

Hradčany Research Newsletter # 11

June 2021

The last Newsletter came out in May 2020, already more than a year ago. During this whole year our lives are greatly influenced by the pandemic. I have found being holed up at home has provided me with a lot of time for philatelic study. The pandemic has also led to a growing popularity of online meetings and one of the fruits of that is the Typographic Study Group, initiated by Mark Wilson. This group will have its second Zoom meeting with participants from countries all over Europe and America on June 26th. This Newsletter introduces some issues I will present there.

Anyone interested in joining the study group is welcome. All material is available on Marks site: <https://knihtisk.org/09-group/group.htm>. An e-mail is enough to have you included on the list of participants.

Postage Due Stamps

The Hradčany postage stamps and the Express stamps have largely been dealt with in the books on their printing history and the complete run of plating studies, all available in English. The obvious next step is delving into the other stamps from the first run of Czechoslovak issues designed by Mucha. The Postage Due and Newspaper stamps remain and I decided to tackle the relatively 'easy' Postage Due (Doplatit) issue first. I started with the mother lode of all Czechoslovak philatelic knowledge, the Czech **Monografie** (part IV) and compared the information contained therein with what can be found on the available (scans of) complete panes of these stamps. This led to the discovery that the Monografie information turned out to be incomplete and sometimes faulty. I have made a file in which the information is corrected and completed where possible, which is available online at <https://czechout.org/pages/library.htm>, next to the English translation of the Monografie pages.

One specific issue remaining contested is the number of plates used for the **30 haler stamp**. The Monografie mentions four plates, but gives only very fragmentary further information. I explored the issue somewhat further in a presentation for the Typographic Study Group, available on the group site (see above). In the most recent issue of Zpravodaj Knihtisk (#94) the existence of a relatively small number of 30 h stamps printed from plates 3 and 4 is also highlighted, opening the possibility of joined efforts to clear this up further.

As yet **plating studies** for these stamps have only been published in Czech, with Jaroslav Moravec as the author. Mark Wilson and myself have now planned to start a project to translate, complete and newly illustrate those plating guides, to be published in English as on-demand CPSGB publications. We already secured the consent from Mr. Moravec for this undertaking.

Express stamps - Printing history

In the last Newsletter I informed you of the work Mark Wilson and I were doing on the 1919 Express stamps as a follow-up to our book "The Hradčany - a Technical History". This has led to the publication last year of "**The Express Stamps: a History**", published as an on-demand publication by the CPSGB; see <https://czechout.org/test2/ex-his.html>.

Hradčany stationary

A subject of continuing interest is the study of the details and printing history of the Hradčany stationary in close cooperation with Patrik Lexmann. This focusses on three areas on interest:

15 haler postcards (CDV 14, 15 and 17), for which we identified all dies used from plates VII and VIII of the 15 h and are still working on the number of printings and their dates.

10 haler (1st design) postal stationary, for which the number of described dies used on the various types of stationary is still expanding from the (present) 166 out of a possible 200 from plates V and VI made for this purpose.

10 haler (5th design) postal stationary, for which up to now 21 dies from plate II have been found used on stationary, as well as 34 dies from a third, different plate. Here we are still in the stage of identifying which dies were used on which of the various types of parcel forms.

20 haler (5th design) postal stationary is a new area of study, made interesting by the use of dies from an early proof version of the 5th design on some of the stationary, along with dies from a third and possibly also fourth plate from the version also used for the stamps.

Some of you have responded to earlier requests by making scans of postal stationary from their collections available for study, which is important and also highly appreciated! A lack of available material to study is the main hurdle to further progress. Luckily there now are some contacts with Czech collectors who are working on the same issues independently.

An appeal for cooperation

Knowledge will only grow when it is freely shared. This is a well-known adage for all sciences and particularly true for philatelic study. The time that the sharing of knowledge and the exchange of stamps was chiefly done in society meetings in some stuffy room lies behind us. Some may mourn this development, I am glad that modern IT possibilities have opened world-wide horizons for exchange of information and cooperation in research. Mark Wilson has clearly demonstrated this with his Knihtisk.org website and the online publication of plating studies and other literature.

Above I have referred to specific areas of research which can only be further explored when more information is shared, first and foremost in the form of hi-resolution scans of available material.

But there may also still be a place for the old-fashioned exchange of stamps. I recently exchanged want-lists for the reconstruction of plates of Hradčany stamps with one of you, which led to mutual completion of several plates. Very satisfying indeed! I have a large stock of duplicate plated stamps and I'm always willing to share those with other serious collectors. Just let me know what you are looking for and I will of course gladly share my want list with anyone who can help.

I hope to be keeping you up to date on further discoveries in the future! I would warmly welcome any contributions on all of the aspects discussed above.

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