from Siberia. The Italian ship *Roma* was the very first to put out to sea on January 15, 1919, and by March 11, 1919, it had arrived in the Italian harbor of Naples. Additional transportation of invalids from Vladivostok was handled during 1919 by the ships of the Entente Nations, e.g., the English ship *Madras* on February 14, 1919, the American ship *Sheridan* on April 14, 1919, as well as many others.

In Vladivostok, meanwhile, there came into existence the Central Economic Commission of the Czechoslovak Army that actively worked on the evacuation of the Czechoslovak soldiers. On December 9, 1919, the *Yonan-Maru* put out to sea from Vladivostok with the first Czechoslovak formations consisting of two battalions of the oldest and most famous rifle regiment *Mister Jan Hus* -- the ship *Tras-Os-Montes* transported another group. Other regiments then followed on various other ships, to which were added at the beginning of 1920 ships that were leased by the Czechoslovak government. America made available for this purpose 12 transport ships, e.g., the ships *Sheridan*, *Madawaska*, *President Grant*, and others, which

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evacuated 36,026 soldiers. On 9 English ships, the *Titan*, *Keemun*, *Ixion*, and others, were transported 16,955 soldiers. One of the last transports was made via the Czechoslovak ship *Legie*, purchased by the Legionnaire's bank in Vladivostok.

The largest of these ships were the *America* and the *President Grant* -- which were the largest of their day that could pass through the Suez Canal. Some of these transports ended up at the US or Canadian coasts, but the great majority ended up in Triest.

While analyzing the postal service in Triest during November and December 1918, we find that there were severe problems of a logistical nature. The communication systems had been damaged by the war, and thus the land -- specifically occupied Austria -- was cut off from Italy. Communications were carried out with the help of hydroplanes between Triest, Lussino, Fiume, Pola, Zara, and the Italian Ancona and Venice. Other kinds of correspondence, both civilian and military, were transported on torpedo boats that served the line "Triest -- Venice".

Another problem was the shortage of Italian stamps. It is possible to find correspondence with 30-cent arrival postage due. For correspondence directed to Vienna and Austrian territory, including locations in German Austria (Sudetenland), there was instituted a special censor. A cancel with the wording "Ufficio Corriere Speciala Vienna" was used throughout 1919 (Fig. 1).

The postal document at Figure 2 is very important to the above-described situation. A letter destined for Prague traveled utilizing the Czechoslovak courier service during the first days of the establishment of the Command Headquarters in Triest. They used the benefits of *franchigia*, and thus bypassed the situation that there were no stamps.

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GINZ - RAMON REDO

by Ludvik Z. Svoboda

As a follow-on to the article that appeared in the last issue ["Petition for a Joint Commemorative Stamp Issue -- Petr Ginz", pg 17], I am providing here an excerpted article taken and translated from the Japhila E-zine found at www.japhila.com. It provides additional background on who Petr Ginz was and why astronaut Col. Ilan Ramon selected Petr's illustration to be taken on the rocketship Columbia flight into space.

**PETR GINZ & ILAN RAMON --
THE FATE OF ONE "COSMIC" DRAWING**

by Bretislav Janík

trans. by Ludvik Z. Svoboda

Petr Ginz was born in 1928 to a mixed Czech-Jewish family in Prague. His mother had moved there into the Jewish family of her husband. Petr attended the Jewish community school on Prague's Jachymov street. Already by then he was in love with books and especially with novelist Jules Verne. His passion for fantasy lead him to his own writing -- he wrote short stories and novels which he illustrated himself. He was an enormously talented and versatile person, for whom in fact it was not destined that he experience or realize any of his dreams.

On 24 October 1942 in his 14th year he was placed on a transport, and because he had already reached the age of 14, he rode off by himself to Terezín [Theresienstadt concentration camp]. Together with his contemporaries he was located in block L 417 (a part of the former Terezín school). Surprisingly soon after his arrival he demonstrated leadership abilities and started -- with the help of additional boys -- to put out the periodical *Vedem* [we lead]. In it he put to use and showed his extraordinary talent and fantasy. He simultaneously edited and wrote the publication, composed poetry for it, and drew its illustrations. He was often compelled to pay for other contributed articles with food, which his family sent to him in packages. He also kept a daily diary. Before his forced departure for Auschwitz (28 September 1944) he gave it to his sister Eva. His sister was two years younger, did not come to Terezín until 1944, and thus survived until liberation. Today she lives with her husband in Israel under the name of Chava Pressburger and is an important artist. She has exhibited her paper portraits and collages all over the world, including several times in the Czech Republic. A large number of Petr's periodicals from 1942-44 and some of his drawings survived and are safe.

During his short life, in which he demonstrated tremendous talent that was perhaps greater than that shown by some people in their entire life, he became immortal. This was also thanks to the intercession of a special or let us say unusual wish of the first Israeli astronaut Ilan Ramon, who took Petr's drawing with him on the 16 February 2003 tragic flight of the renowned American rocketship Columbia on its flight into space. Astronaut Col. Ilan Ramon -- his mother survived her stay in the Auschwitz concentration camp -- requested the memorial organization Jad Vasem to help select an object which had a connection with the holocaust. As a

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personal item Israeli astronaut Ilan Ramon brought with himself a pencil and brush drawn illustration called "View from the Moon of the Planet Earth", dated sometime in 1942. This illustration was drawn more than 60 years before by the young Petr Ginz in the Terezín ghetto.

This illustration documents his great sense for fantasy (in the 40th year of the last century!) and immeasurable longing for life which was not dissuaded by his mandated attendance in the Terezín ghetto and later imprisonment in a concentration camp.

Ilan Ramon, in his selection of the illustration, said: "I know, that my flight is very symbolic for the people of Israel, especially for those who survived the holocaust." The space flight of the rocketship Columbia STS-107 with 2 women and 5 men on board took off on 16 January 2003 from Cape Canaveral in Florida. After a 16 day flight (on 1 February 2003), during the descent maneuver and shortly before landing, the rocketship crashed and the entire crew died. Besides the sacrifice the crew made, the above mentioned illustration by Petr Ginz was also burnt up. And finally, we need to also realize this unbelievable occurrence -- the rocketship Columbia with Ginz's illustration crashed exactly on the date of the unrealized 75th birthday of Petr Ginz!

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Local Chapter News

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COLLECTORS

by Frank Vogel

(714)785-8821/FJVogel@hotmail.com

We just had our regular bi-monthly meeting in the City of Orange, California -- seven members attended. SCP applications were handed out to three non-members.

At our meeting, we have coffee and cookies, show and talk about our new additions, talk about new catalogs/books/interesting magazine articles. Then we go over philatelic material offered for sale/exchange and select items we want. Obviously it would be nice to have new collectors to come to the meeting, to have a chance to go over their duplicates or other materials for sale, to have them see what we have to offer for sale or trade, and to have them participate in our collector's talks.

... I asked the guys, if they have any suggestions what they would like to see in the Specialist, but I didn't get anything from them. However, all of them said they like the Specialist! As for me, I am also a satisfied member of the SCP for a number of years (my membership number is 1251). I appreciate the usual blend of articles dealing with a specific locality (town) or subject and others covering a larger area or whole country.

Most of us, including me, are sort of occasional part-time collectors, not heavyweights who have superb knowledge and have spent much of their free time over their stamps. Voit Smekal promised to bring his collection of postal labels issued during the First Republic and to say a few words on that subject at the September 19th meeting.

1350's ART

by G.M. van Zanten

Part I: The Master of Vyšší Brod Altar

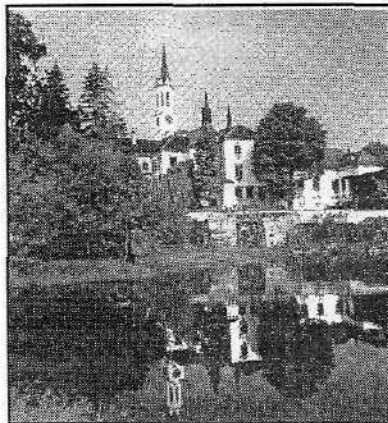


Fig. 1

We do not know his name, therefore he is referred to as The Master of Vyšší Brod.

The town of Vyšší Brod is notable for its monastery, founded in 1259 for the Cistercian Order. The monastery has a slender tower, some 274 feet high (Fig. 1).

One of the Master's works was shown on the 1.20 Kčs value of the 1971 Art on Stamps set (Fig. 2),

it is entitled "The Resurrection". This painting which measures 99.5 x 83 cm was one of nine panels painted on wood and intended for the altar.

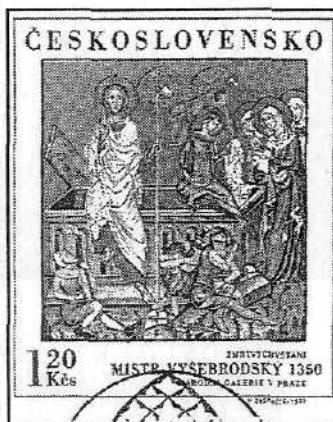


Fig. 2



Fig. 3

On close examination of this stamp we will notice a figure near the bottom on the right, shown enlarged in Figure 3. It gives one an idea of how much work was involved for such a painting -- observe the fine detail!

The cachet on the FDC shows a drawing of "The Shepherd" by the same artist (Fig. 4), it being a part of a painting (center right) entitled "The Nativity" (Fig. 5).

Going one step further we also note St. Joseph at the bottom left of the same panel, shown enlarged in Figure 6.

I find it amazing what one stamp can lead to, part of my interest in the study of Czech as well as Slovak stamps.

Let me close with a few comments on the Master himself despite the fact that we know nothing of him! We now realize that this Master of Vyšší Brod must have been an artist of great talent who gained a leading place in the European context. Assuming that the zenith of creative power usually comes after the age of forty, which would date his birth to around the year 1300.



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

Part II: An Unknown Czech Master

The 3.60 Kčs stamp of the Art on Stamps set of 1973 was part of a block of four totally unrelated subjects. It depicts the "Madonna and Child" (Fig. 7) again



Fig. 7

dating from around the year 1350. The original measures 79.5 x 62.5 cm, it is in the Prague National Gallery.

This madonna is also known as the "Madonna From Veverská", a town north-west of Brno. The FDC shows the head of the Madonna in gold (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8

Part III: Strahov Madonna

She was depicted on the 9 Kčs value of the Czech Republic Art on Stamps issue of 15/12/1993. This stamp (issued in blocks of four) was also commemorating 850 years of the Premonstratensian Order at the Strahov monastery (Fig. 9).

As this painting is greatly venerated, I would like to digress and have a closer look at the institution of the Premonstratensian Order as well as the monastery in history. This takes us back to the year 1926, namely the 1.20 Koruna stamp depicting the scene, shown here enlarged (Fig. 10). A photo copy shows the same scene, but clearer (Fig. 11) -- the statue on the left is that of St. Wenceslas.

The courtyard of the monastery is shown in Figure 12 with a prominent column in front. The monastery was founded by Vladislav II for the Premonstratensians. The column of St. Norbert (1755), the founder of the order, stands near the entrance of the courtyard.



Fig. 9



Fig. 10

Saint Norbert (approx. 1082-1134) was a canon of Xanten in Germany -- situated close to the Dutch border southeast of Arnhem. Norbert was also Archbishop of Magdeburg and chancellor of the Holy Roman Empire. As mentioned, he was the founder of the order, which was founded at Prémontré near Laon in Northern France in 1120. It was during the 30 Year's War

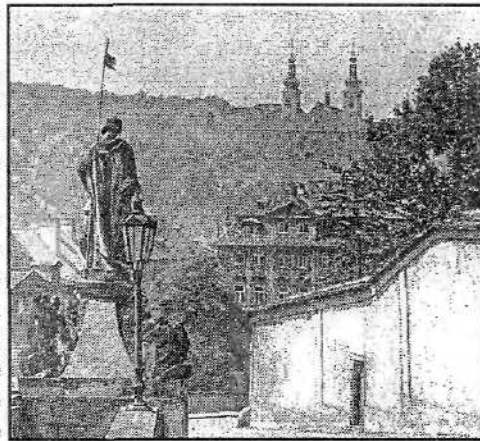


Fig. 11

(1618-1648) that the remains of St. Norbert were rescued from Protestant Magdeburg and brought to Strahov with much ceremony. By the way, St. Norbert's feast day is June 6. The monastery has retained its Romanesque core in spite of fire, wars and extensive alterations.



Fig. 12



Fig. 13

Time to return to our stamp. This icon-like "Strahov Madonna" in the Strahov picture gallery is perhaps its greatest treasure, again done by an unknown Czech Master. Figure 13 shows the cachet from the FDC having a view of the Strahov church as part of the music score for a mass with Latin text.

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THE SLOVAK ROBIN HOOD JURAJ JÁNOŠÍK: A LEGEND OR PURE FICTION

by Frank Garancovsky

The dictionary describes legend as a story of some wonderful event, handed down for generations among a people and popularly believed to have a historical basis, although not verifiable. Fiction on the other hand is described as imaginary, yet, in legal terms, fiction may be something accepted as fact for the sake of convenience, although not necessarily true. A Slovak historian Pavel Dvořák states, "there are two elements necessary for creating a legend -- historical background and an author. A good historical background includes real facts that can give rise to possible fiction. And then a real person is needed to create a legend out of these true facts".

Jánošík was born in Terchová in Trenčín County about 1688. Research however, indicates that he was actually born on a small farm in the highlands in a vicinity of that quaint little hamlet. Today, the spot is marked by a small dilapidated hut with the numbers '575' on it. It stands between two linden trees in a place called Janosov, which boasts of a population of 17 persons, most of whom bear the name of Jánošík.

Though still a child, he was already a rebel against society when he joined the insurgents of Rakoczy II (1703-1711). Jánošík became the symbol of a people's just indignation against oppression, as well as a symbol of hope of ultimate victory, justice, and truth. He joined the imperial army and was sent to Bytčianský Castle as a guard, where he met one of the Emperor's prisoners, an adventurous brigand and soldier of fortune, Thomas Uhorcík. This fateful acquaintance proved to be the turning point of his life.

Following the downfall of Rakoczy's rebellion in 1711, Jánošík returned home

after being ransomed out of the army by his parents. Tradition holds that he became an outlaw and a highwayman because his father was flogged to death by the lord of the manor for refusing to leave the deathbed of his wife in order to work in the fields



Fig. 1

of his master. According to one account, this fatal flogging took place at the village bridge in Terchová. Another account places the murder as being committed at the castle of Teplička in Žilina. The judicial documents merely record the fact of Uhorčík's escape from prison, and coming to Terchová to persuade Jánošík to join his band of robbers in the forest (Fig. 1).

It is well to recall the social conditions in Slovakia at this time. The Revolution had failed, and many a peasant's son was unwilling to bow down under the yoke of a feudal system having tasted freedom as a soldier of fortune. Northern Slovakia suffered the most at this time and soon became the home of the discontented, the discouraged, and the desperate. These men organized robber bands and preyed on the surrounding countryside from their mountain

hideouts. Jánošík became a member after taking the brigand's pledge and sealing his oath with his blood. After being elected a chieftain, the youthful bandit extended the zone of his operations from the eastern counties of Liptov, Spiš, Orava, Turiec Tekov, Malohont, Šariš to Zvolen, Trenčín and Nitra. He crossed into Moravia, Silesia, Poland, and Hungary. Even today, he is claimed to be a national hero of the oppressed people of Poland, the Czecho-Slovaks, Hungary and Romania. A favorite area of operations for the brigands was a spot known as "Tall Pine", directly above the road running from Liptov to Spiš. At one time the area was a heavily forested region that offered protective cover for the bandits. Queen Maria Theresa, by royal proclamation had the picturesque forest rendezvous area cut down. In Jánošík's time, this area was also a favorite ambush point and where Lord Jan Radvanský was robbed while on his way to the funeral of the former revolutionary general, Petroczy. Other notables robbed by Jánošík and his band were Lord Paul Revay, Lady Schardon, and Lord Ladislaus Zmeskal, as did Sipoš of Žilina. Lord Skalka fell into their hands as well as numerous wine merchants, horse dealers, and private citizens.

The circulated story that Jánošík robbed the rich to feed the poor or needy was not always true, for his comrades preyed on the lower classes as well as the wealthy nobility. Some of the booty was given to the poor. The jewels taken from Lord Skalka were given to the young ladies of Terchová. Many romantic tales, which have little historical basis, have become a part of the Jánošík saga in Slovakia. Authentic documents do not even allude to most of the feats attributed to the Slovak Robin Hood. At his trial, Jánošík admitted raiding sheepfolds of the lord of the manor, that some of the shepherds, either from fear or friendship, cooperated in these robberies. Then they would accompany him to celebrate at the taverns; Black Ant in Klenovce; White Horse in Dunajov; and sometimes at the Blue Star in Krasnej; or at the Golden Eagle in Terchová.

Winters found the mountain boys seeking employment in nearby homesteads, thereby eliminating the possibility of betraying footprints leading to their hiding

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places deep in the pine forests. Jánošík served as a farm hand in the winter of 1712-13 at Kovalčík's and Ondrejčík's in Kokava. When spring arrived, they hastened to their mountain rendezvous at the foot of the Tall Pine.

Jánošík's romantic career as Slovakia's Robin Hood was a short one, lasting less than two years. He was captured the first time in the autumn of 1712 in Klenovce but escaped. He was recaptured in the following summer. The commissioner of Malohont granted him an amnesty after having confined him in Jakoffy Castle in Hrachov. He was then immediately arrested by the county police of Liptov, and never again regained his freedom. At Liptov, he was lodged in Vranov Castle in a dark cell chained to the wall, to await his trial and death. No official record gives the exact details of this final capture; but, according to tradition, Jason [Jánošík] was apprehended either because of the treachery of one of his band, namely, Gajdošík, or because of the treachery of a former sweetheart, who lost her heart to the police Captain, Joseph Lehotský. Gajdošík reportedly gave away the secret of his chief's gigantic strength (the magic belt).

Jánošík was allowed to plead his case. He pleaded guilty to robbery, but denied having committed crimes in which he had no part including the robbery of a priest from Orava, or the shooting of a priest from Domaniže. There were many other crimes that included murder, and the looting of churches. In those days a thief, as well as a murderer, might be hanged. Legendary accounts of the trial picture Jánošík as remaining silent about the identity of his comrades. Official records however, indicate that he conveyed their names to the Court, but refused to reveal their whereabouts. As to the buried treasure, he told his listeners that it was hidden in a large fir tree opposite an oak on which a hand was carved indicating the exact location of that fir tree.

Jánošík was tried by the county court of Liptov, in the courthouse of Sv. Mikuláš in Liptov. His trial was presided over by the vice commissioner, Ladislaus Okolicsanyi, on March 16-17, 1713. The other magistrates were from the four districts of Liptov County, namely Jan and Andrew Rady, Andrew Andreanský, and Mathew Joob. The official prosecutor was Alexander Čemický, and the defense attorney was Balthasar Palugyay. The defense pleaded guilty to the charges of robbery and asked clemency of the Court. Moreover, Jánošík promised to give up his former way of life and wished to become a law-abiding citizen again. The prosecution, however, demanded the highest penalty, and succeeded in exacting a two-fold sentence from the Court. It was, that the "double-dealing" prisoner might first pay the penalty for his lighter crimes by being tortured on the rack, and then by being hanged on the gallows to forfeit his life for his graver transgressions. The sentence was in accordance with the laws of the Tripartitum of 1515, 1625, and 1655.

The death sentence was carried out on March 17 or 18, before a vast assembly of people, on the execution grounds of Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš, on the Váh River near the Paludzky Bridge. There the young robber chieftain was hanged on the gallows, and his lifeless body was buried beneath it, as was the custom of that time.

The people however, believed in Jánošík's nobility of character. It is said that his body was buried in the crypt of the church of Sv. Mikuláš, where it lies in a state of complete preservation awaiting the day when a new Jánošík will arise and strike down the oppressors of his people. From there on, there are many legendary stories of Jánošík that have been enhanced by the imagination of writers throughout the many generations that followed.

Jánošík has been the frequent subject of creative art in his native country. His likeness appears on glassware and pottery. His band of mountain boys are shown dressed in colorful blouses and white britches with wide waistbands richly studded with gold, silver, and precious stones, shiny black boots, and gaily colored hats. All were armed with muskets and hatchets (Valaška, Fig. 2), which is the most popular souvenir among visitors.



Fig. 2

In 1996, the Slovak Postal Service issued a 16 Sk commemorative souvenir sheet marking the 60th anniversary of the making of the film "Jánošík" (Fig. 3)[On May 15, 1996, the Ministry issued what appears to be two stamps as a se-tenant, but is actually a single stamp of 16 Sk value alongside a coupon resembling a second stamp. The stamp itself shows a film strip with two frames of the actor Paľo Bielik in the title role of JANOŠÍK with a text along the top and bottom reading: "100 years of Cinema -- Jánošík (1936)". The coupon pictures a camera mounted atop three hills overlooking a river.]

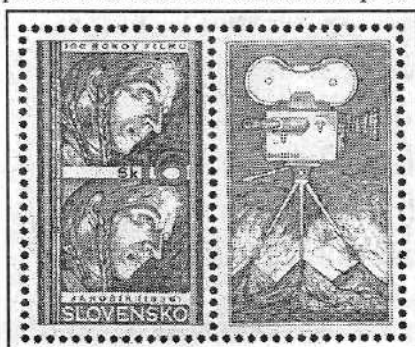


Fig. 3

This and other "Jánošík" stories may be found on the Internet at <http://www.slovakradio.sk/rsi/ang/legends/txt/2708> and <http://www.iarelated.com/history/janosik.htm>.

[Ed. Note: The SPECIALIST is pleased to reprint the preceding article from The Newsletter of the American Slovak Cultural Association of the Mahoning Valley, Issue 41, November 2003, as the 7th in a Series on Stamps of Slovakia by Frank Garancovsky, with permission of the author and editor.]



Philatelic News and Views

From Tom Cossaboom:

-- At ROPEX'04 in June, our member Al Kugel won a Gold with his 10 frame exhibit "The Expansion of Serbia 1876-1921". And Karen Barber won a Silver for her 4 frame exhibit "Hradčany 'Glitches' 1918-1920".

From Savoy Horvath:

-- [I have] received a couple of letters from Czechia, one on Pytlíček stating not to hold ones breath that the SČF club in Semily would vote to censor him or expel him. Absolutely forget it, Pytlíček is well respected in Semily, owns the largest corporation in town and is a know philanthropist, also admired for putting Semily on the map through philately. No one in the SČF is naive enough to think differently. As for the report that Pytlíček is under police investigation, yes the Czech media had reported this, but, it is a police custom to investigate media allegations. No one has pressed charges against Pytlíček, so this police investigation is just a formality. On the SČF Board of Directors, no one there will ever go against Pytlíček. Why? (translation) . . . *We all have skeletons in our closets from the past and none of us dares to rock the boat as we all might sink . . .* This is the Czech mentality from half a century of totalitarianism.

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New Issues

CZECH REPUBLIC

by G.M. van Zanten

1. On June 23, 2004, the Ministry of Transport and Communications issued a 14 Kč stamp to commemorate the 700th anniversary of the birth of Francesco Petrarca (Fig. 1). An Italian Renaissance poet and writer, connoisseur of ancient culture and classical filology, F. Petrarca (1304-1374) is called the father of humanism, the first modern man of letters, and the real founder of modern Italian literature. It was in Italy, and in the work of Petrarca, that literature began turning away from the medieval view of life and art to one in which the individual man and the world this side of the grave acquired dignity and importance, in which general truth and pleasure as well as religious instruction were sought in literature. Petrarca became a man of affairs, achieved ecclesiastical



Fig. 1

preferment and office but without taking orders, and went on diplomatic missions for the Pope and various Italian rulers. On one of the missions he stayed with the Emperor Charles IV in Prague in 1355; the correspondence between them as well as between Petrarcha and the Archbishop Arnošt of Pardubice and the Chancellor Jan

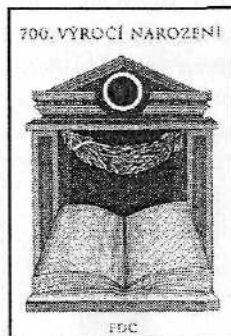


Fig. 2

of Středa contributed to the development of humanism in the Czech lands. In 1326 he met the noble Laura who inspired his lifelong creation of love lyrics collected in the Book of Songs which influenced European poetry. The deep psychological analysis and perfect poetic form and language of Petrarcha's Italian lyrics was a novelty; he was a prolific writer in both Latin and Italian. He was an ardent patriot and promoted the idea of a united Italy. In 1341 he was crowned poet laureate at Rome, declining the same honor, offered in the same year, from Paris. The stamp was designed by Markéta Prachatická, engraved by Miloš Ondráček, and produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by rotary recess print in black, combined with photogravure in yellow, red, blue and gray-golden in sheets of

50 pieces. A FDC in black-gray has a cachet which shows a composition symbolizing Petrarcha's literary activity in the context of the early renaissance (Fig. 2).



Fig. 3

2. On June 23, 2004, the Ministry issued a 9 Kč commemorative stamp for the occasion of the XXVIIIth Olympic Games taking place August 13-19, 2004 in Athens, Greece (Fig. 3). This year the Olympic fire will remain in the country of origin. The fame of the ancient Olympic games in Athens was revived in 1896 by the baron Pierre de Coubertin. The prizes in these 28th Olympic Games are 301 sets of Olympic medals in 28 sport disciplines located at 38 different places. There are about 10,500 registered sportmen coming from 201 countries. The most promising potential winners among the Czech

sportmen are athletes, shooters, smooth and wild water canoeists, and cyclists -- a woman cyclist was selected for this stamp. It was designed by Zdeněk Netopil, engraved by Miloš Ondráček, and produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by rotary recess print in black combined with photogravure in ocher, light blue, red and blue in sheets of 50 pieces. A FDC in blue has a cachet which shows a stylized drawing of a woman cyclist going at full speed (Fig. 4).

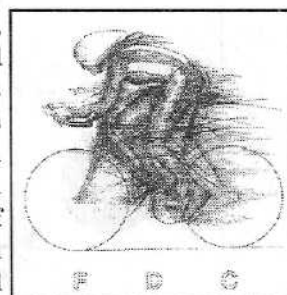


Fig. 4

3. On June 23, 2004, the Ministry issued a 6.50 Kč commemorative stamp for the occasion of the Paralympic Games taking place September 17-28, 2004 in Athens (Fig. 5). The first sport games for handicapped athletes took place in England in

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Fig. 5

1948, almost simultaneously with the Olympic Games. Four years later they began to be called "paralympic". The first Paralympic Games in the spirit of the Olympic Games took place in Rome in 1960, in close relationship to the Olympic Games. The organizers of the Paralympic Games seek to make as little changes in the rules and regulations of the Olympic Games as possible. The number of registered sportsmen coming to Athens from 130 countries is over 4,000. The Czech team will compete in archery, swimming, fencing, basketball, table tennis and athletics. At the 2000 Paralympics in Sydney, R. Musil won two gold medals in shaft and ball casting and one silver medal in casting the discus. The stamp shows a handicapped athlete throwing a javelin from a fixed stool and the logo of the Czech Paralympic Committee. It was designed by Zdeněk Netopil, engraved by Miloš Ondráček, and produced by the Post Printing House in Prague using rotary recess print in black combined with photogravure in ochre, green, blue, and red in sheets of 50 pieces. A FDC in gray-violet has a cachet which shows a stylized drawing of a handicapped athlete throwing a javelin (Fig. 6).

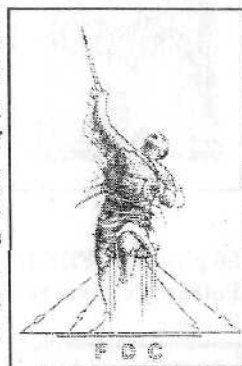


Fig. 6

Stationery

4. On May 26, 2004, the Ministry issued a commemorative postal card with an

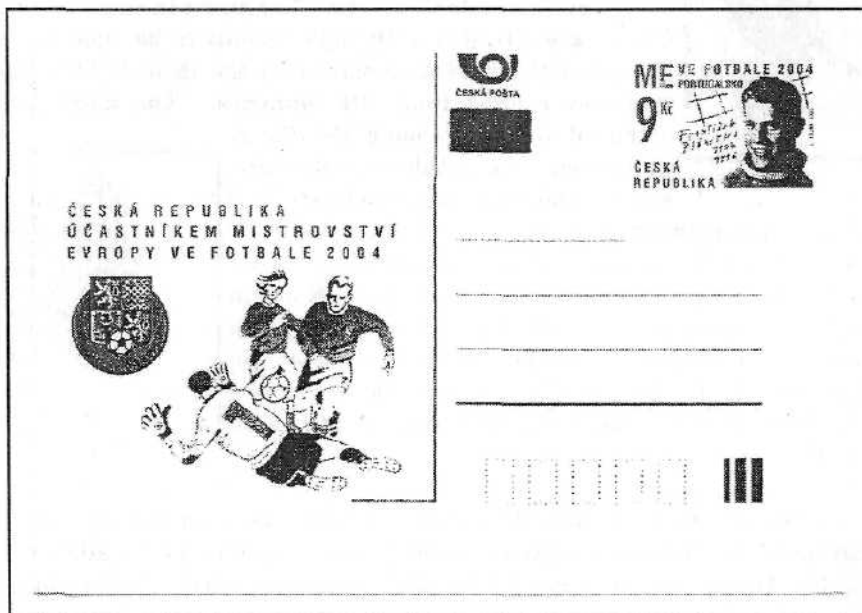


Fig. 7
36

imprinted 9 Kč stamp on the occasion of the European Championship in Football 2004 taking place in Portugal from June 12 to July 4, 2004 (Fig. 7). For the third time the Czech football representatives have advanced to the finals. The stamp bears a portrait from 1926 of the legendary goalkeeper František Plánička (1904-1996). Plánička would have celebrated his 100th anniversary on July 2nd of this year. He loved and played football from childhood. His first club was Slovan Praha VII. In 1923 he moved definitively to Slavia Prague, where he remained his whole life. He was captain of the Czechoslovak team for many years. The cachet of the postal card shows a stylized drawing of a goalkeeper and two attacking forwards accompanied by the logo of the Czech-Moravian Football Association. The postal card was designed by Luboš Grunt and produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by multicolored offset. It sells for 14 Kč.

SLOVAKIA

by Gerald M. van Zanten



Fig. 8

5. On March 10, 2004, the Ministry issued an 8 Sk commemorative self-stick stamp to celebrate Easter (Fig. 8). The stamp shows an ornately painted Easter egg (kraslica) above snow covered mountains. Easter is a time of springtime festivals since long ago. It is one of the most significant Christian festivals commemorating the resurrection of Jesus Christ and marks the end of the Lenten season. Easter itself is also the occasion for numerous ceremonies and customs all over Slovakia. On Easter Monday girls may be either whipped with willow switches or sprinkled with water. Switchers were presented with painted Easter eggs. From the earliest times, the egg was a symbol of rebirth in most cultures. This tradition survives in originally painted Easter eggs. Depending on the area of Slovakia, the ornamentation of the eggs is unique and artistically fabulous. The stamp was designed by Júlia Piačková and produced by the Walsall Security Printers Ltd., England, using multicolored offset printing in booklets of 10 self-stick stamps. A FDC was issued. *[Ed. Note: I believe that this is Slovakia's first self-stick issue.]*

6. On March 23, 2004, the Ministry issued a 20 Sk commemorative stamp in the EUROPA series entitled "Holiday" (Fig. 9 -- sheetlet shown actual size). Each year a new EUROPA issue is developed which is based upon a theme suggested by PostEurope, an organization of European post operators. Each operator can then *determine whether the theme will be included in their issue plan. The present such issue is called Holiday, which is represented by a castle, dove, butterfly, and flowers.* The author captured the holiday spirit -- contentment, freedom and harmony. The Slovak stamp was designed by Tomáš Krčméry and produced by the Walsall Security Printers Ltd., England, using multicolored offset printing in sheets of 10 stamps. A

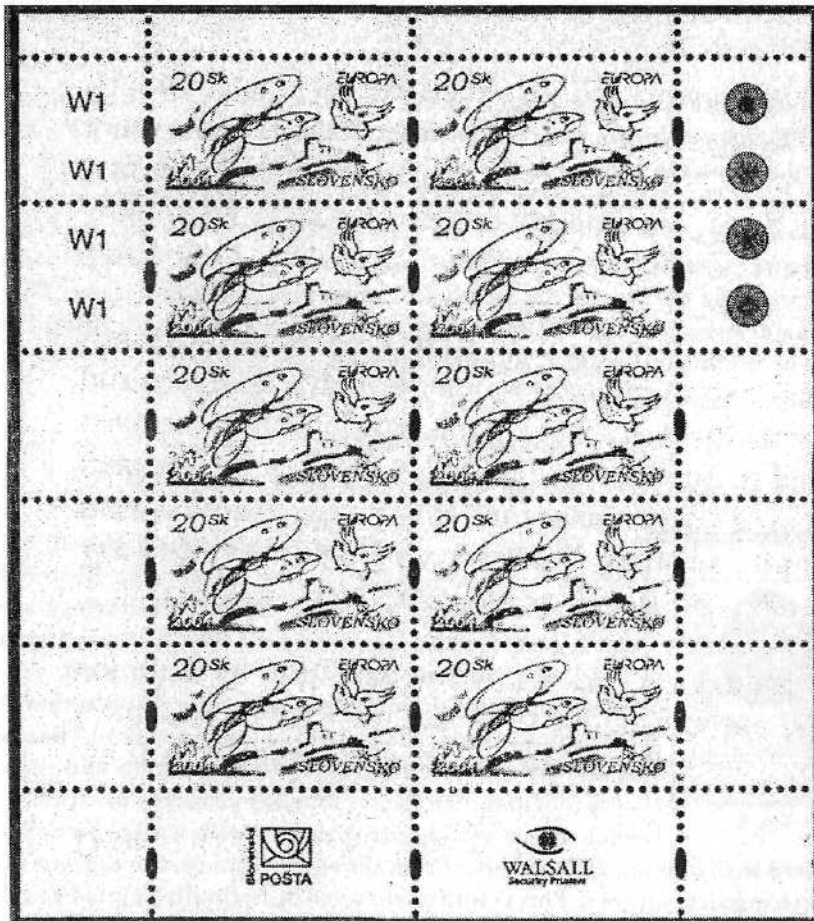


Fig. 9

FDC shows a girl with a dove, and the cancellation depicts a bird flying over a mountain.

7. On April 16, 2004, the Ministry issued a set of two commemorative stamps in the Beauties of Our Country series entitled "Wedding Costumes". The stamps were designed by Katarína Ševellová-Šuteková and produced by the Walsall Security Printers Ltd., England, using multicolored offset printing in sheets of 50 stamps.

-- 15 Sk: Groom's folk-costume from Pata (Fig. 10). One of the most beautiful folk-costumes in Slovakia comes from Pata. It is also worn in the neighboring villages of Šoporňa and Hájske. An old legend says that in the area of today's three villages there was small forest with five haylofts. The area around the haylofts (šopy) got the name Šoporňa. Pata was built on the site where the



Fig. 10

fifth (piata) hayloft once stood , hence its name. The village of Hájske is located at the place where the small forest (háj) was longest preserved. The groom's wedding folk-costume was a heavily embroidered linen shirt and a bodice made from blue damask decorated with silver laces and buttons. Black felt trousers were tucked into high boots with blue laces. A spray of rosemary was tucked into the headband of the hat and another with shinning beads, colored threads and ribbon was pinned to the bodice. Today these folk-costumes are only worn for special occasions. Wedding folk customs remain even today. The second most important man is the bride's father who hosts the wedding. He invites the guests to the wedding feast, selects who gives speeches, and of course gives his permission to the groom to marry his daughter. The duties of the best man start with going around the village to call the inhabitants to the wedding and extend to leading in the festivities and entertaining the guests with poems and games. A FDC was issued.



Fig. 11

-- 28 Sk: Bride's folk-dress from Pata (Fig. 11). The bride's folk wedding dress -- the most expressive clothing from the Pata area -- is characteristically richly embroidered, with bobbin-lace, bows, and shinning ornaments. Originally white embroidery decorated the bottom hems of the bride's black apron but today the aprons are embroidered with colorful flowers. A white and later green skirt was substituted for the flowered and pleated skirt decorated with bows and lace. Plain sleeves have from one- to five-colored checkered embroidery that creates motley ornaments. The

bodice is made from damask, brocade or embroidered linen. High heeled boots are embroidered as well. Especially beautiful is the bride's head-dress that presents the transition from young girl to married woman. Its upper and back parts are decorated with colored and silver pearls, mirrors and garnets. The front of the head-dress has flowered bows, above them it has a silver wreath with a spray of rosemary. Long colorful ribbons hang from the back. A few weeks before the wedding ceremony, the bride will sit in the first pew of the church wearing her wedding head-dress, to announce the forthcoming marriage. The other important woman at the wedding was the so-called "wide" married woman who symbolized fertility. On the road to the church she distributes cakes, during the wedding dinner she collects gifts, and after the ceremony she changes the bride's head-dress for a bonnet. Married women wear a small head scarf with tassels on their bonnets. A FDC was issued.

8. On May 1, 2004, the Ministry issued a 60 Sk commemorative stamp to celebrate Slovakia's entry into NATO (Fig. 12). The stamp displays the NATO emblem along with the Slovak national shield. The stamp was designed by Ivan Schurmann and produced by the Walsall Security Printers Ltd., England, using offset printing. A FDC was issued.



Fig. 12

9. On May 1, 2004, the Ministry issued an 18 Sk joint issue



Fig. 13

stamp entitled "Entry to the European Union" (Fig. 13). The issue commemorates the historical day, May 1st, on which the Slovak Republic (along with a record 9 others) became a Member State of the European Union. The idea of European integration was conceived after WW II. It was first proposed by the French Foreign Minister Robert Schumann in a speech on May 9, 1950. This date, the "birthday" of what is now the EU, is

celebrated annually as Europe Day. In November 2003, the joining countries decided to publish a common stamp issue -- United Europe. The author Jean Pierre Mizzi from the Malta Post designed the stamp, FDC and cancellation. Each one of the countries has its own flag pictured in the left bottom of the stamp with the other flags grouped in the middle and surrounded with 12 stars, all against a background map of outlined Europe. The graphic layout of the Slovak stamp was performed by Vladislav Rostoka, and it was produced by the Walsall Security Printers Ltd., England, using multicolored offset printing. The FDC depicts a symbolic map of Europe with the names of the joining countries.



Fig. 14

10. On May 21, 2004, the Ministry issued an 8 Sk commemorative stamp entitled "Grandfather Večerníček" (Fig. 14). The stamp shows an illustration by Ladislav Čapek of Grandfather Večerníček outside of his straw-roofed cottage in the evening (stars can be seen in the sky), standing by his dog and pointing at a flowering tree. Večerníček [*večer* = evening, *večerníček* = evening star, *večerníček* = person of the evening

star] is the name that was created for a specific evening television program of children's fairy tales. The original idea was to have a special slot dedicated to little children where they could tune in for a bedtime story. At first the broadcasts were made several times a week, but later they became a daily occurrence and a very special time for our children who eagerly awaited their program with Grandfather Večerníček and his little dog. These fairy tales are now a part of Slovakia's animated cartoon history and collectively are known as Večerníček. The aim of the creators was to illustrate national culture, promote the value of a non-violent existence and to instill a sense of well-being amongst the world's children, using the international language of cartoons. The success of their efforts is shown by the many international festival awards and, more importantly, through the affection of our children. Now, almost forty years later, several generations fondly remember the characters and stories which they came to know in their youth. The infamous signature tune of Večerníček, which has become synonymous with televised bedtime story telling, was written by the dramatic advisor and writer, Anna Minichová. The stamp was illustrated by Ladislav Čapek, graphically laid out by Pavol Blažo, and produced by Walsall Security Printers Ltd., England, using multicolored offset in sheets of 50 pieces. A FDC with a cachet of L. Čapek illustrations was also issued.



Fig. 15

11. On May 31, 2004, the Ministry issued a 34 Sk commemorative stamp entitled "Summer Olympic Games Athens 2004 -- Paralympics" (Fig. 15). The stamp shows a handicapped runner crossing the finish line before a middle-torso sculpture of winged victory and the Slovak emblem for the paralympic games.

After 108 years, the Olympic Games return to their birthplace in Athens. The concept of the Paralympics, to honor war veterans suffering from spinal injuries, was the brainchild of neurologist Sir Ludwig Guttman, who set up a Spinal Injury Centre at Stoke Mandeville Hospital in England. The first Stoke Mandeville Games were held in 1948 to coincide with the 1948 London Olympic Games. The first summer Paralympic Games were held in Rome in 1960, and they have been held every four years parallel to the Olympic Games. The physically disabled, including those with cerebral palsy, compete in a range of sports. The summer events include track, football [soccer], swimming, basketball, volley ball, weightlifting, table tennis and archery. The first winter Paralympic Games were held in 1976 in Sweden. A famous Ethiopian marathon runner Abebe Bikila took part in the Paralympic Games after he became paralytic due to a car accident. The first stamp dedicated to the Paralympic Games was issued by Argentina in 1964, the year Tokyo hosted the Games. Slovakia is publishing its first paralympic issue this year. Slovak parathletes will have the opportunity to enlarge their medal collection. [Dr. Peter Osuský] The stamp was designed by Igor Piačka and produced by Walsall Security Printers Ltd., England, using multicolored offset in sheets of 50 pieces. A FDC designed by Igor Piačka and engraved by Lucie Krulíčková was issued.



Fig. 16

12. On June 15, 2004, the Ministry issued an 8 Sk definitive stamp entitled "Ivan Gašparovič -- President of the Slovak Republic" (Fig. 16). The stamp shows a portrait of the President. Ivan Gašparovič was born on March 27, 1941 in Poltár. From 1959 until 1964 he studied law at the Faculty of Law of Comenius University (CU) in Bratislava. During his university studies he represented the university as a player of basketball, football [soccer], tennis and especially as a member of the TJ Slovan Bratislava ice hockey team.

Following graduation he held various increasingly important positions in public prosecutor's offices (culminating as the General Prosecutor of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic in Prague, 1990-1992), became a lecturer in the CU Faculty of Law, and a member of the CU Scientific Board. He continued his lifelong interest in sports by holding various positions of importance in sports organizations and teams. He was elected a member of the Slovak National Council in 1992 and ultimately became its Chairman. Always continuing his interest in the law, he has written numerous university books and textbooks, scientific research papers, and articles in the field of criminal law. He was elected President of the Slovak Republic in the direct presidential elections of April 2004. The stamp was produced by

Walsall Security Printers Ltd., England, using multicolored offset printing in sheets of 100 pieces. A FDC designed by Ivan Schurmann was issued.

13. On June 17, 2004, the Ministry issued a 12 Sk commemorative stamp entitled "Slovak Republic Forests -- Dobročský Prales" (Fig. 17). The stamp shows a forester, J. Dekret-Matejovie, standing by a tree with flowers and plants in the foreground. Dobročský Prales [praes = primaeval forest] is located in central Slovakia within Veporské Vrchy [vrchy = hills/heights] mountain range, and sub-range Balocké Vrchy. It occupies the

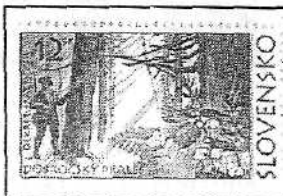


Fig. 17

northwesterly forested slopes of the Brôtovo valley at altitudes between 700 - 1005 meters. It is one of the oldest (it contains trees that are 450 years old) and rarest areas of virgin forest in Slovakia. The dominant tree species are fir, beech and pine along with a rare maple, elm, aspen or ash. Besides the typical Carpathian forest herbal and animal species, there also occur a unique mollusc (*Argna bielzi*) and an interesting small owl (*Glaucidium passerium*). Its preservation began with Jozef Dekret-Matejovie, who was the chief forester at the turn of the 18th century. The forest has been protected since 1913 when it became a national nature preserve. The stamp was designed by Júlia Piačková and produced by Walsall Security Printers Ltd., England, using multicolored offset printing in sheets of 50 pieces. A FDC designed by Vladimír Machaj was issued.

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