

OVERPRINT AND PERFORATION VARIETIES
PRINCE NIKOLA OF MONTENEGRO



NICHOLAS I., PRINCE OF MONTENEGRO

Prince Nikola became ruler of Montenegro at the age of nineteen after his father's assassination in 1860. The first stamps were issued in 1874 soon after which Montenegro's territorial gains in wars against Turkey were recognised at the Congress of Berlin. He was proclaimed King in 1910 but after the redistribution of states at the end of the First World War, he went into exile in France and died in Antibes in 1921.

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THE FIRST ISSUE 1874

All the stamps of Montenegro were printed at the Imperial State Printing Works in Vienna. They had a large number of perforating machines which led to many varieties in the numerous printings of this issue from 1874-1898. The first issue is highly distinctive, perforated 10½-11 with large irregular holes, the teeth of the perforation are sharply pointed. Later issues also perforated 10½ are often offered as if they were the first issue.



The second issue in 1876 was perforated 13 and then 12, but some sheets of the first issue were apparently only perforated vertically and so two varieties occurred, the 2 novic exists perforated 13 x 10½ and 10 novic exists perforated 12 x 10½.



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THE MONTENEGRIN PERFORATIONS

The Imperial State Printing Works in Vienna had several different line perforating machines, ranging from perf.9 to 13. For the second issue of Montenegro from 1876-81, a perforation 13 machine with quite regular alignment and spacing was used for some values, but also a perforation 12 machine, which was extremely irregular both in spacing and alignment. This perforator was also used for the first Austrian issue of Bosnia Herzegovina in 1879.

PERF 13 REGULAR



PERF 12 IRREGULAR



BOSNIAN AND HERZEGOVINA 1879



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THE 1883-1889 ISSUE

The next main printing lasted from, 1883-1893. The perforators were much more regular though during the life of the issue, several different gauges were used. This philatelic cover of 15th September 1891 from the capital Cettigne to Berlin shows the whole series with some of the perforation varieties.



Nos:

15d, 2 novic yellow, p12x12½, 16, 3 novic green, p12, 17, 5 novic red, p12,
21d, 10 novic blue, p12x12½, 20d, 7 novic dull rose p12x12½,
23e, 25 novic brown p12x13, 22, 15 novic ochre, p12

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THE 1883-1889 ISSUE AND THE 1893 COMMEMORATIVE OVERPRINT: 400TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTRODUCTION OF PRINTING IN MONTENEGRO

The new printing in 1883 began with a regular perforation 12 machine, but used several other machines between then and 1889. There was also a problem with the colour of the 7 novic issue which starts as Venetian red but then moves to dull purple and dull rose



In 1893, Montenegro introduced one of the very earliest commemorative issues to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the introduction of Printing into Montenegro. Spare definitives from the 1883 issue were overprinted in Cyrillic: PROSLAVA STAMPARIJE with the dates 1493 and 1893 at the sides. The first issue includes the rarest of all Montenegrin stamps.



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THE FIRST COMMEMORATIVE 1893

The Commemorative overprint celebrating the 400th anniversary of the introduction of printing into Montenegro was printed in panes of 25. There are numerous minor varieties arising from different font sizes and broken type, but there is an important constant variety at position 16 or R4/1 where an alien nine has got into the type tray and appears in 1893.



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THE FIRST COMMEMORATIVE 1893

Later printings of the commemorative were made on the perf.10½ and 11½ issues of 1893 and the alien nine can be found on all values. The overprint was printed in red as well as black on the 10 novcic and 25 novcic.



Date errors can be found on some values, for example 1494 for 1493 on the 2, 3 and 5 novcic and 1495 for 1493 on the 2, 3, 5, 7, 10 & 25 novcic.



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CODA: QUEEN MILENA OF MONTENEGRO

In August 1910, on the fiftieth anniversary of the reign of Prince Nikola, Montenegro was proclaimed a kingdom and a commemorative set of stamps was issued which includes the only philatelic appearance of his wife, now Queen Milena. Although the kingdom was short-lived, by this time, several of their children had married into highly royal families, including the Grand Dukes of Russia, the King of Serbia and the

