



The Rogue's Gallery:

Mishap in Duala

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This topic requires a bit of background. The country's name, Cameroon – Kamerun in German – comes from the Portuguese word “Camaroes”, which means shrimp. These crustaceans were abundant in the coastal waters along this stretch of the West African coast. The principal settlement in the area then also became known as Kamerun, but was renamed Duala in 1901. Much of this coastline was then mangrove swamp, but because Duala was situated on solid ground and was accessible from the ocean, it became an important trading place and the administrative center of what was to become the German colony Kamerun. The first post office in the territory opened in Kamerun/Duala on 1 Feb. 1887, and evolved into a substantial main post office. Virtually all mail to and from the colony moved through Duala. That post office originally used a cancel ‘KAMERUN *’ (Fr. 35), but, with the name change in 1901, it received a new cancel ‘DUALA **’ (Fr. 18). Further cancels followed in 1906 with the first modern “Swiss” design, also reading ‘DUALA’ (Fr. 19), then ‘DUALA a’ (Fr. 20) in 1910 and finally ‘DUALA b’ (Fr. 21) on 22 Aug. 1912. This last cancel saw limited use between that date and 27 Sept. 1914, when Duala was occupied by the Anglo-French Cameroons Expeditionary Force. The *ArGe Cancel* catalogue [4] values this ‘DUALA b’ cancel at €200. It is this last cancel which is the topic of this column.

When Duala was occupied by Allied forces in September 1914, the German population fled inland, and all government functions were taken over by British troops. The Cameroon Expeditionary Forces (C.E.F.) soon opened a military post office at Duala. Three German cancellers – Fr. 19, 20 and 21 – were taken over and were used. The documented use of ‘DUALA b’ on C.E.F. overprinted stamps spans the time between 22 Nov. 1914 and 28 Mar. 1916. Effective 1 Apr. 1916, the British and the French divided Kamerun and introduced civilian administrations. Duala became the center of French administration, and the ‘DUALA b’ canceller continued to be used by the French. French use is documented from 2 Apr. 1916 to 14 May 1930.

Figure 1. ‘DUALA b 20.9.16’ cancel showing undamaged bridge.



Figure 2. French occupation stamp with undamaged ‘DUALA b ? .8.16’ cancel.



Figure 3. ‘DUALA b 18.11.18’ cancel with damaged bridge, both top and bottom.





Figure 4. Block of four French occupation stamps; ‘DUALA b 29.9.22’ cancel with damaged bridge top and bottom.

It was during the early use of this canceller that the “mishap” took place. As has been observed for several other Swiss-type cancellers, the bridge became damaged, first at the top, and a bit later the bottom. The last documented date of an undamaged postmark is 17 Dec. 1916, and the earliest damaged cancel is 6 Jan. 1917. So it seems evident that the damage must have happened sometime during the Christmas rush of 1916. Even though I do not have examples near the exact dates, I can show the damage. Fig. 1 (on the previous page) shows the still-sound postmark on 20.9.16, and Fig. 2 (also on previous page) shows an example of the Moyen Congo 1 cent stamp with the overprint ‘CAMEROUN Occupation Française’ (Scott 130, Yvert 67). Note the still sound cancel ‘DUALA b ?.8.16’. Fig. 3 (previous page) then shows the postmark, dated 18.11.18 with the bridge damaged at both top and bottom. The best illustration of this damaged cancel that I have in my collection comes from a block of four Moyen Congo 10 cent stamps (Fig. 4, above). These also have the overprint ‘CAMEROUN Occupation Française’ (Scott 134, Yvert 71). The date 29.9.22 is quite a bit later, and the cancel now shows the full damaged bridge, both top and bottom.

What has all this post-German use of this cancel to do with forgeries? Friedemann [1] warns right next to the cancel description: “Vorsicht vor rückdatierten Abstempelungen!” (Beware of backdated cancels). He later gives a more detailed description of the use of several genuine Kamerun cancels which were backdated during the French period (see page 601).

In the “Maurer Collection” (see my Rogues’ Gallery column in the last **VORLÄUFER**) there were two examples of such a backdated cancels, and they intrigued me greatly. Ronald Steuer had a look at them and noted that they were backdated cancels, but not forged in the strict sense. I then turned to my friend and Kamerun expert Marty Bratzel, and with his help and information, I can now give a more detailed explanation. The first example (Fig. 5 below) is a horizontal strip of three Kamerun 20 Pf. yacht stamps on piece. They are the watermarked type, (Mi. 23a and Scott 23) which were introduced at Kamerun post offices in January 1914, so their use by the

Figure 5. Strip of three Kamerun stamps, canceled ‘DUALA b 2.8.14’ with damaged bridge; backdated usage.





Figure 6. Kamerun stamps on piece, canceled 'DUALA b 16.8.14' with damaged bridge; backdated usage.

German postal authorities was essentially limited to the period between January and September 1914, although some of these stamps were likely used at inland postal locations until early 1916. The strip shows two strikes of the 'DUALA b' cancel, dated 2.8.14.

The second example (Fig. 6 above) is a vertical pair, also Kamerun 20 Pf. yacht stamps, but here the unwatermarked type (Mi, 10, Scott 10). On these, the two strikes of the 'DUALA b' cancel show the date 16.8.14. This pair of stamps is also on piece, with some print on the envelope visible, reading: "ch-Südamerikanis". The full text is probably something like "Deutsch-Südamerikanische Telegraf Gesellschaft".

Both examples clearly show the damaged bridge and, thanks to the damage described above, it is clear that these stamps must have been cancelled after 6 Jan. 1917. The stamps are genuine, the cancels are genuine, but the canceller was used more than two years after the stamp could have been genuinely used. The backdated dates are both August 1914, just a month before the German post office was closed. Although the two dates are only two weeks apart, the date configurations are different. Note that in Fig. 6, the normal period is present between day and month, but in Fig. 5 there is a dash instead a period after the day. The two cancellations could thus have been produced a long time apart, especially as the canceller was known to be in use until 1930.

One would have expected that the British occupation forces, and later the British-French administration, would have made every effort to confiscate all German stamps and cancellers from every post office in the country, as they did in New Guinea. They would then have overprinted all these stamps in a similar way as had happened in Rabaul, as well as in Lome, Togo. This was apparently not the case. It seems that the German officials either took all these valuable items with them as they retreated, or destroyed them to prevent them from falling into enemy hands. But for some reason they did not include the cancellers. So, as the British and French troops advanced, they found almost no German Kamerun postage stamps. The only stamps that were overprinted C.E.F. were those confiscated from the steamship *Professor Woermann* of the German Woermann Linie. That ship was captured in Freetown, Sierra Leone, with a considerable shipment of postage stamps on board, bound for Kamerun. All these stamps were then overprinted in Freetown, and placed on sale in Kamerun on 12 July 1915. The only sizeable quantity of stamps in Kamerun was found at Garua, which was taken in June 1915. These were overprinted in French but were later destroyed. They never came into use and have been referred to as the "stillborn" issue.

Today there seems to be a considerable number of Kamerun stamps to be found with backdated cancels – especially the watermarked 20 Pf. and 5 Mark values. Where did the originally uncanceled stamps come from? They could not have come from German nationals, as they either fled the country, or became prisoners of war. Their source may have been stamps left behind by individuals, or confiscated from prisoners of war, or even obtained from the philatelic trade in Europe. There seems to have been considerable philatelic interest in Kamerun in the pre-war years. Many letters are known containing full sets of stamps which had been sent to Kamerun for cancellation, and were then mailed back to Europe. Due to the scarcity of the occupation issues, this trade most likely intensified during the British and French occupation periods. Whoever was responsible for these backdated cancels must have had access to the post office, since the canceller continued to be used legitimately. And not just a one-time access, as it seems that given the variety of dates observed, such backdating took place on an ongoing basis, whenever new mint yacht stamps showed up. It is even possible that mint yacht stamps were ordered from Europe, and then cancelled with the post-dated cancellers.

What about the imprinted envelope with a bona fide return address? These pre-printed envelopes were common, and they were also confiscated by the Allies. A keen forger may well have had access to such envelopes as well, and could then have made up very genuine looking letters with the backdated cancels. It is thus only the “mishap” with the ‘DUALA b’ canceller that now helps us unmask a rather skilled and prolific forger. One question remains: were the other Duala cancellers also used for backdating. For some reason the ‘DUALA a’ canceller was not taken over by French authorities, but the ‘DUALA *’canceller (Fr. 19) saw use until at least 14 Mar. 1927. Friedemann notes that Fr. 19 was also backdated, but because there was no damage to that canceller, it is much harder to identify any type of backdated use there.

A dangerous combination here is clearly the one shown in Fig. 5, because the watermarked 20 Pf. stamps are scarce legitimately used, and are valued at €150. Similarly the ‘DUALA b’ cancel had a short life during the German administration, and is valued at €200. Add the observation that the postmark is almost a war date, and the combination could well be worth over €500, and my strip could thus fetch a substantial price. Except for the mishap of the broken bridge!

Lastly, rather than just being backdated, have the three Duala cancels also been forged? Definitely yes! Marty Bratzel and his fellow GCCG member Bob Maddocks have recorded at least 20 different forgeries of Fr. 19, 20 and 21, noting that some are routinely offered on eBay. And, hard to believe, even the illustration of Fr. 19 in the Friedemann handbook is actually a forgery!

References:

- [1] Albert Friedemann und Heinrich Wittmann, *Die Postwertzeichen und Entwertungen der deutschen Postanstalten in den Schutzgebieten und im Ausland*, 4th ed., Vol. 2, Dr. Wittmann Verlag, Munich (1988).
- [2] M. P. Bratzel, H. Kraja and R. J. Maddocks, *Les Obliterations du Cameroun 1914 - 1960*, MPB Canada, Windsor (1990).
- [3] *Stanley Gibbons Stamp Catalogue Part 1: British Commonwealth*, Vol. I, London (1994).
- [4] *Stempelkatalog, Ehemalige deutsche Kolonien und Auslandpostämter*, 16th ed., ArGe Kolonial, Berlin (2003).
- [5] *Michel Deutschland Spezial Katalog*, Vol. 1, Schwaneberger Verlag, Munich (2004).
- [6] Yvert and Tellier, *Catalogue de Timbre-Poste*, Vol. 2, Editions Yvert et Tellier, Amiens (1991). ■

German 'DUALA (KAMERUN) b' Datestamp Used During French Occupation

by R. J. Maddocks

In his "The Rogue's Gallery" column [2], Marcel Zollinger illustrated backdated usage of the 'DUALA (KAMERUN) b' datestamp (Fr. 21) on German Kamerun stamps with dates 2.8.14 and 16.8.14. These two pieces (Fig. 5 and Fig. 6 in [2]) are reproduced below in Fig. 1.

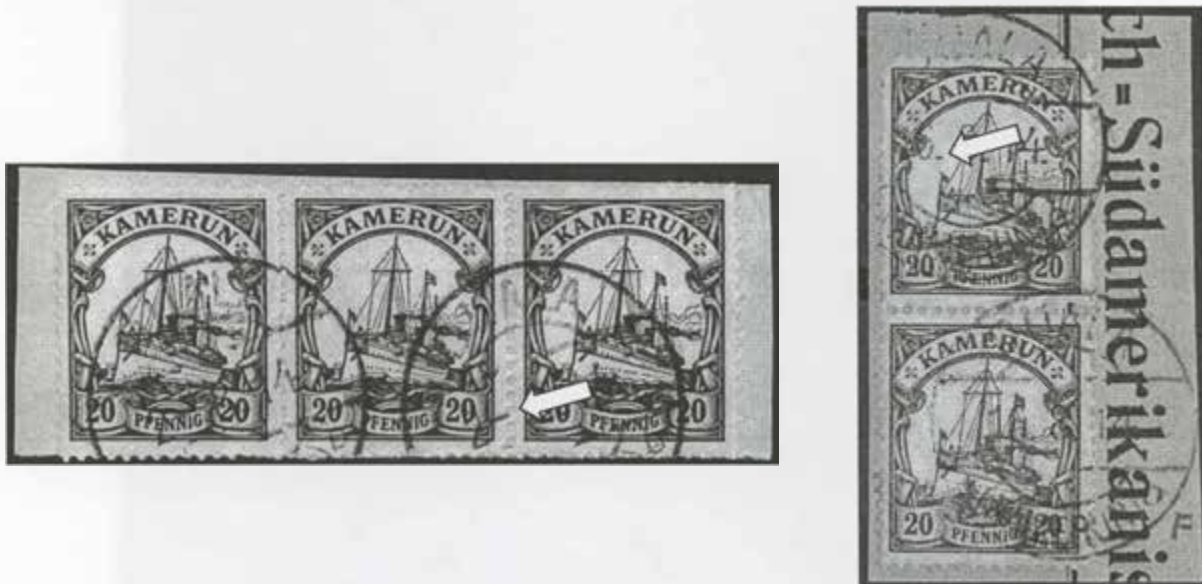
Each however has a different configuration. The latter has a stop (period) after the day, as normally seen throughout the German administration and also for the following fourteen years of French rule, i.e., up to 1930. The former date has, intriguingly, a dash replacing the stop.

I had not seen this variant used during the German period, or indeed during that of the French, until I acquired copies about 2000. It therefore was not mentioned in [1], the definitive work on French Cameroon Postmarks. The questions posed by Mr. Zollinger were when was the backdating likely to have occurred and where, given that both the Kamerun stamps and the canceller itself are considered to be genuine. Would this have been after the French had, in around 1930, replaced the German canceller with their own? Or earlier?

I have to hand two commercial covers which might provide a clue (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3 on the next page). Both covers bear the same 'DUALA (KAMERUN) b' postmark of origin clearly showing the dash having replaced the normal stop after the day. The genuineness of the posting dates is borne out by the overseas transit/receiving backstamps; these Duala strikes could not have been backdated by favour. The first cover (Fig. 2) is postmarked 2-10.17, the second (Fig. 3) 2-8.18.

This indicates a near year of usage of the changed date configuration, and thus unlikely to have been "one-offs". However, I have not seen any Duala covers from between these dates to determine whether the canceller configuration was intermittent or continuous. A strike on a subsequently dated philatelic cover, 23.8.18, shows reversion to the normal setting, as do commercial mailings thereafter.

Figure 1. 'DUALA 2-8.14 (KAMERUN) b' and 'DUALA 16.8.14 (KAMERUN) b' cancels (Fig. 5 and Fig. 6 in [1]).



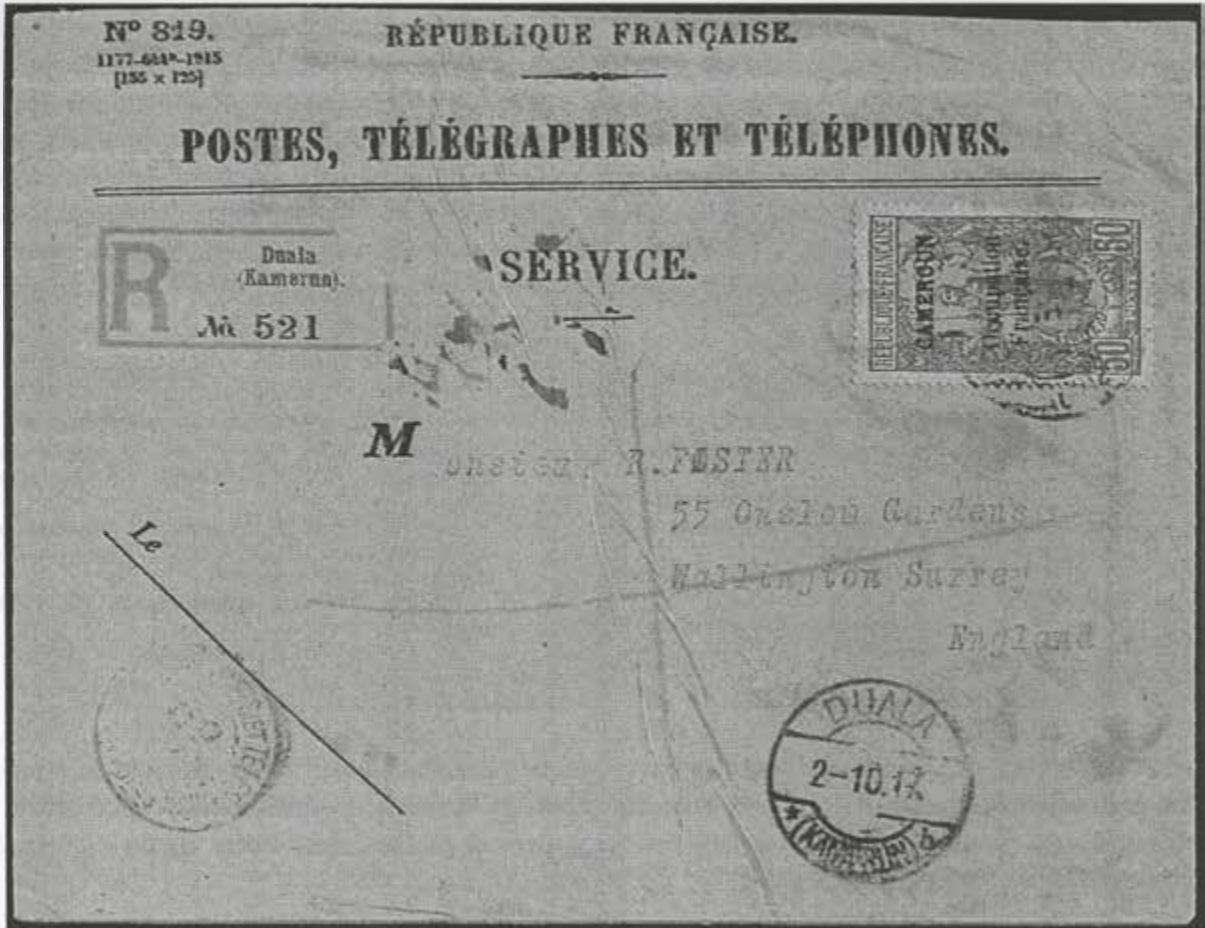


Figure 2. 1917 official P, T & T cover to England, German registration label, 50c French occupation of Cameroun stamp. Postmarked 'DUALA 2-10.17 (KAMERUN) b', backstamped London 9.11.17.

Could therefore the backdated strikes on the German stamps have been arranged in the period 1917-1918 by favour of the Duala postal staff?

Figure 3. 1918 commercial cover to France, franked by French occupation of Cameroun stamps, canceled at Duala on both 2-8.18 and 3-8.18; Neuilly 9.18 backstamp.



Support for the claim that the backdated strikes on the German stamps might have been arranged in the period 1917-1918 by favour of the Duala postal staff, is provided by two letters, dated 28 June 1917 and 18 July 1917, from the Chef du service P & T, Duala, to one of the many philatelists making various requests. The one on the left basically states that he is returning five envelopes duly processed as requested, and the sixth envelope which could not be completed with the requested franking. The letter on the right basically states that he returns under registered cover all six envelopes which Grecht has sent, as requests of this sort are improper.

<p>KAISERLICHES POSTAMT Duala (Kamerun) le 27 Juin 1917 No 286</p> <p>Monsieur,</p> <p>J'ai l'honneur de vous accuser reception de votre de 8 Mai derenier.</p> <p>Je vous envoie sous recommandation par le même courrier cinq des enveloppes que vous m'avez adresse</p> <p>Les timbre / à 0.01, 0.02 et 0.05 me sont parvenus formant bloc et ad pérente complètement à la sixième enveloppe. Je vous retourne le tout</p> <p>Veuillez agréer l'assurance de ma parfaite considération</p> <p>Le Chef du service des Postes et Télégraphes.</p> <p>M. JOSEPH GRECHT Turkheimerstr. 17 BALE</p>	<p>PL. KAISERLICHES POSTAMT Duala (Kamerun) 18 Juillet 1917</p> <p>Monsieur,</p> <p>No. 324</p> <p>En réponse à votre lettre du 20 Mai der nier j'ai l'honneur de vous renvoyer par le courrier sous recommandation les six enveloppes que vous m'avez adressées.</p> <p>Je tiens toutefois à vous faire connaître que dorénavant j'aurai le regret de considérer comme nulle et no evenue toute de/mande de gehre.</p> <p>Agreez; Monsieur, l'assurance de ma parfaite consideration</p> <p>Le Chef du Service.</p> <p>A Monsieur Joseph GRECHT Turkheimerstr 17. BASEL (Suisse)</p>
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I believe the requests were for special frankings and/or cancellations on self-addressed envelopes to be mailed back to Grecht. Grecht was not alone in requesting such favours, as there is a proliferation of philatelic covers seen of the same period, addressed to other Swiss collectors, including Blatter, Thon, and Rheinard.

The contents of the letters to Grecht clearly show that while in some cases his requests were granted, other requests decidedly were not. I would have thought that requests for backdating cancellations on stamps, especially those of Kamerun, albeit with a former German canceller, would have been rejected outright. Perhaps, however, as seen by the two backdated strikes of the otherwise genuine 'DUALA b' canceller, illustrated in [2], exceptions were made. Philatelists may propose but the Postmaster disposes!

Of further interest is that the other former German Duala canceller also used by the French (Fr. 19) is also found with the alternative date configuration, i.e., a dash instead of a stop after the day. The earliest date I have seen is 1-5.16, the latest 2-1.18, all on French Cameroun stamps of the time; see Fig. 4 at right. These were not backdated mailings. The strike in Fig. 4 is from a card to Gabon.



Figure 4. Strike of "Swiss" design Duala canceller (Fr. 19) showing date configuration set with dash rather than stop after day

References:

- [1] Martin P. Bratzel, Jr., Hubert Kraja, and Robert J. Maddocks, *Les Oblitérations du Cameroun 1914-1960*, MPB Canada,, Windsor (1990).
- [2] Marcel Zollinger, "The Rogue's Gallery, Mishap in Duala", *VORLÄUFER* #156 (2009): 27-30. ■

**DUALA KAMERUN BRIDGE CANCELLERS –
BACKDATED POSTMARKS AND DISPLAY OF THE DATE –
OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS**

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Introduction

This article was prompted by two articles in *Vorläufer*, journal of the German Colonies Collectors Group, regarding backdated usage of the Duala Kamerun-b canceller (Ref. 1, 2). In addition to fueling my interest in backdated Kamerun / Cameroun postmarks in general, the articles included an illustration of a backdated postmark with an “unusual” date setting. Exploration of this observation led to a number of questions, presented below. Comments and insight that shed further light on the subject would be appreciated.

Background

During the German administration of Kamerun, three Swiss-style cancellers were used at the Duala post office:

- Fr. 19 – Duala Kamerun (no index)
- Fr. 20 – Duala Kamerun-a
- Fr. 21 – Duala Kamerun-b

The devices, manufactured by the firm Th. Gleichmann in Berlin, were made from steel (Ref. 3). Presumably all three were of similar construction. The date, displayed in a bridge across the center, was set by adjusting wheels on the handstamps. The postmarks are illustrated in Figure 1.

After the fall of Duala on September 27, 1914, the Anglo-French Cameroons Expeditionary Force used all three handstamps at the military post office at Duala, but not necessarily concurrently. Two (Fr. 19 and 21) were also used at the military telegraph office (Ref. 4). After the introduction of civilian administration, effective April 1, 1916, those two cancellers continued in use at the post office opened under French auspices. The

bridge of the Duala-b device was damaged in late December 1916 or early January 1917. The dates of use for the three handstamps are summarized in Table 1. The dates during the German administration are from Friedemann (Ref. 3) and, for the C.E.F. interregnum and the French administration, from documented information compiled by the author over a period of 25 years (Ref. 5).



Fr. 19 Fr. 20 Fr. 21 - Intact Fr. 21 - Broken

Figure 1. Duala Kamerun bridge postmarks.

Table 1. Dates of Use of the Duala Kamerun Handstamps

Canceller	German Administration	C.E.F. Interregnum	French Administration
Duala (Fr. 19)	End August 1906 27 September 1914	3 October 1914 28 March 1916	1 April 1916 14 March 1927
Duala-a (Fr. 20)	End 1910 27 September 1914	15 October 1914 29 December 1915	
Duala-b (Fr. 21) un-damaged bridge	22 August 1912 27 September 1914	12 November 1914 28 March 1916	2 April 1916 17 December 1916
Duala-b (Fr. 21) damaged bridge			6 January 1917 14 May 1930

Display of the Date

A number of questions arise which are presented and discussed below. Since the three Duala handstamps are no longer available for first-hand examination, one must look elsewhere for answers. Gleichmann manufactured many other Swiss-style bridge handstamps for use throughout the German Empire during this time period. Presumably those devices were similar to the three Duala handstamps. Some are, I believe, in the postal museum in Germany. First-hand examination of one or more of those devices would most likely provide definitive answers applicable for the three Duala handstamps. Perhaps such an examination has been published. However, not being familiar with literature on the subject and, absent the opportunity to visit the postal museum, one can examine the postmarks for clues. Several hundred Duala postmarks spanning the three administrations are available to the author.

First, how many wheels were required to set the date? For almost all of the postmarks to hand, the digits for the day, month, and year are properly aligned across the bridge but, for a number of examples, the date is slightly misaligned. Three examples in particular provide tremendous insight.

Since the numbers are slightly out of alignment, the three postmarks display traces of the numbers below. For the postmark dated 30.11.18 (Figure 2), the slight misalignment shows partial portions of the date 29.10.17 underneath. Similarly, for the postmark dated 29.9.22 (Figure 3), below the 9 of the month, a small portion of the number 8 is visible and, below the 29 of the day, small portions of the number 28.



Figure 2. Duala-b postmark with slightly mis-set date

Although it may not be visible in the figure, the postmark on the 4 centimes stamp also shows traces of 30 and 10 respectively above the 29 and 9.

For another Duala-b postmark dated 19.1.22 (not illustrated here), below the 1 of the month, small portions of the number 12 can be seen. Other slightly mis-set postmarks examined corroborate observations for the three examples cited.

From these observations, one can conclude that the month was set with a single wheel – only 12 positions were required. Similarly, one can conclude that the day was also set with a single wheel – 31 different positions would be required. Further, given the traces of the 17 below the 18 for the postmark in Figure 2, one can conclude that the year was also set with a single wheel. The Duala handstamp (Fr. 19) was used for at least 21 years, that is, at least 22 different year settings, and the Duala-b handstamp (Fr. 21) was used for at least 18 years, that is, at least 19 different year settings. How many different dates could one wheel accommodate?

To summarize, the observations indicate that the date on a Duala canceller could easily be set with three wheels – one each for the day, month, and year.



Figure 3. Duala-b postmarks with slightly mis-set date 29.9.22.

For display of the day, however, there is a gremlin! Taking all three handstamps together, the author has postmarks for every day of the month, 1 through 31. For all, the day is followed by a stop. For the first nine days of the month, the day is displayed as -1. through -9. See, for example, the postmarks in Figure 1. In addition, however, the day is also found set as 1- or 2- or 3-, without a stop (Figure 4). Based only on material available to the author, the observed dates for this arrangement are summarized in Table 2, showing that the configuration occurs across at least ten years and



Figure 4. Duala postmarks with the day set with a number followed by a dash. The Duala postmark dated 1-8.14

that there is no pattern. It would appear that attention was not always paid as to which format was chosen to display the first three days of the month, “luck of the draw” as it were.

Table 2. Observed Dates with the Day Set as 1- or 2- or 3-

Duala (Fr. 19)	Duala - a (Fr. 20)	Duala - b (Fr. 21)	
		Undamaged Bridge	Damaged Bridge
3- 10.11 2- 7. 13 2- 12.13 1- 8.14 * 3- 10.14 2- 4.16 * 1- 5.16 2- 12.16 1- 2.17 2- 3.17 2- 1.18 3- 2.21 2- 6.21	2- 11.14 3- 5.15	1- 12.15	2- 8.14 * 1- 5.17 3- 5.17 2- 10.17 2- 8.18
	* – backdated or possibly backdated cancel		

As an example, it may be worth noting that the setting for the Duala canceller (Fr. 19) for consecutive days is 3-10.14 and -4.10.14, that is, a shift from a dash following the day number to a dash preceding the number and followed by a stop. These postmarks were applied to covers that went through the mails.

Significantly, the day set as 4- through 9- is *not* observed. This could be construed as circumstantial evidence that the day was set using two wheels, the first containing a 1, 2, and 3 plus a dash, and possibly a blank; and the second wheel with the numbers 0 through 9, each followed by a stop, plus one position with a . But why include a dash? Also, if only one wheel were used to set the date, then why add the 1-, 2- and 3- but not 4- through 9- ? Further, from all the postmarks examined, the two day digits are aligned, from which no evidence can be derived to support or refute either one wheel or two.

The author compared the numbers in 1-, 2- and 3- with the corresponding first digits in 10 - 19, 20 - 29, and 30 - 31. The comparison included superposition of enlarged images atop a light box. There is nothing to indicate any difference among the three numbers for all three handstamps. This does not, however, provide unequivocal evidence one way or the other.

The question can be asked whether the handstamps were altered when taken over by the C.E.F. or later by the French. But why do so? Also, only a very few days separated documented use by one administration before transfer to another. Further, the occurrence of the day followed by a dash is observed during all three administrations.

The Duala-a cancel (Fr. 20) may exhibit another anomaly. For the Duala and Duala-b postmarks, the earlier date appears below, as depicted for examples in Figures 2 and 3. However, for the Duala-a cancel, the earlier date *may* appear above. The author has too few significantly misaligned Duala-a postmarks to draw a definitive conclusion one way or the other.

Backdated Postmarks

In Table 2, three dates are followed by an asterisk, indicating backdated or possibly backdated strikes. The

Duala-b 2-8.14 postmark (Figure 5) has a broken bridge. The bridge was, however, intact until 17 December 1916, more than two years later. Any Duala-b postmark with a broken bridge before that date is clearly backdated, and that the backdating took place in 1917 or later.



Figure 5: Backdated Duala-b postmark dated 2-8.14 with broken bridge.

Another example (not illustrated here) is a Duala-b 17.3.16 postmark with bridge intact, but the cancel is on a stamp that was not issued until later that year. This clearly indicates that the backdating took place in 1916, before the bridge was damaged.

Backdated Duala postmarks (Fr. 19) are difficult if not impossible to detect. Two candidates are included in the list. The Duala 2-4.16 postmark does not follow the sequence of -1.4.16 and -3.4.16 observed for postmarks on legitimate covers. The author is on the lookout for a stamp – and preferably a cover – postmarked -2.4.16.

The Duala 1-8.14 postmark (Figure 4) is well inked and surprisingly clear; other postmarks from this time period have a much greyer ink and are not so distinctive. To reach a definitive conclusion about backdating, expert knowledge would be required about the differences in the ink used at that time by the German postal authorities and the ink used by subsequent postal authorities. The occurrence of a Duala postmark with the date set as -1.8.14 would also be instructive.

During the examination, a number of other clearly backdated postmarks were found with a range of dates. These have not been tabulated here. As noted above, some have a broken bridge but with a date before the bridge was broken, and others are on stamps which had not yet been issued. For the first three days of the month, backdated examples can have the dash before or after the number. The difference in the day setting may also be useful to detect backdated postmarks if the legitimate postmarks are -1., -2. or -3. and the backdated strikes 1-, 2- or 3-, or vice versa.

Backdating was ongoing over an extended period of time, probably years. The reason for backdated cancels was partly to satisfy collector demand but was largely monetary. The Duala-b canceller saw limited use during the German administration but was a workhorse thereafter. A backdated Duala-b cancel on a German Kamerun stamp could considerably enhance the value of the stamp, especially if the backdated postmark were applied to the watermarked values which saw only limited use, specifically the 20 pfennig stamp (January through September 1914) and the 5 mark stamp (August 1913 through September 1914).

Further Discussion

Further information about the construction and characteristics of this type of canceller would be welcome, as would an explanation as to why the cancellers had the option to set the day as 1- or 2- or 3-. Indeed, any comments that would further inform the discussion and lead to definitive conclusions are encouraged. Please address correspondence to the author through our editor, or submit a follow-up article or letter to editor for publication in a future issue of the *German Postal Specialist*.

Lastly, for those interested in the German colonies and post offices abroad, consider joining the very active German Colonies Collectors Group and receive their well written 32-page quarterly publication, *Vorläufer*. Contact information is elsewhere in this issue of the magazine.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are extended to Marcel Zollinger, Bob Maddocks, and Kevin Doyle. Figure 5 was originally presented in Ref. 1 and 2 and was reproduced here with permission.

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3. Maddocks, R.J. *The Postal Arrangements of the Anglo-French Cameroons Expeditionary Force 1914-1916*. Published by the author, Oswestry, United Kingdom, 1996. 217 pages. ISBN 0-9529487-0-2.
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5. Bratzel, M.P. Jr., H. Kraja, and R.J. Maddocks. *Les oblitérations du Cameroun 1914-1960*. MPB Canada, Windsor, Ontario, Canada 1990. 83 pages. ISBN 0-9694026-0-0. Plus other as yet unpublished information compiled by the author.

A Cover Story, Tsingtau to Dschu Tscheng

By Jason H. Manchester



This cover is a recent purchase. It went from Tsingtau Kiautschou to Dschu Tscheng, a city in Schantung (Shandong) province, China. The postage from Kiautschou to China was 4 cents, same as the rate to Germany. The cover has one German cancellation, one bilingual, two Chinese cancellations and two Chinese inscriptions. The Chinese characters were beyond my ability to interpret so photocopies of the cover were sent to Bobby Liao, Chair APS Translation Committee. The Chinese Characters at the left read Pastor Lin. This may be the Chinese name Pastor Ringhardt used to become Chinese friendly. At the right, the characters read Dschu Tscheng. Mr. Liao explained that the dates for the two Chinese cancellations used the lunar calendar and provided the modern equivalents. He also provided the modern pinyin names for the cities in question. Below, the four cancellations on the cover are arranged chronologically.



Front
Tsingtau
(Qindao)
22 June 1906



Back
Kiautschou(City)
Jiaozhou)
22 June 1906

The DUALA Type-Wheel-Datestamps – Unusual Date Configuration

By Philipp Ruge, (ruge-kaki@t-online.de)

In his article „German ‘DUALA (KAMERUN)b’ Datestamp Used During French Occupation“ in VORLÄUFER #160 R.J.Maddocks wrote there might be a period with a changed configuration of the date showing “day with dash” instead of “day with period”. Basing on a backstamped cancellation with damaged bridge and unusual date configuration “2- 8.14.” (fig. 1 in his article) and two French covers beyond question with dates “2-10.17.” and “2- 8.18” (fig. 2 and 3 in his article) he assumed that the backdating may have occurred in 1917/1918. But he missed that all known dates with dash have a day with only one digit. I have in my collection three English covers datestamped DUALA Ö(KAMERUN) b with the dates “2-10.15.”, “13.11.15” and “13.12.15” (fig. 1, 2 and 3). Regrettably none of the German uses of datestamp DUALA Ö (KAMERUN)b in my collection has this unusual date configuration.



Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.

The datestamps „DUALA KAMERUN“, „DUALA (KAMERUN)a“ and „DUALA Ö (KAMERUN)b“ were equipped with a type wheel system which allowed to adjust every imaginable date just by turning the type wheels. Such datestamps are called “Schweizer Stempel” because this system was invented by the Swiss engraver Johann Jakob Güller in 1865.

In the absence of a real physical datestamp of this type I will try to give a reconstruction of the type wheel system based on observation in my collection:

Due to the cylindrical stamp shaft’s diameter of roundabout 30mm the size of the wheel system is limited. The smallest wheel diameter could be achieved

with the minimum number of 10 types (0, 1, ... 9). In this case there would be 6 wheels in the system with a minimum diameter of roundabout $14.3\text{mm} = 10 \text{ types} \times (3.5\text{mm height} + 1\text{mm space between the types}) / 3.14$.

But I believe the minimum was 12 types (1 ... 12 for the months January December) resulting in a wheel diameter of $17.2\text{mm} = 12 \text{ types} \times (3.5\text{mm height} + 1\text{mm space between the types}) / 3.14$. Still a good fitting into the stamp shaft and less risk of unintended misadjusting.

Because they ran on the same axis, all wheels had to be of the same size and had perhaps the same number of types. The periods after day, month and year were one part with the numeral. Due to the maximum number of 12 types on one wheel the day needed two wheels (31 types would otherwise result in a wheel diameter of 39.5mm). The first wheel contained the numbers “1” ... “3” and at least one dash “-

“ (perhaps 9 dashes), the second wheel the numbers “0.”, “1.” ... “9.” and at least one dash “-“ (perhaps 2 dashes), the third wheel the numbers “1.” ... “12.” and no dashes.

That means a date like 1st August 1913 had normally to be adjusted to “-1. 8.13.”, but it was also possible to adjust to “1- 8.13” without change of the wheel-configuration. Mostly the first version was used, but I have some examples of the latter unusual version in my collection: “DUALA KAMERUN 2- 5.10.” (fig. 4), “DUALA KAMERUN 3-10.12.” (fig. 5), “DUALA (KAMERUN)a 1- 9.11.” (fig. 6) and “DUALA Ö (KAMERUN)b 2-10.15” with undamaged bridge (fig. 1). Only with the wheel for the year I’m not quite sure:



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

One wheel with 12 types only allowed the years “06.” to “17.” (Friedemann #19), “10.” to “21.” (Friedemann #20) and “12.” to “23.” (Friedemann #21).

But how was it possible to use Friedemann #19 till 1927 and Friedemann #21 till 1930 ? Did the French change the year-wheel ? Where did they get it ? Did they get it from the German original supplier ? Or was it made by a French supplier, perhaps using a slightly different font ? I haven’t seen a cancellation from the late period which could prove this version.

But a date wheel stamp HAMBURG ÖÖ 10.5.21.11-12V. with a “21” from a different bigger font in my collection “Deutsches Reich Germania” proves that this version was possible. But on the other hand I have also date wheel stamps with both year-digits on a different level, as there are: RATHENOW ÖÖC 12.12.19 5-6N. (fig. 7), WEIL (BADEN) -7.2.20.2-3N. (fig. 8), BUCKOW (Kr.LEBUS) 19.7.20.6-7V. (fig. 9) A sure indication for one wheel for each year-digit.



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

The turning of the wheels was effected by means of a stick pushing at the outer diameter. For this purpose the wheels could be accessed through an opening in the side of the cylindrical stamp shaft. The wheels axis was a screw which had to be tightened to clamp the wheels during use.

Over the years the wheels became stiff by dirt and corrosion. Perhaps the postal clerks started to use the stick as a lever with the top or the bottom edge of the “date bridge” as centre of rotation. This may be a cause for the later damage of the “bridge”.