

## Express stamps – some new discoveries

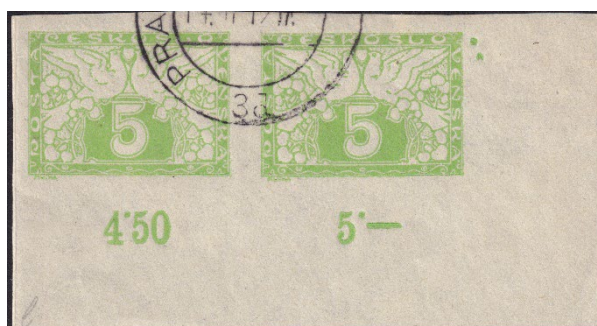
In 2020, Mark Wilson and I published the study “The Express Stamps: A History”, in we aimed to consolidate together all available knowledge on (primarily) the production of these stamps. At the time, this knowledge was fragmented, originating from a number of different sources. We tried to connect all the dots using the available material and in the process made some educated guesses (see <https://cpsgb.org/pod-link/129.html>).

Of course, we understood that newly discovered material could further complete the story, validate our hypotheses, or even reveal errors in our conclusions.

Recently, new findings have come to light, offering a fresh perspective on several aspects of our study.

### Pattern 1 was indeed the first one printed

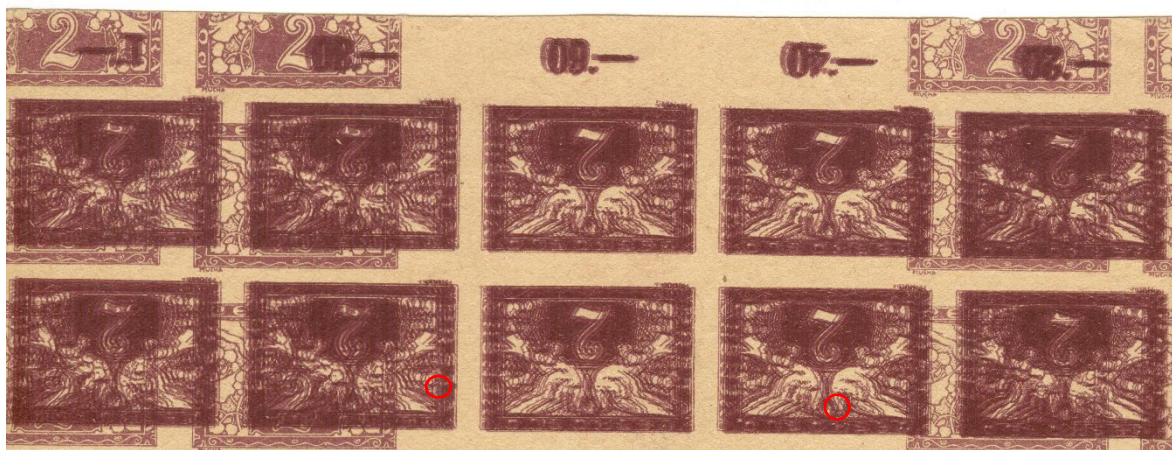
First of all a pair of 5 h stamps was found, pos 99-100 of plate 2, which shows the ‘Lešetický points’ next to pos 100. The exciting thing is that the stamps were cancelled 14.II.19 in Praha, so just a few days after the official first date of issue (10.II.19). They were cancelled to order, probably for a collector collecting used stamps. This discovery underpins the case made in our study that the stamps showing these ‘Lešetický points’ were the first printed. We can now confidently say that the sheets of stamps with ‘pattern 1’ were indeed the first ones printed and distributed.



### Corrected arrangement in the second 2 h printing

Also, in a recent auction held by the Prague firm Flaška, three pieces of Makulatur prints were offered showing gutters from printing sheets with Express stamps. They were acquired and studied by Miloslav Marčan, who brought his findings and preliminary conclusions to our attention. These new discoveries shed light on the arrangement of plates on the printing sheets for the first printings.

The first piece of Makulatur shows a horizontal gutter between two plates of 2 h stamps.



Studying this the arrangement is as follows:

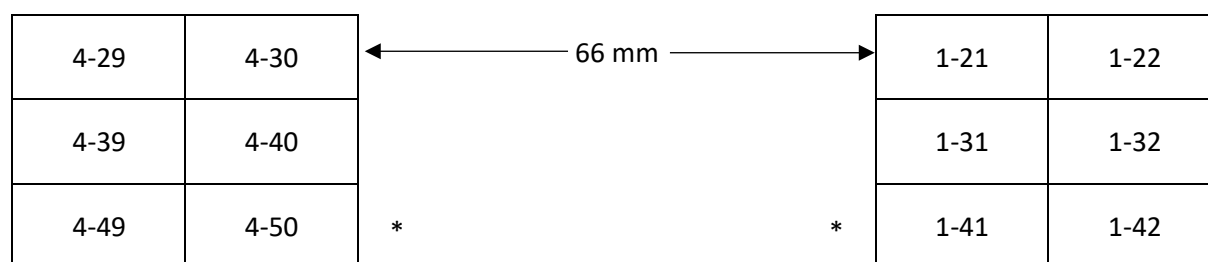
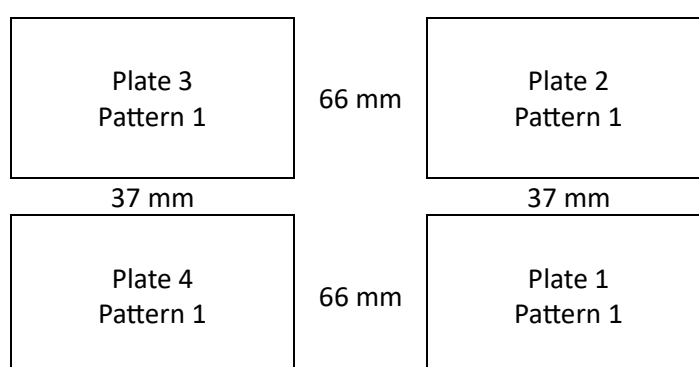


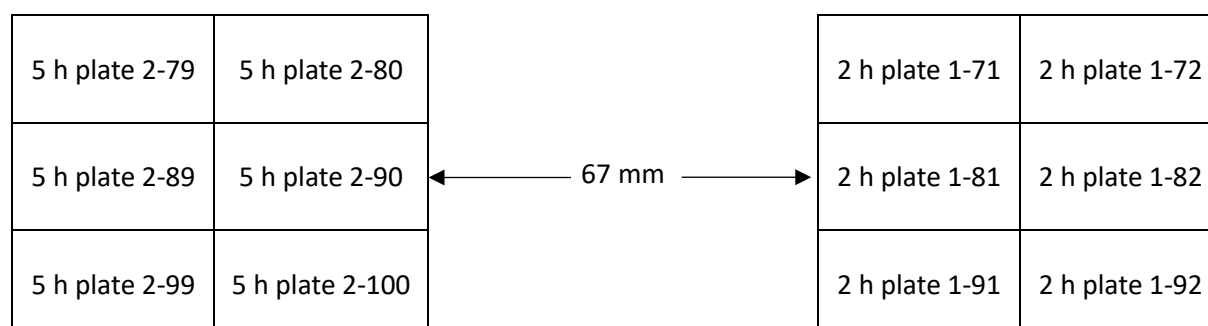
Plate 4 is on the left side and plate 1 is on the right side. Both plates show the guiding points connected with pattern 1 (encircled in red). This gutter pair must therefore originate from what we called in our study as the **second printing** of the 2 h stamps. But in the study, we supposed plate 4 was placed right of plate 1. There was no hard evidence for that when we published it, but we supposed that to be the case because of the known arrangement in the following, third printing. This piece of evidence sets us right. The correct arrangement of the plates in this printing, according to the evidence now available, was in fact:



### New printing discovered

The second piece of Makulatur print, discovered by Miloslav, brought a significant surprise. It reveals a gutter between a 5 h plate on the left and a 2 h plate on the right, clearly from the lower part of the printing sheet, as indicated by the very wide margin at the bottom. This piece is shown on the following page.

The arrangement shown is:



There are no 'Lešetický points' next to pos 100 of the 5 h, indicating that this plate must have pattern 2 (which lacks guide points). Pattern 3 is clearly associated with the third 5 h printing, in which the 5 h plates are positioned on the right side of the printing sheet.

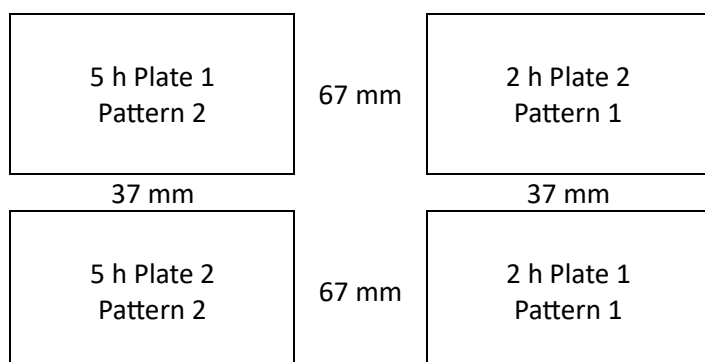


Regarding the 2 h plate 1, its pattern cannot be determined by this part of the sheet. However, on the same Makulatur piece, an inverted print of plate 2 appears, showing a guiding point belonging to pattern 1 (indicated in red). On this piece of (circumstantial) evidence, we assume that plate 1 also follows pattern 1 in this printing.

The stamp pair shown above clearly indicates that the 5 h stamps did contain the 'Lešetický points' in the first printing. This means that this piece of Makulatur must originate from a newly discovered printing where the 2 h plates 1 and 2 of pattern 1 were combined with the 5 h plates with pattern 2.

This new printing likely occurred directly after the printing involving the four 2 h plates discussed above. It is probable there was more need for 5 h stamps than were available from the first printing, so the plates 3 and 4 of the 2 h were removed from the printing form and replaced by the 5 h plates (plate 1 over plate 2).

On the basis of this one piece of evidence, the arrangement for this **newly discovered printing** must thus have been:



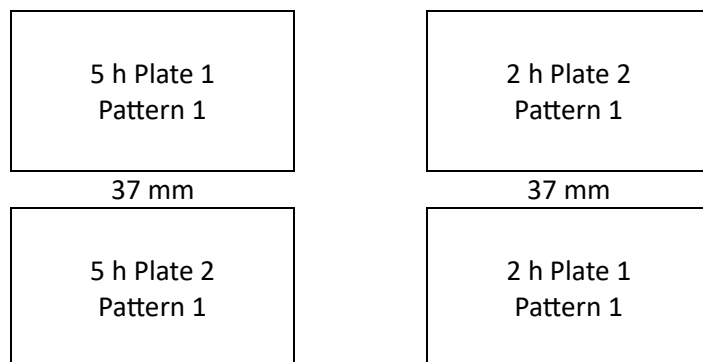
At this point, with Mr. Lešetický absent due to illness, the printers did not bother to place guiding points and 'Lešetický points' (which did not serve a practical purpose anyway) next to the 5 h plates. Meanwhile, the 2h plates remained in place, still retaining their points.

## Arrangement of first printing



The third piece of Makulatur shows 5 h plate 1, pattern 1 (with 'Lešetický points'), position 68 to 100 above plate 2, position 8-10. The measured distance between both plates is 37 mm. Here an enhanced cutout from this piece is shown, with plate 1, pos 100 above and plate 2, pos 10 below. This is the first direct evidence seen for the arrangement of the 5 h plates in the first printing.

Bearing in mind that all sheets of the 2 h plates 1 and 2 with guiding points and 'Lešetický points' show the same arrangement (pattern 1), the complete arrangement of the plates in the first printing is now also clear. Plates 1 and 2 must have been in the same place in this printing as well and the arrangement must have been:



This demonstrates how new discoveries can shed fresh new light on events that occurred more than a century ago. We always welcome your thoughts and further contributions to our studies!

My sincere thanks go out to Miloslav Marčan for sharing his discoveries and for his contribution to this article!

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Johan Sevenhuijsen