



THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST



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Winner of Numerous Philatelic Literature Awards

A.P.S. Unit 18

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Editorial Hinges

This issue completes 15 years of my being the editor of *The Czechoslovak Specialist*. I am very much looking forward to my replacement, but where are you? Somewhere out there in our membership there must be an adventurous sole that is willing to take on this job. Remember, I will stay on to help break you in. And, the Board has already agreed that some degree of compensation could be worked out.

Meanwhile, I wanted to make you aware that our current problems in finding a new editor is not unique for us.

While going through some papers that were included with books and other materials that were donated to our library (remember the library is now my responsibility also), I came across a hand-written "story" by one of our former editors that sheds light on the early years of our Society and the problems they had with filling the editor position.

Frank J. Kovarik of Chicago (Fig. 1) was a very early member of the Society (member #5) who was a long time editor of the *Specialist* (1942 - 1961) and very active in the Society. This is his story in his hand:

"The Czechoslovak Philatelic Society F.J.K.

Early in 1938 I received an invitation to help form a society of collectors of Czechoslovak stamps, from one of the most ardent collectors it has been my privilege to know, Mr. Joseph W. Lowey of New York.

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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. Our web site (www.CSPhilately.org) on the Internet provides Society information on Membership, History, Education, Auctions, Exhibits, Book Reviews, Contacting other members via e-mail, and more. The site is maintained by Marisa Galitz, 1430 Brickell Bay Drive, #907, Miami, FL 33131, e-mail: MMGalitz@gmail.com.

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All officers and board members serve the Society voluntarily and without compensation.

Editorial Hinges

(Continued from Page 1)

Being a pessimist, I answered Mr. Lowey, I tried and failed, but that I have a small group in Chicago who are enthusiastic collectors but too small numerically to organize a national Society. I wrote to as many collectors as possible asking them to help organize a unit within the APS, but failed to get the minimum necessary and the best I could do is contact the Czech collectors who were interested, and form a local group who met periodically in one another's homes. Lowey's enthusiasm was contagious and when I saw he can succeed in a mild way, I brought this to the attention of our Chicago group and in due time most of the Chicago group became members of the nascent Cz Phil Soc of No America.



Fig. 1

It didn't take long and the society was 30 members strong. Mr. Lowey, who was responsible for this, named officers to serve until the first general meeting at which time a slate of officers, submitted by the nominations committee, would be elected or rejected.

In the December 1963 issue of the Specialist the author writes (p. 148) that Kovarik submitted a constitution for the Society. Many points of that constitution were revised, eliminated or replaced by others. All in all, the constitution was accepted by the majority. The first officers elected were: President: George F. Smyth, Bridgeport, Conn.; Secretary, Joseph W. Lowey, Bronx, NY; Treasurer, Guy Greenawalt, Washington, DC; Librarian, J.M. Stephens, Toronto, Canada; Appointed Editor, Tod Raper, Columbus, Ohio.

The Chicago group had most of the specialists and because it has been meeting for a long time became a chapter of the parent society and New York followed shortly. A chapter was formed in Batawa, Ont., Canada, but when Bata, the shoe manufacturer relinquished his hold of the factory there, the group disintegrated. Another chapter was organized in Cleveland, but because of lack of enthusiastic collectors, the chapter ceased to exist.

Catastrophe struck the Society soon after its organization. Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia and became its "protector", whatever that may mean. Slovakia fell away to become an "independent" puppet of the Third Reich. Subcarpathian Ukraine was the first to be seized by the Soviet forces. Had it not been for the patriotic Czechs and Slovaks in the Society, it would be just another philatelic group that died aborning.

It was not until the end of WW 2 that the Society regained its strength which was almost lost when the communists overthrew the government of President Eduard Benes and his democratic socialist party and established a dictatorship, not of proletariots, but of Stalin's henchmen. This was another blow to the Cz Phil Society.

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

Most societies that devote themselves to the study of stamps of a certain country, a specific theme, or a definite topic, owe their existence to a publication which furthers the study of the society's reason for existence. The editor of such publications must be careful to obtain for the readers articles of interest. It is best if he is known to many knowledgeable specialists of the society he represents. He must be careful to avoid controversy and, like all politicians, he must be hail fellow well met.

The Czechoslovak Specialist is the official organ of the Cz Phil Soc of No America. Its first editor was a newspaper man from Columbus, Ohio, Mr. Tod Raper. The first issue of the Specialist appeared in May, 1939, at a time when the Society had fewer than 50 members and the dues were one dollar a year. Mr. Raper was fortunate to find a printer who was a philatelist and could understand the terms as applied to the hobby, Mr. Harlan Miller of Lawrence, Kansas. Mr. Raper published his last issue of the Specialist in February 1940. May of that year the editorial chair was filled by Mr. Peter Kreischer of Chicago. Kreischer was an old hand at editing; he edited the "British Pacific Islands" and in the short time of his editorship, did a good job.

Many of us recall Pearl Harbor and as Peter worked in a war industry where his 40 hours a week job suddenly became more like 70 hours and he was forced to resign.

Dr. Reiner-Deutsch, then president of the Society appointed Mr. Lolly M. Horechny of Newark, N.J., who after a mere three months tendered his resignation.

Dr. Reiner-Deutsch then appointed F.J. Kovarik to succeed Mr. Horechny who accepted the task for a limited time which lasted almost 20 years. During the war years the going was rather rough but thru the efforts of member John Velek, permission was obtained to translate articles from the book *Československé Známky* by E. Hirsch and J. Fraňek. Most of the translating was done by the editor, with an editorial assist from Mr. Guy Greenawalt, the Society treasurer. It was not until after the war that others helped out with translations and not until 1947 that Czech specialists of the old country came to the fore, especially Zdeněk Kvasnička, Ladislav Kropáč, František Novotný, Jan Karásek, and our most faithful translator, George R. Skopeček.

Dr. Reiner-Deutsch succeeded Kovarik in Jan. 1962. The last issue of the Specialist under his editorship was Feb 1969; the next few issues were put together by the printer from material left in his hands by the editor. The Board appointed Mr. Edward J. Benchik of Port Jefferson Station, N.Y. And his last issue was April 1971. Mr. Wm. Schoenig, the assistance editor at that time took over with the September issue. It was just now my friend Bill Schoenig wrote to me that at the advice of his doctor he is forced to resign the editorship. It is the hope of most of us, the new editor will be a young, healthy and sincere advocate. If I understand correctly, one such person has been found and if my conjecture is correct I wish him, with all my heart, a true Slavic "Mnogaja Ljeta" and assure him of my hearty cooperation.

Every cloud has its silver lining."

If we look at the further history of the editor position, we see the following as to who was editor, the period they served, and how many issues they produced:

Bill Schoenig, Sep 71 - Jun 72, 10 issues
 Henry Hahn, Sep 72 - Jun 76, 40 issues
 Jane Sterba, Sep 76 - Sep 78, 21 issues
 Dominic Riccio, Oct 78 - Sep 79, 10 issues
 Harlan W. Miller, Oct 79 - Nov 79, 2 issues
 Henry Hahn, Dec 79 - Jan 80, 2 issues
 Richard Major, Feb 80 - Mar/Apr 85, 35 issues
 Frank W. Julsen, May/June 85 - Jan/Feb 87, 11 issues
 Gerald van Zanten, Mar/Apr 87 - Sep/Oct 87, 4 issues
 Mirko Vondra, Nov/Dec 87 - Nov/Dec 96, 55 issues
 Ludvik Z. Svoboda, Jan/Feb 97 - present, 86 issues

So you can see that the function of editor has been a real up and down situation.
 We need to find another editor, soon.

✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂

NEW PRINTING PLATE COMBINATIONS FOUND

by Jan E.M. Bisschops and Ladislav Olšina

edited by Mark Wilson

The Hradčany stamps, a collector's favorite for a very long time, were printed some 90 years ago. Since then many collectors have studied these stamps. Fortunately, a number of those collectors have also published enough of their findings to enable all collectors to use that knowledge fruitfully. One might think that everything about these stamps had already been discovered and reported, but in this article we will show that even today new discoveries are possible.

Our discovery began with our examination of a horizontal gutter containing the first Hradčany stamps ever printed, some red 10h stamps (POFIS 5/ Scott 3) and green 5h stamps (POFIS 3/ Scott 2). That horizontal gutter was, in fact, a piece of printers' waste (Fig. 1). One may assume, however, that the plate positions on this piece reflect the plate positions found on the printed sheets sold to the public.

Our initial goal was to identify the plate positions of the stamps in the gutter pair. Although the doubling of images on this piece of printers' waste make it a bit difficult to see the details of the gutter pair stamps, we managed to determine their positions on the original plates. The red stamps, positions 99 and 100, are definitely from Plate II and the green stamps, positions 91 and 92, are definitely from Plate I (Fig. 2)¹. [*Figure 2 uses Czech philatelic terminology: TD indicates 'Plate' and ZP 'Position'.*] We were excited to learn that this pairing of plates is not mentioned in the *Monografie* (see Volume I, page 100). There it states that the only possible horizontal gutters with a 10h red stamp at left and a 5h stamp at right required both stamps to be from their respective Plate II. We rechecked our printers' waste but saw nothing that required us to revise our initial findings: we were sure that on the left were a pair of 10h Plate II stamps and on the right a pair of 5h Plate I stamps, an arrangement the *Monografie* clearly fails to report.



Fig. 1

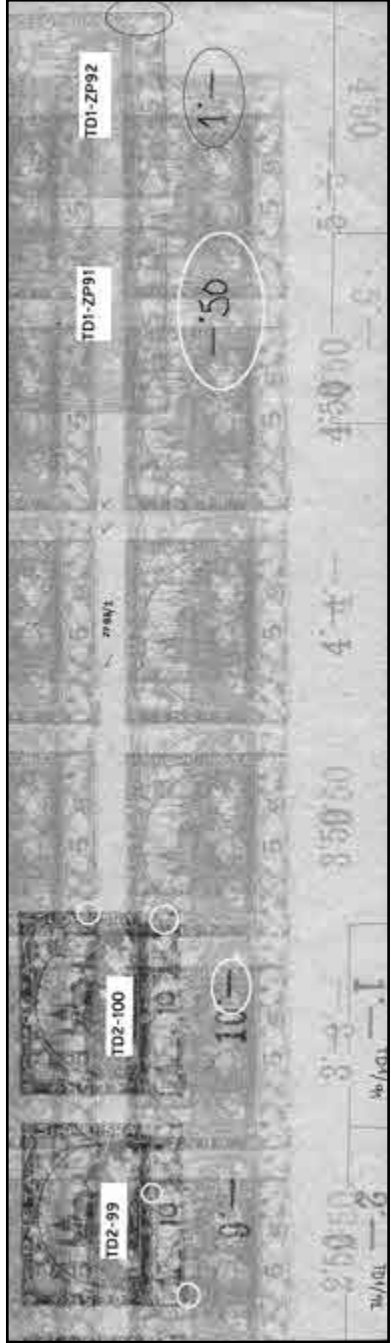


Fig. 2

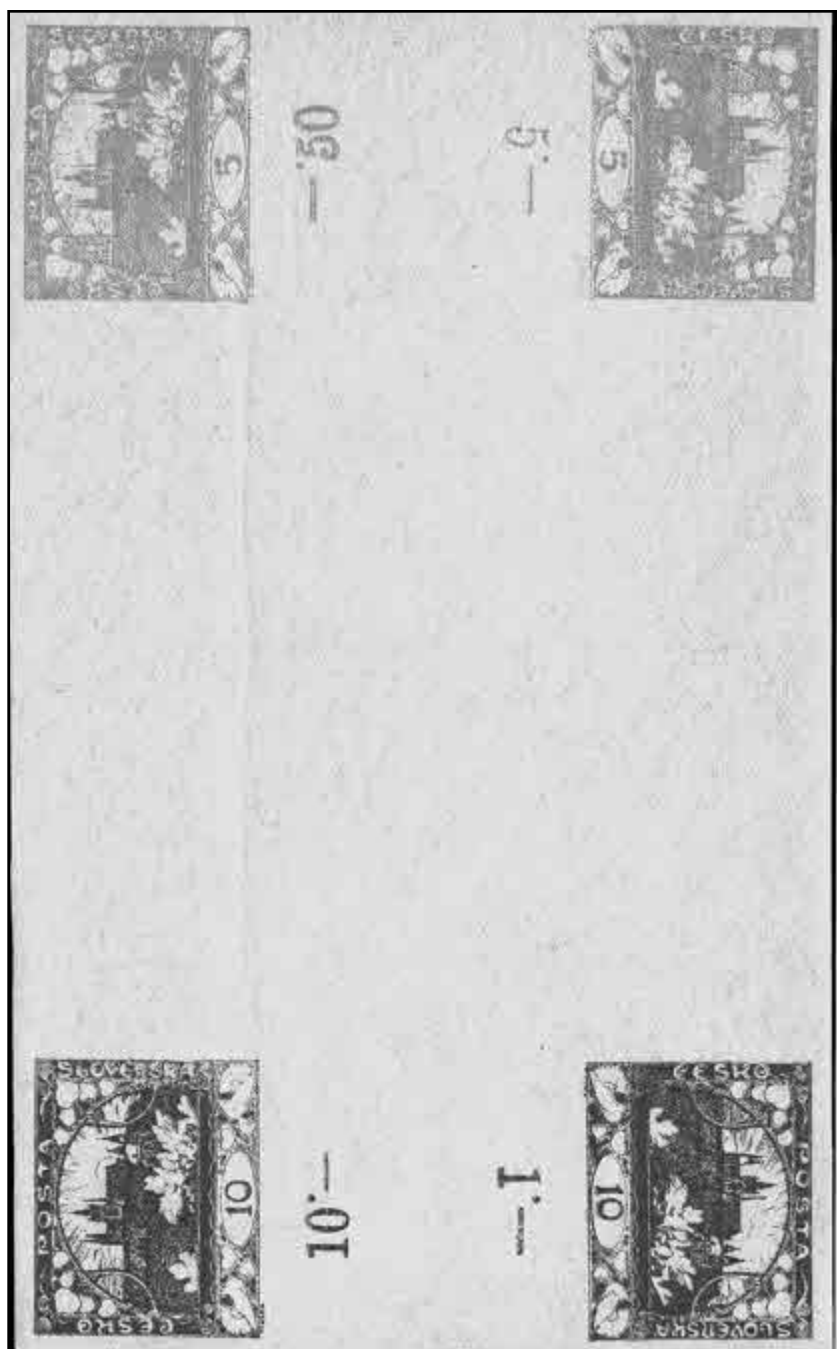


Fig. 3



Fig. 4

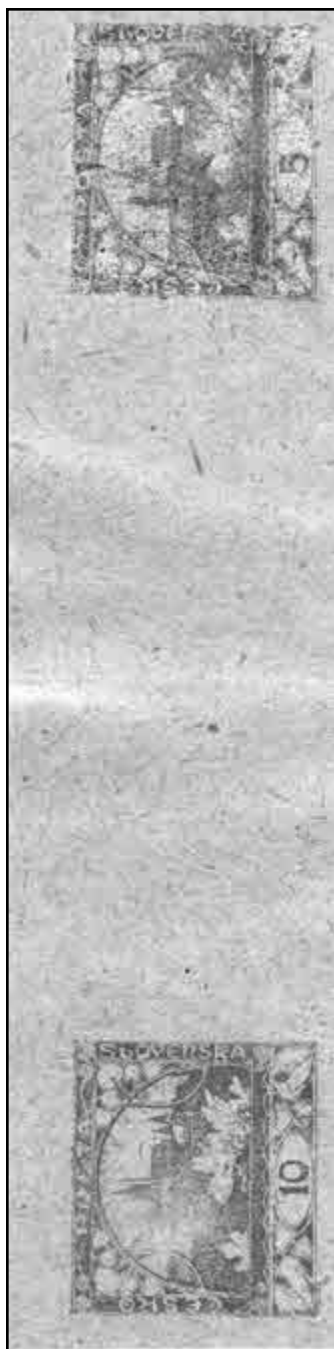


Fig. 5

An examination of Jiří Majer's beautiful auction catalogues became the next step in our research. In the catalog for the March 29, 2008 auction a cross gutter was offered as Lot 138 (Fig. 3); this same cross gutter is illustrated in the POFIS catalog. We were able to identify the plate positions for this gutter: the horizontal gutter with the 5h stamp (position 100) next to the 10h stamp (position 91) was printed from the 5h Plate II and the 10h Plate I. The other gutter pair is even more interesting: the 10h stamp (position 100) is from Plate II and the 5h stamp (position 91) is from Plate I, the same combination found on the printers' waste described above.

An item from another Jiří Majer auction is also of interest. It is Lot 136 from the December 1, 2007 auction (Fig. 4). This gutter pair, also printers' waste, shows at left 10h stamps (positions 59 and 60) from Plate II and at right 5h stamps (positions 51 and 52). We were also able to examine a high-resolution scan of yet another horizontal gutter pair owned by Mark Wilson. It shows a 10h red stamp (position 10, Plate II), at left and a 5h green stamp (position 1, Plate I) at right (Fig. 5).

So we have now examined four different horizontal gutter pairs, and all of them show 10h Plate II stamps on the left and 5h Plate I stamps on the right. We have been unable to locate any example of a horizontal gutter with both stamps from Plate II of their respective denominations.

So, there are two possibilities. Either the *Monografie* described the wrong plate positions for full sheets, which seems most probable as we found no gutters with the plate positions described by the *Monografie*, or the full sheets were also printed in the arrangement we found but which was never reported by the *Monografie*.

Thus, we need your help. Please look in your collections for horizontal gutter pairs of the first issue 5h and 10h stamps. If you own one, please send us a high resolution scan (at least 600 dpi) to jan@bisschops.net. Images of horizontal gutters with the 10h stamp at either the left or the right will be helpful to our study. We will try to identify the plates used to print the full sheets and, if new information is discovered, we will report our findings in a future article.

This article was first published in the October 2011 issue of the journal of the Dutch Czechoslovak collectors' club, the *Vereniging voor Tsjechoslowakije Filatelie*. We would like to thank Jiří Majer for his permission to use Figures 3 and 4, and Mark Wilson for his permission to use Figure 5.

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THE 25h CHAINBREAKER
Part II -- The Visual Indices
by Mark Wilson

[*Ed. Note: This is a continuation of the Introduction article which appeared in the Spring 2011 issue.*]

A visual index permits collectors, once a plate flaw is found, to tentatively assign the stamp to a plate position. To use the index, find what you think to be a plate flaw on the stamp in question. Turn to the visual index diagram that contains the position of the stamp under examination, but be sure to check the index for both plates.

For this issue there are ten diagrams:

- Top of stamp: Plate I, Plate II
- Arms and head: Plate I, Plate II
- Body and numerals: Plate I, Plate II
- Skirt: Plate I, Plate II
- VHB: Plate I, Plate II

If you find the flaw in the visual index, note the number associated with your flaw and turn to the full descriptions (in Part III of this article) to see if any other flaws are described for your candidate. If your item matches the full description, chances are you may have “plated” the stamp -- found its original location on the 100-stamp pane. However, it is important to remember that many stamps share the same or similar flaws. Thus, always be conservative when assigning an item to a specific plate and position.

Suppose, for instance, you had in hand a stamp with a plate flaw -- a gap in the upper side of the right forearm. Figure 9 indexes the portion of the stamp that contains the right forearm. Should you turn to Figure 9a, you would note that the gap in the upper side of the right forearm is labeled “2”; the flaw is found on stamps in position 2 on Plate I. Being a careful collector, you would then check against Figure 9b and learn that the same flaw is found in position 98 on Plate 2. Thus there are two possible locations for your stamp, either I/2 or II/98 -- which is it?¹ [*1 The notation I/2 (sometimes written as 2/I) indicates the plate and position of the stamp; the Roman numeral represents the Plate, the Arabic numeral its position. In this instance the stamp described is position 2 on Plate I.*]

Once Part III of this series is published, you would turn to the descriptions of both stamps. In the description of I/2, you would learn that a second flaw, a gap in the bottom of the lowest linden leaf, should also be found on this stamp. On the other hand, II/98 has a gap in the outline of the skirt above the right foot.

By checking for the required second flaw (and any others in the descriptions) you would ascertain which stamp you had in hand. Suppose, on the other hand, that none of these described flaws appeared on your stamp? The only conclusion to be drawn is that your stamp is from neither of the two positions. The flaw you found is a printing flaw -- a random fluke that cannot be used to identify the stamp.

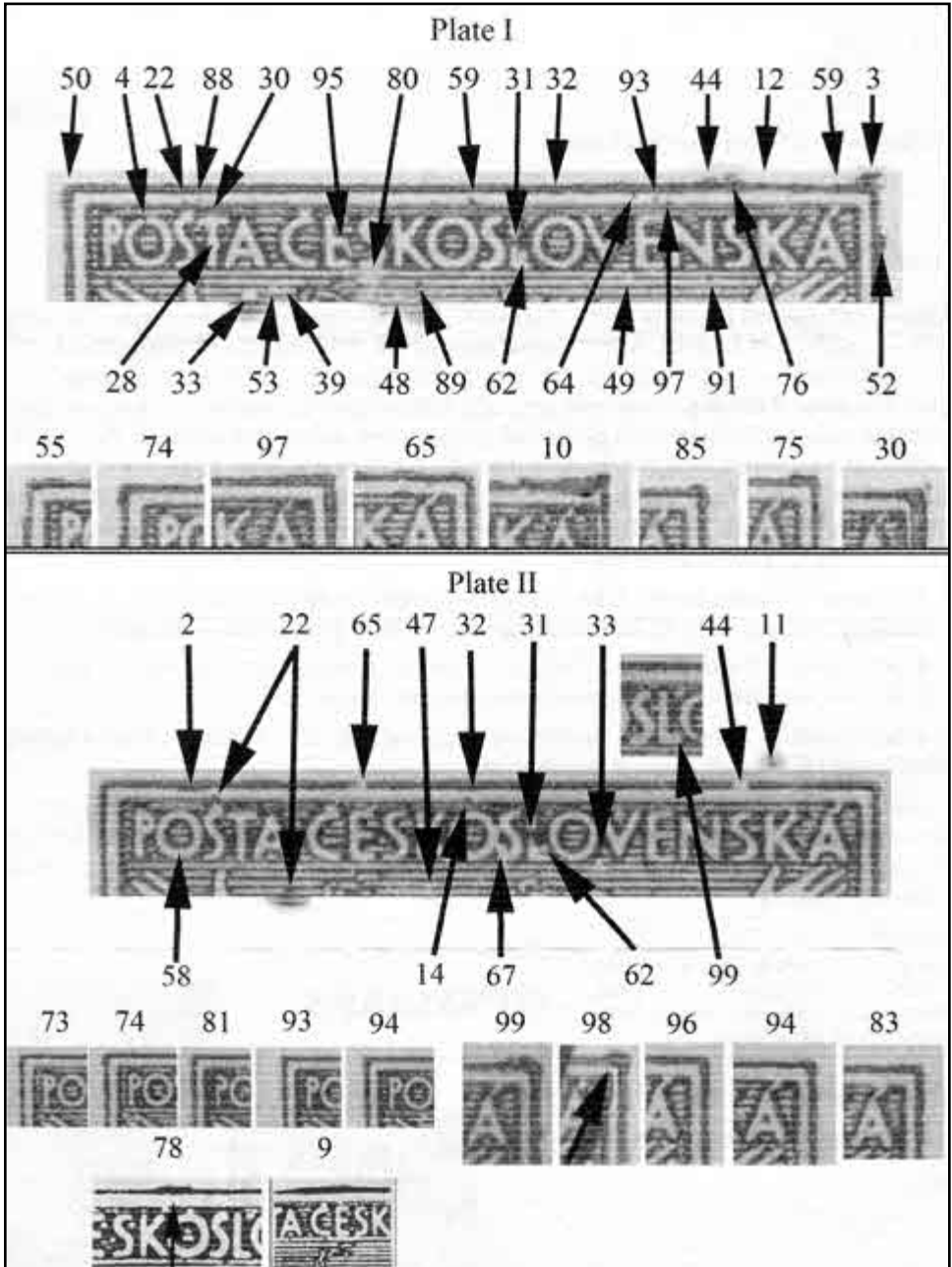


Figure 8: Top of stamp -- Plate I, Plate II

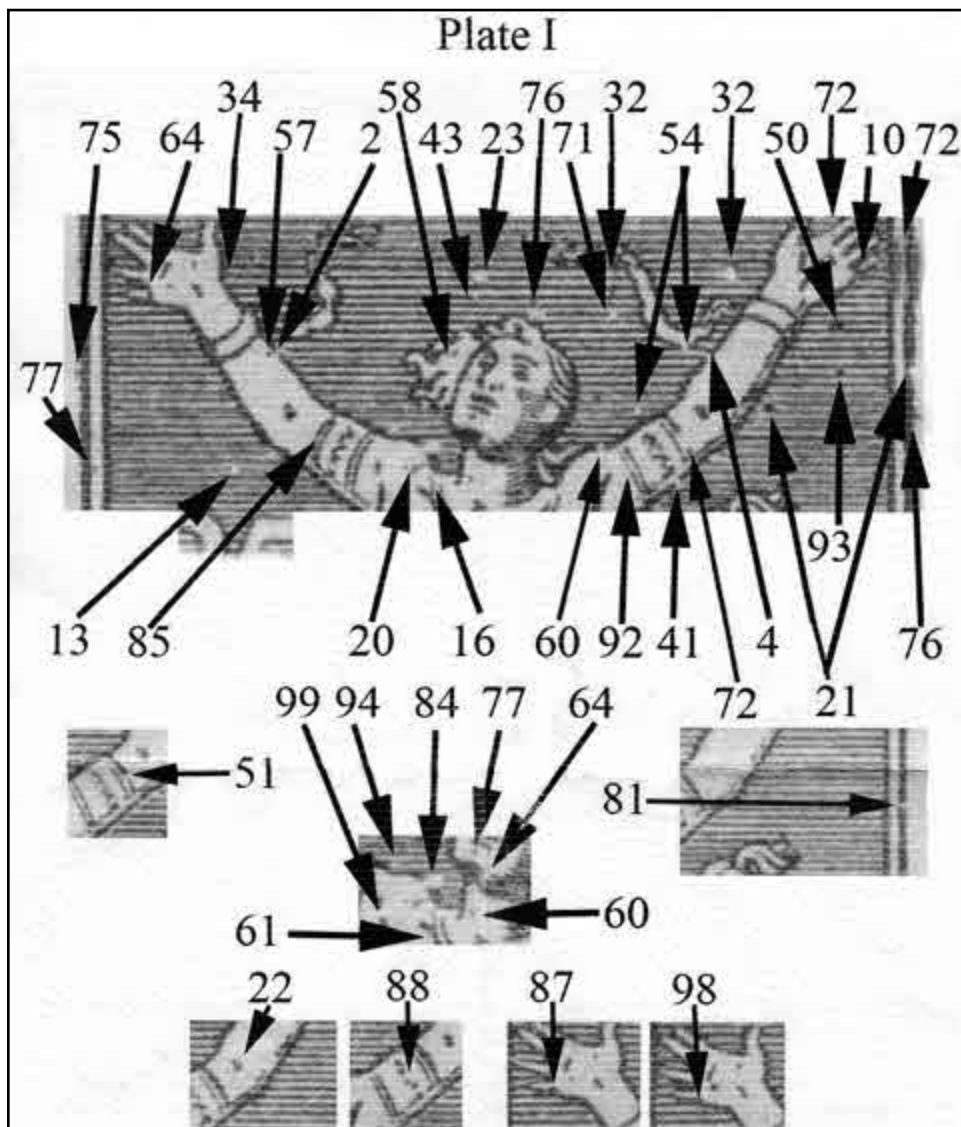


Figure 9a: Arms and head -- Plate I

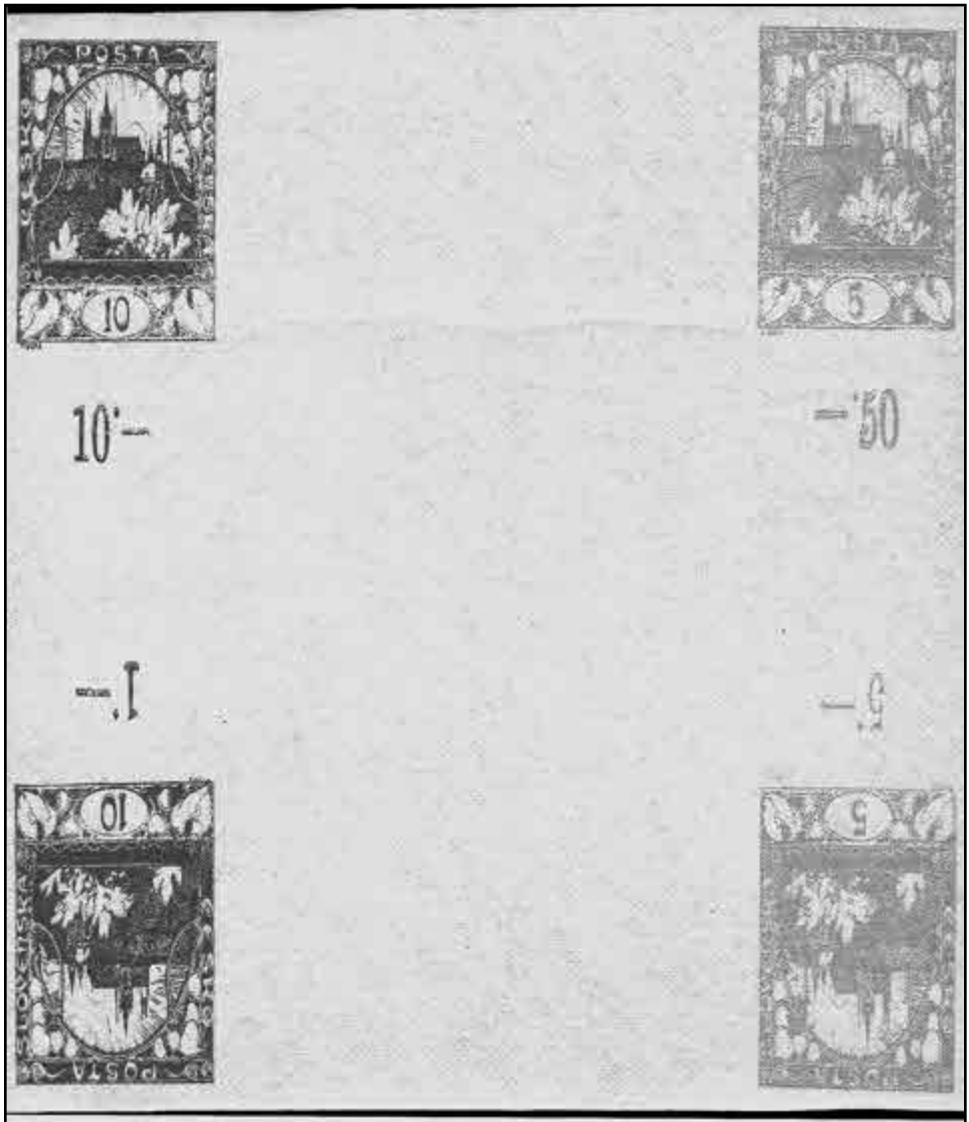


Figure 9b: Arms and head -- Plate II

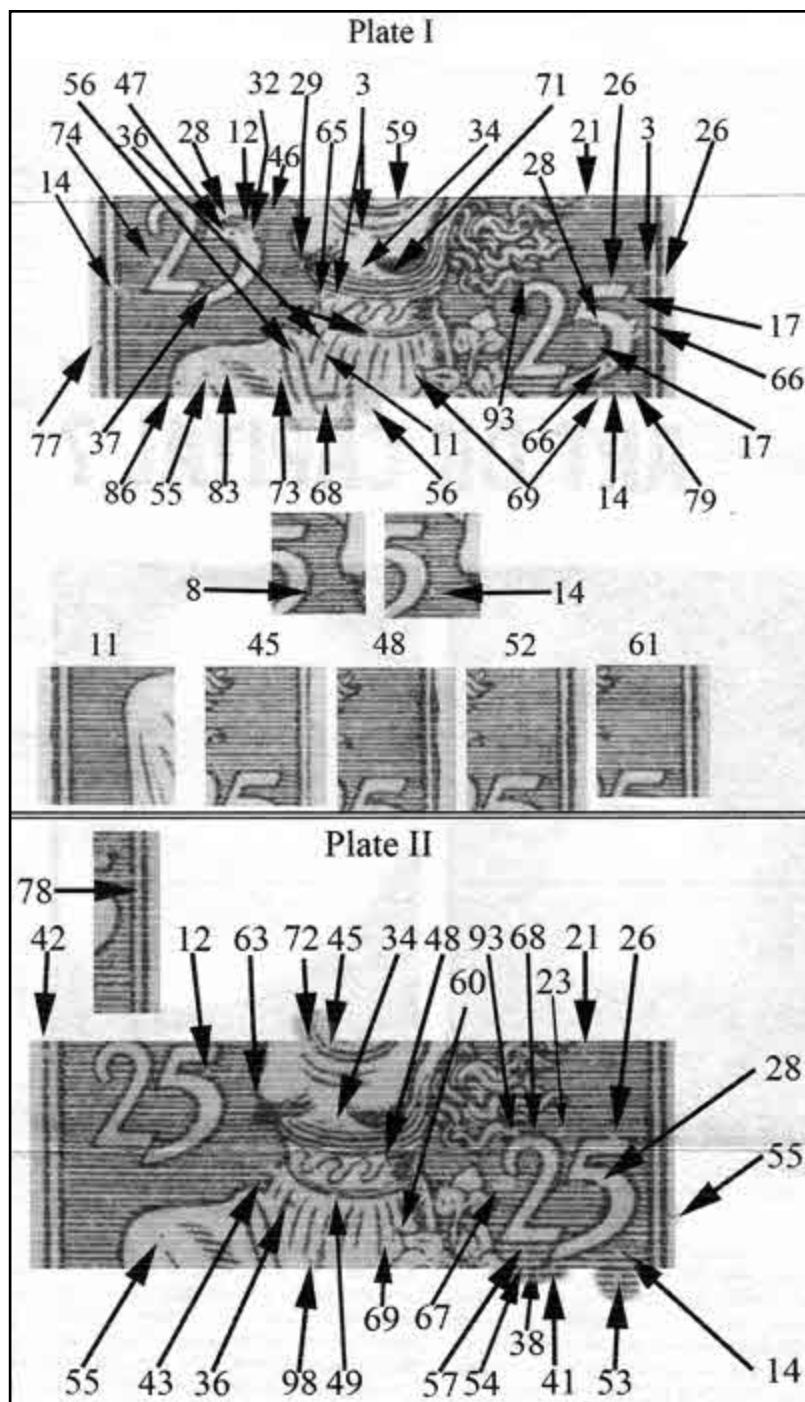


Figure 10: Body and numerals -- Plate I, Plate II

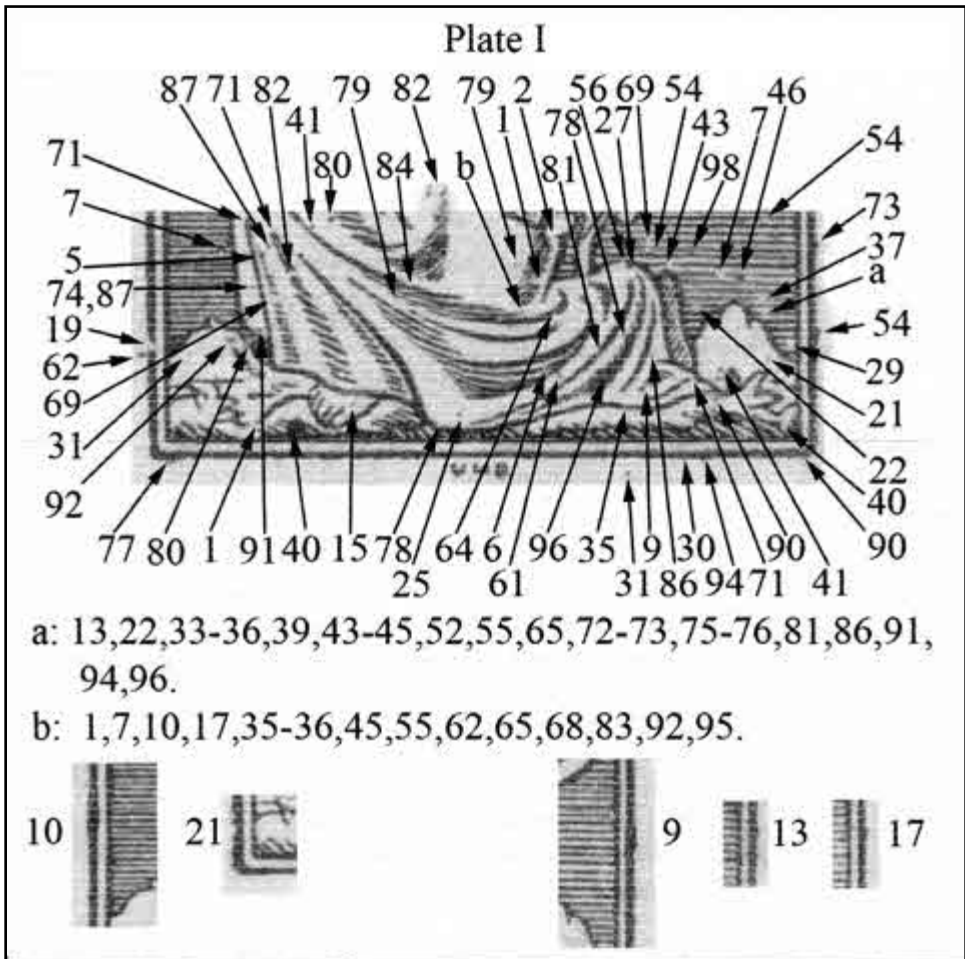


Figure 11a: Skirt -- Plate I

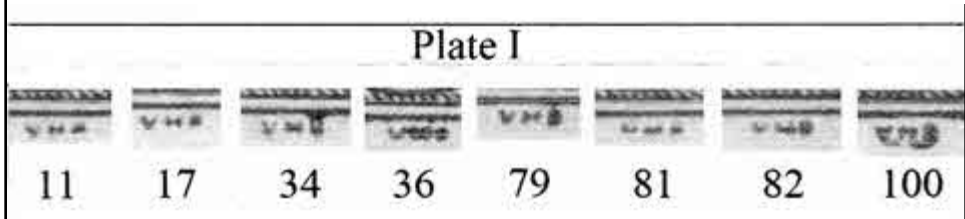


Figure 12a: VHB -- Plate I

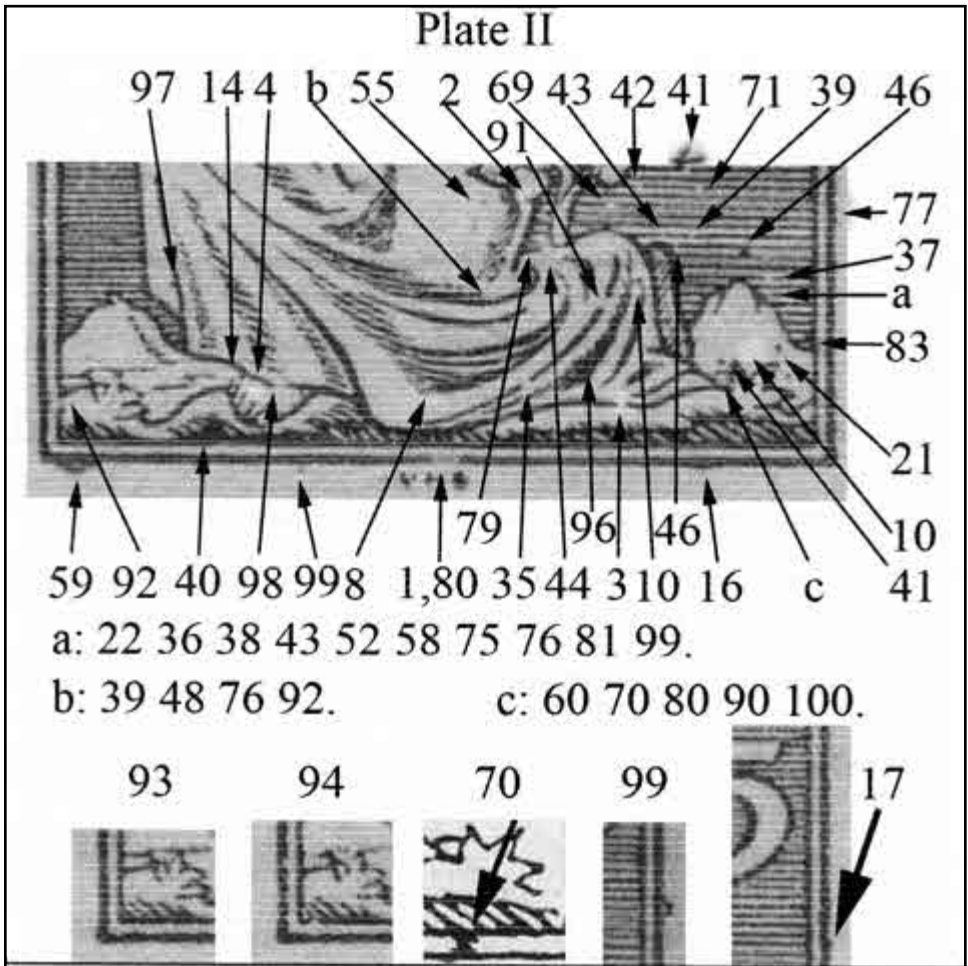


Figure 11b: Skirt -- Plate II

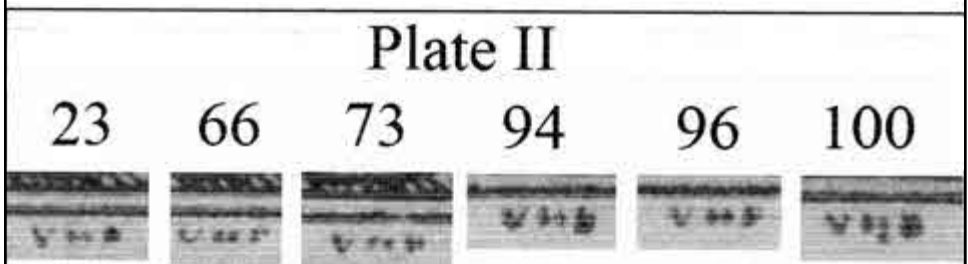


Figure 12b: VHB -- Plate II

There is, for some of use who enjoy mastering a particular stamp, an intense joy in identifying with precision the source of each stamp. While reconstructing a plate offers great pleasure, sometimes just knowing a bit more about the stamp in hand can be quite satisfying.

Closed Albums

Joseph M. Lacko **Mar. 19, 1921, Dobrá Voda, Slovakia** **Oct. 8, 2011, Hillsborough, NJ**

Joseph M. Lacko, 90 (member #1613, Fig. 1), of Hillsborough, formerly of Union, died Saturday, October 8, 2011 after a short illness.

Born in Dobrá Voda, Slovakia, then Czechoslovakia, Joe immigrated to Sleepy Hollow, NY (then called North Tarrytown) as a 14 year old, with other children in the care of an agent. His parents were already living in the USA the previous six years and had left him in the care of his grandparents. After taking an extra year to learn English, Joe graduated from North Tarrytown High School in 1940.

He then served over three years in the Naval Air Force during World War II and attained the rank of Aviation Radioman 3rd Class. After the war, he moved to Union and worked several years at the Singer Manufacturing Company in Elizabeth. He started working for NJ Bell Telephone Company in 1954 as a central office technician in Irvington and Newark and retired in 1985.



Fig. 1

Joe was an avid athlete who played several sports, but was best known as a star forward in the semi-professional German-American Soccer League. After his playing career, he was a referee for the NY and NJ Soccer Referees Assoc. In 1966, he officiated an international match between Tottenham Hotspurs and Bologna FC at Randall's Island Stadium.

He was also a collector of philatelic items with sports themes winning awards for his collections of the Olympic torch, ice hockey, and Sokol activities. Joe travelled by car with his family to all 48 contiguous states. While his wife, Helen, of 56 years predeceased him, he is survived by his children, Ronald M. Lacko and wife, Ann, of Boechout, Belgium and Joyce E. Hieber and her husband, Douglas, of Branchburg, and 4 grandchildren.

Joe will be missed.

Book Review

Verzeichnis der Postämter (Postfilialen), Postablagen (Postservicestellen), und Postpartner von Österreich, Teil 1 für Orte in den heutigen Landesgrenzen der Republik Österreich von ca. 1700 to 2009. (List of Post Offices (Post Branches), Postal Agencies (Post Service Places) and Postal Partners of Austria, Part 1 for the locations in the present-day Republic of Austria from ca. 1700 to 2009.)

by Hermann Sanbach

March 2010, 195 pages in A4 format, 25 Euros plus postage.

Verzeichnis der Postämter und Postablagen von Österreich, Teil 2. (List of Post Offices and Postal Agencies of Austria, Part 2).

By Hermann Sanbach

April 2008, 345 pages in A4 format, 25 Euros plus postage.

Part 1 is a listing of post offices, branches, postal agencies, service places and postal partners presented in a four-column format. The first column lists the province in which the post office is located. Column two shows the abbreviation for the present postal district. Column three lists the present Austrian postal code for the office. Column four lists the name of the post office, the opening and closing dates (if any), any name or postal code changes. In the front of the volume there is a series of maps of the Republic of Austria showing the postal districts and their abbreviations. There is also a list of the postal districts and their abbreviations. If you have any interest in Austrian postal history, Part 1 is a must have publication.

Part 2 is a listing of post offices and postal agencies in the Austrian part of Austria-Hungary, excluding the present-day Republic of Austria. It also includes Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Sandjak of Novi Pazar, Liechtenstein, Austrian post offices in the Levant, Lombardy-Venice, and the Hungarian post offices transferred to Austria in 1921 and returned to Hungary in 1922. For those interested in Czechoslovak postal history, this part includes Bohemia, Moravia, Austrian Silesia, and those parts of Upper and Lower Austria transferred to Czechoslovakia after World War I. The volume is arranged in a three-column format. Column one lists the crownland (Bohemia, Moravia, etc.). Column two lists the administrative district. Column three lists the post office, opening date, closing date, name changes, present day name, and postal code. There is a series of maps in the front showing the Austrian crownlands and districts with present-day national boundaries. The post offices are in alphabetical order with both the German and second-language names listed for ease of finding. For example the author lists Prag 1 - Praha 1 opening in 1526? as Prag-Praha. About 1880 it was renamed Prag Altstadt -- Praha Staré Město; becoming Prag 1 -- Praha 1 on 17 Feb 1896. The present

designation is ČZ 110 00 Praha. If you are interested in the postal history of any part of "Old Austria", this is a very useful tool.

Both volumes can be purchased from the author, Hermann Sanbach, who can be contacted in English via email: Hermann_S@gmz.at. Payment can be made via PayPal.

Tom Cossaboom

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New Issues

CZECH REPUBLIC

by G.M. van Zanten

1. On August 31, 2011, the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic issued a 20 Kč commemorative stamp on the occasion of the 2011 Men's European Volleyball Championship (Fig. 1). On the stamp are depicted silhouettes of volleyball players with a ball. The Czech's men's team won a surprising 10th place at the 2010 World Cup in Italy after they had beaten the previous world champions, the US team, 3:0, but had unluckily lost 2:3 to the new world champions from Brazil. The championship will be hosted in Austria and the Czech Republic (in Prague and Karlovy Vary) again after 10 years (in 2001 the Czech team won fourth place in Ostrava).



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Jan Svoboda is the coach of the Czech team which is in a tough group with Russia, Portugal and Estonia. There

are sixteen country teams in four groups of four. Vienna will host the final championship event on September 18. The stamp was designed by Pavel Švejda and produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by multicolored offset in printing sheets of 50 pieces. A FDC in gray shows a volleyball player serving the ball (Fig. 2).

2. On August 31, 2011, the Ministry issued a commemorative souvenir sheet entitled "Nature Protection: Šumava -- UNESCO Biosphere Reserve" having 4 stamps and 4 labels (Fig. 3). The importance of the Šumava National Park and Protected Landscape Area grew in 1990 when it was declared a biosphere reserve [part of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) program] covering almost the entire Šumava region and the neighboring Bavarian Forest National Park in Germany. The biosphere reserve is located in the mountain area along the Austrian and Bavarian border with the Czech Republic. The entire region was affected by human activities (such as gold mining and the glass industry) from as early as the 10th century. Šumava is the last big central European area that abounds in ancient mountain forests, lakes of glacial origin, peat bogs, rivers and their canyons that have been preserved until the present day. The plains that cover the central part of Šumava are more than 1,000 meters above sea level and are used as meadows or pasture land. A large number of rare animals and prominent wild birds live in the area. The Šumava - UNESCO Biosphere Reserve souvenir sheet is the final one of the series of six sheets featuring Czech biosphere reserves. The souvenir sheet was designed by Libuše and Jaromír Knotek, engraved by Martin Srb, and produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by colored offset combined with black engraving.



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

-- 10 Kč -- *Tetrao urogallus*, *Turdus torquatus* (birds) and *Erebia euryale* (butterfly). A FDC in green-blue shows *Falco peregrinus* (migratory peregrine falcon) (Fig. 4).

-- 14 Kč -- *Colias palaeno* (butterfly) and *Dactylorhiza traunsteineri* (flower). A FDC in dark brown shows *Bonasa bonasia* (forest quail)(Fig. 5).

-- 18 Kč -- *Tetrao tetrix* (bird), *Aeshna juncea* (insect), and *Alces alces* (animal). A FDC shows *Alces alces* (moose)(Fig. 6).

-- 20 Kč -- *Lynx lynx* (animal) and *Picoides tridactylus* (bird). A FDC shows *Lynx lynx* (Fig. 7).

Four labels complete the composition of the sheet showing other fauna and flora occurring in the area.

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3. On August 31, 2011, the Ministry issued a self-adhesive stamp booklet with 6 definitive postage stamps with imprinted letter “E” commemorating W.A. Mozart (Fig. 8a). On the stamp is depicted Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart expressively



Fig. 8a



Fig. 8b



Fig. 9

conducting the original score from the opera Don Giovanni with the Theater of the Estates building in the background (Fig. 8b). The stamp booklet was designed by Marina Richterová, the stamps were designed by Martin Srb, and were produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by multicolored offset in self-adhesive definitive stamp booklets of 6 pieces. A FDC in green-black shows a depiction of the character of the Knight Commander from the opera Don Giovanni (Fig. 9).

4. On September 14, 2011, the Ministry issued a 14 Kč commemorative stamp dedicated to the traveler František Alexander Elstner (Fig. 10). On the stamp is depicted F.A. Elstner and behind him in the background is his car on a sand dune. F. A. Elstner (Apr. 11, 1902, Prague -- Sept. 8, 1974, Prague) was a Czech motor traveller, scout, journalist, and author. At age 14, he joined the still relatively young scout movement. He was excluded from school at age



Fig. 10

17 because of his love for adventure (rather than for having bad grades). He joined the International Red Cross and was sent as a member of its anti-typhoid brigade to Subcarpathian Rus. On his return he was selected to continue his education including the law. He became a teacher, and the long summer holidays gave him time for his other activities, such as traveling and scout camps. Elstner was a very active member of the scout movement. As a young boy, he also became a passionate motorist and author. He wrote for the magazine *Motor Revue* (beginning in 1918), helped to set up several motorist clubs and promoted motoring in general by both writing and working. Through a loan from his magazine he purchased a motorcycle with sidecar in 1926, which he and his wife Růžena used extensively on their travels throughout most of Europe. As a renowned motorist, Elstner was chosen by automaker Aero to stress test its new models. This involved driving it throughout Europe -- remember there were no highway tunnels through the mountainous Alps nor good roads through eastern Europe. The post-1948 communist regime ended Elstner's plans of any further international expeditions. His activities were limited to local travels, lectures, promotion of the scout movement, writing books for young people, and attempts at publishing (prohibited in the 1970's). The stamp was designed by Antonín Odehnal, engraved by Jaroslav Tvrdoň, and produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by rotary recess print in black-blue combined with photogravure in blue, red, yellow, and other in printing sheets of 50 pieces. A FDC in black-blue shows a car with palm tree in the background (Fig. 11).



Fig. 11

5. On September 14, 2011, the Ministry issued a 10 Kč commemorative stamp in the Crafts series entitled Historical Organs in Plasy (Fig. 12). The organ at the Church of the Assumption of Our Lady in the Cistercian Monastery in Plasy is a unique early Baroque instrument. Built in 1688 by leading Czech organ builder Abraham Stark from Loket, it had 29 registers and is still counted among the largest organs in the Czech Republic. The first large restoration event in the late 18th century involved a significant change of the overall shape of the instrument. The next partial restoration came in the early 20th century. The organ was last



Fig. 13



Fig. 12

played in 2000 before it entered its next overall reconstruction and restoration project in 2004-2006 which involved restoring it to its original 1688 Baroque sound. Renowned pianist and organist Jaroslav Tůma gave a

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concert at the inauguration ceremony held on September 29, 2006 in the presence of bishop František Radkovský who consecrated the restored instrument. The stamp was designed by Pavel Dvorský, drawn by Jaroslav Tvrdoň, and produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by multicolored offset in printing sheets of 50 pieces. A FDC in dark brown depicts little angels playing musical instruments -- a detail from the organs (Fig. 13).

6. On October 5, 2011, the Ministry issued a 21 Kč commemorative stamp dedicated to World Post Day (Fig. 14). On the stamp is depicted the globe and around it fly postal pigeons holding letters while a postal pixie blowing a trumpet lies on the world. The annual World Post Day held on October 9th commemorates the 1874 creation of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in Bern, Switzerland. The original name was General Postal Union. The main goal of the UPU has been and continues to be to safeguard development of the international postal communication network and create uniform conditions for international mail exchange. The key documents are the UPU Acts containing rules for international postal services. The supreme body is the Congress whose members meet at least once very four years, and it has the power to amend the UPU Acts. French is the official language of the UPU which now has 191 member countries. It involves up to 5 million staff at more



Fig. 14

than 660,000 postal branches. The global network of the postal sector may help it become an important player of an information society. Postal branches in many countries have been transformed from places where you can merely post or pick up your mail into sites offering modern electronic and financial services. Governments, international organizations and private businesses in a number of developing countries have been using the postal sector as a suitable channel for providing public access to new information and communications technologies, such as the Internet or email. The Czech Post has not lagged behind. It has been offering a range of services relating to electronic banking, hybrid mail, registered electronic mail, e-Government, and the recently established PostSignum QCA (the Czech Post is the administrator of a central address information system and a certification authority). The stamp was designed by Dušan Kállay, engraved by Miloš Ondráček, and produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by multicolored offset in printing sheets of 35 pieces. A FDC in black-violet shows a postal pixie riding a winged horse which is flying over the clouds (Fig. 15).



Fig. 15

7. On October 5, 2011, the Ministry issued two 10 Kč commemorative stamps to honor two designers of Czech movie posters. The stamps were designed by Zdeněk Ziegler, engraved by Jindřich Faktor, and produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by multicolored offset in printing sheets of 25 pieces.

-- 10 Kč, *Une Femme Douce*, Olga Poláčková-Vyleťalová (Fig. 16). This painter and graphic artist was born in Hradec Králové on August 8, 1944. She took a course of private studies with a leading Czech textile artist, finished studies at



Fig. 16

an art school (1968), and then Prague's Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design (1969). The designer of altogether seventy-six film posters (1969-89), Poláčková-Vyleťalová has been exhibiting her works since 1974. Her design of the *Une femme douce* poster became an icon of the Czechoslovak film poster art. A poetic harmony, dreamy lightness and imagination are the typical features of all of her works. Her posters have won a number of prestigious international awards, such as the Cannes International Film Festival 1973 -- Grand Prix for the Best Poster (*Une femme douce*); Cannes International Film Festival 1974 -- International Critic's Prize (*Mládí a láska*, Youth and Love); Chicago International Film Festival 1979 -- Gold Hugo (*Zrcadlení*, Mirroring). Her latest exhibition of film posters was the sole event at Prague's cinema

Světazor in September, 2008. Her husband Josef Vyleťal also created film posters. A FDC in black depicts the poster for the horror film *The Birds* by Alfred Hitchcock.

-- 10 Kč, *Markéta Lazarová*, Zdeněk Ziegler (Fig. 17). This graphic designer and typographer was born in Prague on October 27, 1932. As a student at Prague's Czech Technical University, he started his career as a graphic designer and typographer creating mainly advertising pieces, followed with book designs and film posters in the early 1960s. Using various techniques, he authored some three hundred film, exhibition and theater posters, designed a number of sleeves for gramophone records, logos, and created a corporate identity image for the publisher Brody and for Prague's Czech Museum of Fine Arts. He is the holder of many national Most Beautiful Book Design Awards, two international awards for books published by Aulos, and the Chicago International Film Festival 1978 Gold Hugo for the Best Poster. He has exhibited his typographic works at a number of prestigious



Fig. 17

international shows and has published them in a number of magazines. His

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graphic designs have been adopted by an impressive array of Prague's theaters, galleries, and museums. Ziegler is the author of a number of postage stamps and member of the Czech Post's Stamp Graphic Design Board. Finally, he is the designer of these two stamps honoring film posters. A FDC in other depicts the poster for the film *The Stolen Airship*.

8. On October 5, 2011, the Ministry issued a self-adhesive stamp booklet with definitive postage stamps with imprinted letter "A" showing the figures from a popular TV series of bedtime stories for children -- the tinkers Pat and Mat (Fig. 18a). On the stamp are depicted the tinkers Pat and Mat in their brotherly embrace (Fig. 18b). Pat and Mat first appeared in 1976 in the film "Tinkers". The couple changed a T-shirt and donned a beret and bobble hat for the next "Pat&Mat . . . and that's it" series. Designed as adult entertainment, the buddies have successfully used their charm and tricks to please all generations. However, they had to wait until 1989 to get their names. Mat was also allowed to dress his red



Fig. 18a



Fig. 18b

T-shirt again to mark the occasion. The key inspiration for their stories is the extreme clumsiness of the two. But fun is not all -- what matters is the optimistic attitude of Pat and Mat towards life. They never give up, even if everything is lost, and are always proud of their own solution. Both stars were continuously shining until 1995. The new millennium brought Pat and Mat back to the stage with their new stories. The stamps were designed by Jan Chvojka (who also wrote scripts for popular Pat and Mat film series), and were produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by multicolored offset in self-adhesive definitive stamp booklets of 10 pieces. A FDC in multicolored offset depicts Pat and Mat driving in a car.

9. On October 27, 2011, the Ministry issued the definitive stamp “Gate with a Peacock” with labels for additional printing and with imprinted letter “A” (Fig. 19). This stamp was originally issued in 2005 in face value of 7.50 Kč. Now the stamp is issued in other colors and with the literal tariff. The stamp shows a decorative gate with a peacock sitting on its top with a trumpeter on its back. The ajar gate and both other symbols evoke “the way to glory”. The stamp was designed by Karel Zeman and produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by multicolored offset. It is issued in arranged printing sheets of 9 stamps and 12 labels. On the right edge of the sheet there is a decorative architectural design. The labels bear a small decoration, however some of the sheets will be issued with blank labels for additional printings in accordance with the wish of the customer.



Fig. 19

10. On October 27, 2011, the Ministry issued the definitive stamp “Rose above Prague” with labels for additional printing and with imprinted letter “E” (Fig. 20). This stamp was originally issued in 2003 in face value of 6.40 Kč. Now the stamp is issued in other colors and with the literal tariff. The theme of the stamp is inspired by Seifert’s verses about Prague and symbolizes the association of his beloved city and a flower. In the center of the graphic composition is



Fig. 20

Clementinum observatory tower with the statue of Atlas, and in the background there is Týn Church and other historic landmarks of Prague. The stamp was designed by Karel Zeman and produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by multicolored offset. It is issued in arranged printing sheets of 9 stamps and 12 labels. The right upper label depicts a decorative detail from the postage stamps, the other 11 labels will bear on the date of issue tiny motifs related to the drawing of the stamp. Some of the sheets will be issued with blank labels for additional printings in accordance with the wish of the customer.

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11. On November 9, 2011, the Ministry issued a set of three commemorative stamps in the Art on Stamps series. The stamps were produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by recess print from flat plates combined with multicolored offset in printing sheets of 4 pieces.



Fig. 21

-- 24 Kč: Jaroslav Vožniak (1933-2005), "Milenci (lovers)(1965)" (Fig. 21), Central Bohemian Gallery, engraved by Václav Fajt; in yellow, pink, green, blue, and black. One of the legendary figures of post-war Czech art, Jaroslav Vožniak was a painter and graphic artist. He became best known as the author of a unique series of paintings called *Ikony* (*Icons*). Considered as the most original Czech pop art work, the ancient-Byzantine-icon-style paintings on wooden plates pictured -- instead of the Virgin Mary and other female saints -- world film stars decorated with Czech costume jewelry instead of religious relics

and accompanied with various symbols and signs. Vožniak studied at Prague's Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design, and at Prague's Academy of Arts. In the mid-1950's, he and other students created a group called *Šmidrové*, centered around an "aesthetics of strangeness" defined by the group's leading theoretist Jan Kříž as a "special form of post-surrealistic symbolism, transformed into an instrument of watchful imagination serving internal visions and critical understanding of social reality". Vožniak lived to try different art styles. He was fascinated with contemporary hyperrealism, surrealism, pop art and abstract art, although his original ideas might best respond to mannerism of Rudolf II's era. A FDC in green shows Vožniak's painting of the series "Birds".



Fig. 22

-- 26 Kč: Joža Uprka (1861-1940), "Žena v Kukuřici (woman in maize field)(1910)" (Fig. 22), Joža Uprka Gallery, engraved by Miloš Ondráček; in ocher, pink, green-blue, blue, and black. Joža Uprka was a Czech painter and graphic artist. A representative of Romantic historicism and decorative Art Nouveau, he authored paintings documenting the life and habits of peasants in his native south Moravia. Born into a peasant family in Kněždub, he was the son of a farmer and amateur painter, and attended both a German school for teachers and the Czech-language Slavic Grammar School in Olomouc. After graduation he attended Prague's Academy of Arts (1881-84). With other artists (including Alfons Mucha) he formed a group called *Škreta*.

In 1888 he settled in his native region, Moravian Slovakia, which became the source of inspiration for the key part of his work. He painted scenes from the everyday life of peasants, their work, habits and festivities, folk costumes, and the surrounding landscape. He received a Mention Honorable at the 1893 Paris Salon for his painting *Pouť u Svatého Antonínka* (pilgrimage to St. Anthony church) and thus became an internationally renowned artist. His best-known work, *Jízda Králů* (kings' ride), had two original versions, one Realist and the other one

Impressionist. He married a folk painter and settled down near his native village of Kněždub where he hosted numerous Czech and foreign artists (such as Leoš Janáček and French sculptor Auguste Rodin). He also sought new inspiration in the Slovak countryside. He visited Dubrovnik in 1928 for a study of the life and costumes of rustic people. Uprka lived to see several comprehensive exhibitions of his works (Prague, Brno, Hodonín). He founded and helped run several artistic and ethnic societies and associations. A FDC in dark-green shows his drawing “Man with a jug”.

-- 30 Kč: August Bedřich Piepenhagen (1791-1868), “Zimní Krajina, 19. Století (winter landscape, 19th century)” (Fig. 23), Kodl Gallery, engraved by Martin Srb; in blue, ocher, violet, brown, and black. August Bedřich Piepenhagen was a Prague-based German landscape-painter. Born into a button- and fringemaker’s family in Soldin near Frankfurt an der Oder, he learnt his father’s trade and set off on a journey throughout Europe. The Swiss landscape made a powerful impression on him and led to his first attempts at painting. He settled down



Fig. 23

for good in Prague’s Old Town where he joined fringe- and button-maker Jan Rissbitter’s workshop. He took over when the owner died and as a popular button-maker had many new customers, but also continued painting and soon established himself as a recognized painter. Although he was a fashionable painter and sold a large number of his numerous landscapes, it was not easy for him to secure a sufficient income for his family, a process famously described by him as “Art seeks bread, but craft finds it”. Two of his four daughters inherited their father’s talent and became landscape-painters, but it is the father’s exceptionally extensive and attractive work that made the family famous. A FDC in black shows his work “Castle Ruin in Forest”.

12. On November 9, 2011, the Ministry issued a definitive postage stamp with imprinted letter “A” dedicated to “Christmas” (Fig. 24). On the stamp is depicted the nativity scene with Mary, Joseph, Baby Jesus, and animals. This year’s Christmas stamp also comes out printed on a Christmas picture postal card. The stamp was designed by Slovak artist Dušan Kállay, engraved and drawn by Miloš Ondráček, and produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by multicolored offset with linear drawing in printing sheets of 50 pieces.



Fig. 24

Stationery

13. On August 31, 2011, the Ministry issued a commemorative postal card with an imprinted letter-denominated “A” postage stamp honoring “60 Years Since the

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Beginning of Production of the Minicar Velorex” (Fig. 25). On the imprinted “A” stamp is depicted the minicar Velorex. In the left part of the postcard is depicted the Velorex on a tree-lined road at the symbolic bollard with the number “60”, and behind it in the background is a waving tourist. Velorex is a three-wheeled minicar with a tubular frame upholstered with leatherette (reportedly the only homologated vehicle with a canvas body in the world). Its builders are the brothers František and Mojmir Stránský. Velorex was originally produced as a small-scale production of the Stránský brothers. Then later, after nationalization, it was produced in the velo-cooperative Solnice as a minicar for disabled people. After the termination of the production of the three-wheeled Velorex (about 15,000 were produced), even four-wheeled Velorex’s (about 1,500) were made. However,

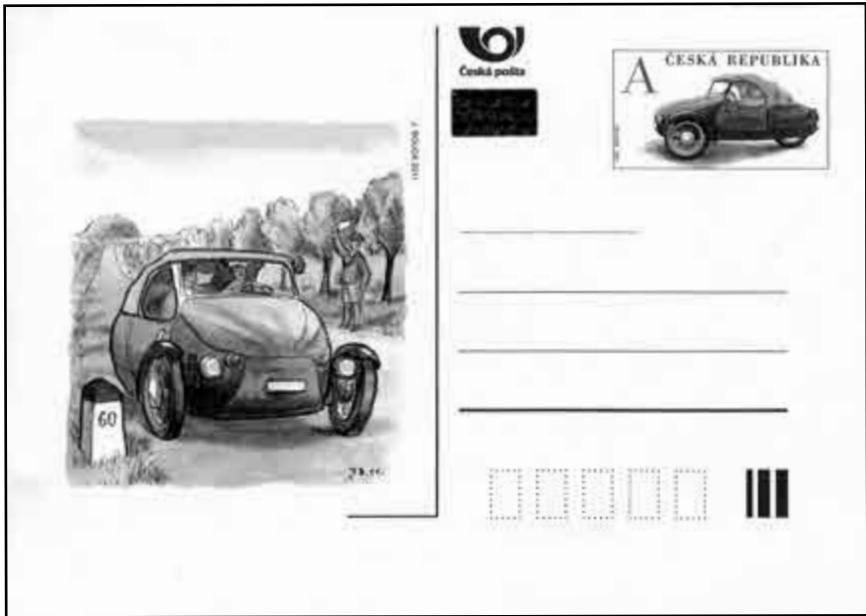


Fig. 25

they did not reach the fame of their three-wheeled predecessors. The stamp and postal card were designed by Jiří Bouda and produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by full-colored offset.

14. On August 31, 2011, the Ministry issued a commemorative postal card with an imprinted letter-denominated “Z” postage stamp honoring the “Czech Forest in Israel” (Fig. 26). On the imprinted “Z” stamp are depicted small six-pointed stars in rows along with Czech text stating “Czech Forest in Israel”. In the left part of the postal card are six-pointed stars in seven rows and seven columns forming a square. They are here as a symbol of the Star of David -- the symbol of the Jewish Nation. After the establishment of the State of Israel an idea was born in the former Czechoslovakia -- to found and to finance a Czechoslovak Forest in the

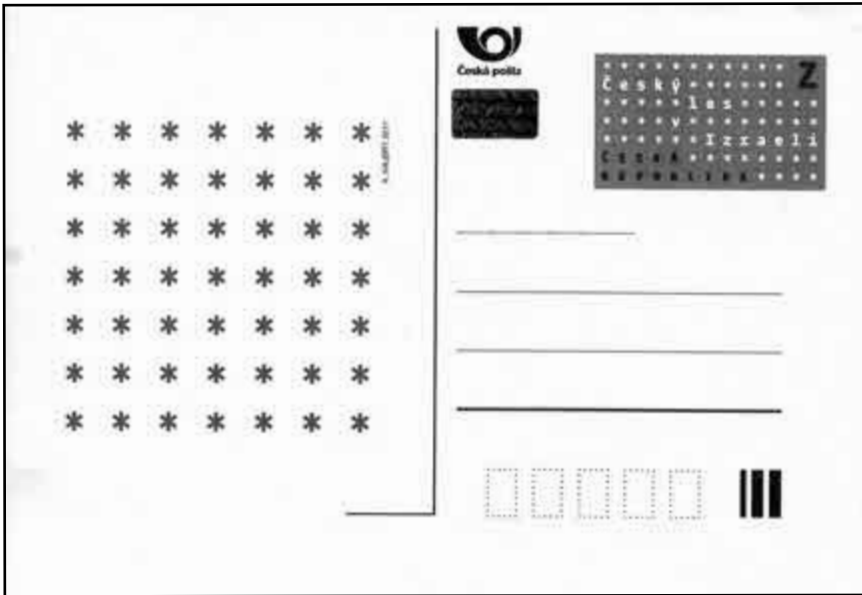


Fig. 26

desert of Israel. However, subsequent international developments and the freezing of political relations with Israel thwarted the project. Then the Czech branch of the KKL -- JNF renewed the idea of the Bohemian Forest and collected funds for its planting in the Negev desert, near the ancient city of Ber Sheva. The placing of the cornerstone of the first 10 hectares of the forest in the end of 2005 got an extraordinary reception. Since then, the forest has grown to be twice as large. In addition, the President of the Czech Republic, Václav Klaus, and former Prime Ministers, Mirek Topolánek and Cyril Svoboda, and other personalities have planted their symbolic trees in Israel. The stamp and postal card were designed by Aleš Najbrt and produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by full-colored offset.

15. On September 14, 2011, the Ministry issued a commemorative postal card having a Christmas picture and an imprinted letter-denominated "A" Christmas postage stamp (Fig. 27, shown here postally used, with the independent commemorative Christmas stamp also applied next to it). On the reverse of the postal card are depicted various craftsmen from Bethlehem -- a shepherd, a baker, a cook, a tailor, and a builder (Fig. 28). They are observing a falling star which is heralding the coming of Jesus. Around the star are hovering angels, heralding this joyous Christmas event. The picture is inspired by Dušan Kállay's illustration from the picture book "Eine Weihnachtsgeschichte oder die Drei Fragen" (The Christmas Fairy Story or The Three Questions) written by Antonie Schneider, based on the story of Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy. On the imprinted "A" Christmas stamp is shown the Nativity Scene with Mary, Joseph, the Christ child, and animals. The imprinted stamp was also issued as an independent Christmas



Fig. 27

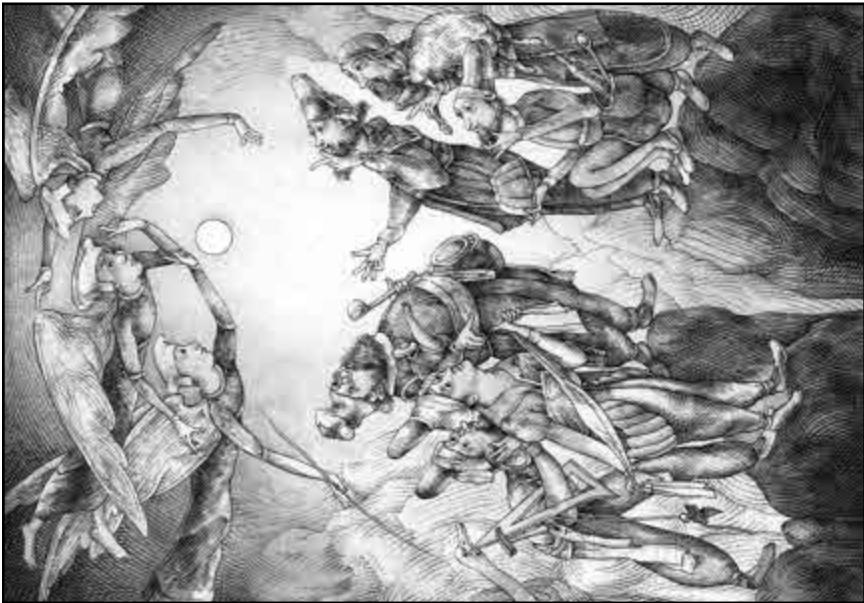


Fig. 28

stamp [see paragraph 12 above]. The designer of the postal card and imprinted stamp was the Slovak artist Dušan Kállay, the postal card and imprinted stamp were drawn by Miloš Ondráček, and were produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by multicolored offset.

16. On October 5, 2011, the Ministry issued a commemorative postal card having an imprinted letter-denominated “E” postage stamp honoring “The First Czecho-Slovak Philatelic Exhibition Vysoké Mýto” (Fig. 29). The imprinted “E” stamp was already issued on June 23, 2010, on a picture postal card “A. Mucha -- The Morning



Fig. 29

Star”. In the left part of the postal card are depicted the logos of the First Czecho-Slovak Philatelic Exhibition Vysoké Mýto, of the Union of the Czech Philatelists, of the Union of the Slovak Philatelists, and a detail from a fallen soldiers memorial (by Alois Jirásek for the 30th Infantry Regiment). In October, the philatelic club in Vysoké Mýto organized the Universal Competitive Philatelic Exhibition in cooperation with the Regional Museum in which also Slovak exhibitors took part. The aim of the exhibition was to promote philately and also to deepen cooperation between Czech and Slovak philatelists. The organizers of the exhibition were the Union of Czech Philatelists in cooperation with the Union of Slovak Philatelists, the Czech Post, and the Regional Museum. The imprinted stamp was designed by Zdeněk Ziegler, the postal card was designed by the Organizing Committee of the Exhibition, and the postal card was produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by full-colored offset.

17. On November 9, 2011, the Ministry issued a commemorative postal card having an imprinted letter-denominated “E” postage stamp honoring the “Battle of Tobruk” (Fig. 30). On the imprinted “E” stamp is shown a Czechoslovak soldier’s head with a helmet showing the circular Czechoslovak tri-color emblem with fighting figures in the background. In the left part of the postal card are shown two soldiers behind a barricade firing an anti-aircraft machine gun. Under the image are the words in Czech “11th Infantry Battalion 10.12.1941”. The city of Tobruk and the surrounding area saw a number of battles fought during the 1941-42 war

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operations between the British army on one side and the German and Italian troops (the “Afrikakorps”) on the other side. Taking turns, both sides seized control of the city several times. The siege of Tobruk started on April 11, 1941, when Tobruk was attacked by an Italian-German force. The besieged territory was defended by British and Australian troops (called “Desert Rats” by German media, a name adopted by the Australian troops), and was relieved by fresh troops in October 1941. The replacement troops included the Polish Carpathian Brigade and the Czechoslovak 11th Infantry Battalion (East). This was the largest war operation in the Near East and North Africa for the Czechoslovak forces. Between October 21 and December 10, 1941, the 643 men of the battalion led by Lieutenant Colonel Karel Klapálek held the most exposed western section of the fortified

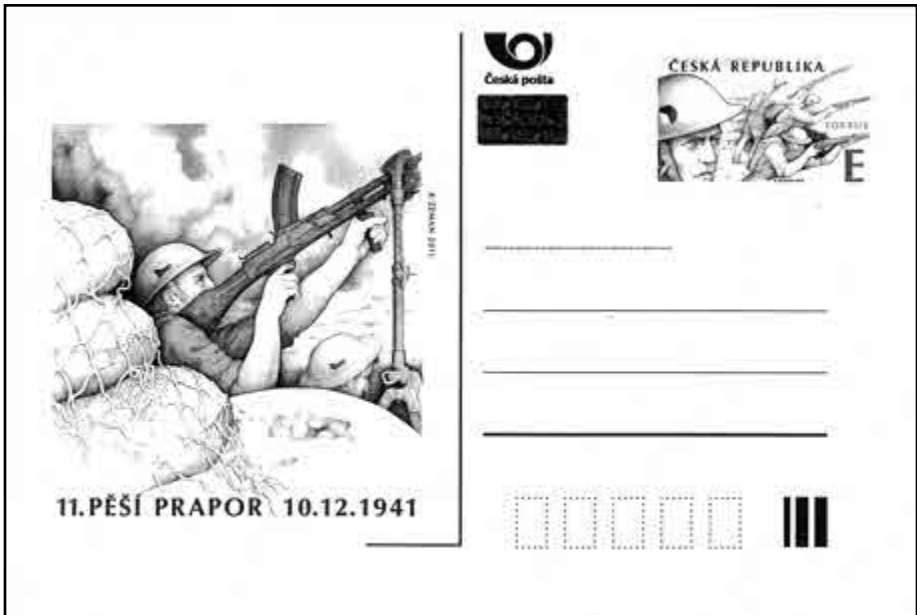


Fig. 30

perimeter. During the battles for Tobruk, 14 members of the battalion died, 26 sustained heavy injuries, and 55 received minor injuries. A memorial at Tobruk War Cemetery still commemorates the battles fought by the allied and Czechoslovak soldiers. The postal card and imprinted stamp were designed by Karel Zeman and produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by full-colored offset.

SLOVAKIA
by Gerald M. van Zanten

18. On July 29, 2011, the Ministry of Transport, Posts, and Telecommunications issued a 0.50€ commemorative stamp honoring the 100th anniversary of the birthday of Ján Cikker (1911-1989)(Fig. 31) -- the stamp shows the composer and

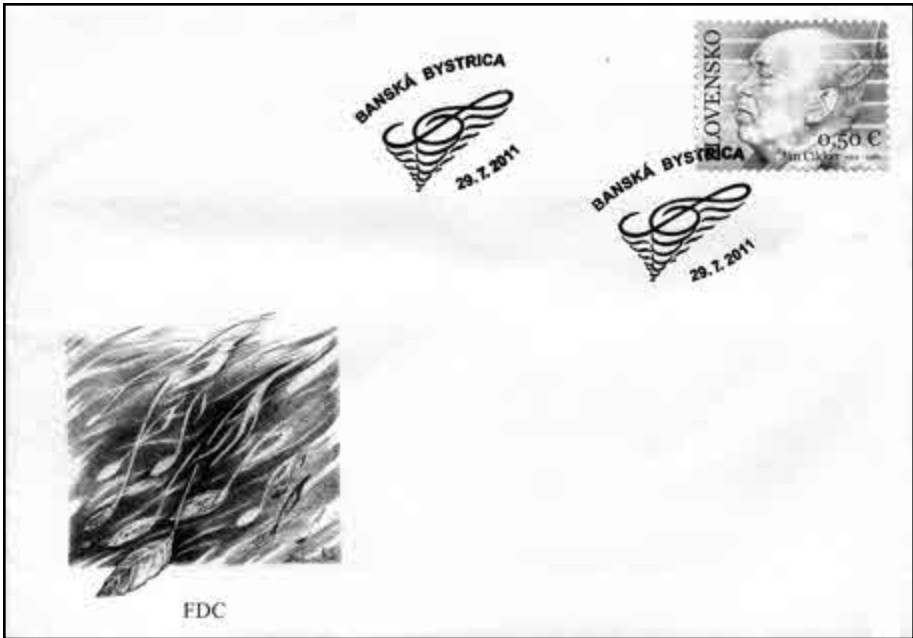


Fig. 31

a leaf against a musical staff in the background. Music composer Ján Cikker (Banská Bystrica -- Bratislava) studied composing, conducting and organ at the Prague Conservatory from 1930 to 1936 and musicology at Charles University at the same time, then later at the Music Academy in Vienna. Thanks to his thorough training, his early compositions showed his mastery of the current level of musicology in Prague. From 1938 - 1951 he was a teacher of music theory in Bratislava, after which he taught composition at the Academy of Performing Arts. Several of his orchestral, chamber, vocal and choral works have become standard parts of orchestral repertoires. Later he began to focus on adapting Slovak folk music to orchestral works, and used inspiration from the literature of the world's greatest authors for his operatic opuses. Throughout his life he won a number of international awards. Ján Cikker belongs among the most significant of Slovak composers of the 20th century. The stamp was designed by Katarina Slaninková and produced by the Poštovní Tiskárna Cenin Praha using offset in sheets of 50 pieces. A FDC in brownish-black shows musical notes morphing into leaves being blown by the wind.

19. On September 2, 2011, the Ministry issued a 0.40€ commemorative stamp honoring the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava (BIB) 2011 (Fig. 32). The Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava (BIB) was first held in 1967. It is the largest non-commercial event of its kind in the world, presenting the original works of books for children and youth in a competitive way. The BIB International Jury awards 11 prizes -- Grand Prix BIB, five BIB Golden Apples and five BIB Plaques. The BIB is the most important event organized by BIBIANA, the International

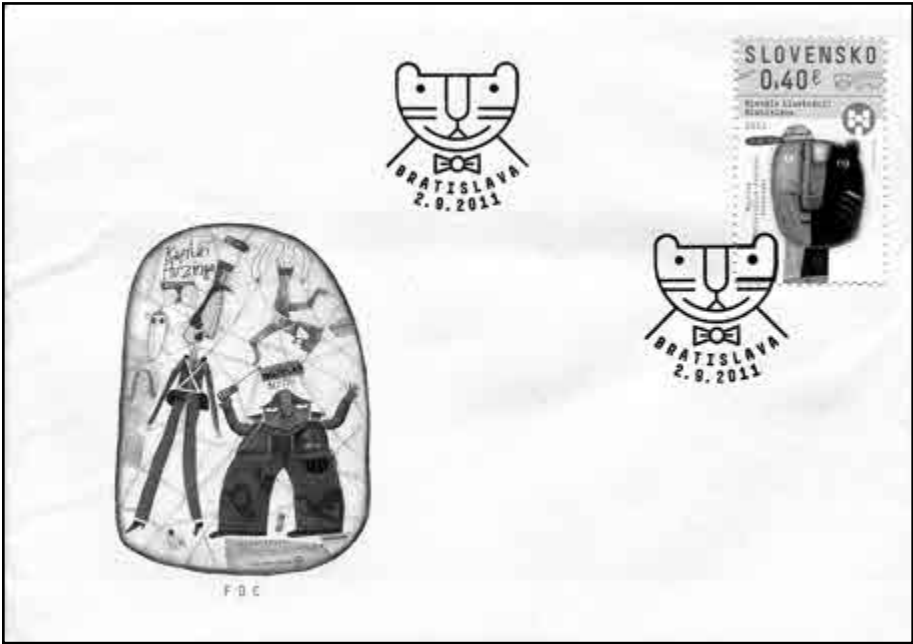


Fig. 32

House of Art for Children. It is held every odd year in the autumn in Bratislava. The latest event in 2009, the 22nd year of BIB was attended by 344 authors from 37 countries with nearly 2500 illustrations. On the stamp is reproduced an illustration from the book “Tracy’s Tiger” by a talented young Slovak artist Martina Matlovičová-Kráľová, which won the previous Biennial BIB Golden Apple. She studied at the Academy of Performing Arts in the Department of Animation. She, however, concentrates mostly on book illustrations, which earned her several awards. Her work is characterized by the use of combined techniques -- painting is often supplemented by collage which completes the whole illustration compositionally. The illustrations possess saturated, bright colors, which often dominate her work. Illustrations created for children need innovation, humor, and some exaggeration. The illustrations of “Tracy’s Tiger” are very diverse in genre and color. Each illustration seems to be from a different book, but it is precisely this inconsistency that creates a whole that makes this book interesting. Illustrations appear easily and freely in the book which was also the reason why this work was awarded the BIB Golden Apple. The stamp was designed by Vladislav Rostoka and produced by the Poštovní Tiskárna Cenin Praha using offset in sheets of 50 pieces. A FDC in multicolor shows one of the illustrations from the book with Kapitán Huzinga of the police along with Blyth of the water department.

20. On September 22, 2011, the Ministry issued a 0.40€ commemorative stamp for the 100th anniversary of the birth of Michal Miloslav Hodža (1811 - 1870)(Fig. 33). The principle motif of the stamp is Hodža’s portrait with a background in which there are books and pens, symbolizing his merit in codification of the Slovak

literary language. Michal Miloslav Hodža was one of the leading personalities of Slovak cultural and political life in the 1830's -- 1860's. He was born in the village of Rakša in central Slovakia. He studied at the Evangelical Seminary in Prešov and later in Bratislava. In 1837 he finished his studies of theology in Vienna and was ordained a Lutheran priest. He spent most of this life as a pastor in Liptovský Mikuláš. During his studies in Bratislava, he became close with Ludovít Štúr, the leading person of the rising generation of Slovak national activists as well as Joseph M. Hurban who shared the same opinions. Along with them, he brought about a new codification of the Slovak literary language in 1843, which has lasted with minor modifications until the present time. Hodža also participated in establishing Tatrín (1844), the first nationwide cultural association as well as in issuing the first Slovak political newspaper (1845). He was one of the leaders of the Slovak revolution in 1848-1849, in which he represented the moderate wing. In May 1848 the National Assembly gathered at his parsonage, which formulated the first national political agenda (Demands of the Slovak People). He was a leading member of the Slovak National Council and one of the leaders of the military uprising for Slovak national rights. After the revolution he worked as a notary devoting himself to cultural, linguistic, theological, and political activities. He also was a founding member of a new national program, Matica Slovenská, as well as a member of its Committee (1863-1867). In 1867 after a conflict with the authorities he emigrated to Těšín in Silesia, where after a short illness he died on March 26, 1870. He is buried in Liptovský Mikuláš. The stamp was designed by Ivan Schurmann, engraved by Rudolf Cigánik, and produced by Poštovní Tiskárna Cenin Praha using rotary recess printing in sheets of 50 pieces. A FDC in black



Fig. 33

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depicts a collage showing the church where he worked and where, thanks to his initiative, a number of major national gatherings took place, along with other items that symbolize his contributions to the development of the nation, its culture, and the Slovak Lutheran Church.

21. On October 14, 2011, the Ministry issued a 1.10€ commemorative stamp from the Nature Protection series for the Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*)(Fig. 34). The stamp shows the male strutting with tail-feathers raised before the female. The



Fig. 34

Great Bustard is Slovakia’s heaviest flying bird. It grows up to more than one meter with a wing span of up to 2.5 meters and the heaviest individuals can weigh up to 22 kg. This, originally a steppe bird, inhabits our agricultural landscape. It feeds on both plant and animal food and harder seeds. The plant food includes leaves, buds, flowers, whole plants of field crops, and weeds. The animal food is mainly represented by insects, but occasionally the bird catches smaller vertebrates, for example voles, mice, lizards, and even young birds. It nests on the ground, usually in the cereal crops and clover plants. For most of the year, they concentrate in flocks, which dissipate during the nesting season. The Great Bustard has two subspecies -- the European, which lives typically in the area from the Iberian Peninsula to Siberia, and the Asian from eastern Altai to Mongolia. Even though the bird lives in an extensive area, it nests in an irregular manner. Nearly 75% of the European population, estimated at 33,000, lives in the Iberian Peninsula. Since the mid-1970’s, there has been a dramatic decline in their



Fig. 35

Figure 35 shows a maximum card for the stamp showing two birds in flight.

number mainly in Central Europe. The cause was the intensification of agriculture, building of roads, and power supply lines. Their number fell to 5 to 10 females in Slovakia in the 1990's. Their number seems to be improving thanks to the efforts of nature protection organizations and farmers. It currently lives only in the Danube Lowland where there are two protected bird areas in the border areas of Austria, Slovakia and Hungary. It is protected in Slovakia as well as in the European Union. The stamp was designed and engraved by Rudolf Cigánik and produced by Poštovní Tiskárna Cenin Praha using recess printing in sheets of 4. A FDC in black shows a symbolic image of a male Great Bustard caught in barbed wire.

22. On November 11, 2011, the Ministry issued a 0.40€ commemorative stamp honoring Christmas 2011: Folk Motif (Fig. 36). The stamp shows a perník (gingerbread) fish with white icing lying on a green Christmas tablecloth with ornamentation. Christmas is a Christian feast of the incarnation and birth of Jesus Christ. The Christmas season lasts from the evening worships of the feast of the Nativity until the Sunday after the feast of the Epiphany (or Three Kings). Initially, only the first Christmas Day was celebrated (according to the Gregorian calendar it was December 25). Since the reformation, people began to celebrate Christmas one day in advance, on Christmas Eve (December 24). In the Orthodox Church, Christmas is celebrated according to the Julian calendar -- on 7 January. The Slovak word "Vianoce" may be associated with the German Weihnachten (Consecrated night) or Italian *via (di)nozze*, which literally means "honeymoon",

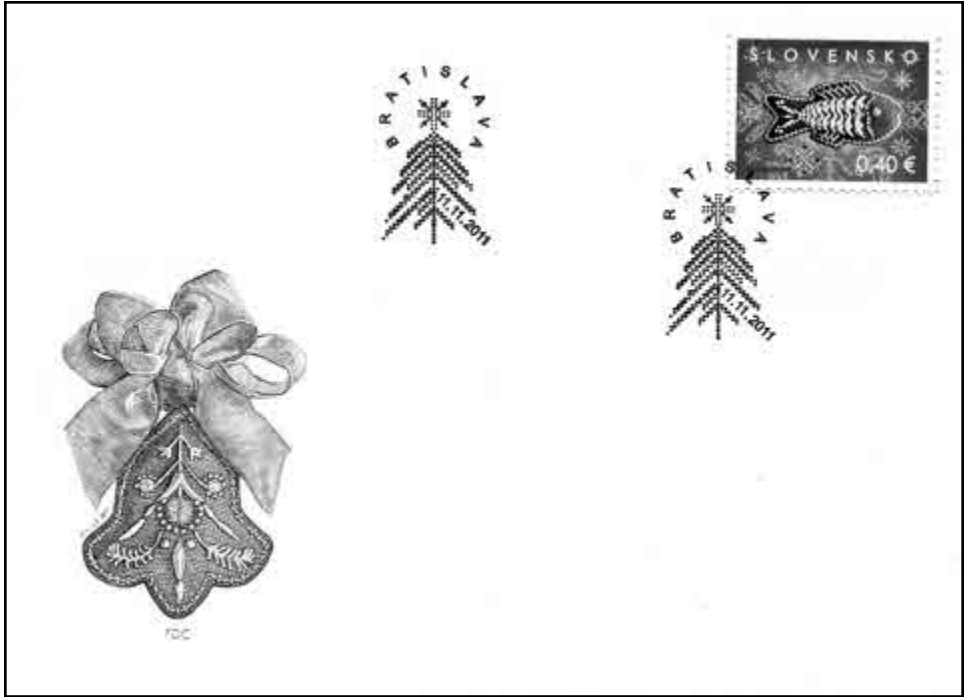


Fig. 36

since the birth of Jesus occurred on the way to Bethlehem. The custom of giving gifts at Christmas is documented in a Protestant environment from the 16th century. In Catholic families, however, the gifts were given already on the feast of St. Nicholas (6 December). Other Christmas traditions and symbols include a Christmas play (from the 11th century), making of Christmas cribs (from the 13th century), and an Advent wreath and decorated Christmas tree (from the 19th century). A well-known paradise tree, which was originally a tree in the center of the stage decorated by fruit, later became a symbol of Christmas. Lit candles on the Christmas tree symbolize the light that came into the world to put the darkness out. The arrival of the Saviour is traditionally celebrated as a rich feast, which ends the period of fasting. According to the advice given by the housewives from the 19th century “one should eat meat that is legless, for Christ’s birth it should be meat of the two-legged animal, and on St. Stephen’s Day meat of the four-legged animal. It should be fish, bird, domestic or wild animal. One meat should be fried, the second should be baked, and the third should be cooked or stewed”. The Christmas period is also characterized by baking small sweet-smelling cookies, cake called vianočka (Christmas cake), makovník (poppy seed cake), nut cakes and medovník (honey cake). The stamp was designed by Marianna Varcholová and produced by Poštovní Tiskárna Cenin Praha using offset in sheets of 50 pieces. A FDC in reddish-brown shows a Christmas tree bell ornament tied with a ribbon.

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