



THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST



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Presidents' Corner

The Society for Czechoslovak Philately had a very successful convening program at the Rocky Mountain Stamp Show in Aurora, Colorado, May 15-17, thanks to the active participation of its members, wonderful exhibits by some exhibitors, superb talks, and excellent pre-show organization by our resident director and new president, Lou Svoboda.

Twenty-five visitors signed our guest book at the show, including four new members whom we warmly welcome. We had a wonderful location for our table on the corner (Fig. 1, our photos are courtesy of Al Zulueta) which gave us extra chair space for visitors and table space for books. This helped us to sell almost \$700 of books and to get those four new Society members. This is not bad for an area that is world-renowned for its outdoor activities.

In the exhibiting arena we can report the following results amongst our members:

-- Phil Rhoads, "The Murder of Lidice", Gold Award; Alfons Mucha Award (best Czechoslovak exhibit, selected by the show jury); American Philatelic Congress Award (best show exhibit write-up); Denver Stamp Club Award (best show historical exhibit); Collectors Club of Denver (best show multi-frame display); Rocky Mountain Stamp Show (voted most popular exhibit by the attendees).

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1923 AGRICULTURE and SCIENCE ISSUE
TYPE II 100h: TWO PROBLEMS
 by Mark Wilson

Introduction

The Specialist recently published a series of my articles describing in detail all of the types and subtypes of the 1923 Agriculture and Science issue! [Mark Wilson. *A Guide to the Types and Subtypes of the 1923 Agriculture and Science Issue: The Czechoslovak Specialist*; Sep/Oct 2008, Nov/Dec 2008, Jan/Feb 2009, Mar/Apr 2009.]. I drew most of the information presented in those articles from the publications and notes of Jindřich Látal, a noted Czech specialist who has devoted a lifetime to the study of the typographic stamps printed during the early period of the first Czechoslovak republic. In his notes describing the 100h denomination² [unless otherwise identified, consider all mentions of the 100h denomination as Type II], Mr. Látal mentions that its subtypes may be found in four possible arrangements. I found something about those arrangements troublesome.

In order to understand why the four arrangements create a problem, it might be best to first consider a plate schematic for the 100h Agriculture and Science issue. Conventional wisdom has it that the printers copied a two-by-five block of dies (the shaded area within Figure 1) ten times to construct a plate of 100 clichés.

1	2	3	4	5	Copy 2
6	7	8	9	10	
Copy 3					Copy 4
Copy 5					Copy 6
Copy 7					Copy 8
Copy 9					Copy 10

Fig. 1: Plate Schematic

(the subtypes in position 2 through position 4 are replicated in position 7 through position 9), it is possible to simplify their representation and avoid needless repetition when illustrating them. That is, whatever might be said about the location of subtypes in position 2 through position 4 applies as well to position 7 through position 9. Thus, each two-by-five block can be schematically represented by a single strip of five dies.

The 100h has four subtypes: *subtype a*, *subtype b*, *subtype c*, and *subtype d*. These four subtypes occupy the original block of dies' six central positions: position 2 through position 4 and position 7 through position 9 (see the shaded areas in Figure 2). Additionally, any particular subtype always occupies exactly the same two vertical positions, one below the other, within every block.

Since for any single two-by-five block the arrangement of subtypes within both rows of the block is always identical

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Position 1	Position 2	Position 3	Position 4	Position 5
Position 6	Position 7	Position 8	Position 9	Position 10

Fig. 2: Schematic of the Two-by-Five Block of Dies

Subtype Arrangement within Blocks

Mr. Látal discovered the 100h subtypes fall into four arrangements. He called them Block 1, Block 2, Block 3, and Block 4. I have altered his original numbering of the blocks to better present this article's central thesis³ [*In his notes, Mr. Látal's numbering of Block 3 and Block 4 is the reverse of the numbering appearing in this article.*]

type II	subtype a	type II	subtype b	type II
---------	-----------	---------	-----------	---------

Fig. 3: Block 1

type II	subtype c	type II	subtype b	type II
---------	-----------	---------	-----------	---------

Fig. 4: Block 2

type II	subtype c	subtype d	subtype b	type II
---------	-----------	-----------	-----------	---------

Fig. 5: Block 3

type II	subtype a	subtype d	subtype b	type II
---------	-----------	-----------	-----------	---------

Fig. 6: Block 4

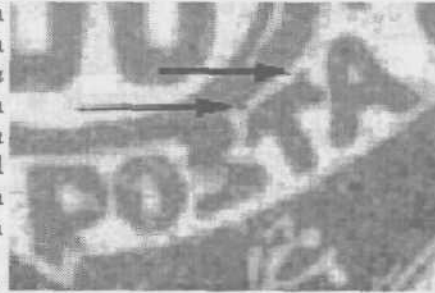
When each individual position in the four blocks is examined sequentially (by reading downward through the Figures 3-5), the first three blocks show a steady progression of changes. While the first, fourth, and fifth positions remain unchanged in all four blocks, the *subtype a* in the first block's second position (Fig. 3) is replaced by a *subtype c* in the next two blocks (Fig. 4-5). Likewise, the ordinary Type II stamp occupying the third position in the first two blocks (Fig. 3-4) is replaced by a *subtype d* in the final two blocks (Fig. 5-6). However, in the fourth block the *subtype a* in the second position appears somewhat of an abnormality.

The reappearance of *subtype a* in the fourth block clearly disturbs the progressive replacement sequence just described. No matter where one places the fourth block in the above sequence, a sudden disruption of the simple replacement sequence occurs. One may well ask, why does this matter?

Subtype Evolution

To understand why the reappearance of *subtype a* raises an important question, it is necessary to first examine what might be called the **evolution** of *subtype c* and *subtype d*. The use of the term **evolution** to describe the introduction of those two subtypes into the sequence of blocks requires a bit of explanation.

Consider first *subtype c*. The flaws in *subtype c* clearly indicate that it is a damaged *subtype a* die. That is, *subtype a* and *subtype c* occupy the same block position (position 2) and share two flaws not found in any other 100h die. Both have a small colored mark above the left arm of the T in POŠTA and a small colored projection from the upper end of the T's right arm (Fig. 7).

Fig. 7: Common *a* and *c* Flaws

Subtype c differs from *subtype a* only in that the shading lines below the allegorical figure's raised knee are damaged in *subtype c* (Fig. 8) and are undamaged in *subtype a* (Fig. 9). Examination of a number of position 2 stamps (*subtype a* and *subtype c*) reveals progressive damage (Figs. 10a-d) to these shading lines.

Fig. 8: *Subtype c*Fig. 9: *Subtype a*

In Figure 10a, the damage is slight: a truncation of the left ends of the upper three shading lines and above them is a small nick in the thick central seam on the right pant leg. In Figure 10b, the nick and damaged upper three shading lines reappear, but added are gaps in three of the lower shading lines. The damage to the shading lines is even more extensive in Figure 10c. Finally, Figure 10d illustrates a full-blown *subtype c*.



Fig. 10a-d: Progressive Damage to the Shading Lines

Thus, over time, *subtype c* evolved or emerged from *subtype a*. It appears that the damaged shading lines were weaker than the surrounding parts of the die and wore down or broke over time. In point of fact, it becomes quite difficult to

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assign some partially damaged intermediate forms to either one subtype or the other.

Do these examples illustrate the precise stages of the evolution of *subtype c* from *subtype a*? Probably not -- there are dozens and dozens of damaged variations indicating this evolution. Determining exactly which path the transformation followed would require extensive research and far more documentary material than is at hand for this article. However, the above examples demonstrate a likely, if not exact, process.

Now we must answer the question: Did *subtype d* follow the same sort of evolutionary path as did its sibling *subtype c*? Because *subtype d* began life as an ordinary Type II stamp rather than as an obvious subtype, its **evolution** can only be studied when it appears within a pair or block alongside other identifiable subtypes. In this case, these would be the subtypes found on either side of position 3: *subtype a* or *subtype c* to its left in position 2, and *subtype b* to its right in position 4.



Fig. 11: *Subtype d*



Fig. 12: Position 3 Type II

Subtype d may be identified by two specific flaws (Fig. 11) absent from its Type II precursor (Fig. 12). Flaw 1 is a white mark caused by four breaks in the shading lines within the seat of the pants to the upper left of the allegorical figure's ankle wrap. Flaw 2 is a white protrusion from the upper center edge of the leaf below the knee of the figure's left leg.

Either flaw may be found without the other. For instance, Figure 13 illustrates a stamp absent flaw 2 and with flaw 1 only partially developed (only three broken shading lines) while in Figure 14, flaw 1 consists of a single broken shading line coupled with a partially developed flaw 2. Other stamps may present flaw 1 as a set of very thin shading lines. As with *subtype c*, the die itself seems to have had weak points that led to the development of *subtype d*. But how could a flaw appear then disappear?

Figures 10 through 14 do seem to demonstrate quite strongly that *subtype c* in position 2 and *subtype d* in position 3 **evolved** over time. Clearly, *subtype c* is a descendant of some primeval *subtype a*. In a similar manner, some primeval Type II in position 3 was the ancestor of *subtype d*.



Fig. 13: Only Flaw 1



Fig. 14: Only Flaw 2

Thus we may safely conclude that the emergence of *subtype c* and *subtype d* is the result of their evolution from precursors: they do not represent new or repaired dies replacing the original two dies. If that premise is accepted by the reader, we may return to the problem caused by the fourth block (Fig. 6).

The First Problem

Since *subtype a* is clearly a precursor to *subtype c* in position 2, and since the ordinary Type II stamp in position 3 is a precursor to *subtype d*, it follows that the first block (Fig. 3) holds its appropriate place in the sequence as the absolute initial arrangement of the subtypes. The sequencing of the next three blocks, on the other hand, presents a problem.

If the evolution of *subtype c* preceded the evolution of *subtype d*, then the second block (Fig. 4) is also in its proper place in the sequence, and the third block (Fig. 5) -- indicating the later emergence of *subtype d* -- becomes the logical successor to the second block. It is the presence of *subtype a* coupled to *subtype d* in the fourth block (Fig. 6) that destroys the sequence: how could a *subtype c* revert to a *subtype a*?

On the other hand, if *subtype d* evolved prior to *subtype c*, the sequence of blocks might be rearranged sequentially by swapping the second and fourth blocks as follows:

type II	<i>subtype a</i>	type II	<i>subtype b</i>	type II
---------	------------------	---------	------------------	---------

Fig. 15: Block 1

type II	<i>subtype a</i>	<i>subtype d</i>	<i>subtype b</i>	type II
---------	------------------	------------------	------------------	---------

Fig. 16: Block 4

type II	<i>subtype c</i>	<i>subtype d</i>	<i>subtype b</i>	type II
---------	------------------	------------------	------------------	---------

Fig. 17: Block 3

type II	<i>subtype c</i>	type II	<i>subtype b</i>	type II
---------	------------------	---------	------------------	---------

Fig. 18: Block 2

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This second arrangement simply shifts the problem from the fourth block to the second block. In this case we must ask, how could a *subtype d* revert to an ordinary Type II?

For the first sequence (Fig. 3-6), the sudden reappearance of a *subtype a* coupled to a *subtype d* breaks the evolutionary progression and for the second sequence (Fig. 15-18), the sudden reappearance of an ordinary Type II in position 3 coupled with a *subtype c* breaks the progression. How can this situation be explained?

The only rational explanation is that the printers used at least two different blocks of dies, the second cast from the first, to manufacture the 100h plates.

Apparently even the weaknesses in the original block were transferred to the second. This means that two separate evolutionary lines existed. In one, *subtype d* evolved before *subtype c* (Fig. 19) while in the other the reverse was true (Fig. 20). Two sequences also help explain, for instance, how the lack of one or the other flaws in *subtype d* occurred (Fig. 13-14).

II	a	II	b	II
II	a	d	b	II
II	c	d	b	II

Fig. 19: First Evolutionary Sequence

II	a	II	b	II
II	c	II	b	II
II	c	d	b	II

Fig. 20: Second Evolutionary Sequence

The Second Problem

The introduction to this article mentioned conventional wisdom has it that, as was the case with all other Type II and Type III denominations, the printers used a two-by-five block of dies to produce the Type II 100h stamps. On the other hand, to produce the two Type I denominations (100h & 300h) the printers used a single strip of only five dies.

Below are schematics of two rows of dies for every denomination and type of the 1923 issue. In each, only the identifiable subtypes are noted. Most significant are the differences (or lack of them) between the upper and lower rows of the blocks. The blocks have been arranged to demonstrate the problem we are about to investigate.

a	b	c	d	e
a	b	c	d	e

Fig. 21: 100h I

Fig. 22: 300h I

	a/c	II/d	b	
	a/c	II/d	b	

Fig. 23: 100h II

a	b	c	d
a	b	c	d

Fig. 24: 300h II

				a

Fig. 25: 200h II

	a			
			b ⁴	

Fig. 26: 100h III

a	b	c	d	e
f	g	h	ch ⁵	i

Fig. 27: 200h III

a	b	c	d
a	b	c	d

Fig. 28: 300h III

[⁴In his *unpublished* notes Látal places subtype b in position 10 rather than in its classical location of position 5. It is not clear to me if this is a typographic error or not. He does not mention in his notes that he disagrees with the classical representation, so I am unsure as to just where subtype b should be located. Either location supports the ten-die theory.]

[⁵As was explained in my series of articles, the digraph ch is the ninth letter of the Czech alphabet.]

For the denominations and types illustrated by Figures 21-24, the lower row is identical to the upper row. This lack of differences implies the use of only one strip of five dies. (The Type I 300h in Figure 22 had no subtypes; thus its schematic is blank.)

For the denominations and types illustrated by Figures 25-28, the lower row of dies differs from the upper row. This difference implies the use of two strips of dies to form a block of ten dies. The Type III 200h is the most elegant demonstration with its ten different subtypes: clearly its construction involved ten dies. To return to conventional wisdom: it says the printers used strips of five dies rather than blocks of ten dies to print Type I stamps. Supposedly, at least as reported in the current literature, all Type II and Type III stamps were printed using blocks of ten dies rather than strips of five dies.

Note that the blocks of Type II 100h and 300h stamps shown in Figures 23-24 do not appear to conform to the conventional wisdom: they resemble the Type I configuration of dies in that the upper and lower row of stamps are identical. Perhaps -- and I stress *perhaps* -- the printer assigned the same workman who produced the Type I 100h and 300h to the task of producing the same denominations for the Type II issue.

We do know that Type I 200h dies were created but not used. *Perhaps* the printer assigned a second workman to the task of manufacturing the Type II 200h denomination, and he hit upon the idea of using ten rather than five dies. *Perhaps* that technique proved more efficient, so that when printing the Type III stamps everyone used his method. The arrangement of Figures 21-28 is intended to highlight the "two workman theory". Figures 21-24 show the "first" workman's efforts while Figures 25-28 show that of the "second" workman.

I am unaware of any reports in the literature supporting the idea that the Type II 100h and 300h stamps were produced in the same manner as were their Type I counterparts. If any readers have citations regarding this, please let me know.

There is another explanation that combines both problems. Perhaps, as the literature reports, blocks of ten clichés were used, the second strip of five cast from the first with weaknesses in the same place. In each strip of five, the evolution of position 2 and position 3 proceeded at different rates.

However, vertical pairs of stamps in different stages of their evolution, while a requirement, are not sufficient proof. The proof needs vertical strips of three stamps, where the top and bottom stamps show identical evolution and the middle stamp differs. This would support the existence of blocks of ten and explain the varying rates of evolution. Unfortunately, I have at hand only one such vertical strip and so am left without an answer.

Conclusion

My personal involvement with the 1923 Agriculture and Science issue has so far been confined to only two denominations: the Type II 100h and the Type III 200h. For both denominations, great pleasure has been found in uncovering artifacts and problems I have not seen reported anywhere in the philatelic literature. The 1923 stamps, even after 86 years, may still have new problems to uncover and resolve.

Perhaps the literature has already noted or answered both problems in citations I have missed. Some might find this situation less than satisfying. But my pleasure arises from first noticing something amiss, working out just what the problem is, then attempting to find a solution. Nothing is sweeter than the dissolution of the tension between questions and their answers, or between exploration and discovery.



Letters to the Editor

1. Dear Editor and Czech People:

We were amused to read your letter from Savoy Horvath regarding the cover Readstown, Wisconsin (most likely not a real place) to Czechia [*Mar/Apr 2009, pg 16*]. Somewhere along the line you all have missed the point that the postal persons directing this letter read Czechia as Chec(h)nia, and directed this item via the most secure route via Azerbaijan.

This is understandable as Chechia [*sic* Czechia] is not the official name of anyplace while Chechnia (meaning in Chechen "compared to our thugs your thugs are girl scouts") is the real name of someplace and obviously the two can be easily confused, as in the present instance.

To prevent future misunderstanding and the purloining of well-defined geographic names we suggest that the Czech Republic use as its official name one of the following:

1. Sveti-Kiril-i-Metodi-Stan.
2. Montana. Now in use by both Yanqui imperialists and Bulgaria.
3. Macedonia. Used by those people in Skopie and Greece. The Bulgarians do not use it for their part, leaving a blank spot to be filled by those people in Prag.

Your humble servant

K. Panitsa

President, Society for the Propagation of Chechen Philately and
Geopolitical Security (SPChPGS)

2. Lou:

-- Here is an email I got on Sudetenland Zeppelin Flights, sent by an ebay dealer who sometimes sends out such emails.

Phil [Melamed]

"Dear Phil:

The year was 1938. The well-polished Nazi propaganda machine was hitting on all its deceptive cylinders. German stamps, particularly its semi-postal issues, had been soldiers in the Reich's propaganda war for years.

In the late fall of 1938, after the Germans took over the Sudetenland, a strange trip made by one of the famed Zeppelin dirigibles created a curious blend of stamp collecting and political propaganda.

It was the eighth flight of the LZ 130. On December 2 it left Friedrichschafen and with 62 crew and 7 passengers aboard headed south to the Sudetenland. Also aboard, more than 1,400 pounds of stamped covers franked with the famed Zeppelin cancellation.

As the Graf Zeppelin II approached Reichenberg, now the Czech Republic city of Liberec, it drifted to a lower altitude. This was the day Hitler was in the Sudetenland, visiting Reichenberg, and the propaganda ministry had the majestic Zeppelin floating above to impress the Reich's new citizens.

Early in the afternoon, the LZ 130 drifted over the city's airport and the philatelic covers were dropped. Stamp dealers had loaded the flight, and covers with various stamps and various Sudetenland cancels commemorate the journey (Fig. 1).

Wintry weather meant a rough return flight for the Graf Zeppelin II to Friedrichschafen. This trek to the south was one of the last for this, the last of the Nazi airships.

The following August, weeks before Germany's invasion of Poland, the LZ 130 took off again, this time on a more nefarious, more secretive voyage.

The mission: to spy on British radar installations. The Zeppelin sailed above the east coast of Great Britain, going as far north as the Shetland Isles before returning to base.



Fig. 1

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Collectors prize the Zeppelin covers. And non-collectors remain intrigued by the rigid airships, which perfectly addressed the Reigh's needs for propaganda and military intelligence. They are enjoyed for the history and the intrigue they represent."

[Thanks to Paul Talbot, who can be reached at ptalbot@paultalbot.com, and whose ebay store is at www.paultalbot.com.]

3. Dear Lou:

Here is some update information to my "St. Katherine's on the Mountaintop" article from the Mar/Apr 2009 issue, pg10.

As late as 1949 the top of Mt. Sněžka looked like it had a small village on it with eight buildings. Well now that has greatly changed.

This past winter was a particularly difficult one for the mountains and especially for Mt. Sněžka. The snows were so heavy that only three buildings are left standing as can be seen in this picture (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2

In the photograph I have drawn a dashed line to signify where the border is between Poland and the Czech Republic (Poland on the far side) running right through the middle of the current and collapsed buildings. The large round building on the Polish side is the observatory whose roof was collapsed by snow, and whose telescopes on top were also damaged. To its right are the collapsed buildings that housed the Polish ski industry's equipment and lifts. On the Czech near-side can be seen the more-than 325 year old St. Katherine's Chapel -- still standing. Immediately to its right are the collapsed remains of the restaurant and contract postal station building.

Reconstruction efforts have already begun.

Savoy Horvath

Book Review

**FORERUNNERS and CONCURRENT STAMPS and
STATIONERY OF 1918-1919 CZECHOSLOVAKIA**
(Československé Předběžné a Souběžné Známký
a Celiny 1918 - 1919)
by Pavel Hirš

When you read the title of this 140 page, profusely illustrated in color, bound book you are initially a little turned off. It sounds strange and does not seem like something that would interest you or affect you.

But the next time you come across a cover or piece of Austrian or Hungarian stationery from the 1918-1919 time frame that has Austrian or Hungarian stamps or franking on it and has been used in Czechoslovak territory, then you will realize that you need this book -- and especially if you would like to know what value to put on it.

Basically this book addresses these kinds of "in-between" philatelic situations that occurred in the turbulent times of the birth of Czechoslovakia.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the forerunner and concurrent stamps and stationery of Austrian origin used in early Czechoslovakia. The second part deals with like philatelic items but of Hungarian origin. And the third part contains three lists of post office names (in use on 28.10.1918) translated from other languages into Czech. The first list is from German into Czech of those post offices located in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia. The second list is from Hungarian to Czech/Slovak of those post offices located in Slovakia. And the third list is from Hungarian to Czech/Slovak of those post offices located in Carpatho-Ukraine. Not all post office names are included; none of the lists include names that could easily be identified because they look practically the same in both languages.

Now back to the first two parts. Each part begins by going through the Austrian/Hungarian (respectively) definitive stamps that were used on postal items of that period in the Czechoslovak territories. It shows covers/cards as examples and has tables that give values for the items including: single issue usage, double issue usage, triple issue usage, etc.; halved-stamp usage; mixed Austrian or Hungarian usage; registered and special delivery items; letter cards; first day of independence use and last day of validity use; mixed usage with Czechoslovak stamps. It then covers special use stamps such as: newspaper stamps (including their use as definitive stamps or postage due stamps); special delivery stamps (including their use as definitive stamps, postage due stamps, or newspaper stamps); postage due stamps (including their use as definitive stamps and in halved-stamp usage). Then they go on to the respective stationery including: letter cards; pneumatic tube cards; postal cards; newspaper postal order; postal money order; postal receipt for telegram; telegram blanket form. Every one of these stationery items is illustrated at least once, and as with the definitive and special use stamps are listed in a table with values.

Of course, the biggest drawback is that the book is only in Czech. However, because of the very extensive illustrations and with the use of our Glossary of Philatelic Terminology, the reader should have very little trouble navigating this valuable text.

Ludvik Z. Svoboda



ZDENĚK BURIAN and PRE-HISTORY by G.M. van Zanten

The settlement of Štramberk in Wallachia [about 40 km east of Olomouc in Moravia] feels very old indeed to the casual visitor; however, many of its wooden cottages are of more recent times. The village center contains a remarkable group of 18th and 19th century traditional Wallachian folk dwellings, mostly semi-timbered with beautiful carvings, low wooden gables and balconied fronts. The village is also one of the best starting points to experience the local culture.

Next to the old Jesuit church is a small museum displaying archaeological finds from the nearby Šipka cave. Just below the main square is the Zdeněk Burian museum, dedicated to the work of this prolific painter, who was born in nearby Koprivnice and spent his childhood in Štramberk.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Burian (1905-1981) was a book illustrator as well as an avid paleontologist and best known for his painstaking representations of the world of pre-historic humans (Fig. 1, 2).

Inspiration for these paintings came from the nearby Šipka cave where remains of Neanderthal men were discovered in the late 19th century. A stamp to commemorate his work was shown in the Jan/Feb 2006 *Specialist*, which is the 25 Kč item of the 2006 Art on

Stamps set entitled *Deinotherium* (Sc. 3288). Figure 3 shows its FDC with a Neanderthal man as the cachet. These were the men who used the tusks of animals to carve amulettes and perhaps also tools, and of course figurines.

Which brings us to the carving called "Venus of Moravany", which was shown on the Slovak 38 Sk stamp described fully in the May/June 2007 *Specialist* (Fig. 4). The oldest documented examples of artistic expression found in Slovakia

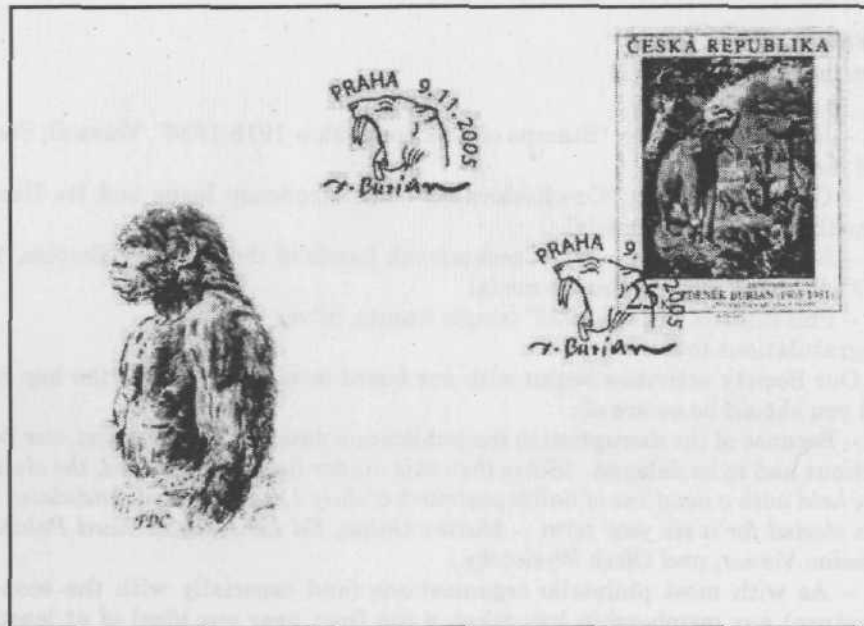


Fig. 3



Fig. 4

are from the Paleolithic period, or Stone Age. An exceptionally artistic example of such an object in the form of a woman with exaggerated sexual features was found in 1939 at an excavated mammoth hunters' camp at Moravany nad Váhom [just east of Piešťany]. The 7.5cm figure, of mammoth ivory, was carved about 22,800 B.C. (according to Carbon 14 dating) by a modern human.



Fig. 5

Yet another discovery! This time the "Venus of Věstonice" (no philatelic material was issued for this item, but I present here text and an illustration from my collection). This 11.1cm figurine (Fig. 5) was discovered by Professor Karel Absolon (1877-1960), a Moravian scientist of international renown, while conducting research of the diluvial settlements at Dolní Věstonice [about 30 km south of Brno]. This well-known statuette is estimated to be more than 25,000 years old.

KEEP DIGGING !!!

Presidents' Corner

(Continued from Page 1)

- Jaroslav J. Verner, "Stamps of Czechoslovakia 1918-1938", Vermeil; Society Gold medal
 - Olech Wyslotsky, "Czechoslovakia - The Hradcany Issue and Its Usages", Vermeil; Society Silver medal
 - Alfonso G. Zulueta, Jr., "Czechoslovak Lands of the Austrian Empire, 1569-1919", Vermeil; Society Bronze medal
 - Phil Rhoads, "Praga 1938" (single frame), Silver
- Congratulations to all!

Our Society activities began with our board meeting. Some of the key items that you should be aware of:

-- Because of the disruption in the publication dates of the *Specialist*, our Board elections had to be delayed. *[Since then this matter has been resolved, the elections were held with a deadline of ballot postmark of July 1, and our five candidates have been elected for a six year term -- Marisa Galitz, Ed Lehecka, Richard Palaschak, Jaroslav Verner, and Olech Wyslotsky.]*

-- As with most philatelic organizations (and especially with the economic downturn) our membership has taken a dip from near our ideal of at least 300 members to about 256. The biggest repercussion is that our dues are not enough to pay all of the costs for the publication of the *Specialist*. Fortunately we have a



Fig. 1: Lou Svoboda and Richard Livingston at the Society table.



Fig. 2: Lou Svoboda, Lois Verner, Tom Cossaboom, and Rich Palaschak discussing world problems.

buffer in our bank account, but we have to make a new push to bring our membership numbers up. We hope that you will help us to find new members. Your ideas and suggestions are greatly appreciated.

-- Since the publication of the *Specialist* is by far our biggest expense, we are investigating a number of possible ways to reduce our costs here without doing damage to your enjoyment of this publication.

-- A number of you reported that you were having difficulties in getting books from our library. We have therefore reopened the question of where our library is housed, and how we can solve the problems that have been experienced. Three members of the Board plan to meet with Bob Gibson, the Society's librarian in Baltimore, to assess the status of the Henry Hahn Memorial Library, the availability of materials to its members (please write if you have comments about your usage of the library), and then to make recommendations to the Board. We hope to hear from them soon.

-- Future conventions:

--- 2010 -- Philatelic Show, Boxborough, MA, April 30-May 2, 2010

--- 2011 -- Minnesota Stamp Expo, Crystal, MN, July 15-17, 2011.

-- Our Constitution and Bylaws are to be posted on our web site [*This has already been instituted by our web master, Marisa Galitz*].

-- The Board elected the following to two year terms: president - Ludvik Svoboda, vice-president - Richard Livingston, treasurer - Edwin Lehecka, secretary - Phil Rhoades.

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Following the board meeting, the board and guests retired to a nearby Czech/Slovak/German restaurant, The Golden Europe, and had a wonderful meal. Everybody had a choice of 5 entrees, Czech/German beer on tap, Czech/Slovak wines, and apple strudel for dessert. It was a wonderful evening, and everyone seemed to really enjoy the meal and the company.

On Friday evening, Lou and his wife Katherine sponsored an informal beer/wine/ lots-of-finger-food get together at their home. Everyone came and no one left early, so they were either exhibiting excellent manners or were having a good time. As the pictures show (Fig. 2,3), I believe it was the latter. After all, they got to meet Butterscotch and Samson, the carved carousel horse and goat that live in the front room.



Fig. 3: Katherine Svoboda, Joyce Palaschak, Lou Svoboda, and Lois Verner talking about Samson and Butterscotch.

Following the general meeting on Saturday, Society members and other show attendees had the pleasure of hearing two excellent talks: "Prague Revolutionary Overprints on 1918 Czech Scout Post Stamps" by Frederick Lawrence, and "Czechoslovakia's 1923 Agriculture and Science Issue" by Mark Wilson. Both speakers were very knowledgeable and illustrated their talks exceptionally well. I learned a lot!

At our Sunday morning breakfast meeting, I presented our Society's medals of achievement to exhibitors Verner (gold), Wyslowsky (silver), and Zulueta (bronze). We urge our members to consider exhibiting at shows in the future, especially at those shows where we are among the convening societies. Exhibiting gives you a chance to share your knowledge and enthusiasm for your unusual finds with others who have an interest in Czechoslovak philately.

But I cannot conclude without mentioning the magnet that our table was at the show. It was colorful, eye-appealing, covered with books, and people couldn't help but stop and say hello. I had show officials take me aside and complement me on our table and how it was attracting people. Thank you to all that spent time there to welcome and speak with the visitors and to sell the books and memberships.

One final comment. If in reading the above exhibit results you get the impression that Phil Rhoades's "Murder of Lidice" was a show hit, you are absolutely correct. People would come up to you and ask you where to find it; school groups had come to view it; many handkerchiefs were used in the viewing. This exhibit is truly a work of love and from the heart by Phil. Little wonder that when the Czech Republic was holding a special anniversary celebration in commemoration of the original event, the Czech government paid Phil's way to and from the Czech Republic to bring his exhibit for all there to see. Well done Phil, you have truly used philately to get to the hearts and minds of people, and to teach them never to forget.

Richard Livingston
Ludvik Z. Svoboda



THE FIRST SLOVAK EURO-DENOMINATED POSTAGE STAMPS by Slovak Postal Service

Technically this article should appear in the Letters to the Editor column, however it is of such significance that it warrants its own listing in this issue. The information was submitted to me by former long time member George Srb (who moved to his ancestral Slovakia several years ago) and by our book sales manager Savoy Horvath. In his letter George said, "Last week [about Nov. 12], 'Slovenská Pošta' mailed a pamphlet to every household in the country telling people about the change to euro, and the first stamps which will be issued in the first days of January '09." I have translated the pamphlet here for your benefit.

"Since the beginning of 2008, the Slovak Post has been intensively preparing for the entry into the European Union. This significant step is mirrored in all spheres of life, namely not only in economic matters, but primarily in everyday life. Thus, as the entire society prepares itself for this important change, even the Slovak Post is step-by-step solving the entire group of tasks, among which is the preparation and realization of the issue plan for postage stamps under the new Euro currency.

On January 1, 2009, the Slovak Post will issue the first commemorative stamp with the nominal value of 1€ [see its image in the New Issues column of this issue]. The stamp was designed and engraved by Martin Činovský. The stamp -- in arranged printing sheets of 6 stamps, which will also be simultaneously accompa-

nied by other philatelic products -- will be produced by rotary recess print in flat plates in combination with offset.

On January 2, 2009, the Slovak Post will issue an additional 12 basic Euro-denominated postage stamps [again see the images in the *New Issues* column of this issue]. Eight will be definitive stamps that will mimic the denomination structure of the eight European Union coins while the other four casual ones will have nominal values corresponding to the stamps most often used in actual tariffs paid. These stamps are components of the new issue group "Slovak Cultural Heritage -- Pre-Romanesque and Romanesque Monuments".

These first Euro-denominated postage stamps will have a new design whose development was participated in by the Dutch designer of Slovak origin, Peter Bilák, and the Slovak renowned graphicist, Peter Augustovič. The basic idea of the new issues was the presentation of the Slovak cultural inheritance from the beginning of the Christian culture in Slovakia, exactly when in the past Christianity was a common element in all of Europe. The issue series presents cultural monuments from the period of the 9th-13th centuries that are historically highly regarded but little known by the general public, and which are scattered across the entire land of Slovakia. Participating in the graphic designs of these stamps were the most renowned Slovak designers of postage stamps -- Peter Augustovič, Igor Benca, Róbert Brun, Arnold Feke, Karol Felix, Dušan Kállay, Peter Uchnár, and engravers -- Rudolf Cigánik, Arnold Feke, František Horniak.

The requirements of the Slovak Post were: that the stamps through their color should be easily distinguished at first glance -- like our bank notes, and that the monuments represent all of the Slovak lands according to the current geopolitical divisions. Common characteristics of the postage stamps are background hatching of parallel lines, uniform design arrangements, and the use of Fedra font for the lettering. A common motif in the current history of Slovak stamp production of the most extensive series of stamps involves sacred architecture. On the stamps are shown not only views of churches, but also architectural details typical of pre-romanesque art."



Philatelic News and Views

1. From Savoy Horvath:

-- According to Dagmar Holcmanova, director of the Prague police investigative unit, human fault cannot be assigned for the destructive fire of last October that destroyed the left wing of the Exhibition Palace where PRAGA'09 had just been held -- a hot plate was accidentally turned on. On that day two maintenance workers were dispatched to stall #2 to repair some wooden steps (their presence was confirmed by the police via surveillance camera). The exhibit manager had to stay in the building as long as anyone else was still present, so after approximately 60 minutes past the closing time of 6 p.m. -- to get the workers out -- he shut down the overhead lighting system, plunging that wing into darkness. The workers were stumbling around on their way out, and one of them apparently brushed against a hot plate. Police investigators later discovered that every stall anteroom hot plate had an easily moved on/off switch and that by brushing by it, the switch could be



Fig. 1

turned on. Someone had used that hot plate as a storage location for napkins and paper cups, which then started the blaze.

-- I am sending you here an unused Czechoslovak -- Air Mail card with a blue striped border (Fig. 1)(the "Letadlem Par avion" field plus airplane are also blue, while the stripes above and below are red). These un-franked cards were issued by the ČSSR post in the late 1980's for philatelic use in sendings for first flight cancels and are now used also for other commemorative cancels. Shown here (Fig. 2) is a similar used red striped card (here the "Letadlem Par avion" field is blue, while the



Fig. 2

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Fig. 3

stripe down the middle and the airplane are red). This card has a number of interesting cancels. The rectangular one is commemorating the C-152 OM-SVK flight of 29.6.2002, the parachute shaped one on 29.6.2002 commemorates the 60th anniversary of the first military parachute school in Slovakia at Trenčín, the one



Fig. 4

with wings commemorates the Trenčín aeroclub, and the one partially over the address commemorates the NITRAFILA international philatelic exhibition of 11-15.6.2003. It is interesting that the round NITRA 7 postal cancel (supposedly the one identifying when the card was actually submitted to the post office) shows a date of 29.6.02 -- which is more than a year earlier than the NITRAFILA commemorative cancel. The message side contains no other date, nor does it give any information that would explain this discrepancy.

-- Today we have two more post cards -- one from Slovakia and the second from Prague and both contain cancels commemorating the 90th anniversary of the death of General M.R. Stefánik. The Slovak one (Fig. 3) has a very colorful cachet commemorating the Czechoslovak Legionnaires who fought in France, Russia, and Italy and contains two commemorative cancels -- the circular one for the legionnaires and the rectangular one for the death of Gen. Stefánik, 4.5.2009, Trenčín. The one from Prague (Fig. 4) is another variety of the un-franked air mail card for commemorative cancels -- this one has alternating red and blue stripes with the "Letadlem Par avion" field in blue. The commemorative cancel shows Gen. Stefánik -- first minister of war of the Czechoslovak Republic -- and reminds to never forget the Scout saying "Forward" and also shows the Scout fleur-de-lis.

2. From Rex Dixon:

-- I am forwarding (from Hartmut Liebermann) translated information about Petr Gebauer's exhibit, Czech Dead Letter Offices, on Bret Janik's EXPONET site [www.japhila.cz/hof/0528/index0528a.htm]:

"Covers passed through Dead Letter Offices (DLOs) represent a fascinating collecting topic where each item is a unique piece with its own history and usually with both sides full of cancels, markings, postage stamps and seals. DLOs process letter mail that is undeliverable to the addressee and cannot be returned to the sender. Such mail is officially opened and returned if a valid address is found. DLOs were established at postal directorates and existed already in the 19th century in Praha (Prague) and Brno. During the 20th century their number progressively increased to 8 by 1949, at which time most of them were closed and only the original two DLOs remained. Beginning in 1952 there was only one DLO, in Prague, then from 1966 there was one in Trnava (Slovakia), and from 1993 one in Brno (for all of the Czech Republic). The usual Czech term for DLO is "poštovní úložna", sometimes used in the form "poštovní úložna a ohlasovna" (dead letter and parcel office). No fees were associated with the processing of mail by the DLO, but beginning in 1937 return postage appropriate to the class of original mailing was charged. DLOs used a large variety of paper seals for the re-closing of opened covers, as well as handling, duty, and advisory handstamps to mark necessary data on the covers. The DLOs also used grouping advisory, date, and official handstamps intended for internal use which occasionally also appear on processed mail.

1. The exhibit "Czech Dead Letter Offices" presents a specialized documentation of Czech dead letter offices from 1901 (when the usage of paper seals for the closing of mail began) to 1966, and includes also examples from later periods up to the present. To ensure the best picture quality for EXPONET, this exhibit is derived from a completely electronic version created by combining text, scans of original items and computer-generated images of the seals. Each

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item is presented from both sides -- below the original of the front side is shown a scan (sometimes reduced) of the back side. The descriptions include computer reconstructions of the pictures of the used seals that are the most collectable artifacts of DLO items."

3. From Lubor Kunc:

[In the July/August 2008 Specialist issue, the article "The Náchod Gutters Redux!!", by Mark Wilson, caught the attention of our member, Lubor Kunc, of Prague. Because it reflected new ground in the world of the Hradčany issues, Lubor believed it should be translated into Czech and published in Filatelie. After several months of work, that is exactly what happened -- Lubor translated the article, and it appeared in the 3/2009 issue of Filatelie. Along with the article there were the following additions by the editorial staff of Filatelie, which I believe would be of interest to our readers.]

"Preface

An entire generation of collectors of the first definitive issue -- the 1918 Hradčany -- has patiently gathered and published information from their studies. In the ninety years since their release, especially during the past half-century and earlier, this has become a body of respectable size and engendered status for this classical issue. Despite this work, from time to time something new surfaces which further adds another bit to our knowledge. Such a discovery may be found in these unreleased 5h light green gutters, here documented to a high standard by a foreign collector ignited by an interest in our typographic stamps and postal history.

Editor's Note *[at the article's end]*:

This article is a fine example that research activity into Czechoslovak stamps is not just the province of our [Czech] collectors. Valuable information can be obtained through contact with foreign collectors in distant lands. It is well known that many rare items were taken away by emigrants, especially during the years 1938, 1939, 1948, and between 1968 and 1969; most was legally and illegally taken during the 1948-1989 period. Only in the past ten or fifteen years did we really understand this. During the previous century, the United States was a frequent destination of these exiles, thus it is not strange that the larger part of this material ended up there. Frequently, in the course of time the original owners died and any understanding of the material's rarity faded away. In these circumstances, the fact that these light green 5h gutters were not inverted with respect to one another went unnoticed; also, a lack of information about paired stamps could have begun to play a part -- at that time inverted gutters were relatively common (and in point of fact are still so) -- and the rarer non-inverted pairs, to put it plainly, could through ignorance have been overlooked (such were the circumstances of the Oregon dealer, who placed them on the internet as "philatelic rubbish"). To put it plainly, green five haleř gutters were somewhat common and thus not of much interest (and I believe, no one saw these for what they were). At a time when these common 5 and 10h gutters could be had cheaply, the original owner may also have

been confused (because specialist collectors offered little for plain exemplars), I believe, and he "touched them up" by canceling half of them and marking all with provisional postage due markings, thus altering their appearance to entice sale. In the end, this apparently proved unsuccessful, because the gutters remained for the most part uncut (and together) until today.

The case of S. Komberec's study collection, mentioned in the article by this researcher, testifies to the interest of foreign collectors in our "classical" issues. When the collection was offered for sale in the Profil auction a few years ago, Czech collectors showed only negligible interest; in due course it was sold for a low bid to a German collector.

This article indirectly exposes the fact that our collectors do not yet take full advantage of the internet. It shows that it pays to watch auctions. Among all kinds of annoyingly common and forged materials, perhaps someone else may find another discovery of a lifetime!"

4. From Kivdul Adobovs:

Last year we neglected to report how our various members did with their exhibits at PRAGA 2008. Here is a listing of the awards that various members received:

- Georg Wilhelms, "Czechoslovakia; The Hradčany Issue"; Gold
- Hans van Dooremalen, "Postal History of Brno up to 1875"; Gold
- Jan Verleg, "Postal History of Carpatho-Ukraine 1786-1945"; Gold
- Olech Wyslotsky, "The Hradčany Issue and its Usages"; Large Vermeil
- Jaroslav Verner, "Czechoslovak Military Mail in Siberia 1914-1921"; Large Vermeil
- Alfonso Zulueta, "Afghanistan: the Amanullah Period, 1920-1929"; Large Vermeil
- Jan Verleg, "Handbook Carpatho-Ukraine, Postal History and Stamps 1786-2000"; Vermeil
- Lubor Kunc, "Field Post Systems on Czechoslovak Territory X.1918-II.1919"; Large Silver
- Karel Holoubek, "Revolutionary Overprints 1944/45"; Silver
- **16** or Kunc, "Postal History of World War I" (on CD); Silver
- el Fischer, "Czechoslovakia: the Košice Issue"; Silver



ERRATA

-- In the article "Carpatho-Ukraine" of the March/April 2009 issue, page 8, the author would like to make the following correction. Where it talks about the Ukrainian national colors are blue, white and yellow, it should have been just blue and yellow. The blue represents the blue of the sky, while the yellow represents the golden grain in the fields.

New Issues

CZECH REPUBLIC

by G.M. van Zanten

1. On April 8, 2009, the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic issued a commemorative souvenir sheet with one 51 Kč stamp showing the Reliquary of Saint Maur at Bečov nad Teplou (Fig. 1). The reliquary was likely created in 1225-1230 on request of the Benedictine Abbey in Florennes, Belgium for relics of SS. Maur, Timothy, and John the Baptist. For centuries it was a venerated and carefully kept shrine. In the late 18th century, probably due to its considerable wear, it was withdrawn from use. In 1838 the church sold the damaged reliquary to Alfred de Beaufort-Spontini, an aristocrat holding land also in the territory of today's Czech Republic. He had the reliquary repaired and following its exhibition in Brussels in 1888 he brought it to Bečov nad Teplou. After WW II, the Beauforts -- as an aristocratic family loyal to nazi Germany -- had to leave Czechoslovakia. It was likely at that time when they hid the reliquary of Saint Maur in the backfill under the floor of the Gothic chateau chapel of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary. For



Fig. 1

a long 40 years it laid there forgotten by the professional community. It was only after the request of a certain American citizen for collecting an unspecified thing at an unknown place and its taking out of the country that the curiosity on the Czech side was aroused. This led to the beginning in 1984 of the systematic search by the former Federal Criminal Central Office who found the reliquary on November 5, 1985. The reliquary, damaged by its stay in the wet ground, was taken from Bečov to Prague and deposited at several places in the course of the following years. It was only after 1989 that the proprietary relationships could be resolved and the most demanding conservation works, which lasted 11 years, could begin. Since

May 2002 the repaired reliquary can be seen at the chateau in Bečov nad Teplou near Karlovy Vary. In terms of its historic value the thing is priceless; it is the only monument of its kind in the Czech Republic. The reliquary is 140 x 42 cm by 65 cm high, and its upper part has the shape of a gabled roof. It is made of walnut wood richly decorated with numerous embossed ornaments and statues of silver gilt, precious stones, filigrees, and gems of precious and semi-precious stones. The opposite faces of the reliquary are decorated with approximately 25 cm high statues of Saint Maur and John the Baptist. Other smaller embossed ornaments show the life of Moses. Each of the side walls bears a row of statues of apostles. The reliquary contains skeleton relics and remnants of textiles and leather. The stamp shows the front face of the reliquary with the statuette of Jesus Christ. Next to the stamp, there is the enlarged statuette of Saint Maur from the opposite end. In the lower part of the souvenir sheet is pictured the entire reliquary. The stamp and souvenir sheet were designed by Zdeněk Ziegler, engraved by Václav Fajt, and produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by recess print from flat plates in black combined with multicolored offset. A FDC in brown depicts a relief from the roof of the reliquary depicting Saint Maur on the christening of Saint Apollinarius (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2

2. On April 22, 2009, the Ministry issued a 10 Kč commemorative stamp to dedicate the 75th anniversary of the completion of the construction of its present building (Fig. 3). The building of the Czech Ministry of Industry and Trade is one of the few seats of Czech governmental offices which fulfill their original purpose for which they were built.



Fig. 3

Thanks to this it has also maintained the character of its external and internal style and many items of the original equipment. This year (2009) is the 75th anniversary of the completion of the building. According to the initial idea of the Prague city council, the construction -- begun in 1928 -- was to be completed in three years' time. However, the final approval of the building took place no earlier than in 1934. The designer of the building of the Ministry and the Patent Office was Josef Fanta (1856-1954) architect and professor at the Prague Institute of Advanced Technical Studies and an adoptee of Art Nouveau after 1900. He also designed the Art Nouveau main railway station (Hlavní Nádraží) in 1909. The Ministry building of four floors has a stone facing made of granite and sandstone; the dominating feature, especially when alight in the evening, is its glass dome. The balcony on the first floor is decorated with the statues of Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, and Engineering. The eastern side, facing the Vltava river, is unusually rich in decorations, boasting especially the allegorical figures of Enterprise, Invention, Perseverance, and Truthfulness. The figure with children -- lying at both sides of the front -- stand for Trade and Industry. The total number of statues decorating the whole building is 120; they are accompanied with a large amount of

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Fig. 4

sgraffitos, ornaments, metal bars and other decorative segments. The decorations are the work of fourteen artists such as, e.g., the famous sculptors Josef Paukert and Čeněk Vosmík. The distinctive features of the architect Fanta's style can be found also in the interior of the building, especially the ministerial stairway made of granite and marble and lit through a three-section window of stained-glass panes in lead. The stamp shows the northern front of the building with the main entrance. The stamp was designed by Zdeněk Ziegler, engraved by Václav Fajt, and produced by the Post Printing House in Prague using rotary recess print in black combined with photogravure in yellow, pink, light blue and blue in printing sheets of 50 pieces. A FDC in brown shows the eastern front of the

building (from Revoluční street) with a rich decoration (allegorical figures of Enterprise, Invention, Perseverance and Truthfulness)(Fig. 4). This roof terrace of the oval pavilion creates a dignified entrance into the representative rooms of the Ministry.

3. On April 22, 2009, the Ministry issued a 10 Kč commemorative stamp dedicated to the 150th anniversary of the former Pardubice-Liberec South-North German Junction line (Fig. 5). The Pardubice-Liberec line is the third oldest railway line in Bohemia. After the construction in 1854 of the Olomouc-Prague railway line Pardubice wished to have a link to Liberec and the army a link to the garrisons in Hradec Králové and Josefov. It is 160 km long, the first Czech railway in a demanding low mountain relief, and today it goes through three regions: from Pardubice through Hradec Králové,



Fig. 5

around Jaroměř, through the Jizera valley and over the Jěstěd foot to Liberec. The industrial magnate baron Liebig asked for the construction license which he received in 1856, and the first train came to Liberec on May 1, 1859. This railway was a part of the whole system of almost 800 km of lines which connected the whole industrial and coal production region of northeastern Bohemia to Saxony, Prussia, and Austria. The stamp shows a train pulled by the locomotive from the SNDVB series IIa from 1857 leaving the tunnel in the Jizera valley between the towns of Železný Brod and Semily. The stamp was designed by Jiří Bouda, engraved by Bohumil Šneider, and produced by the Post Printing House

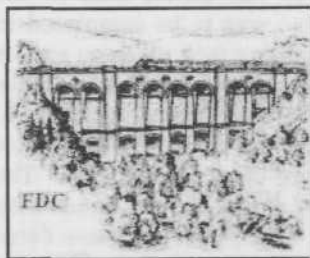


Fig. 6

in Prague by rotary recess print in black combined with photogravure in red, yellow, pink, and blue in printing sheets of 50 pieces. A FDC in brown shows the train crossing the viaduct near Sychrov in the Mohelka river valley (Fig. 6).



Fig. 7

4. On May 6, 2009, the Ministry issued a 17 Kč commemorative stamp in the EUROPA series dedicated to Astronomy (Fig. 7). The Association of European Public Postal Operators PostEurop declared "Astronomy" as this year's common theme for the postage stamp issue EUROPA. At the initiative of professional astronomers associated in the International Astronomical Union the year 2009 was proclaimed by the UNESCO as the International Year of Astronomy under the auspices of the UN. This event is closely related to the 400th anniversary of use of astronomical telescopes by Galileo Galilei. At an international conference the Czech Republic will commemorate

also the 400th anniversary of publication of Kepler's major work *Astronomia Nova* through the issuance of this stamp. The astronomer, mathematician, physicist, and astrologer, Johannes Kepler (1571-1630), was a man of significance not only for the Czech environment. In 1600 he came to Prague as an already convinced follower of the Copernican system. At the emperor Rudolf II's court he became a colleague of Tycho Brahe and after the latter's death (1601) he took the position of the emperor's mathematician and astronomer. Kepler who was convinced of a harmonious structure of the world believed that the grouping of planets into specific geometrical figures has an extraordinary impact on the world events. On the basis of data obtained by Brahe he calculated the elliptical orbit of the planet Mars and formulated the first two of his famous laws which regulate the motion of planets. The results were published in 1609 in his work *Astronomia Nova*. In 1612 Kepler left Prague for Linz where in 1618 he formulated his third law on planetary circulation. J. Kepler belongs to the major astronomers of the 17th century. He dealt with geometry, observed the explosion of a supernova, and improved/constructed an astronomical telescope. He is the first man to actually calculate the so-called Bethlehem star.

He found that it was the three-times repeated conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in Pisces in 7 BC that was the "star of Bethlehem". The postage stamp shows the portrait of J. Kepler with the schematic interpretation of his first and second laws concerning the elliptical orbit and the speed of the planet's circulation around the Sun. The stamp was designed by Jan Ungrád and produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by multicolored offset in printing sheets of 6 pieces. A FDC in dark-brown shows the goddess of astronomy Urania, a drawing according to a detail from the decoration of Kepler's book *Astronomia Nova* (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8

5. On May 6, 2009, the Ministry issued a set of two commemorative stamps in the Beauties of Our Country series. They were designed by Jan Kavan, engraved by Václav Fajt, and produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by recess print from flat plates. The 12 Kč stamp is printed in printing sheets of 8 pieces with Czech text in blue stating EXHIBITION OF THE POSTAL MUSEUM IN VYŠŠÍ

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BROD located in the gutter of the printing sheet. The 14 Kč stamp is simply printed in printing sheets of 8 pieces.

-- 12 Kč: The Cistercian Monastery at Vyšší Brod; colors -- ocher, blue, dark-blue, black-brown (Fig. 9). The Cistercian Monastery at Vyšší Brod, celebrating



Fig. 9

this year the 750th anniversary of its foundation, belongs to the major cultural monuments in Southern Bohemia. It was founded in 1259 by Vok of Rožmberk who called Cistercian monks from Austrian Wilhering. Vyšší Brod became the Rožmberk family monastery, endowed with large property, and the burial place of ten generations of the family. In 1611 when the family of Rožmberk died out the monastery passed under the imperial patronage, and later on it was granted to the Eggenberg family. The monks had to maintain continuous fighting with the family for their rights. In the early 18th century the monastery passed onto the Schwarzenberg family. The rather distant location of the monastery saved it from destruction at the time of the Hussite wars as well as at the reformation era. The location remained basically unharmed and constitutes the best preserved and historically most authentic monastery in the Czech Republic. The cycle of nine board paintings by the so-called Master of Vyšší Brod in the gallery of the monastery is a middle-pointed style jewel of South Bohemian painting. The library is the third largest Czech library. Located in the chapel is a board painting of the Madonna of Vyšší Brod by an unknown painter and the most precious item in the treasury of the monastery is the double-arm Záviš' cross. A community of Cistercian monks who moved back to the monastery has been gradually reconstructing the monastery. The building of the abbey is the seat of a branch of the Postal Museum in Prague hosting the permanent exposition "Postal History in the Czech Lands Since 1526 Until Today". The exhibits include, e.g., coaches and sledges, postal uniforms, contemporary signs and post



Fig. 11

boxes, postage stamps, historic telegraph machines, telex machines, telephones, etc. Since 1995 the monastery is on the list of national cultural heritage. The stamp features the exterior of the monastery church of the Holy Virgin which is the actual dominating point of the buildings. Towering above the church is a drawing outlining the Gothic style of architecture with ogive arches and a wheel-window. A FDC in gray-green shows the tympanum of the portal gate to the sacristy of the monastery church of the Holy Virgin (Fig. 10).

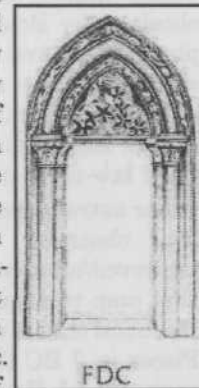


Fig. 10

-- 14 Kč: The Chateau at Horšovský Týn; colors -- yellow, brown, red, black-brown (Fig. 11). The chateau at Horšovský Týn is located in West Bohemia. After the

1547 fire the original early Gothic bishop castle of the central European type of citadels underwent a delicate reconstruction led by the Italian architect A. Galli into a Renaissance chateau of the Lobkowitz family. Still preserved is the early Gothic bishop castle chapel with uniquely structured ribbed vault and wall paintings built by the Burgundian construction works in the mid-13th century. With the exception of small Neo-Renaissance rebuilding in the back courtyard in the late 19th century the chateau underwent no further reconstruction. The knight hall contains a unique gallery of portraits of Czech rulers. The origin of the gallery is connected with the chateau at Jindřichův Hradec and the Slavata family. In the course of the 16th and 17th centuries the latter ordered a chronological series of portraits of rulers from the Přemyslid family through the Luxembourg family, Jiří of Poděbrady, the Jagellon family until the Habsburg family. The largest part of the original magnificent series of portraits is kept at the chateau at Horšovský Týn.



Fig. 12

In 1996 due to its immense historic value the entire chateau was proclaimed a national cultural monument. The chateau includes not only the main chateau building but also the building of the burgraviate and the almost forty-hectare landscape gardens with the Gloriette, the Widows' House, and the Loretan Chapel which is likely the first building of this kind in Bohemia. The gardens are open to the public on the side of the town of Horšovský Týn. Today the chateau is one of the Czech monuments which are most open to the public, offering several visitor tours through furnished residential premises of the chateau and the richly furnished chateau saloons. The stamp features a part of the chateau with the main entrance gate. The design of the stamp is made complete with a drawing outlining the unique ribbed vault of the castle chapel. A

FDC in brown shows the entrance gate of the castle chapel (Fig. 12).

6. On May 27, 2009, the Ministry issued a 10 Kč commemorative stamp in the For Children series entitled Spejbl and Hurvínek (Fig. 13). Spejbl and Hurvínek, the most famous Czech puppets, are the theme of the traditional issue dedicated to children. They were conceived by their spiritual father and performer Professor Josef Skupa (1892-1957). The figure of Spejbl was created by the woodcarver Karel Nosek in 1920 and coupled with Kašpárek belonged to the most popular heroes of Pilsen children. Hurvínek was invented, designed and created in 1926 by Gustav Nosek, Karel Nosek's nephew. In 1930 Professor Skupa established the first professional puppet theater of a new type called Pilsen Puppet Theater of Professor J. Skupa, later renamed to *The Theater of Spejbl and Hurvínek*. In the same year the Spejbls welcomed new members -- Hurvínek's friend Máníčka and the dog Žeryk. In 1945 the theater began performing in Prague. In 1971 added to these core four figures was Mrs. Kateřina Hovorková - Máníčka's pedantic granny. The



Fig. 13

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST



Fig. 14

humorous stories from the life of these wooden heroes are known to children almost all over the world where the Theater Spejbl and Hurvínek played. The theater performs also satirical comedies for adults. The stamp shows Spejbl and Hurvínek. It was designed by Hana Čápková, engraved by Miloš Ondráček, and produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by rotary recess print in black combined with photogravure in yellow, light brown, red, and black in printing sheets of 30 pieces, and also in philatelic booklets of 8 stamps and 2 labels. The label shows three other protagonists of the Theater Spejbl and Hurvínek -- Máníčka with her granny and the dog Žeryk. A FDC in black shows all four puppets together with the dog Žeryk (Fig. 14).

7. On May 27, 2009, the Ministry issued a 21 Kč stamp to commemorate Rabbi Judah Loew (Fig. 15). The Jewish rabbi and scholar Judah Loew ben Bezalel (c. 1525-1609), also known as Rabbi Löwe or as the Maharal of Prague (MaHaRaL is the Hebrew acronym of *Morenu Ha-Rav Loew*,

"Our Teacher the Rabbi Loew" or also *Morenu Ha-gadol Rabbi Loew*, "Our (Great) Teacher Rabbi Loew") is a significant historical person. In 1553 he became the leading land rabbi in Mikulov where he stayed up to 1574 when he left for Prague. During his stay in Prague he founded a talmudic school (yeshiva) which he administered for 10 years beginning in 1582. He also set up the regulations for the *Chevre Kadisha* (burial society). Besides his work as a rabbi, Judah Loew was interested in natural sciences, particularly in astronomy and astrology. Perhaps he met the court astronomer of the Emperor



Fig. 15



Fig. 16

or Rudolf II, Tycho Brahe. While there is a note proving his audience with the Emperor on February 16, 1592, its contents -- according to the Emperor's wishes -- was kept secret. Maybe their common interest in alchemy was the likely reason for the audience. In 1592-1597 Judah Loew served in the position of leading rabbi in Poznan and since 1597 until his death he was a leading land rabbi of the Kingdom of Bohemia. He is buried at the Old Jewish Cemetery in Prague. The life of the Rabbi Loew is filled with numerous stories and legends, the best known of which is the legend of the Prague Golem. Nevertheless, the Golem is mentioned in none of the seventeen printed publications of the Rabbi. The legend first appeared at the turn of the 18th and 19th century. Besides his literary activity the Rabbi also occupied himself with the education system; as a result of

his opinions as a teacher he is compared to J.A. Komenský. The stamp features a stylized portrait of Rabbi Loew, his name in Czech and Hebrew, and the years 1609-2009. Also shown is the tympanum of the entry portal of the Old-New Synagogue decorated by vine shrub relief and the sign of the Prague Jewish community. The stamp was designed by Karel Zeman and produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by multicolored offset in the form of printing sheets of 5 stamps and 4 labels. The label in the same size as the stamp shows Rabbi Loew's cup, one of the few relics remaining from the rabbi's property. A FDC in red-brown showing the western part of the Old-New Synagogue as seen from Maisel street and having the shadow of the legendary Golem on it and his face (Fig. 16).

SLOVAKIA

by Gerald M. van Zanten



Fig. 17

8. On January 1, 2009, the Ministry of Transport, Posts, and Telecommunications issued a 1.00 Euro (€) stamp to commemorate its First Euro Stamp (Fig. 17). Upon EU accession, the Slovak Republic undertook to gradually implement legislative and economic measures leading to Economic and Monetary Union, as well as the introduction of the common currency -- the euro. As of 1 January 2009 the Slovak Republic became the sixteenth member state of the Eurozone -- a geographic area comprising countries that have adopted the euro as their common currency -- and joined countries with one of the strongest currencies in the world. The design of the euro banknotes

with values of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 is identical for all Eurozone countries. The euro coins are issued in the eight different values of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 eurocents, and 1 euro and 2 euros. Each Eurozone state mints coins with a common European motif on one side and a country-specific national motif on the other. The Slovak euro coins feature the following three motifs: the Tatra Mountains peak of Kriváň on the 1, 2, and 5 cent euro coins; Bratislava Castle on the 10, 20, and 50 cent euro coin; and the Slovak double cross on three hills on the 1 and 2 euro coins. This first euro-denominated stamp shows the euro symbol below which is an outline map of the state of Slovakia having a dot where the capital, Bratislava, is located. The stamp was designed and engraved by



Fig. 18

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

Martin Činovský and produced by the Poštovní Tiskárna Cenin Praha, a.s., by recess printing from flat plates combined with offset in sheets of six stamps and a central gutter showing coins with the 3 symbolic motifs of Slovakia which appear on the new coinage (Fig. 18). The cachet of the FDC shows in dark blue-gray the modern Postal Headquarters building with a new Euro coin banner (Fig. 19)[*Thanks to Czechout 1/2009*].



Fig. 19

9. On January 2, 2009, the Ministry issued a series of 12 commemorative stamps entitled "Slovak Cultural Heritage -- Pre-Romanesque and Romanesque Monuments" that are denominated in euros. [See "The First Slovak Euro-Denominated Postage Stamps" article elsewhere in this journal for details from the Slovak Post as to the purpose, design criteria, and various Slovak stamp designers and engravers of this series of stamps.] All of the stamps were produced by Poštovní Tiskárna Cenin Praha, a.s.; the 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 euro cent, and the 1 and 2 euro stamps used rotary recess printing combined with gravure in sheets of 100 stamps; the 33 and 66 euro cent stamps used offset printing in sheets of 50 stamps; and the 1.33 euro stamp used recess printing from flat plates combined with offset in a miniature sheet containing one stamp.



Fig. 20

-- 0.01 €: Chapel of St. Margaret near Kopčany (Fig. 20). The Chapel of St. Margaret of Antioch is situated opposite to a destroyed Great Moravian hill fort "Valy" near Mikulčice. Research of such a unique monument was inspired by signs of the church's Great Moravian origin. The ground plan proves that the chapel is of an archaic type of Christian sacral architecture, which can be referred to as a one-nave church with a square presbytery. It is a rare representative

of Pre-Roman architecture of the 9th-10th century that has been preserved intact. Thanks to archaeological research in 2004, several tombs with Great Moravian inventory were uncovered, which confirmed its Pre-Romanesque origin. The stamp shows a view of the chapel from the rear. A FDC in gray shows the front of the chapel (Fig. 21).



Fig. 21



Fig. 22

-- 0.02 €: Church of the Virgin Mary in Boldog (Fig. 22). This church in Boldog is an interesting example of Romanesque architecture in rural environment. Much of the wall masonry and church tower date back to the Romanesque period, while subsequent constructions and reconstructions date to the 12th and 13th centuries. During the construction, older grave plates from the Roman period were used: the left portal lintel is created by a stele of a Roman centu-



Fig. 23

rion and merchant Quintus Atilious Primus from the 1st century. Invaluable proof of Romanesque stone-sculpture was preserved in the interior of the church, i.e., a relief-decorated font that has a reservoir supported by columns. Among them, the central relief of Christ with the left hand raised in a blessing gesture can be seen (which is seen on the stamp). This font, being exceptionally rare in its form and decoration, is included in the list of Roman monuments in Slovakia. A FDC shows the Romanesque church from the front (Fig. 23).

-- 0.05 €: Rotunda of St. Margaret in Šivetice (Fig. 24). The Catholic church of St. Margaret of Antioch in Šivetice represents a building of a central tendency -- a rotunda. The inside consists of two parts of a semicircular ground plan: an apse vaulted by a half-dome and a nave with a quarter-sphere vaulting. The church is made of brick. It was the Zach family who built the rotunda around the first half of the 13th century when they were owners of Šivetice. It was a kind of noblemen's church, in which the founder



Fig. 24



Fig. 25

possessed certain privileged rights -- to be buried there, to have private sacral functions, to use it in property defense (there were slit windows in the attic) which was not unusual when talking about medieval churches. The rotunda was exceptional for its size -- with the perimeter over 11m, it belongs to the biggest rotundas in Central Europe -- and for its painting decoration which has been preserved in the church apse. In horizontal strips, two narrative cycles are depicted above each other: the lower one shows scenes from Christ's life, whereas the upper tells the story of St. Margaret of Antioch, the patron of the church, which was created during the second half of the 13th century. It is the oldest preserved example of the depiction of such a topic to be found not only in Slovakia but also in medieval Hungary. A FDC shows a detail of Christ's crucifixion from the lower narrative cycle (Fig. 25).



Fig. 26

-- 0.10 €: Church of St. John the Baptist in Sedmerovec-Pominovce (Fig. 26). This is the only remaining building of the former village of Pominovce (which was subsumed into the village of Sedmerovec) and was erected in the 12th century. The church is made of quarry stone and has an upper gallery in the nave that was probably used by nobility to observe masses (this gallery is pictured on the stamp). Similar galleries were features in other Romanesque churches, but rarely were their authentic appearance so carefully preserved. A FDC shows the church from the front (Fig. 27).



Fig. 27

-- 0.20 €: Church in Svätušė (Fig. 28). Initially erected early in the 13th century of brick and stone, only the western



Fig. 29

portion of the original (the facade with a portal and a gallery with a built-in tower) still remains after reconstruction took place late in the 15th century (this western portion is seen on the stamp). A FDC shows the portal decorated in Romanesque style (Fig. 29).

-- 0.33 €: Church of the Virgin Mary in Čierný Brod (Fig. 30). This red brick and sometime plaster single nave church was erected early in the 13th century, but reconstructed many times subsequently, although the last such effort in the 20th century returned it to much of its original appearance. The concept of having some of

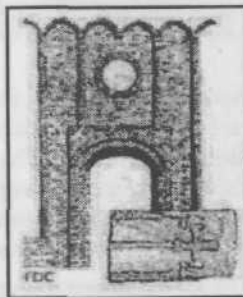


Fig. 31

the red brick show while other parts were plastered (and probably colorfully painted) originated in the Pre-Romanesque period and was known in other parts of Europe as well.

The stamp shows the church from the side. A FDC shows the western portal with a round window above as well as a Romanesque relief-decorated stone slab with a motif of three crosses symbolizing Golgotha. The slab may have originally been a front-piece of an altar table or a grave covering (Fig. 31).

-- 0.50 €: Church of St. Martin in Spišská Kapitula (Fig. 32). Originally built in the early 13th century as a three-nave basilica without a cross nave and with a two-tower western front (see Fig. 33 which is the cachet of the FDC), it lost its eastern part during a late Gothic reconstruction in the 15th century. The stamp shows the White Lion -- a sculpture carved from travertine which is a light colored stone, hence the source of its name -- that dates back to the church's original construction and currently sits near the northern entrance. The sculpture is unusual in that the lion has no mane and holds an open book in its front paws. The FDC shows the church in a quartering view (Fig. 33).

-- 0.66 €: Church of St. Egidius in Ilija (Fig. 34). This single-nave church was built in the middle of the 13th century, probably on the site of an earlier sacral building. The elaborate structure and rich decorations of the western portal under the tower contrast markedly with the overall architectural austerity of the rural-appearing building (see Fig. 35 which is the cachet of the FDC). In contrast the inside con



Fig. 28



Fig. 30



Fig. 32



Fig. 33



Fig. 34



Fig. 35

tains column heads that are covered in ornaments which, in spite of damage, show how skillful the stone-sculptors were -- note the motif of two birds with one head creating the corner volute shown in the center of the stamp image. A FDC shows the church from the rear (Fig. 35).

-- 0.83 €: Church of St. Stephen the King in Žilina-Závodie (Fig. 36). This Late-Romanesque one-nave church was probably erected in the middle of the 13th century, but there is also the possibility that it was built in two Romanesque phases, the first producing the present eastern part (small one-nave church with an apse) followed later in the 13th century by the addition of a more spacious nave to the west. The church is also distinctive through its wall paintings, which in some cases are in several layers, some dating back to the original construction (see the stamp image in Fig. 36). A FDC shows an architect's drawing of the building and surroundings (Fig. 37).

-- 1.00 €: Church of the Virgin Mary in Biňa

(Fig. 38). In the early 13th century this church was built at Biňa along with a monastery of the Premonstratensians by Omodej of the aristocratic Hunt-Poznan family -- but today it serves as the local parish church. It is a single-nave church with a large west gallery this is dominated by two towers (see Fig.



Fig. 36

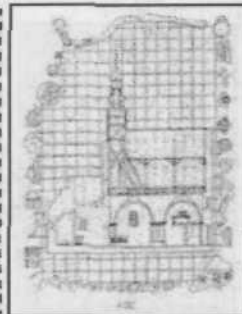


Fig. 37

39 which is the cachet of the FDC). Inside, the capitals of the supporting columns have carved stone floral and figural decorations. On the stamp is shown one of these carved stone figural decorations -- a representation of Atlas -- that is located on the inner lining of the portal. A FDC shows an illustration of the current building (Fig. 39). [Biňa is closely linked with significant evidence of Early Middle

Ages settlement. As early as in the 9th century -- the era of the Great Moravian Empire -- a village was located at an elevated terrace along the river Hron. Its existence was proved by the excavation of graves containing Great Moravian jewelry. In the late 10th century, the area was fortified with earth ramparts which are unique in terms of their extent and strength. We assume that their construction was ordered by King Stephen I during the war with the insurgent Kopán. The fortified area was used also throughout the following centuries.]



Fig. 38



Fig. 39

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

-- 1.33 €: Church of the Holy Cross in Hamuliakovo (Fig. 40). This brick, single-naved church was erected in the middle of the 13th century, but is one of those few which is still in its original form. As such, it has some well preserved wall paintings, the best of which are in the presbytery. The painting on the barrel vaulting has a central figure of Christ surrounded by animal symbols of the four evangelists -- John (the eagle), Matthew (the man), Luke (the bull), and Marc (the lion). Perimeter walls of the presbytery depict figures of the twelve apostles and Old Testament prophets. The stamp was issued as a miniature sheet -- central stamp and four decorative labels (Fig. 41). The stamp shows the church tower, and the labels show some of the painted walls from inside of the church. The FDC shows the figure of St. Catherine holding the wheel, with which she is associated (Fig. 42).



Fig. 41



Fig. 42

-- 2.00 €: Church of St. Michael the Archangel in Dražovce (Fig. 43). One of the most well-known Romanesque buildings in Slovakia stands on a small area of chalk rock above the village of Dražovce. The small church consists of a rectangular even ceiling nave, a low apse vaulted by a half-dome and a slim pyramidal tower dominating the western gallery. The present building was erected in the early 13th century on the site of a smaller church built in the 11th century. Both the stamp and the FDC depict the church from the rear (Fig. 44).



Fig. 40



Fig. 43



Fig. 44

in the early 13th century on the site of a smaller church built in the 11th century. Both the stamp and the FDC depict the church from the rear (Fig. 44).

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