Plating Guide for Plates III and IV of the HRADČANY 15 H

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by
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Rekonstrukce III. a IV. desky

Translated into English with the kind permission of the author
by Dr. Mark Wilson

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*The Translator*

**Cover Illustration:** Lower left corner block of eight from Plate I showing both types of the fourth spiral and the lower left inner frame variations.

April 2004
This information was taken from the *Monographs on Czechoslovakian Stamps*, Volume I, written by Dr. F. Kubát.

Stamps in the 15h denomination were printed in the so-called Fifth Design. It was derived from the fifth revision of Mucha’s second draft.

The auxiliary setup was built from auxiliary prints from the 25h denomination with a new value pasted in to the value tablet and with control numbers pasted on the lower edge of the auxiliary setup.

For printing, the plates were grouped into a printing matrix of four plates. Two of the plates were 15h, the remaining plates were other denominations. It is known that they were coupled with newspaper stamps.

Printing of the 15h denomination began on June 3, 1919 as the first stamps in the Fifth Design. This denomination was released on June 7, 1919 in imperforate form.

The entire release was some 116,650,000 stamps, of which 52,090,000 were imperforate. The printing house had a number of perforating machines and used them with various gauges on the 15h stamp. All of the perforated 15h stamps from Plates III and IV were comb perforated in either 13 3/4 x 13 ½ or 11 3/4.

Individual plates may be identified by examining a control number and the stamp above it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate III:</th>
<th>Plate IV:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13.50 with three bumps on the zero. Type I fourth spiral. Right dove’s tail (— —).</td>
<td>12. — — with a gap in the decimal line Type I fourth spiral. Right dove’s tail (— —).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are philatelically interesting variations in the stamps.

**1. Types**

a) Spirals:

- **Type I:** Every stamp on both plates
- **Type II:** Does not exist on the these plates.

b) Trimmed Numerals – Same positions on both plates:

- **Type I:** All positions not give below.
- **Type II:** Bottom on numeral 1 trimmed – 13, 71, 78, 89, 94.
- **Type III:** Bottom on numeral 5 trimmed – 9, 81.
- **Type IV:** Bottom trimmed on both numerals – 68, 75.

c) Shifted numerals – Same positions on both plates:

- **Type I:** All positions not given below.
- **Type II:** Tilted downward – 5, 19, 23, 45, 54, 64, 66, 67, 71, 72, 74, 82, 90.
- **Type III:** Tilted upward – 91.
- **Type IV:** Shifted downward – 33, 80, 90.
- **Type V:** Shifted upward – 8, 16, 34, 57, 82.
- **Type VI:** Shifted to the left – 14, 15, 21, 28, 56.
- **Type VII:** Shifted to the right – 1, 60, 91.
2. Plate repairs before printing – The right dove’s tail
   Both plates have the uncorrected right dove’s tail (– –).
4. Colors
   a) Perforated 13 3/4 x 13 ½ – vermillion, brown red, brick red, carmine.
   b) Perforated 11 3/4 – brick red.
5. Paper – Thicknesses from 0.03 to 1.0 mm.
6. Plate defects
   a) Primary – Unrepaired right dove’s tail (– –) on every stamp.
   b) Secondary – Both plates, positions 59, 79.
   c) Tertiary
      Plate III: 18, 52, 56, 60, 98.
      Plate IV: 4, 5, 11, 64.
7. Printing defects
   a) In the image – double prints on the gummed side, printing on the gummed side of the paper.
   b) Offsets – entire printing press, partial printing press.
   c) Wandering rings – in various places.
   d) In the color – over-inked, under-inked, no ink, dirty spaces between the stamps.
   e) In the paper – single fold, overlapped, thinned paper.
   f) In the perforations – rough, displaced, extended and foreshortened comb.
8. Forgeries – none reported.
9. Envelopes
   a) Single – domestic letter rate.
   b) Double – (certified) domestic letter rate.
New Findings

A few surprises were found concerning stamps printed with Plates III and IV. When we compared the ratio of Type I fourth spirals found on Plates III and IV with those found on other plates (not including those rare stamps from Plates I and II), for 100 loose stamps, it was found to be:

III : IV : V : VI = 5 : 5 : 45 : 45.

This means that for every ten stamps printed only one was printed by Plates III or IV. Nor was the ratio any better for stamps overprinted DOPLATIT [POSTAGE DUE].

It now seems possible, in my view, that Plates III and IV were removed from service early because they were damaged during printing or when the printing matrix was being disassembled for cleaning. They then were replaced by Plates V and VI. This suggests that, with four plates and a total of 116 million stamps released, each plate was responsible for an average of 29 million stamps. That is roughly the same number of stamps printed by a single plate for some other issues: the 3h, the 10h First Design, the 10h Fifth Design, and the 20h First Design.

Of plate defects not published before, I offer the following:

Secondary – Position 93 - connection detached from the second hacek.
Tertiary: (Plate IV):
  Position 1 – white bump on the lower loop of the Š with a white spot under it.
  Position 5 – White splotch on the left coil.
  Position 10 – White spot connects the inner white frame line to the eighth spiral.