

# The first Austrian postal card – a critical analysis of types and subtypes

## 1. Introduction

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2019, it was exactly 150 years that the world's first postal card was issued in Austria. The idea of such a standardized postal object, to be transported uncovered and its message visible, had first been proposed by Heinrich von Stephan in 1865, during the 5<sup>th</sup> congress of the German Postal Union in Karlsruhe, Germany. However, the German postal administration was not yet ready for such a revolutionary idea. The concept of a postal card was again proposed by Dr. Emanuel Herrmann in a long article in the Viennese journal "Neue Freie Presse" of 26 January 1869. Dr. Herrmann presented an economic analysis of the costs of sending letters, and argued that a postal card, on which there would be no place for long formal sentences, would represent a major cost reduction for companies, especially if it were to travel at a lower rate than letters, as he proposed. He argued that the postal administration would be largely reimbursed by a substantial increase in mail volume.

The Austrian postal administration was receptive to the arguments of Dr. Herrmann, and on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1869, the world's first postal card saw the light simultaneously in the Kingdoms of Austria and Hungary.

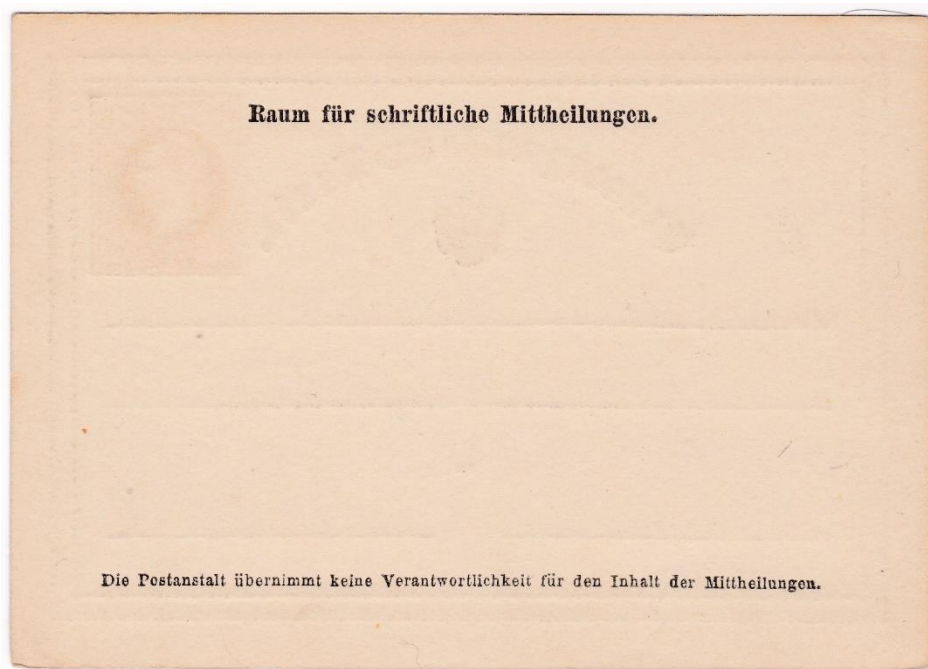


First postal card of Austria, issued on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1869

This first postal stationery card has an imprinted yellow 2 kreuzer indicium (compared to 5 kreuzer for the letter rate), is rather small sized, 12.2 by 8.1 cm, and with 3 lines for the address on the front, the first line starting with the word "An" (= For). On the back, it first states that this is the place for the written text: "Raum für schriftliche Mittheilungen" = space for written messages. At the bottom, we read that the postal administration declines all responsibility for the contents of the messages. This reflected the worry that obscene and otherwise unacceptable text could travel openly, and could be read by everyone. The two cards issued in Hungary differed by containing the Hungarian coat of arms, one with German, and the other with Hungarian text.

Through 1876, this first card was followed by 22 very similar cards, which differ by the text on the front and/or back. Some of these cards are bilingual, with the German text accompanied by similar text in Bohemian, Illyrian, Italian, Polish, Ruthenian or Slovenian.

This new invention was an overwhelming success. 2.7 million cards were sold in the last 3 months of 1869, and about 10 million cards in 1870. Five years later, in 1875, more than 25 million cards were sold. By then, more than 30 other postal administrations had followed the Austrian example, and had issued postal cards.



Back of the first postal card of Austria

## 2. Historical overview of studies

The first detailed study of these cards was published by Kropf in his books of 1902 and 1908. Kropf proposed a classification with 8 main numbers:

- Number 1 was reserved for the first card, on which the first line of the front side begins with "An",
- Numbers 2 to 8 were attributed to the cards on which the first line starts with "Adresse": number 2 for the German card, and numbers 3 to 8 for bilingual cards (German plus one of six other languages used in the Austrian empire).

For cards 2 to 8, a further subdivision was made on the basis of the presence and position of the text on the back, and the presence or not of an indication of the language on the lower right on the front of the cards. On the basis of these criteria, different types were listed for each number, beginning with "a" and ending with "e". In total, 23 different cards were distinguished. This classification is still used in the handbook of Ferchenbauer (Part III, 2008), although there, number 2 is attributed to the two Hungarian cards, so that the German and bilingual cards are now listed as numbers 3 to 9. Additionally, the order of the bilingual cards is changed as well.

Kropf (1902, 1908) was also the first to use differences in the succession of dots and diamonds in the inner frame of the border to make a further subdivision of these cards, and proposed a total of 64 subtypes.

The work of Kropf was further developed by Ascher, who published his findings in 1913, in the magazine "Ganzsachen-Sammler". Ascher's study is of remarkable quality, and has, in my opinion, not been surpassed in the entire century following it. He proposed a classification with 23 numbers for the main types (earlier described by Kropf) plus a separate number 24 for the famous 5 Kr error card, which was accidentally issued in December 1873. By very meticulous study, he increased the number of subtypes to 75.

The main classification of Ascher, with 24 cards, was followed by Schneiderbauer (1981), although the 5 Kr error card didn't receive a separate number but was listed as card 18FD (Fehlbruck = Error Print), and later and later similarly treated by the Michel catalogue. Schneiderbauer's work (and initially, also the Michel catalogue) didn't list the numerous subtypes, which were again listed by Frech in his "Postkarten-

Handbuch” (1991, 2015). Since 2013, Breitwieser has been in charge of this part of the Michel catalogue, and the various subtypes have appeared there as well.

In November 2018, the Schwaneberger Editing Company, which commercializes the Michel catalogues, presented a specialized booklet on the first Austrian postal cards, often called “Gelblinge” in Austria and Germany, written by Breitwieser. The booklet is, in fact, an updated version of an article by the same author, which is (as of December 2019) still available on the internet site of VPEX (Verein Philatelistischer Experten) at [http://www.vpex.info/P1\\_bis\\_p24\\_\(vers2014\).pdf](http://www.vpex.info/P1_bis_p24_(vers2014).pdf). In this booklet, Breitwieser presents 29 new types, so that in total, we are now confronted with 104 different types for the 23 main cards.

I think we have to congratulate Franz Breitwieser. Publishing the results of his ongoing study as a beautifully illustrated Michel booklet is really an achievement. This booklet will undoubtedly stimulate many collectors to take a closer look at these beautiful postal cards, and (why not?), start to collect them. For me personally, the booklet incited me to have, once again, a close look at all my cards, with three main aims:

- 1) To check whether I could find the newly described types in my collection,
- 2) To compare the list of earliest observed dates for every type with my own observations, and
- 3) To see whether I agree with the proposed classification.

A first version of the present article was published on the website of the FIP Postal Stationery Commission in December 2019. Thanks to the exchanges with several collectors, I can now present this second version, which contains some important modifications, especially concerning the interpretation of the numerous anomalies observed on this first postal card.

### **3. Objectives of this study – principles of the classification**

This article presents the results of my investigation of the very first postal card. The results for all other cards of the 1869 type will be published in a number of future articles.

Before discussing what we know about the printing process, it is important to define the terminology used in this study. It is evident that the classification of the cards has to do justice to the different ways (described in the next chapter) by which varieties likely were produced. Ideally, there should be different classification levels for different cases, where differences between typeset originals (“Urtype”) should be placed higher in the hierarchy than differences between copies of these originals, or between individual clichés on a plate or varieties due to wear of individual clichés.

The philosophy adopted in this article, which largely follows the one suggested by Hanspeter Frech in his outstanding “Postkarten Handbuch”, can be resumed as follows:

- 1) Different cards**, indicated by **Numbers** – The 23 main cards are distinguished by a) the text on the front, b) the presence/absence and position of the text on the back and c) the presence or absence of an indication of the language on the front side, in the lower right corner. It is evident that in many cases, several successive plates have been used to print one card type. Personally, I do not think that the German/Bohemian card with erroneous 5 Kreuzer facial value deserves a separate number.
- 2) Different super-types**, indicated by **Capital Letters** – This term is traditionally reserved for minor changes of the text on the cards. This concerns the two main types of German/Bohemian card n° 18, with different length of the word “Correspondenz-Karte”, and the two main types of German/Italian card n° 19, with or without brackets around “Ital.”.
- 3) Different types**, indicated by **Roman Numbers** – The different types are traditionally based on differences in the succession of dots and diamonds in the inner frame border, not only in the corners, but also at other positions in the inner frame. **It is generally thought that these different types represent different type-set originals, which are at the basis of the production of the 64 clichés on a printing plate.**

4) **Different subtypes**, indicated by **small letters** – This concerns small anomalies in the inner, middle or outer frame, which involve a substantial part of the produced cards of a certain type during a certain period. **These subtypes may represent different master copies of a type-set original (with the same general succession of dots and diamonds)**. Each of these master copies has been multiplied into several clichés, which may have been assembled together on a single plate. Alternatively, the clichés produced from each master copy may also have been used to create several independent plates, so that more than one plate may have existed for a single type.

5) **Different varieties**, indicated by **small numbers** – In my opinion, all small differences between individual clichés occurring together on a plate, all differences due to progressive (and differential) wear of the clichés, and all small incidental printing imperfections should be considered as varieties.

Finally, now that these different categories have been defined, I think that it is consequential and even imperative to present the various types and varieties of each card in **a strictly chronological order**. Such an approach, which makes it easier to understand how some of the types/varieties evolved out of earlier types/varieties, will offer maximum insight in the temporal evolution of the printing material.

In order to distinguish between the numbering proposed by Breitwieser (2018), which is very different from all earlier classifications, and the numbering used here, which mostly follows Ascher (1925) and Frech (1991, 2015), I will systematically refer to **Breitwieser's numbers by adding FB before the number**.

In this study, the distinction of the various types, subtypes and varieties is based on the subsequent observations of:

- 1) the succession of diamonds and dots in the inner frame,
- 2) damage to individual diamonds and/or dots in the inner frame, and
- 3) irregularities in the outer frame (the trefoils in the corners and archlike ornaments on the 4 sides) and middle frame (the wiggling line of very small points)

For all different cards, I have systematically consulted the very early sources (Kropf, 1902, 1908 and Ascher, 1913), before verifying the presence of the described cards in my own collection, and comparing my findings with those of Breitwieser (2018).

#### **4. Considerations about the printing process**

It is important to note, first, that most earlier sources agree that sheets of 64 cards were produced by relief printing (typography), with copies of typeset originals (clichés) having been used for all text parts and frames. Printing apparently took place in three independent stages:

- 1) the black text and ornaments were printed on the front
- 2) the black text was printed on the back, and
- 3) the indicium was printed in yellow ink.

It has long been thought that the cards were printed in this precise order. However, recently, Tschernatsch has shown that the yellow indicium is not always printed over the black text, but that the inverse situation exists as well, so that we can conclude that there was no fixed order.

Ascher (1913) described that a typeset original ("Urform") was multiplied to produce a printing plate with 64 clichés. Minor differences between individual clichés, such as very small changes in the size of the frames, could have arisen during the duplication process. Ascher (1913) further suggested that most of the main types should correspond to independent printing plates. However, he also indicated that some of the types may not correspond to a new printing plate, but are rather due to the replacement of one or more severely worn clichés on the plate.

Rather surprisingly, to my knowledge, since 1913 no substantial additions have been made to Ascher's assumptions concerning the printing process. This is regrettable, because in view of my findings and the

discussions I had with professional printers familiar with typesetting, I have started doubting whether all conclusions of Ascher (1913) are fully correct.

The observations I could make on the cards in my collection led me to many thoughts and questions concerning the printing process, some of the more important ones are summarised here:

- It seems evident that the **three printed parts of the postal card**, with front, back and indicium, **were printed with three different plates**. I think that it is important to realize that these three plates were totally independent. Intuitively, we would expect that these three plates would systematically be changed together, at the same time. However, the appearance of the 5 Kr error in December 1873, simultaneously in types 18A-III, 18A-IV and 18A-V, types which all were in use circa 2 months (since October 1873), proves that this was not always the case.

- It appears that all text parts and the frames were type-set and reproduced separately, and only assembled together in a single printing block (together with the coat-of-arms, which was not type-set) when needed. This may explain why we often find the same frame in several successive cards (or super-types) of the same language group, and even in cards with different languages.

- The most straightforward way to produce the 64 cards on the plate is to produce 64 type-set originals, using printer's type. Since such a procedure would ask a huge amount of work, it is improbable that this occurred.

- The most direct way to produce 64 copies (clichés) of a single type-set original is to copy it 64 times. Such a procedure will undoubtedly lead to a number of small, but consistent differences between the 64 individual clichés. Some of these differences will be caused by small movements of the individual lines of the type-set original in between the making of the successive copies, leading to dislocations, especially at the junctions of the 4 lines making up the rectangular frames.

- Alternatively, it is possible that, first, a single master copy of the original was produced, which was then copied 64 times. In that case, only some very minor differences should occur between the individual clichés, because the source of mobility of the type-set individual lines was no longer present.

- It is also possible that more than a single master copy has been produced on the basis of the type-set original, each of which was multiplied a number of times (possibly different for each master copy), to arrive at the required number of clichés needed to form a plate. This could explain the presence of systematic small errors, which affect a large part, but not the whole stock of cards of a certain type (characterised by a certain succession of dots and diamonds).

- Alternatively, several master copies of the same type-set original may each have been used to produce all 64 clichés of a printing plate, so that several plates of the same type (defined by the succession of diamonds and dots) existed at the same time.

- In my opinion, we can't entirely exclude that, for some plates, the 64 clichés were produced starting from more than one type-set original. This would lead to the presence of different types (with different successions of dots and diamonds) on a single plate. It would also explain the scarcity of some of the types and the fact that, in many cases, different types have very similar periods of occurrence.

- Finally, in the golden era of illustrated postcards, the early 1900's, it was not uncommon to print cards with different views with a single printing plate. The relative proportions of the clichés with different views on the plate depended on the respective needs for each card view. I think it's probable that also in our case, postal cards with different languages were produced from a single plate. This is particularly likely for some cards printed in very small quantities, such as the first card in Illyrian language. It seems highly improbable that for this card, a whole 64-card plate was assembled.

- The printing plates were used for long periods of time, perhaps for half a year or more. During such long periods, the clichés would have certainly worn. In the case of relief printing, could lead to the partial or total disappearance of certain details, and may explain the progressive appearance of certain errors on individual clichés.

- In case of serious damage to one or several clichés on a plate, these may have been repaired, or replaced by a new cliché, individually, or several clichés together as a group. These new clichés could have

been produced from the original type-set original, or from a new one. The latter case could be an alternative explanation for the appearance of new, relatively rare types.

I fully admit that many of the possibilities discussed above are speculative. However, I wouldn't mention them, if I didn't see indications that such particularities indeed have occurred.

## 5. General description of the first Austrian postal card

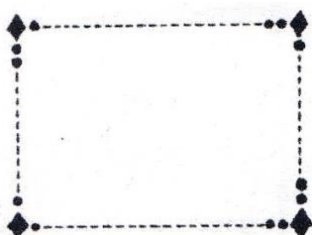
In the following descriptions of the various cards and their varieties, I will often refer to the position of certain anomalies by making reference to the nearby dots (P, point) and/or diamonds (D), which are always counted from the left to the right, and from top to bottom. **The diamonds in the 4 corners are NOT included in the count.** I will indicate the upper (A, above), left (L), right (R) and lower (B, below) frames, dots and diamonds by their first letters. For instance, PB37 is the 37<sup>th</sup> point from the left on the lower inner frame.

When referring to the ornaments (the arches) in the outer frame, these will be counted starting from the left (for the upper and lower frames) and from above (for the left and right frames). The four trefoil corner ornaments will not be included in this count.

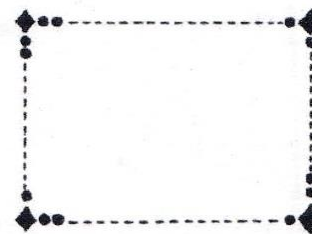
### Card n° 1 – issued 1 October 1869

This is the only card with "An" on the frontside, and with an instruction, and a disclaimer for the responsibility for the contents of the card on the backside. The inner frame, which is used to distinguish the various types, is composed of 48 diamonds horizontally and 32 diamonds vertically. Traditionally, 3 main types are distinguished on the basis of the succession of dots and diamonds in the four corners: cards 1-I, 1-II and 1-III, which follow each other between October 1869 and the second half of 1871. In his recently published study, Breitwieser has unfortunately decided not to respect the chronological order so that his card FB1-I, which corresponds to the second type (which appeared in May 1870) is younger than card FB1-II, which corresponds to the first type, which occurred on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 1869.

**Card 1, type I**, has been issued on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 1869. To date, 5 cards used on the first day are known, cancelled in Landeck, Lemberg, Perg, Pilsen and Vienna. In newsletter 63 of the "Arbeitsgemeinschaft Österreich" Kobelbauer showed a card cancelled in Vienna on 30 September 1869, with an arrival cancel of Brünn of 1<sup>st</sup> October 1869. Type I is characterised by the following corner arrangement:

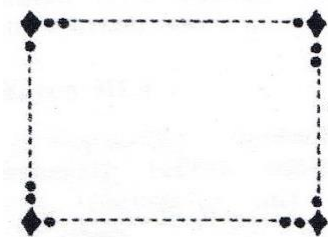


Card 1, type II, has basically the same corner characteristics, but the whole inner frame was rotated by 180°, so that the two double dots which were positioned in the lower right corner in card 1, type I, are now positioned in the upper left corner:

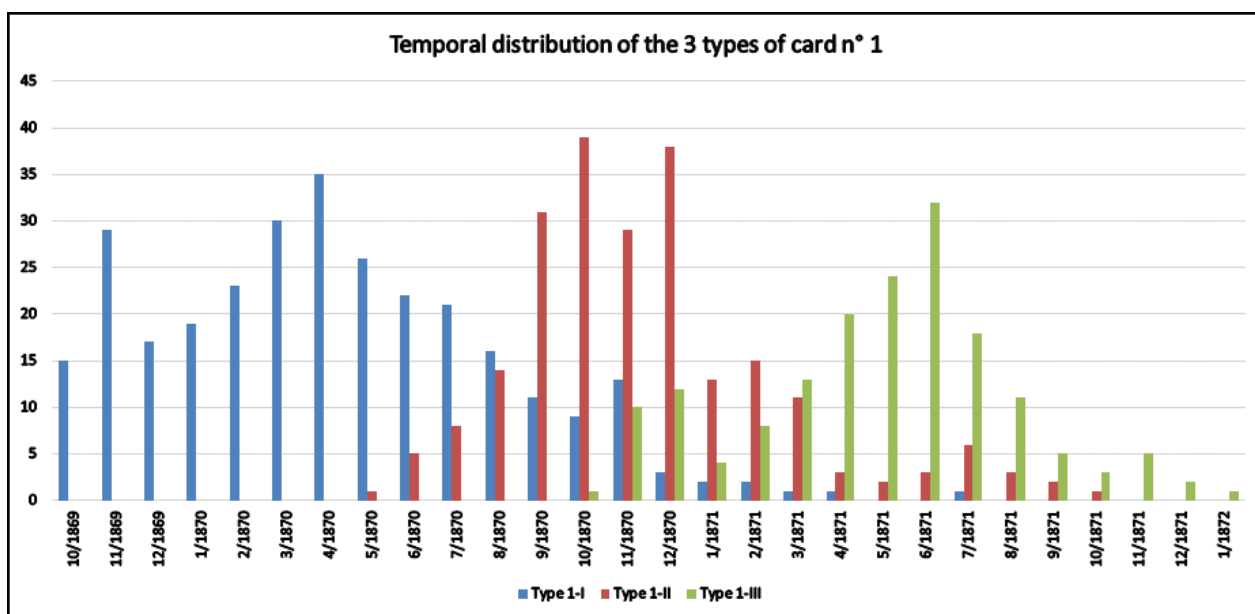




Card 1, type III, has entirely different corner characteristics:

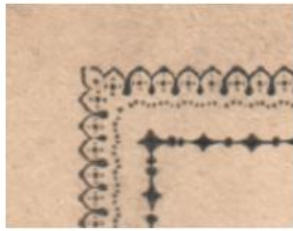


By looking at the distributional data over time (of the 711 cards of card 1 in my collection; 311 of type I, 229 of type II and 171 of type III), we can obtain a fairly precise idea about the period of use for each of these cards:



The sharp drop in the number of cards of type I, between November and December 1870, suggests that in many offices the available stocks of card 1, type I, had been exhausted by then.

The first observed date for **card 1, type II**, of 11 August 1870, mentioned by Ascher (1913), was readjusted to 17 June 1870 by Breitwieser (2018). In the collection of Lars-Olof Nilsson there is a card which has undisputedly been cancelled on **20 May 1870** (the arrival cancel of Vienna is of 22 May 1870):



**20 May 1870:** oldest known specimen of card 1, type II  
Courtesy Lars-Olof Nilsson

Card 1, type II has extensively used until March 1871, but we observe an abrupt drop in April 1871.

For **card 1, type III**, Ascher mentioned a first date of 22 January 1871, whereas Breitwieser mentions a first date of 25 November 1870 for his card FB1-III. In my collection, there is a card of type III cancelled on **25 October 1870**. The date is confirmed on the back of the card:



Prag 24/10 1870



**25 October 1870:** oldest known specimen of card 1, type III

In view of the strong decrease in the numbers in October 1871, it appears that this card was sold in many post offices until September 1871.



## 6. Detailed description of the three main types of card 1

In the initial studies of the 23 main cards by Kropf (1902,1908) and Ascher (1913-1914, 1925), several types were differentiated, exclusively on the basis of the succession of diamonds and dots in the inner frame. Recently, Breitwieser (2018) increased the total number of types to 104. For the first postal card, which is the subject of this paper, the subdivision of Ascher (1925) into 3 main types has been followed by all subsequent authors, until Breitwieser (2018) added two additional types.

Harris (1971) made a first attempt to further subdivide the 3 main types, into 4, 5 and 3 subtypes in types I, II and III, respectively. These subtypes were based on “microscopic features” in the coat of arms, on minor vertical offsets between some of the letters of the word “Correspondenz-Karte”, and on very small deformities of some of the archlike ornaments of the outer frame.

I have tried to apply the subdivision proposed by Harris (1971), with disappointing results. The main problem is that the microscopic details in the coat of arms cannot be seen when the card is too heavily printed. Additionally, many of the features used to distinguish the subtypes are non-quantitative and rather subjective. In practise, the number of cards which I could unambiguously attribute to a subtype was very limited, suggesting that the classification of Harris (1971) is not satisfactory.

Also for theoretical reasons, the choice to base subtypes largely on details in the coat of arms and on the position of the letters in the word “Correspondenz-Karte” can be disputed. It should be kept in mind that these two elements were produced independently from the frames, before all these elements were assembled in the printing block. Since the main types of all cards are based on the (inner) frame, it seems logical to base further subdivisions on the characteristics of the frame, and not on other elements, which may very well have changed independently. For this reason, I have based the subtypes and varieties presented below exclusively on anomalies in the inner, outer and middle frames.

### **Card n° 1, type I, officially issued on 1 October 1869**

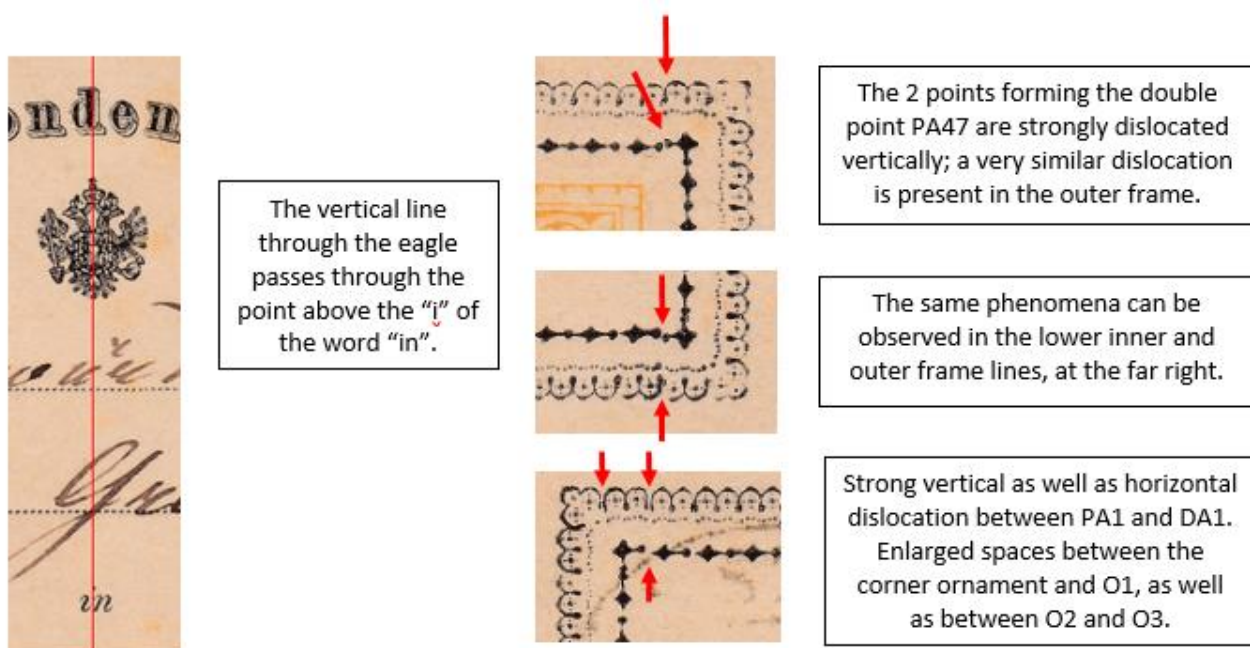
In his study from 1913, Ascher distinguished two subtypes (his numbers 1 and 2), whereas in his catalogue of 1925 this was no longer the case. The two subtypes distinguished in 1913 have exactly the same corner characteristics. Ascher (1913) indicated that they differ because in the **first subtype, the midline through the eagle passes through the “i” of the word “in”**, and there is a **vertical dislocation** between the two dots forming the double dot in the upper inner frame line at the far right (**PA47**). Conversely, in the **second subtype, the midline through the eagle passes through the “n” of the word “in”**, and the **two dots forming the double dot PA47 are vertically well aligned**.

A closer study reveals that these two subtypes indeed exist and appear in a proportion of about three (subtype a) to one (subtype b), over the whole period of usage of card 1, type I. It should be noted that many other characteristics correlate with the two traits indicated by Ascher:

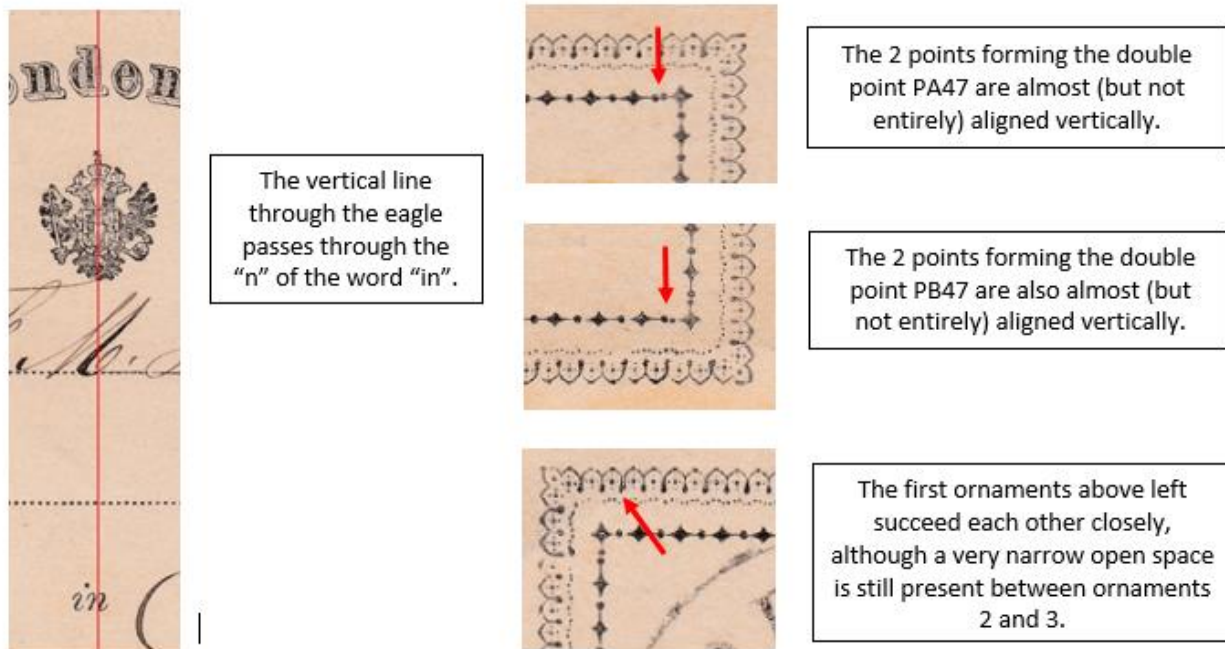
- ✓ The vertical dislocation of the first subtype also concerns the two dots forming the double dot on the far right of the lower frame (PB47),
- ✓ These two vertical dislocations at the far right of the upper and lower inner frames are accompanied by similar vertical dislocations in the outer frame, between the second and third arch-like ornaments from the right (not counting the trefoil like corner ornaments).
- ✓ A similar vertical dislocation can be observed at the far left of the upper inner frame between PA1 and DA1. In the outer frame above this dislocation, there is an empty space between the corner ornament and the first ornament and/or between the second and third ornaments.

The following figures details the two different subtypes:

**Type I, subtype a** – A typical example of 7 January 1870. Strong dislocations can be seen in the inner as well as outer frame lines, at several places. This concerns 223 of the 311 cards of type I in my collection.



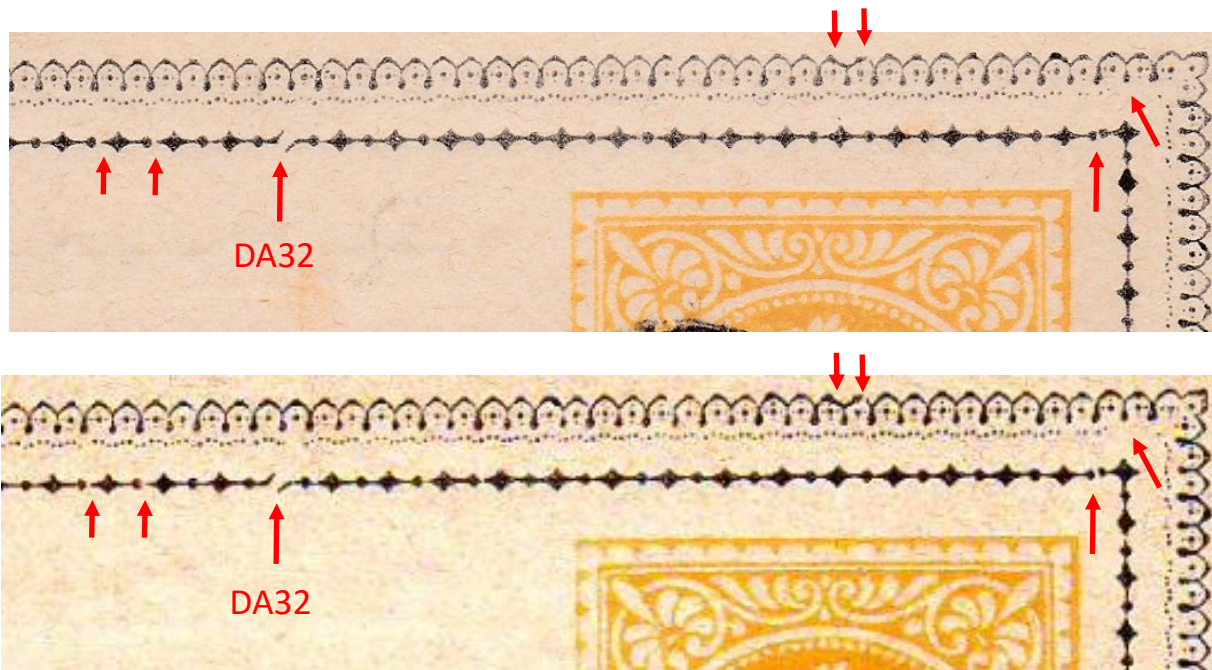
**Type I, subtype b** – A typical example of 23 October 1869. All the points which show dislocations in subtype a are much better aligned now, although still not perfect. This concerns the remaining 88 cards of the 311 cards of type I in my collection.



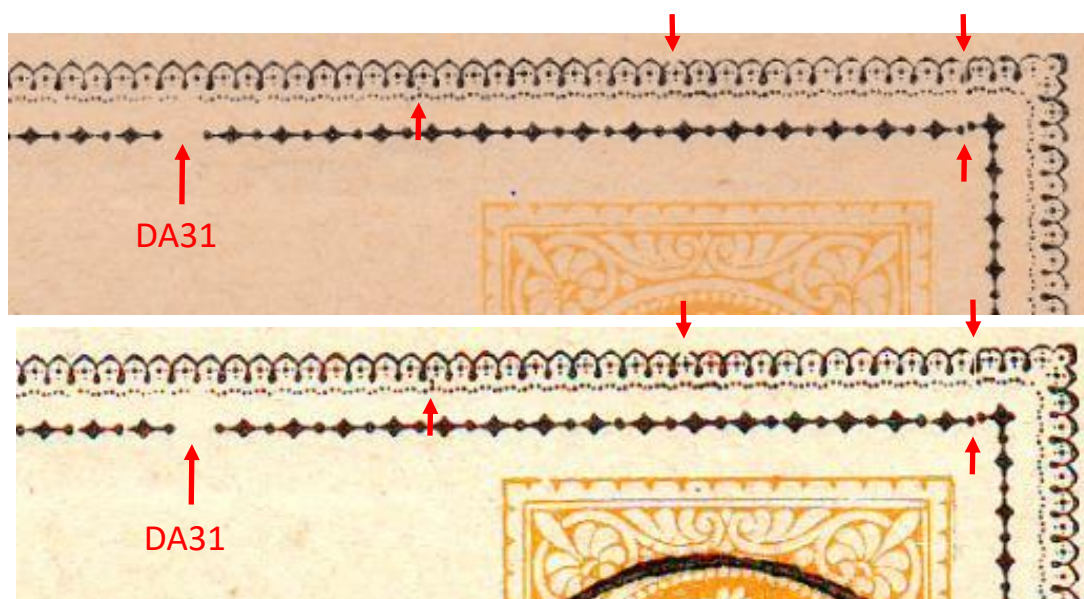
These minor differences, which appear at the far left and right sides of the upper and lower frames, can be observed on part of the stocks of many of the following cards. It is evident that they are the result of slight dislocations at the corners of the (inner and outer) frame, where four type-set lines of ornaments were fixed together to form a rectangle. For Card 1, type I, these dislocations show much variation in intensity, from very slight to major. The slightly different position of the coat of arms with respect to the word "in" appears to be related to these dislocations.

Summarising, the two varieties described by Ascher (1913) are indeed present: card 1-1a with the junctions of the four frames showing major dislocations, and card 1-1b with the four frames well aligned.

A further study of the inner, middle and outer frames reveals the presence of a very large number of more or less important varieties, many of which have been observed in more than one card. In all of the cards which show the same varieties, other parts of the inner, middle and outer frames are identical, **proving that these varieties concern individual clichés**. Three examples are given below. In each case, I show 2 different cards, to make it evident that these printing flaws are accompanied by additional very minor anomalies, which are identical on the 2 cards, corroborating my conclusion that these anomalies are typical of individual clichés.

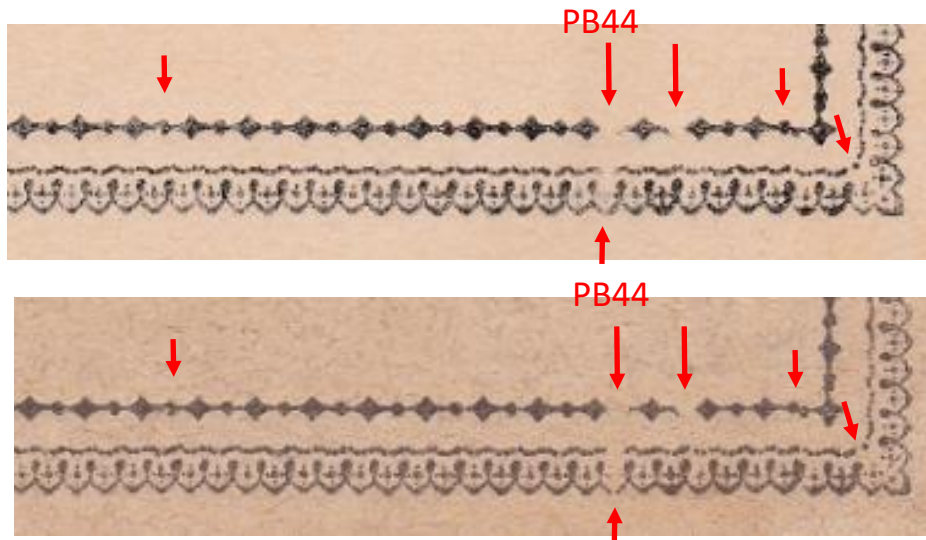


Example 1: **broken diamond DA32**. Above: card sent from Seitendorf, 9 January 1870. Below: card sent from Landek, 24 May 1870. Both cards belong to subtype 1a. Note the identical oblique damage to DA32. Note also the identical double point PA47, the slight interruptions of the connecting line between PA29 and DA29 as well as between PA30 and DA30. See also the identical damage of two 2 ornaments of the outer frame. And finally, note the identical absence of the middle frame in the upper right corner. Many other identical details can be observed on the other frame lines.





Example 2: **lacking diamond DA31**. Above: card sent from Mariaschein, 26 May 1870. Below: card sent from Ober Laibach, 1 October 1870. Both cards belong to subtype 1a. Note the identical lack of diamond DA31 and the 2 connecting lines with PA31 and PA32. Note also the identical position of the double point PA47, and the space before the last 2 ornaments in the outer frame. Note also the ornament with broken roof, and the identical small vertical double point in the middle frame. Many other identical details can be observed on the other frame lines.



Example 3: **lacking dots PB44 and PB45**. Above: card sent from Prague, 28 November 1870. Below: card sent from Klagenfurt, 2 May 1870. Both cards belong to subtype 1a. Note the identical lack of dots PB44 and PB45, as well as the damage to middle and outer frame below dot PB44. Note also the identical position of the double point PB47, and the isolated dot in the lower right corner of the middle frame. Note also the damage to dot PB36, which is identical in both cards, and the very smeared character of many the ornaments at the right of the lower outer frame. Many other identical details can be observed on the other frame lines.

Many other more or less major anomalies were observed. Among the 311 cards of card 1 type I in my collection, I can distinguish 29 distinct varieties, of which 16 occur at least on two different cards, of which 13 were subtype 1a and 3 subtype 1b.

The question is how the appearance of two main subtypes and many more-or-less prominent anomalies developed exactly in the same way on several cards, can be explained. First, there is little doubt that all the consistent major errors correspond to individual clichés on the plate. Eventually, by very careful study, taking into account even the smallest details, it should be possible to identify all 64 clichés of the plate. In fact, since publishing the first version of this paper, in February 2020, I managed to describe 53 different varieties for type 1, subtype 1a alone. These 53 varieties (which I believe correspond to individual clichés) are represented by 184 of the 223 cards of this subtype. For the remaining 39 cards, I have not yet identified distinctive features.

Concerning the two subtypes, it seems important to note that cards with strong vertical dislocations (subtype a), which represent 71,7% of the cards in my collection, show a strong variability in the degree of dislocation, going from minor to major. Also in the second subtype, the alignment of the double dots is almost never perfect. This means that when we consider the whole stock, there is a continuous variability in vertical dislocation, which goes from “almost none” (subtype b) to “major” (subtype a). Such a situation could not exist if the typeset original had been copied once, and that from this Master copy, 64 clichés were produced. The only way to explain the wide range of vertical dislocation is that the type set original was reproduced 64 times. Only in such a case, small movements of the typeset originals between the making of the 64 copies could explain the varying degree of vertical dislocation.

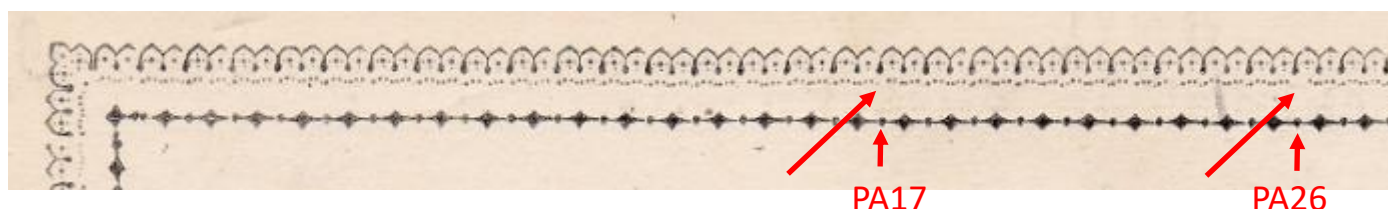
Finally, we may wonder whether subtypes a and b appeared on the same printing plate or are from two different printing plates. At present, before knowing exactly how many clichés existed for subtypes a and b, it is still too early to answer this question.

### Card n° 1, type II, earliest date known 20 May 1870

It is remarkable that in this type II, the inner frames show fewer major anomalies (severely damaged points and/or diamonds; completely missing point/diamonds) than card 1 type I. It appears that in a short time, many of the printing problems were solved. Individual clichés are much more similar than before.

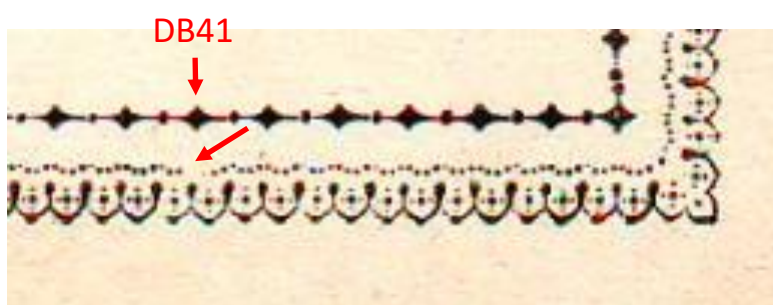
However, some of the cards of this type still show some vertical dislocation, especially in the upper right (PA47) and lower right (PB47) corners. Additionally, the middle frames show some interesting differences. In fact, on many cards, the upper and lower middle frame lines show some interruptions. On the basis of these two criteria, two main subtypes can be distinguished:

**Subtype a** – Cards with a **vertical dislocation between diamond PA46 and dot PA47** at the right of the upper inner frame (to a variable extent). These cards have always **interruptions in the upper middle frame above PA26** and, to a lesser degree, above PA17. This concerns 186 of the 229 cards in my collection.

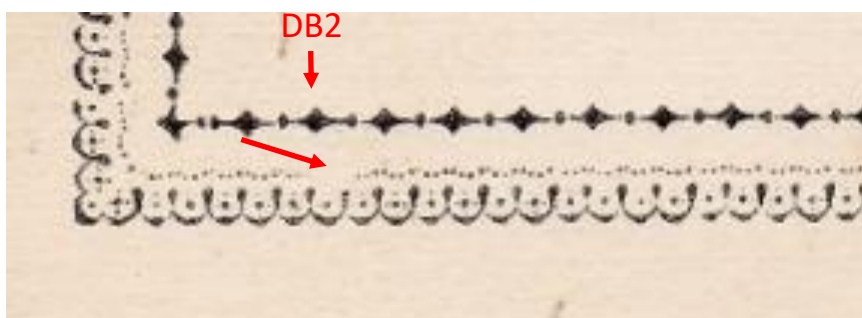


In 93 of my 186 cards of this subtype, no other noticeable interruptions occur in the middle frame. Such cards, listed as **subtype a1**, are very common until December 1870, but become scarce thereafter.

In part of the other cards of subtype a, an additional interruption occurs in the lower middle frame, below diamond DB41. This variety, named **subtype a2**, concerns 80 of the 186 cards of subtype a. Just as subtype a1, these cards are very common until December 1870, and rapidly become scarce thereafter.



Finally, a **break in the lower middle frame under DB2** is present in 13 of the 186 cards of subtype a. Such cards, identified as **subtype a3**, are evenly spread until their disappearance in December 1870.





**Subtype b** – Cards with **no clear vertical dislocation between diamond PA46 and dot PA47**. This concerns the remaining 43 of the 229 cards in my collection. In these cards, the lower middle frame shows a **major interruption below diamond DB29, with several dots missing**. The oldest card of subtype b is cancelled on 22 November 1870, so that **this subtype is not found during the first 6 months of use of card 1, type II**. From January 1871 on, cards of subtype b account for about 60% of cards of type II.



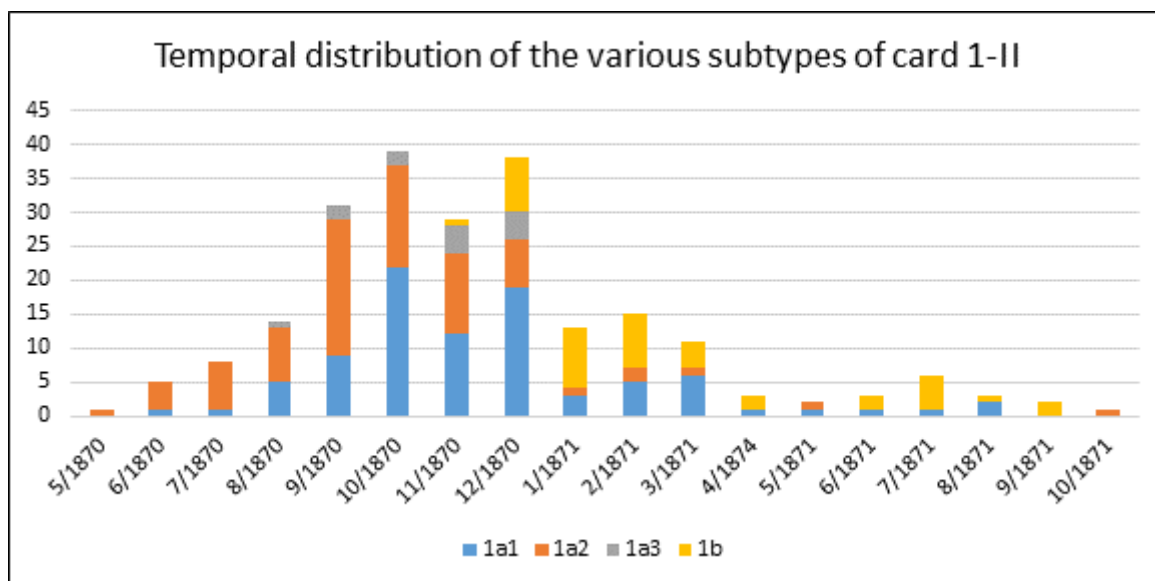
Unfortunately, after 150 years we can only speculate about the meaning of such small varieties. First of all, the much lower number of major anomalies identified in type II is striking. For card 1, type I, 29 more-or-less major, easily to recognise varieties could be distinguished on the basis of anomalies in the three frames. For card 1, type II, besides the anomalies of the middle frame described above, only 4 anomalies of the inner frame, and one anomaly of the outer frame could be found in more than one card. As for card 1, type 1, these anomalies are thought to represent individual clichés.

For card 1, type I, on the basis of the multiple severe anomalies, we speculated that the typeset original could have been copied 64 times, with the large variability in vertical dislocations as the main argument.

The recurring errors in the middle frame, and the much more limited variability in vertical dislocations, suggest that the cards of type II were produced differently. It appears that for card 1, type II, **the type-set original was first copied into a very limited number of intermediate (master) copies, which were then been multiplied** to obtain the 64 individual clichés. The three different forms of subtype a:

- 1) With interruption of the middle frame above PA26 (and PA17), no additional interruptions in the lower middle frame (subtype a1),
- 2) with additional break in the lower middle frame below DB41 (subtype a2),
- 3) with additional break in the lower middle frame below DB2 (subtype a3),

suggest that there has been more than a single master copy.



The appearance of subtype 1b, at the very end of November 1870, followed by the very strong decline, after December 1870, of subtype a (a1, a2 as well as a3) is remarkable. In my opinion, this strongly suggests that the whole plate has been renewed. It appears that the first plate, containing only clichés of subtype a (a1, a2 and a3) was used until the end of November 1870, when it was replaced by a new printing plate, which contained only clichés of subtype b. In December 1870, the stocks in most post offices still mainly consisted of cards of the old plate, but from January 1871 onwards, cards of the new plate prevailed.

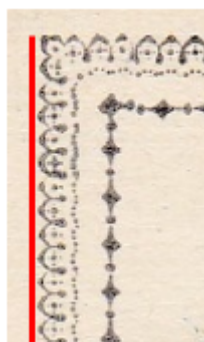
It further appears that the clichés of subtype b were produced with a new master copy, which was created from the same typeset original that was used to produce subtype a. If this hypothesis is correct, it would mean that the same type (same succession of diamonds and dots) was used to produce two consecutive plates. This would clearly be in disagreement with the general idea that each type corresponds to a single plate.

Card 1-II is the first card which occasionally appears on white paper. This paper is slightly thinner (170 to 190 µm) than the usual buff stocks (190 to 240 µm). The first card on white paper in my collection was cancelled on 13 August 1870.

### Card n° 1, type III, earliest date known 25 October 1870

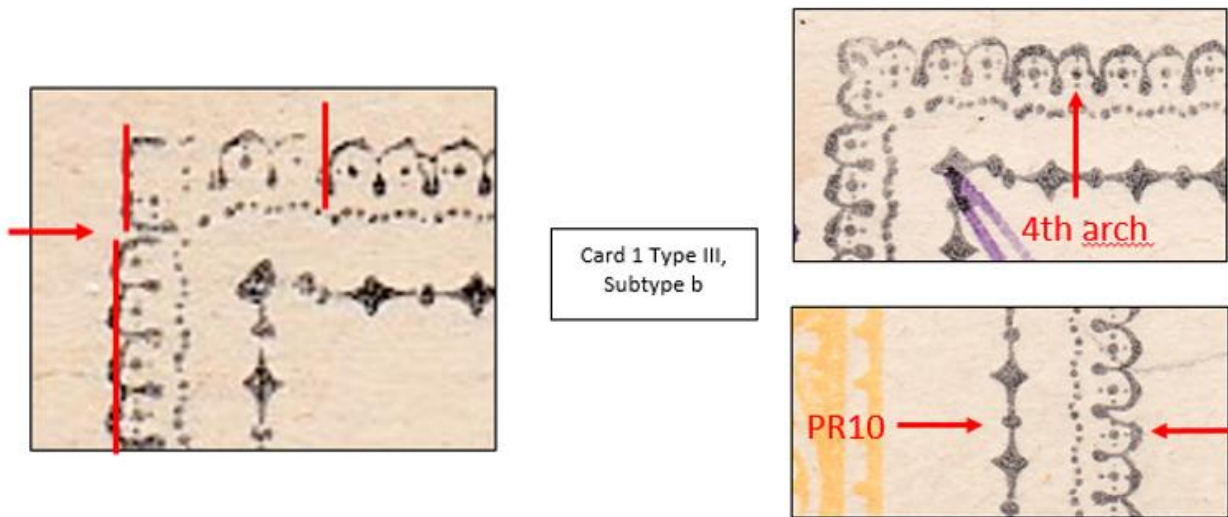
In his publication of 1913, in addition to giving separate numbers to cards printed on white (n° 5 and 7) or buff stock (n° 6), Ascher distinguishes two main subtypes for this card. In his card n° 7, the upper left corner ornament is clearly shifted to the right compared to all ornamental arches on the left side. In his cards 5 and 6, this is not the case. In his *Grosser Ganzsachen-Katalog* of 1925, these subtypes are no longer mentioned, probably for the sake of simplicity.

These two types indeed exist. **Until March 1871, in all cards, the left outer frame is straight**, and the ornament in the upper left corner is almost perfectly aligned with the left outer frame. In these cards, there is systematically a hole in the upper middle frame above PA34. I will call this card **subtype a**.



Card 1, type III,  
subtype a

In **March 1871** (earliest date in my collection 14 March 1871, and 8 March 1871 in the collection of Lars-Olof Nilsson), cards appear that show **a clear dislocation between the left outer frame and the corner ornament in the upper left corner**. Additionally, **2 archlike ornaments of the outer frame are damaged: the 4<sup>th</sup> one of the upper frame (on the right), and the one right of PR10 (above)**. In these cards, there is also a hole in the upper middle frame, but now this hole is positioned above PA33. Additionally, the vertical dislocation between the two dots forming the double point in the upper left corner (PA1) is much more prominent. And finally, many cards show a vertical dislocation in the upper outer frame, mostly after the 2<sup>nd</sup> arch-like ornament (from the left). I will call this **subtype b**. Among the 171 cards in my collection, 108 belong to subtype a and 63 to subtype b.



Card 1 Type III,  
Subtype b

Breitwieser (2018) presents 2 new types (his cards FB1-IV and FB1-V). Card FB1-IV differs from card 1-III by the disappearance of one of the dots of the double dot PB47, at the far right of the lower inner frame. Additionally, one of the dots of the double dot PR1, in the upper right corner, is strongly reduced or even absent. Card FB1-V has the same characteristics as card FB1-IV, but differs by the disappearance of still another dot, the one forming the double dot PL31, at the lower end of the left inner frame.

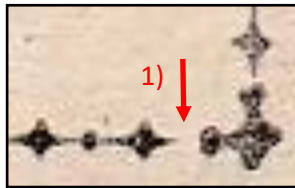
Breitwieser explains that card FB1-V is a further evolution of card FB1-IV; the second dot in the lower left corner is progressively decreasing, until a single dot remains. At that moment the card designated FB1-V. He gives 8 March 1871 as earliest date for card FB1-IV, and 27 April 1874 as earliest date for card FB1-V. Inspection of 171 specimens of card 1-III in my collection shows that cards with such characteristics are indeed present, and always belong to **subtype b**. In fact, about 25% of the cards of subtype b are showing these missing dots. As I will show, the characteristics used by Breitwieser to define his cards FB-IV and FB-V are extremely variable, and for that reason, personally, I prefer to include all cards with these characteristics in type III, subtype b.

A card cancelled on 20 March 1871 shows all the main characteristics of card FB1-IV:

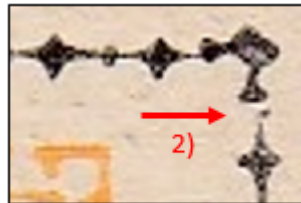




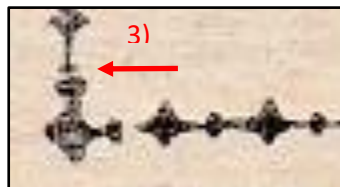
- 1) The left dot of the double dot PB47 at the lower right has completely disappeared,



- 2) The lower dot of the double dot PR1 is strongly reduced, and



- 3) The upper dot of the double dot PL31 in the lower right corner is strongly reduced, announcing the arrival of type FB1-V.



These features are always accompanied by the two distinctive traits of subtype b, a **clear horizontal dislocation in the left outer frame**, between the corner ornament and the first arch-like ornament, **and the two damaged arches in the outer frame**.

Further study shows us that all cards of subtype b are affected by the partial reduction of the dots in the lower left and/or lower right corners. The dot in the lower right corner is either strongly reduced (49 of the 63 cards) or totally absent (14 cards; FB1-IV and FB1-V). The dot in the lower left corner is totally absent in three cards (FB1-V, see picture below), and partial in 39 of the 63 cards of subtype b.



This card, from **19 May 1871**, card 1, type III, **subtype b**, which shows the most advanced stage, with one of the dots of both the double dots PB47 and PL31 totally missing, corresponds to type FB1-V. Two other cards

with these characteristics in my collection are dated 14 May and 25 May 1871. Comparison with some additional cards of the collection of Lars-Olof Nilsson shows that these anomalies occur in several clichés.

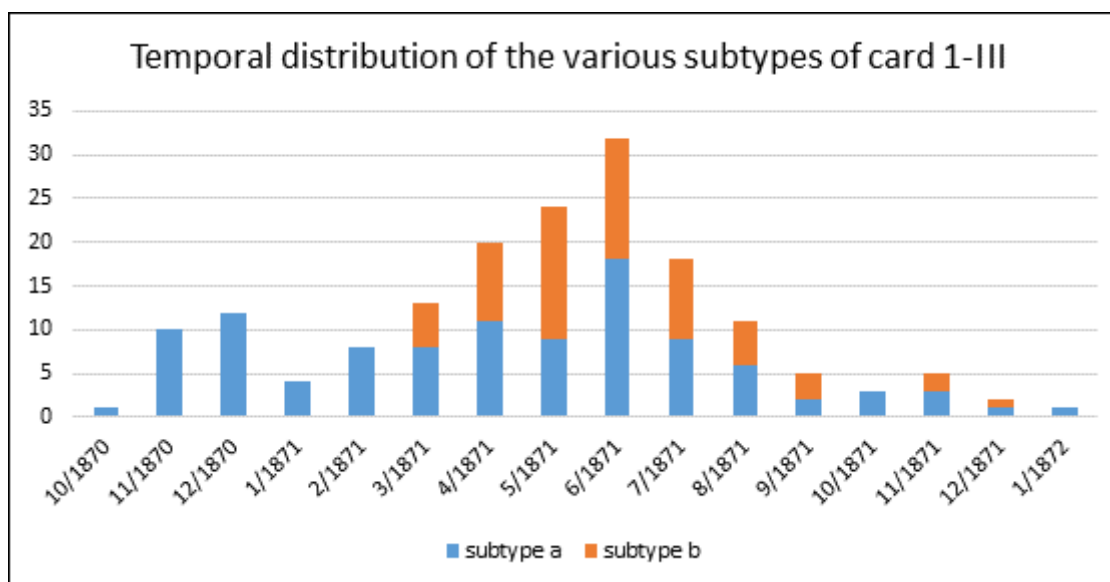


My observations show that 1) these partially or completely missing dots occur only in subtype b, 2) they occur, to some variable extent, in all cards of this subtype, 3) these anomalies show considerable variability in intensity and 4) card types FB1-IV and FB1-V are only the tip of the iceberg, they are extreme cases, which make part of a much larger ensemble.

Recently, Lars-Olof Nilsson attended me on the fact that in card I, type III, other dots close to the corners may be missing as well. This may be the case for PA47, or for the right dot of the double dot PA1.

A missing dot PA47 has been observed in two cards of subtype b, but also in two cards of subtype a, in which also the right dot of PA1 had almost disappeared. In both cases, the two cards seem to be identical, and to have been printed by the same cliché.

Summarising, the most remarkable feature of **card 1, type III**, is the existence of **subtypes a and b**, which were previously described by Ascher (1913). Subtype a) is present during the whole period of use of type III (108 of the 171 cards in my collection), from 25 October 1870 to the end of 1871. Subtype b only occurs in March 1871, and accounts for about half (63 out of 133) of the cards in my collection dated 14 March 1871 or later.



For me, it is clear that within subtype b, there is a large variability in the characteristics (partly or completely missing dots PB47 and PL31) which led Breitwieser to distinguish his types FB1-IV and FB1-V. These two types (with totally missing dots) form an integral part of a much larger ensemble. Additionally, in practice it is very hard, if not impossible, to distinguish cards with a very small remnant of a dot, and cards without any trace of a dot.

The question is how to interpret these observations. First, the arrival of subtype b in March 1871 suggests that at this moment, a substantial number of new clichés were produced. However, unlike the situation observed for card 1, type 2 (where the appearance of subtype b, in December 1870, was shortly after followed by a



strong decline of subtype a), here both subtypes continue to be present in about equal numbers until the end of use of card 1.

This suggests that also in this case, a new plate was assembled, using a new master-copy produced from the type-set original. But unlike the situation observed for card 1, type 2, where we speculated that a new plate (subtype b) may have replaced the old plate (subtype a), here, **the subsequent common occurrence of subtypes a and b**, in about equal numbers, **strongly suggests that both plates were been used simultaneously** until they were replaced by the plate(s) of card 2 at the end of June 1871. If true, this would be the first time that two printing plates (with the same type of card) were used together, probably in response to a strongly increasing demand.

The newly produced clichés, of subtype b, produced with a new master copy, show quite some variability, especially concerning PB47, PL31 and PA47, including several clichés in which one dot of the double dot PB47 is completely missing (=FB1-IV), at least one cliché in which also one dot of the double dot PL31 is completely missing (=FB1-V) and one cliché in which dot DA47 is missing.

### Classification of the types, subtypes and varieties of card 1

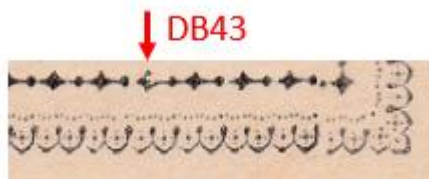
In view of my findings, I propose the following classification for the different types, subtypes and varieties of card 1, which largely follows the earlier classifications of Ascher (1913) and Frech (1991, 2015).

#### Card 1, type I – earliest date 1 October 1869 (= FB 1-II)

**Subtype a** - Strong vertical dislocations in the inner as well as outer frame lines, the midline of the coat of arms goes through the “i” of “in”.

All varieties listed below, each observed on at least two cards, are thought to correspond to individual clichés. The cards of each of these varieties can be distinguished on the basis of the indicated anomalies, but have many other details in common. For each variety, I indicate the first and last dates, as well as the number of observed cards, in my collection and elsewhere.

**Variety a<sub>1</sub>** – white spot on right part of diamond DB43. 11/11/1869 – 12/11/1869 (2 cards).



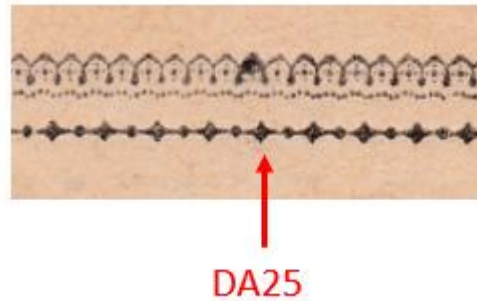
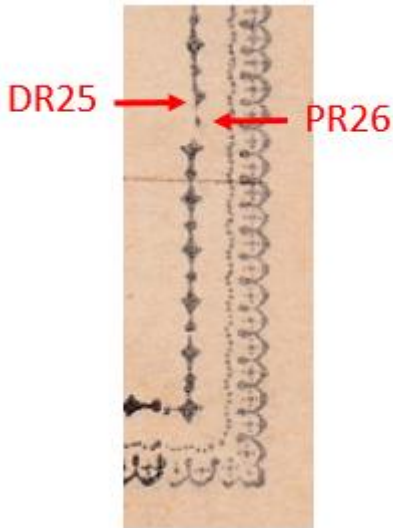
**Variety a<sub>2</sub>** – broken diamond DA32. 9/1/1870 – 24/5/1870 (3 cards).



**Variety a<sub>3</sub>** – lower part of diamond DA42 absent. Hole in middle frame above DA42. 19/1/1870 – 12/11/1870 (5 cards).



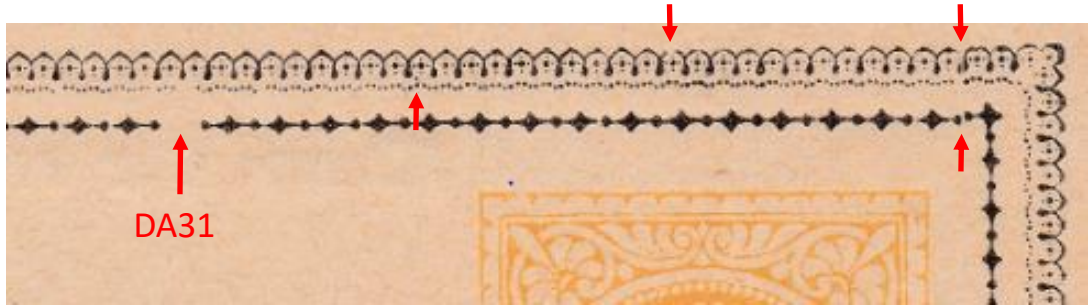
**Variety a<sub>4</sub>** – diamond DR25 and dot PR26 damaged at the left, outer ornament above DA25 heavily damaged. 12/2/1870 - 24/3/1870 (3 cards).



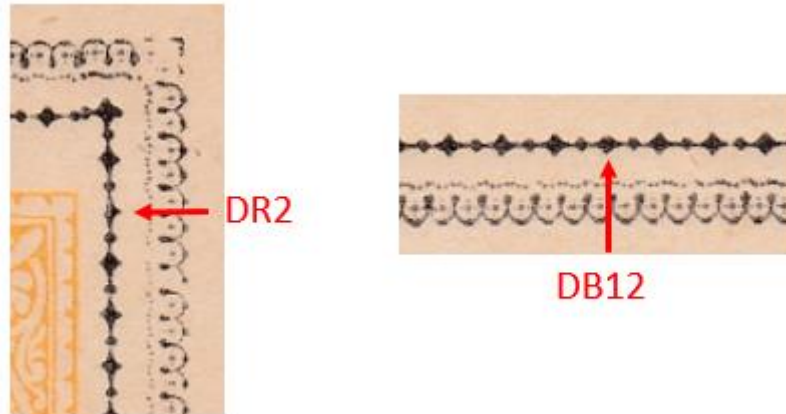
**Variety a<sub>5</sub>** – diamond DR8 and dot PR9 damaged; outer ornament above DA27 misses top. 29/10/1869 – 27/4/1870 (3 cards).



**Variety a<sub>6</sub>** – lacking diamond DA31. 23/3/1870 – 1/10/1870 (3 cards).



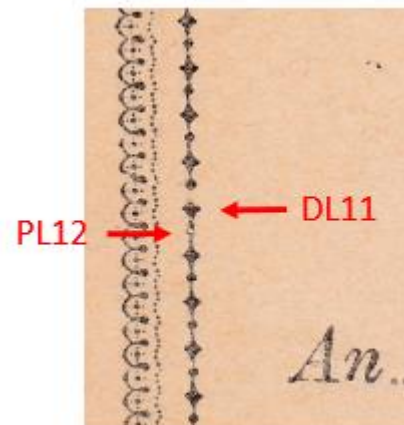
**Variety a<sub>7</sub>** – diamond DR2 damaged left, diamond DB12 damaged above. 30/12/1869 – 1/9/1870 (5 cards).



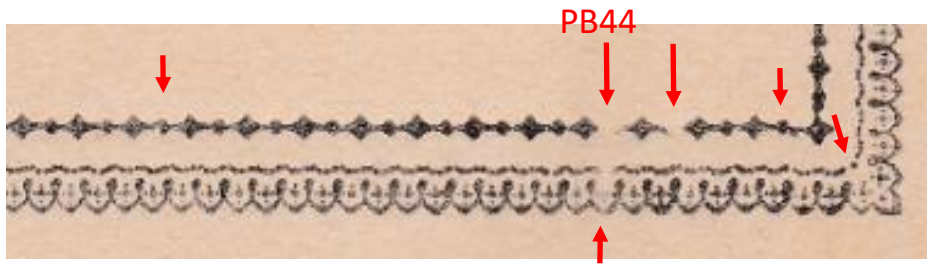
**Variety a<sub>8</sub>** -- diamond DA14 damaged, the upper dot of double dot PL1 strongly reduced. 14/12/1869 – 17/2/1871 (6 cards).



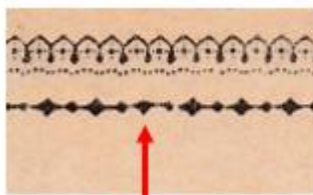
**Variety a<sub>9</sub>** -- diamond DL11 damaged above, white spot on PL12. 25/4/1870 – 18/5/1870 (2 cards).



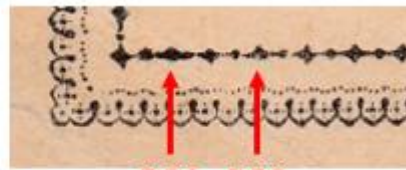
**Variety a<sub>10</sub>** – lacking dots PB44 and PB45. 2/5/1870 – 28/11/1870 (5 cards).



**Variety a<sub>11</sub>** – diamond DA21 damaged above, diamonds DB1 to DB3, PB1 and PA2 all damaged. 20/5/1870 – 6/8/1870 (5 cards).

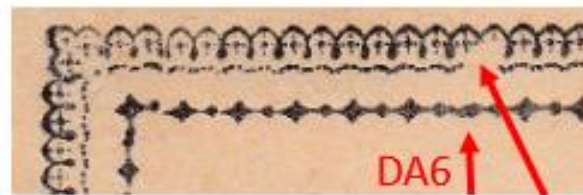


DA21



DB1 DB3

**Variety a<sub>12</sub>** – diamond DA6 and the outer frame above this diamond strongly damaged. 7/7/1870 – 15/9/1870 (4 cards).



DA6

**Variety a<sub>13</sub>** – diamond DR6 damaged left. 3/5/1870 – 12/8/1870 (5 cards).



DR6

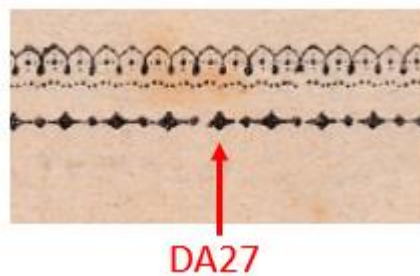


**Subtype b** – No strong dislocations in the inner and outer frame lines, the double points of PA47 and PA47 are well aligned. The midline of the coat of arms goes through the “n” of “in” – earliest date **1 October 1869**.

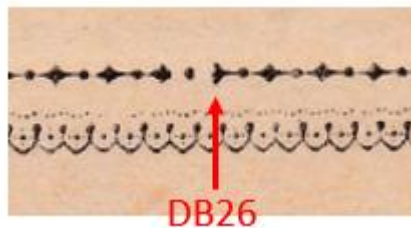
**Variety b<sub>1</sub>** – white spot on right part of diamond DB19. 23/10/1869 – 26/12/1869 (2 cards).



**Variety b<sub>2</sub>** – diamond DA27 damaged left, connecting line with PA27 absent. 13/12/1869 – 5/5/1870 (4 cards).



**Variety b<sub>3</sub>** – diamond DB26 damaged left. Connecting lines left and right of PB26 absent. 12/2/1870 – 30/3/1870 (2 cards).



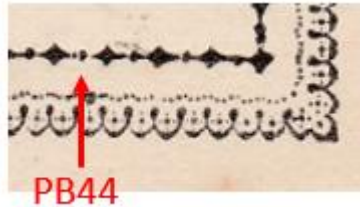


## Card 1, type II – earliest date 20 May 1870 (= FB 1-I)

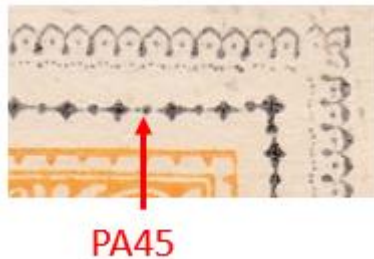
**Subtype a** - vertical dislocation between the 2 dots forming double dot PA47. Interruption in the upper middle frame above PA26 (and PA17) – earliest date 20 May 1870.

**Subtype a1** – no additional interruptions in the lower middle frame

**Variety a1<sub>1</sub>** – point PB44 double. 13/8/1870 – 7/11/1870 (6 cards).



**Variety a1<sub>2</sub>** – point PA45 double. 2/10/1870 – 22/10/1870 (3 cards).

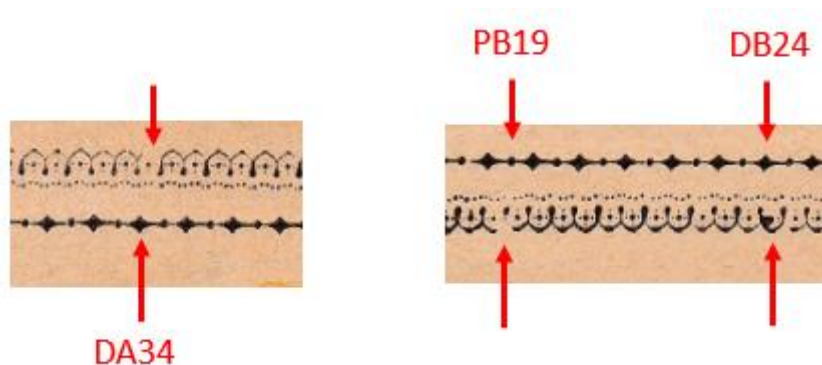


**Variety a1<sub>3</sub>** – point PA46 almost disappeared, PA47 weak. 30/1/1871 – 10/3/1871 (2 cards).

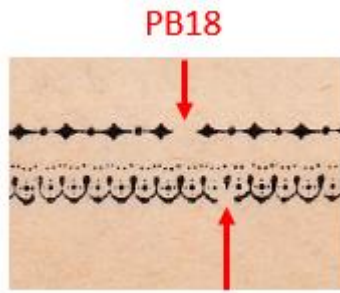


**Subtype a2** – additional interruption in the lower middle frame below diamond DB41

**Variety a2<sub>1</sub>** – ornaments above DA34 and below PB19 damaged, black spot on ornament below DB24. 5/6/1870 – 14/9/1870 (3 cards).



**Variety a<sub>2</sub>** – dot PB18 disappeared, ornament below DB19 damaged, dots PA16 and PB3 slightly damaged. 14/6/1870 – 15/7/1870 (2 cards).



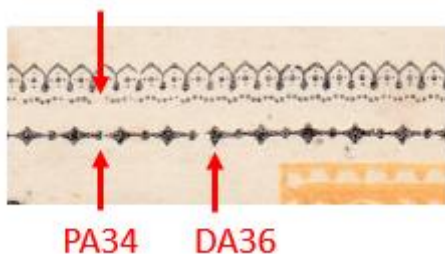
**Subtype a<sub>3</sub>** – additional interruption in the lower middle frame under DB2.

**Subtype b** - no clear vertical dislocation of dot PA47. Lower middle frame with interruption below diamond DB29 – earliest date **22 November 1870**.

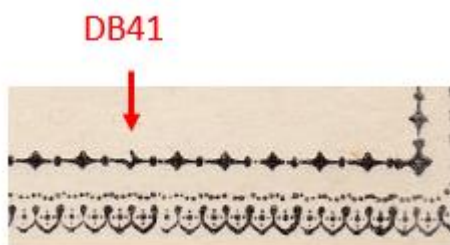
## Card 1, type III – earliest date 25 October 1870 (= FB 1-III)

**Subtype a** - upper left corner ornament almost perfectly aligned with the left outer frame. Interruption in the upper middle frame above PA34 – earliest date 25 October 1870.

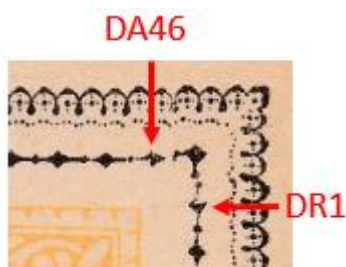
**Variety a<sub>1</sub>** – diamond DA36 damaged at the left, connecting line with PA36 disappeared. Note the hole above PA34 typical for subtype a. 2/12/1870 – 24/5/1871 (2 cards).



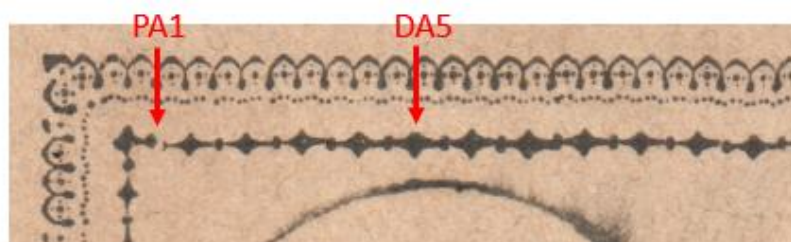
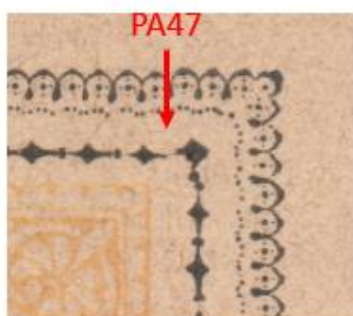
**Variety a<sub>2</sub>** – diamond DB41 damaged above left. 25/5/1871 – 16/7/1871 (2 cards).



**Variety a<sub>3</sub>** – diamond DA46 damaged, dot PA47 damaged left, diamond DR1 damaged above. 9/6/1871 – 21/1/1872 (2 cards).



**Variety a<sub>4</sub>** – dot PA47 is missing, the right dot of PA1 is strongly reduced. Diamonds DA4 to DA8 very fat. 5/1/1871 – 25/3/1871 (2 cards).



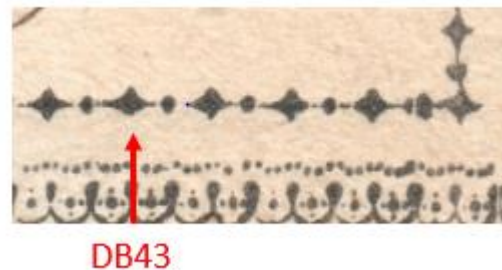
**Subtype b** - clear dislocation between the left outer frame and the upper left corner. 4<sup>th</sup> archlike ornament above broken at the right; arch right of PR10 damaged above. Interruption in the upper middle frame above PA33 – earliest date **8 March 1871 (Fide Breitwieser/Nilsson)**

**Subtype b1** – the 2 dots of double dots PB47 and dot PL31 are both (at least partly) present.

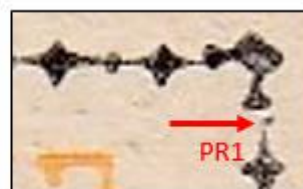
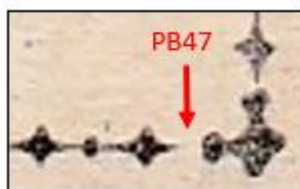
**Variety b1<sub>1</sub>** – double dot PR1 strongly diminished, diamond DR1 damaged above, connecting line between PR1 and DR1 disappeared. 28/5/1871 – 28/7/1871 (2 cards).



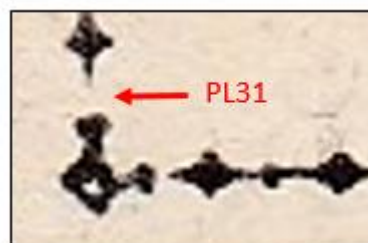
**Variety b1<sub>2</sub>** – dot PA47 absent, diamond DB43 damaged below. 23/4/1871 – 22/6/1871 (3 cards).



**Subtype b2** – total disappearance of the left dot of the double dot PB47; the lower dot of the double dot PR1 strongly reduced or absent (= **FB 1-IV**).



**Subtype b3** – as subtype b2, but with additionally the upper dot of the double dot PL31 totally disappeared (= **FB 1-V**).



**NB.** In the listing above, all sub-subtypes (a1, a2, etc.) are supposed to correspond to part of the clichés of a printing plate, whereas all varieties (a1<sub>1</sub>, a1<sub>2</sub>, etc.) are thought to correspond to a single cliché.

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I invite all readers to send me their corrections, additions and other comments. I especially incite all collectors to check their cards for the systematic errors which in my opinion represent individual clichés. Please inform me about all observations of additional anomalies and of dates observed for the anomalies presented here.

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