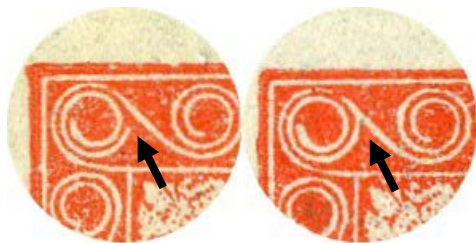


## Corrections in the Hradčany stamps of 5<sup>th</sup> design

Sometimes it is possible to make new discoveries with stamps that have been in your collection for many years. That happened to me recently. I have been working for some time with Jiří Krnak (from the Czech Republic) on the postal stationery with the stamp image of the 10 and 20 h of the 5<sup>th</sup> Hradčany design. In doing so, he also asked me to take a look at the blackprints from my collection. This led to an interesting discovery.

As is well known, these very stamps of the 5<sup>th</sup> design feature the so-called 'spiral types' and also the 'pigeon types'. These are two features in the design that are present on all stamps in the negative of all values, but were corrected at a later stage on some of the plates made from them. In those corrections, the 4<sup>th</sup> spiral was closed. This was forgotten on some stamps, resulting in sought-after connected spiral types. To correct the 'pigeon fault', the white line above the right pigeon was closed (but this too was not always done consistently).



Spiral types before and after correction



Pigeon fault before and after correction

In principle, such a correction can be done at various stages of making the printing plate, for example before the plate is etched, by touching up the print of the negative on the plate. But it is also possible to make those corrections when the plate is ready; then some metal has to be taken out of the plate with a needle or a small gouge to draw a white line through. After all, this is letterpress printing, where the higher-lying metal parts are printed in colour and the lower-lying parts in the print remain white.

Which technique was used in practice was not known until now, but now I can show that the corrections were made only at the final stage before printing, in the etched plate.

Below are two examples that demonstrate this. Both are blackprints that were made as proofs of the plate before they were corrected.



The first case involves a stamp of the 5 h value; position 41 of the 3<sup>rd</sup> plate. This has clear plate characteristics, including the T of POŠTA extended on the left. In the black print the 4<sup>e</sup> spiral is clearly still open, on the stamp it is closed.



The second example is a stamp of the value 20 h; position 13 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> plate. The features are a little less clear here, but a dot on the upper frame line between O and Š and the damage to the right frame line between dove and 10th spiral are clear, as is the pattern of dots in the sky. Again, the spiral is open in the black print and closed on the stamp, but here the dove fault has also been corrected.

This is sufficient proof that these corrections were only made on the finished plate, after the first proofs were made (in black).