

# THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

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## AUSTRIAN POSTAL STATIONERY WITH CZECH TEXTS

It was not expected to have postal matter issued in Bohemia to bear a legend or text in Czech. On stamps it was not until October 28, 1918 that the legend appeared in Czech. It is a different story with correspondence cards.

Right at the beginning let it be understood that this article does not reveal any discoveries because all in this specialty has already appeared in print written by knowledgeable persons. But after publication of their articles certain questions were raised and interesting items came to light. In answer to some of the questions there are proofs in the author's collection which may interest the reader.



The first correspondence card in the world was produced in Austria and released for sale on October 1, 1869. The legend on it, of course, was in German only. On succeeding issues of the card a legend in Czech makes its initial appearance on July 1, 1871. The card, bearing the head of the monarch in a medallion printed in yellow color, and indicating a postal value of 2 kreuzers bears a curved inscription "Correspondenz-Karte" in German, and beneath it, in smaller type, the equivalent in Czech.

In October 1872 another issue made its appearance, the card having gained popularity with the public. In the printing process an error occurred when instead of the current value of 2 kreuzers one of the cuts in the plate was replaced with a 5-kreuzer cut.

On this matter the president of the Vienna Collectors of Postal Entires reported: "On October 18, 1873 the Praha postal authorities ordered from the State Printery in Vienna one million correspondence cards. With the switch in cuts 6,375 sheets with a total of 408,000 erroneous cards were printed. The error in printing was discovered at the end of November or beginning of December 1873 at a time when 15,000 of these cards were already in the hands of the public. The sale of the cards was stopped immediately. On December 31, 1873 the Ministry of Post in a special decree ordered the erroneous cards validated by sticking a 2-kreuzer stamp of the same design (issue of July 1, 1867) over the objectional value, and at the beginning of May 1874, without any additional decree, 393,000 of these corrected in value cards were made available to the public.

Two inconsistencies come to mind. One that the error was discovered towards the end of November or early in December, and second that the corrected cards were released for sale at the beginning of May 1874. And this does not take into consideration the immediate stoppage of sale following discovery of the error. The big question is, when? The

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fixing of the correct dates would be most important in the evaluation of the cards. The error is listed in the handbook by Dr. Ferchenbauer, and also in the specialized catalog of postal stationery by Eng. Schneiderbauer. In these publications we learn that the high market value of the cards applies only to the original cards printed in error and postally used prior to May 1874 in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia. Cards used later are listed 40% lower in price. Practically it is impossible to ascertain on what day in May 1874 the highly priced card suddenly diminished 40% in value.

Because of the high price placed on these interesting cards an attempt was made to ascertain dates of use during the critical period by scanning sources of information diligently.

C. Lindenberg of Vienna wrote in 1907 that after examining "thousands" of cards for the period, he found 8 erroneous cards of 5-kreuzer value, and of these 5 bore a date prior to May 1874, and three were postmarked after May 1874.

H. Tomschik of Vienna, a well known collector of entires, quotes one example where the card bears the date of January 31, 1874 with a Holeschau (Holešovice) cancellation. Cards with the corrected value through a 2-kreuzer adhesive were scanned, and the oldest date appears to be July 17, 1874 with a Praha cancellation.

Other collectors who were interviewed personally or their exhibits closely scrutinized for dates of cancellations differ grossly from the critical dates quoted by Tomschik both as to erroneous and the corrected value cards.

In the author's own collection of these cards the dates are closer to the critical period. A 5-kreuzer card postally used bears the cancellation stamp of "Ingerowitz" and the date of December 11, 1873. (Figure 1) Of the corrected value the oldest card bears the date of May 20, 1874 and a Praha postmark.

In order to establish a criterion for evaluation it would be well if readers would answer the following questions

a) Do collectors have knowledge of an earlier date of postally used erroneous card than the date of December 11, 1873?

b) Do collectors know of an earlier postal cancellation date on the corrected value card than May 20, 1874?

Do collectors consider erroneous cards postally canceled after May 1874 to be worth 40% less than cards postally used prior to May 1874?

Consider the conclusions reached by Mr. Lindenberg on this matter.

Speculations on this postal curiosity do not end with the foregoing. We could also raise the question of design difference on the stamp. Several types are in existence, but a certain philatelic authority in Praha would promptly call such discussion not "specialization" but "fragmentation."

## Czech Language On Cards Known As Treasonable

In Austria, under pressure by nationalities demanding their rights in the use of mother tongue a law was adopted which in Art. 19 of December 21, 1867 reads: "Equality of rights in all component lands (of the monarchy) concerning the use of native languages in schools, public offices and in everyday life is acknowledged." Based on this proclamation, but especially on permission of December 12, 1874 facilitating the printing of private post cards without imprinted stamps caused a phenomenon which caused many a sleepless night to the bureaucrats in Vienna. Czech publishers and organizations began to print correspondence cards without stamps. In addition correspondence cards printed by the State were being "corrected" according to the whim of the publishers or philatelists.

For example in Figure 2 an entire is shown with the legend in two languages as issued in 1883. It is postally canceled at Smiritz on March 24, 1884. The legend "Correspondenz-Karte" on the card is cleverly eliminated by the sender with a stroke of pen even to the "in" on the line for the locality. The German legend is converted into the silhouette of a moving train while the Czech-language legend remains untouched.



In Figure 3 the card was printed in the National Printery of Joseph Nohavec of Terezín and bears a 2-kreuzer stamp canceled on October 17, 1885 in Theresienstadt. The card bears a legend in Czech bold type and underneath in a much smaller type the legend "Correspondenze-Karte" which was against regulations. In the upper left hand corner of the card appears the emblem of Bohemia with the motto "Let's not give in."

Advertising cards appeared in Austria in 1906 were used to a great extent by commercial enterprises. Lesser use was made of this advertising medium in Bohemia. Some Praha entires, usually in both Czech and Ger-



man appeared, with messages of commercial nature on both sides of the card. They are quite rare (Figures 4 and 5).



On these illustrations it is also necessary to consider the temper and mores of the era. On Figure 2 the name of the addressee is interesting. It is the name of a well known collector, Vincent Jedlička, founder of the Club of Czech Philatelists in Praha in 1887. On the message side his



Unfortunately, Rambausek's lengthy request for a raise for himself, his courier and the addition of a new courier route to Triesch, some 13 kilometers due north of Teltsch, received a negative response. However, we do learn from this document that Rambausek considers his postal service in Teltsch to date back to 1834 rather than 1836, the date cited in the document appointing him Collector of Letters.

The official response to Rambausek's petition reads as follows:

"15993/3099 1845 -- To the k.k. Post Office -- Teltsch

As a preliminary reply to your petition of the 27th of last month, you are notified that with regard to the new routes between Stannern and Teltsch and between Teltsch and Datschitz, no additional expansion of the mail has been authorized beyond that which can be carried by a foot courier.

In view of the daily service necessitated by the daily vehicular shipment, your service will be considerably facilitated because of more even distribution, and it is not likely that the total amount of mail transported between Teltsch and Stannern will increase markedly with the addition of the shipment from Datschitz since the Post Office in Datschitz is connected for the transport to Vienna via Jamnitz and Budweis.

The apprehensions of your k.k. Post Office concerning this cannot be thought of as well reasoned at the start of the new arrangement, but one ought to wait first for the result of the new arrangement.

Meanwhile, one is inclined, in view of the better performance through the connection with Datschitz, to raise the wage of the courier suitably, also to allow a subsidy though not to accept an excessive demand.

The Post Office, therefore, after this preliminary decision has immediately introduced a suitable plan so that the newly ordered mail connection between Stannern and Datschitz via Teltsch will be started in the way thus determined.

The mail connection for Teltsch, as well as for Datschitz, will be considerably improved through this new arrangement, and only the result of this plan will indicate how this plan can be improved further. Therefore, a follow-up can be given to your well intended request.

From the Administration of the k.k. Post Office, in absence of the Secretary and Chief Administrator. Vienna, 31, 1845"

The postal connections with Teltsch following changes going into effect on September 1, 1845 are shown in Figure 9.

The route to Schelletau, which in 1836 was under the care of Rambausek, was most likely discontinued or came under the jurisdiction of the Schelletau Postmaster. The route to Datschitz, established in 1845, was under the jurisdiction of the Datschitz Postmaster, while Rambausek continued his only route, though henceforth on a daily schedule to Stannern.

Examples of actual correspondence lend further insight into the postal operations of the period. An 1848 letter from Jamnitz to Teltsch, shown in Figure 10, received a blue dated line postmark in Jamnitz and a red receiving postmark in Teltsch. Though certainly routed through Datschitz, it did not receive a transit marking there, as was a frequent custom at that time.

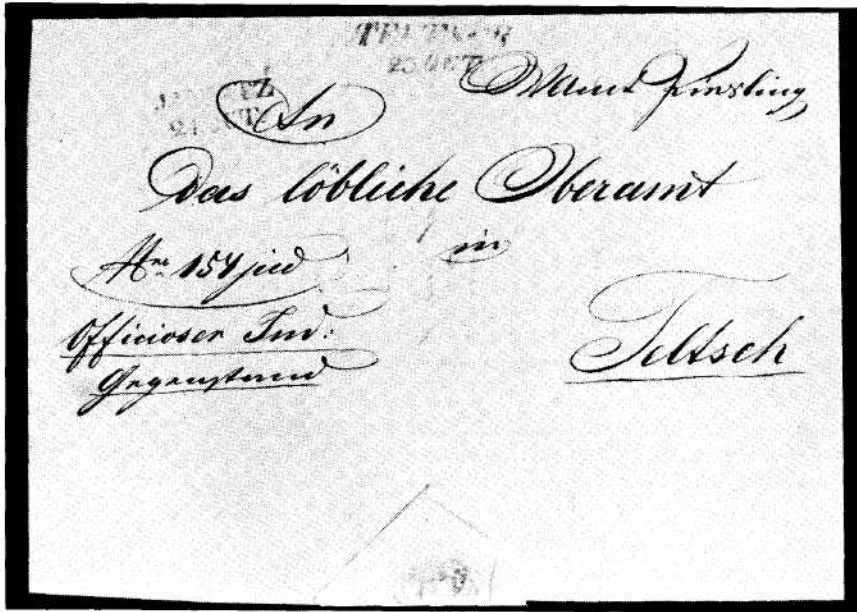


Figure 10., JAMNITZ (Blue) to TELTSCH (Red), October 23, 1848

A registered cover posted in Gratz in March 13 (year not evident from the cover) shown in Figure 11 shows a Vienna transit postmark on March 14th, and the new circular Teltsch arrival postmark, Votoček type G.3, which came into use in 1853. It is presumed that the cover passed through the route from Vienna established in 1845, i. e., via Znaim, Budweis, Jamnitz, Datschitz to Teltsch. Unfortunately, no transit markings were applied to this cover in Moravia.

The Datschitz postmark of this period, Votoček G.18 in black, is illustrated on a cover dated April 15, 1852 and shown in Figure 12 together with the earlier Teltsch straight line postmark.

A result of the Postal Administration's refusal of Rambašek's request in 1845 for a direct postal link with Triesch is illustrated in a cover from Triesch to Teltsch (Figure 13), a mere distance of some 13 kilometers (see Figure 9). The letter, postmarked in Triesch on December 13, 1855, "NACH ABGANG DER POST" (after departure of the mail) took a rather circuitous route to Teltsch (south) by way of Iglau (north), where it received a transit postmark on December 14th. Based on routing then

extant, the letter may be presumed to have reached Teltsch by way of Stannern only on December 16th, on which day it received the straight line arrival postmark in Teltsch. Thus, instead of 13 kilometers, the letter was carried close to 50 kilometers and required three days for delivery.



Figure 11. GRATZ to TELTSCH (Votoček G.3) via Vienna

Foot courier service to Stannern was replaced in 1849 by a horse rider, and on October 1, 1849 the Mail Collection Station in Teltsch became a "Mail Dispatch and Relay Station". Vehicular mail to Iglau and Schelletau was initiated shortly thereafter and to Datschitz in 1860. Col-

lector Moritz Rambausek was named "Mail Dispatch and Relay Station Administrator" at a salary of 420 Florins annually.

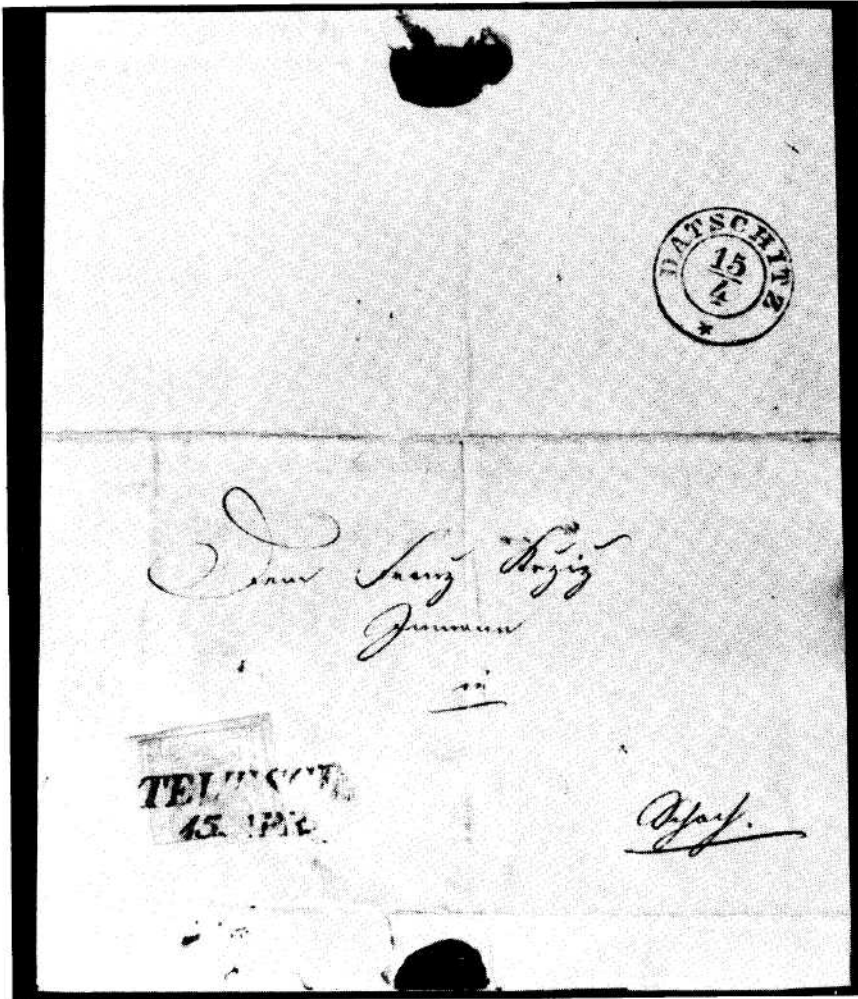


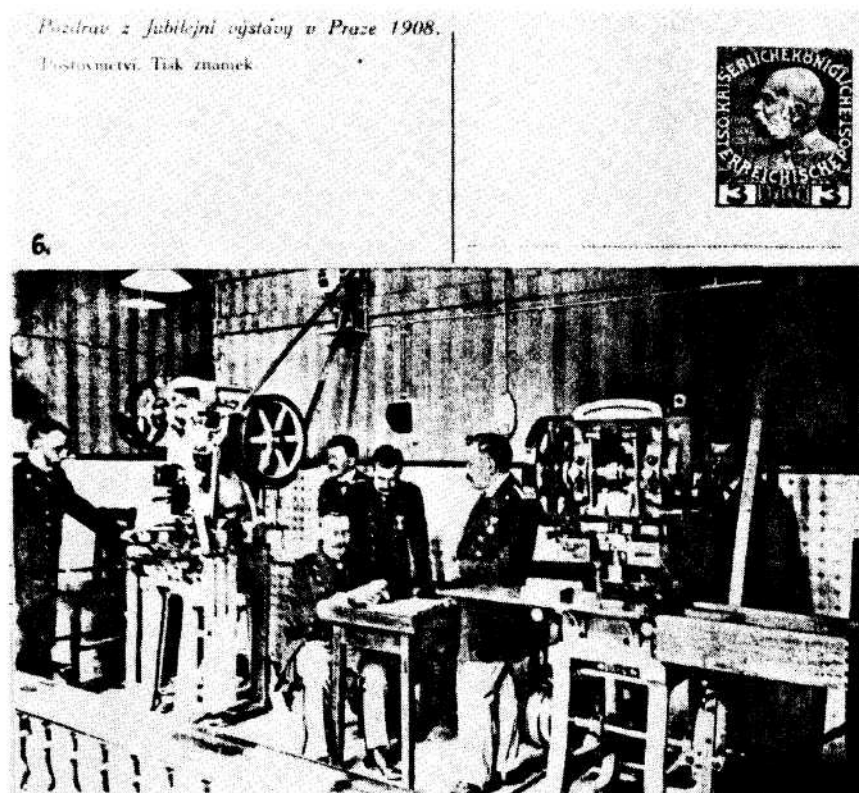
Figure 12. TELTSCH via DATSCHITZ (Votoček G.18), April 15, 1852

Yet another milestone in the history of postal service to Teltsch was achieved in 1860 when the "Mail Dispatch and Relay Station" was elevated to a "Postal Station and Relay Depot". The pertinent document reads as follows:

"To the k.k. Mail Dispatch and Relay Station Administrator, Mr. Moritz Rambausek in Teltsch -

The Finance Ministry has found itself obliged in accordance with the decree of 5 April of last year, z 15832/852 to authorized conversion of the Mail Dispatch and Relay Station in Teltsch to a Post Office and Postal Relay Depot.

On card No. 6 we have the location of the deed with the perpetrators caught in the act. This post card was printed by the Unie Printery in Praha. At the Exhibition it was imprinted with the 3-kreuzer issue of the Jubilee series of stamps in violet color and with a legend added in Czech: "Greetings from the Jubilee Exhibition in Praha in 1908. The imprinting of stamps by the Postal Service."



The imprinting of stamps on official and other entires is fully publicized and cataloged, but the message and the reply part of the card illustrated is of special interest. It is a correspondence card with a prepaid reply from Praha to Paris and return, prepared and mailed by the well-known Praha philatelist and researcher Hanuš Kropf. The address, return address and the messages are all in his handwriting. (Figures No. 7 and 8). Kropf died about three years later, in 1911 in Praha.

Concerning these imprints at the Jubilee Exhibition in Praha in 1908 an interesting article was written by Jiří Nekvasil, a collector of entires, in which he not only refers to what was imprinted but also describes the spirit of the Exhibition which developed into a nationalist-manifestation. He mentions that stamps were imprinted on cards designed for the Praha pneumatic post (Figure 9) bearing also the Czech legend "Card for rapid delivery by pneumatic post." These entires were imprinted



with additional stamps at the Exhibition and the legend in Czech is always first, taking precedence over the German (Figure 10) Nekvasil notes that nine different types of cards were thus imprinted, but two types were in such small number that he was never able to locate a single example.

The last illustration (11 and 12) on the use of Czech language on Austrian entires affords an opportunity to learn that organizations took advantage of the situation, had privately printed cards imprinted with valid postage. In the two illustrations the Club of Czech Philatelists in Praha on February 26, 1912 notifies its member, Dr. Karl Rix and invites him to regular meeting of the Club. The Club was founded in Praha in 1887 and Dr. Rix was a well-known collector and founder of a Club of Collectors of Postal Stationery.

## CHARLEY'S CORNER

I had the pleasure, while attending a recent midwest auction sale, of meeting once again our society member and expert on stamps of Czechoslovakia, Dr. Ladislav Fischmeister. As we were looking through the many lots of Czechoslovakia to be sold we came upon a most curious fact. Many of the stamps such as B-18A and B-19A used. Michal A1, the 10 kopek Siberia overprinted "Cheska Pochta" bore only the expertizing mark of "Z. Mikulski". Also the rare sets of the 25 K to 1 R "Balicky do Vlasti" and "Prvi Jugoslavenski puk v Sibiriji" overprints had only the rather shabby expertizing mark of Jaroslav Sula. All this material came from a very extensive collection of Czechoslovakia.

The question is: How is it that after all these years that only the mark of "Z. Mikulski" should appear on these stamps? In one talk I had with Gilbert he led me to believe that 75 to 90% of all the rarities of Czechoslovakia had passed through his hands. And what about all the other experts: Mrnak, Tribuna, Hirsch, Franek, Leseticky, Sperling, Arthur Kessler, Felix Brunner, Karasek and others? Would not one of these have ever expertized one of these stamps? After all these are great rarities from the beginning, and one would have to expect that at least one of these experts would have signed them. I have seen some "Pošta Československa 1919" overprints unsigned, but always common material or at least lesser rarities such as B59, B60, B62 or B71-72. The real rarities are a different story. On the genuine overprints there is always the signature of at least one expert, and most of the great rarities several experts appear, and often there is a certificate.

The overprints on the stamps mentioned did not look good to me, especially that on B112. This particular stamp, the 5 fillér black numeral postage due stamp, had a dark muddy sort of overprint unlike any we had ever seen before, yet it was also signed "Z. Mikulski". We determined that this stamp had to be a forgery; on the others Dr. Fischmeister said he would have to take the time to measure and examine through a big glass.

It would seem possible then that the stamps with the "Mikulski" signature are being forged somewhere in Europe. A B90, 10 Kč parliament, being offered at a recent Gunter Loth sale in Mainz, Germany, as "Luxus" with a starting bid of 1400 DM is definitely a forgery. It is readily visible from the color plate that the letters are misformed and not properly aligned. It also is signed only by Möbs and Mikulski.

My advice is that you request an extension if you bid on material of this sort so that you have time to submit it to Herbert Block of the Mercury Stamp Company or to the Philatelic Foundation for authentication, especially when only recent "expert" markings appear. Good hunting.

Charley Chesloe

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#### DECEASED

- 938 Roy Normandin of Kankakee, IL died as the result of an auto accident. The Society for Czechoslovak Philately regrets the loss of this good member and wishes to express its sympathy to his family.

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