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An analysis of the bilingual postal cancellations in the German-
Czech provinces of Austria-Hungary during the period
1867-1919

Is it the thriller story it is believed to be?

1) Introduction

Inspired by a life-long fascination with the language struggles between neighboring peoples in Austria-Hungary the author built up a collection of postal cancellations. An interesting and influential article by Edwin Müller from 1925 [Ref.1] drew his attention to the provinces Bohemia, Moravia, and (Austrian) Silesia – which currently form the Republic of Czechia. Müller paints a picture of official authorities and local postmasters embroiled in a continuous language struggle between the Czech and German community that was supposedly reflected in the (spelling of the) names of the places where the post offices were located and the way these places were displayed in the postal cancellations. This picture, however, does not correlate with some precise historical census data the author uncovered. In this article, the author wishes to share his findings that the names on, and their position in,

the postal cancellations say a lot less about the language spoken near the postmaster's office than assumed by Müller.

The author does not speak or read the Czech language and has no access to official sources on the relevant postal history, which could very well throw more light on this topic. The author hopes to receive comments and additional data from readers to enrich –and possibly correct– his knowledge on this subject.

2) Historical Background

Before 1867 the Austrian or Habsburg Empire consisted of 24 provinces and was inhabited by a number of nationalities: Germans, Italians, Slovenians,



Fig.1

Czechs, Poles, Ukrainians, Slovaks, Hungarians, Rumanians, Croats, and Serbs, all speaking their own language (Fig.1).

Throughout this empire, German was the only official language, and public officers of all ranks had to read and speak German. Emperor Franz Joseph in Vienna had a lot of troubles reigning over all these provinces which had different and often conflicting ambitions. During the period of the Italian unification, he first lost Lombardy in 1859 and then Venice in 1866 after a defeat in the disastrous war against a temporary alliance of Italy and Prussia. The King of Prussia wanted to annex Bohemia but his Chancellor Bismarck opposed the idea [Ref.2]. The Bohemians did not like that idea either and hoped to get more freedom by entering an agreement with Vienna. The Hungarians, however, had learned lessons from their failed revolution in 1848 and used this opportunity of weakness of Vienna to make contact with Bismarck. They forced an agreement with Vienna, the so-called Ausgleich, that led to the creation of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in which Austria and Hungary were equal partners. Both countries had their own constitution and their own legislative bodies. Only the emperor and certain common institutions (the ministries of foreign affairs, war, and finance) united them. In June 1867 Franz Joseph was officially crowned King of Hungary and so a permanent solution for the relationship with Hungary was reached. The original Habsburg Empire was now split up into a Western (Austrian) part called Cisleithenia and an Eastern (Hungarian) part, Transleithenia (colored brown and yellow, respectively, in Fig.2). The Czech provinces of Bohemia (Böhmen), Moravia (Mähren) and Silesia (Schlesien) in the Austrian part were now separated from the linguistically related neighboring people of Slovakia in the Hungarian part.



Fig.2

Inspired by Hungary's success in forcing the Ausgleich arrangement, Bohemia wanted to achieve a similar type of Ausgleich with Austria. In 1871 Franz Joseph came to an agreement, but the Germans in Cisleithenia and the Hungarians in Transleithenia very strongly opposed this idea so that it was cancelled. But on one issue there was a breakthrough: the Cisleithenian government granted all nationalities (see pg.2) a full equality of rights for the use of their own language. Although this concession was withdrawn soon after, the post officials had acted immediately. Before 1871, the names of the places that had a post office were monolingual, namely German, regardless of the language of the local people. This was perceived as an insult by the Czech population and the post offices acted to address it. For Bohemia,

Moravia and Silesia, it meant that next to the German name also the local name appeared on the cancellations: they became bilingual. In Bohemia and Moravia, the Czech name was used. For Silesia, it was either the Czech or the Polish name.

Hungary, meanwhile, never gave equal language rights to their ethnic minorities (Slovaks, Ukrainians, Rumanians, Serbs). In 1919 the Czechs and Slovaks got united in the new Republic of Czechoslovakia but these fifty years of separate development probably contributed to their troublesome relationship, which ended in the Republic's split into Czechia and Slovakia in 1993.

For a deeper understanding we shall now turn to the demographic situation in the provinces Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia (which currently form Czechia), and which are the focus of this article.

3) The demographic situation in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia in the year 1900

In the top-left of Fig.3 one can see in yellow, green and pink how the 3 provinces Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia are situated in the north-western corner of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Fig.4 shows the political and administrative division in districts, whereas Fig.5 shows the percentage of the German-speaking population in the districts (the only other ethnic group on Fig.5 are Czechs). In the eastern part of Austrian Silesia (not shown in Fig.5) one also finds significant numbers of Poles as shown in Fig.6.

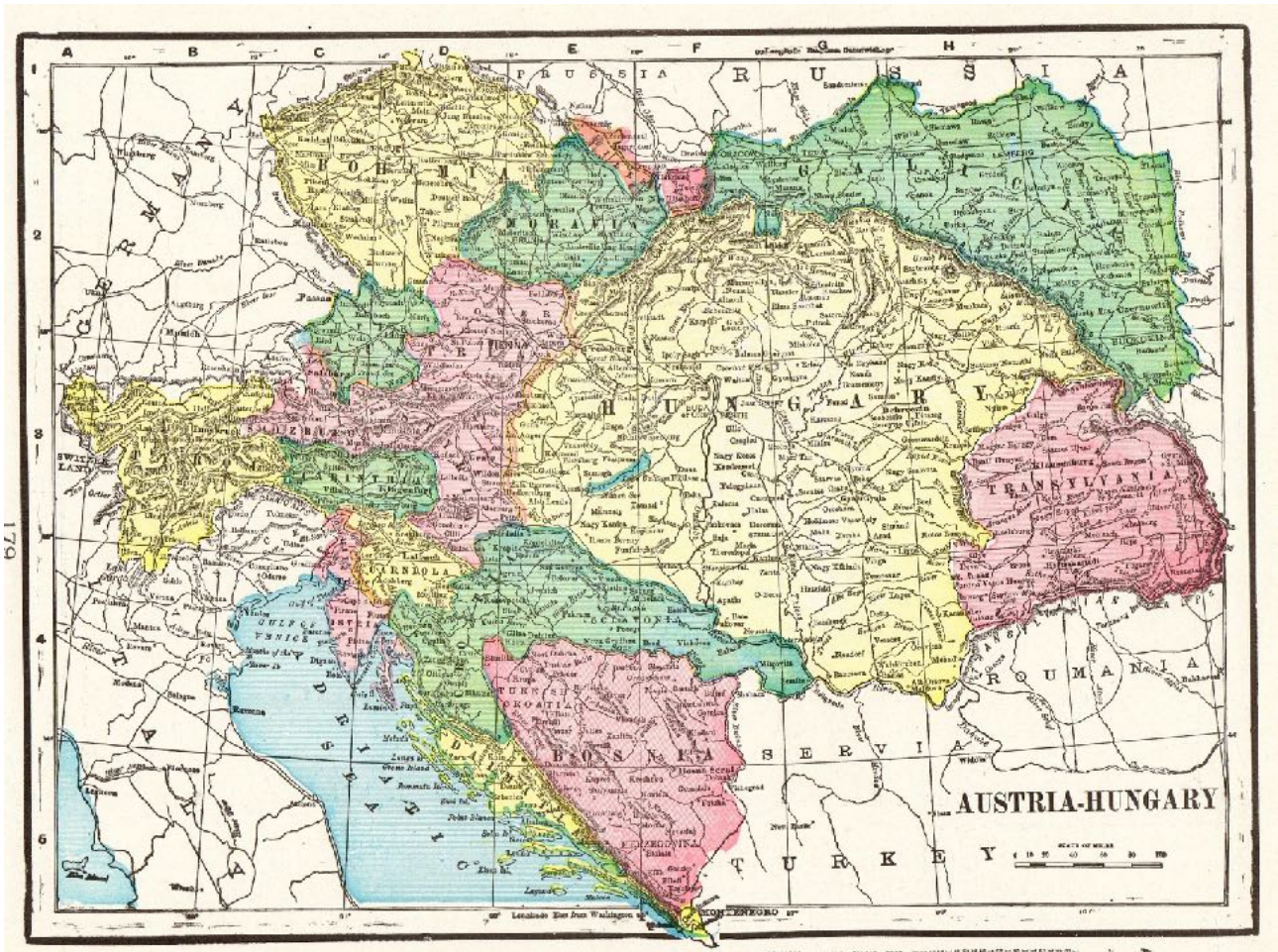


Fig.3

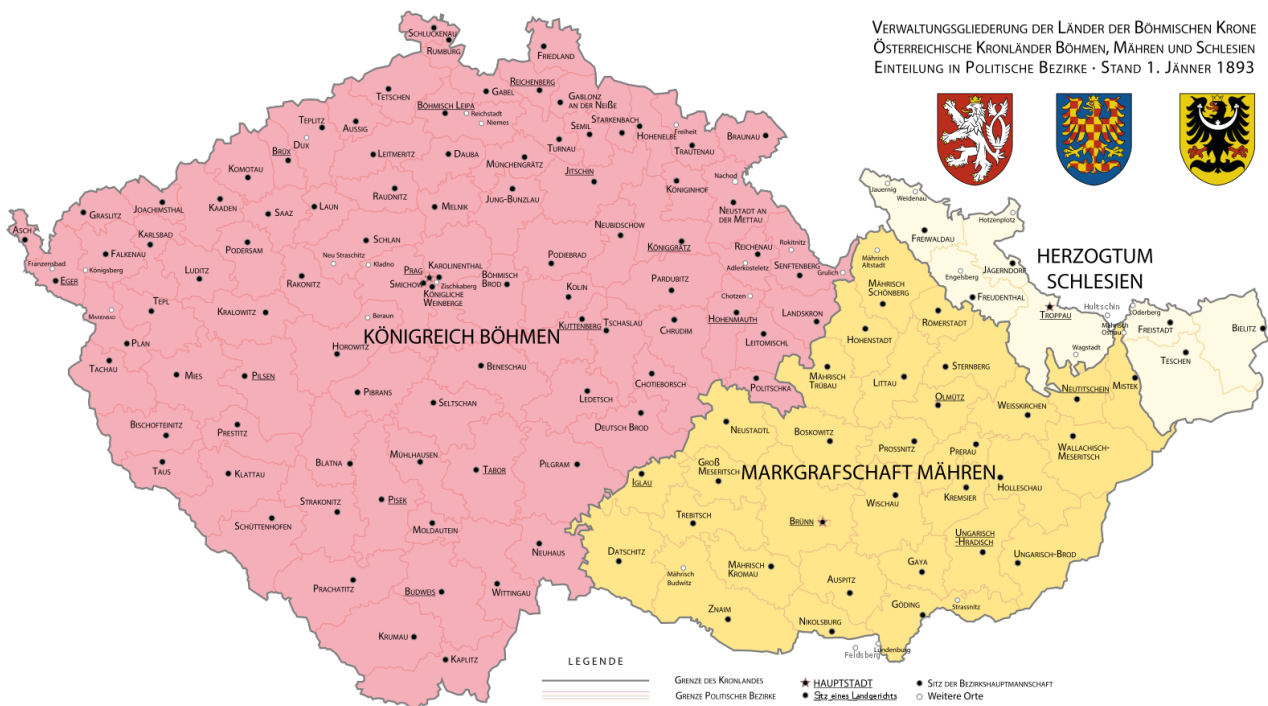


Fig.4

Fig.5 shows that the German-speaking population is concentrated in the border areas of our region of interest. In the central parts, nearly 100% of the population is Czech-speaking and there was a very sharp demarcation between both groups (for brevity, in the rest of the text we will simply use the terms “Czech” and “German” to mean “Czech-speaking” or “German-speaking”). There are only a few districts where the average population is truly mixed, as Table 1 below shows. This is especially true for the big cities as can be seen from the Gemeindelexicon [Ref.3], which gives the results of the population census taken in 1900 in Cisleithenia.

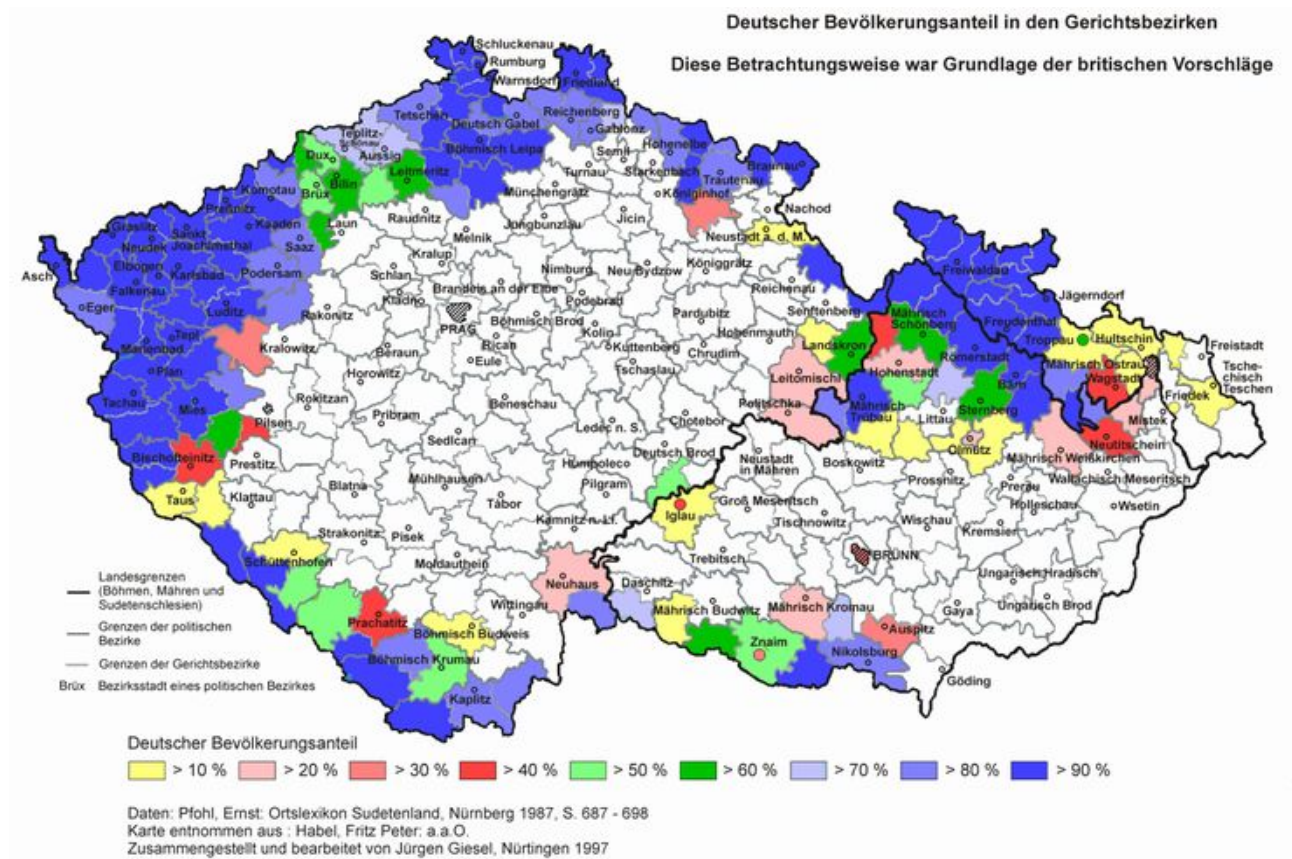


Fig.5



Fig.6

Table 1

Places with a language minority from:	Bohemia	Moravia	Silesia
0-1%	1063=78%	397=66%	91=58%
2-9%	228=17%	153=25%	38=24%
10-19%	36=3%	26=4%	12=8%
20-29%	18=1%	12=2%	6=4%
30-39%	11=1%	7=1%	6=4%
40-49%	9=1%	9=1%	5=3%
Total:	1365	604	158

Since this touches on the main subject of this work, the author made a lot of effort to find the details about the language situation in each place where a post office was present in 1900. Specifically, he combined the data in the *Gemeindelexicon* [Ref.3] with the philatelic data in the *Handbuch* of Klein [Ref.4]. Klein mentions 2127 post offices being active in 1900 in the 3 provinces of concern and shows all cancellations found from all these offices over the period 1867 till 1900.

The richness of the data in the *Gemeindelexicon* is astonishing: from the smallest hamlet to the biggest towns, data about ethnicity, religion, number of houses, presence of churches, chapels, windmills, and so on – they are all there. All post offices mentioned by Klein are also listed, and from them, the author took the relevant data, summarized in this article. This was a very time-consuming job, but the author has plenty of time, being happily retired!

In Table 1, and in the rest of the text, all places are treated equally: a hamlet with one post office and a town like Prague with 21 post offices are both counted as one place. The data in Table 1 confirm the extreme language segregation, especially in Bohemia: we can see that in 1063 out of 1365 places (78%) with a post office, the population belonged for more than 99% to the same ethnic group: Germans in the border areas and Czechs in the central parts.

Even in the few mixed districts the segregation between the various hamlets or villages was very strong. As an example we take the district of Leitmeritz in the transition zone between the German and Czech speaking areas (see Figs.4 and 5). In that district, there were 35.503 Germans and 8852 Czechs, meaning 20% is Czech. The district consists of 114 hamlets and villages and 2 cities, Leitmeritz and Theresienstadt. It turns out that 93 out of the 114 hamlets and villages were for more than 99% German-speaking, 11 were

more than 99% Czech speaking and only 10 of these hamlets were mixed in the sense that there lived more than 1% of the minority. Only the 2 cities were really mixed (90 and 57% German, respectively) but it might very well be that on a neighborhood or street level this segregation was also present. In other words, there was clearly profound ethnic segregation at the smallest level of society. This is a recipe for serious problems because everywhere, German was the official language.

Later in history (and beyond the focus in this work) these problems became profound indeed: between 1938 and 1948 Sudetenland (under which name the German-speaking region was known at that time) was the immediate cause for the outbreak of World War 2 and the ethnic cleansing after that. The author wants to stay clear from politics in this article but he will call, for the sake of simplification, the German-speaking region (yellow, salmon, pink and purple parts in Fig.7) Sudetenland (although strictly speaking only the yellow area bears that name, as can be seen from the names in the black rectangle in the upper right corner of Fig.7). Comparing Fig.7 with Fig.5 one can see that Sudetenland matches very closely the German-speaking parts.

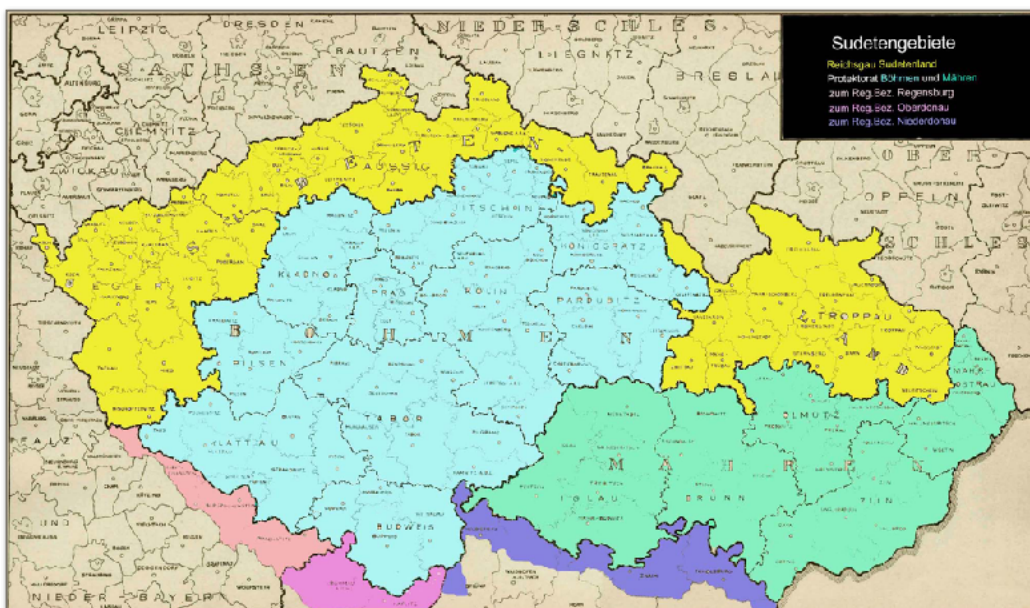


Fig.7

4) The types of postal cancellations in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia according to Müller

The interest of the author in this subject was ignited by a monograph published by Edwin Müller in 1925 with the title: 'Sprachenstreit und Poststempel im alten Österreich-Ungarn' [Ref.1]. Müller's main conclusions can also be found in Klein, [Ref.4, Teil 1 p. 34].

Müller's work is incredibly rich in interesting detail, but below we give only a brief summary. Much of this summary is regarded as historical fact (and we shall present it as such below), but the author believes that certain assumptions are *not* based in fact, and we'll highlight these passages accordingly. In the next section we will further analyse the areas of disagreement.

As mentioned in section 2: before 1871, German was the only language used on postal cancellations. For German-speaking places this was, of course, not a problem but for the Czech-speaking places, the Czech name had to be Germanized (except for the relatively few ones which had a specific German name, like e.g. Terezin = Theresienstadt). That was done by transcribing: the Czech letters which are not present in the German alphabet had to be replaced by equally sounding German letters, like in

Telč = Teltsch

Benešov = Beneschau

Dačice = Datschitz

Němčice = Niemtschitz

Very often the resulting name was neither German nor Czech, like

Chotovin (German Chotowin, Czech Chotoviny)

Hořic (German Hořitz, Czech Hořice)

Dymokur (German Dimokur, Czech Dimokury)

Note that in the 'German' names also Czech letter types were used!

Müller says that in 1871 it was ordered that for important places, where the Czech name was completely different from the German name, bilingual cancellations had to be introduced and that newly opened post offices with a bilingual name had to acquire bilingual cancellers. *Note: We will argue in the next section that this statement does not reflect the postal facts.*

The same rule applied to existing post offices, which had to replace their old canceller. Müller goes on to say that for this purpose officially-made 'Einkreisstempel' or 'single-circle' cancellers were delivered and the rule was: the German name had to be at the top, the Czech name at the bottom as seen in Figs.9 and 10.



Fig.8 Postmaster bilingual cancellation of Böhmisch Brod = Český Brod

This kind of single-circle canceller was already used in 4 cities before 1867 [Ref.1,5] but they were designed by the local postmaster. An example is shown in Fig.8 for Böhm(isch) Brod= Český Brod. The cancellation does not include the year, as was usual before 1867. This specific post stamp is canceled somewhere between 1864 and 1867, the cancellation itself was used until about 1885 as can be seen from the data in [Ref.4].



Fig.9 Adlerkosteletz / Kostelec nad Orlicí
21-6-1880



Fig.10 Mährisch Ostrau Stadt / Moravska
Ostrava Město 7-10-1878

Sometimes the names were put sequentially separated by a hyphen but also in that case, the German name had to come in front, see Fig 11:



Fig.11 Göding - Hodonin 13-3-1881

In a few cases the postmaster designed his own cancellers, sometimes according to the rule that the German name be on top, but often not, like in Figs.12/13 where the Czech name is on top: Mnichovo Hradiště / Münchengrätz and Beroun/Beraun:

Not only the local postmasters made, deliberately or not, irregular cancellers.



Fig.12 Mnichovo Hradiště / Münchengrätz



Fig.13 Beroun / Beraun

Also centrally issued cancellers sometimes had the Czech name on top, like the left-hand picture in Fig.27 and in Fig.14 (Ždírec). Fig.14 is an example of a rather poor and incomplete cancellation but the author deliberately shows it



Fig.14 Ždírec / Zdiretz 11-2-1881

here because also from incomplete cancellations one can come to sound conclusions.

The higher officials were not very happy with this mess and ordered that locally issued postmaster cancellers were not allowed anymore and that bilingual cancellers only could be acquired after approval by the ministry. At this point, it is worthwhile to remember that in Cisleithenia all nationalities (except for the Ukrainians in Galicia and Bukovina, see Fig.1) already had bilingual cancellations of the same type as those shown in Figs.9 and 10. The rules were different for the various provinces as seen below. The top/bottom cancellation was for a mixed population of:

Germans and Slovenians in current Slovenia: German/Slovenian, 190 places
Italians and Slovenians in current Slovenia: Italian/Slovenian, 24 places
Italians and Croats in current Croatia (Istria): Italian/Croatian, 21 places
Italians and Croats in curr. Croatia (Dalmatia): Croatian/Italian, 103 places
Germans and Poles in Galicia: German/Polish, 6 places

(Note: the number of places has been added by the author)

All these provinces followed the top/bottom rules, unlike the 3 provinces of concern here.

In the beginning of the 1890 decade, a new type of top/bottom canceller was introduced for the whole of Cisleithenia, also for the monolingual provinces: a 'Zweikreisstempel' or double-circle cancellation as in Fig.15. The Czechs were not satisfied with this new type of the old-felt insult: why should the German name be on top and not the Czech?



Fig.15 Klobouk in Böhmen/Klobuky v
Čechách, 22-8-1893

The Czechs were not satisfied with this new type of the old-felt insult: why should the German name be on top and not the Czech?

That was the reason that around 1995 only for Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia a complete new position of the names in the double-circle canceller appeared where no language would be privileged, a left/right instead of a top/bottom canceller. Müller states that at the left-hand side the place name had to appear in the language of the majority, see Figs.16/17 (showing a cancellation of Winterberg=Vimberk, 90% German and Kolinec=Kolinetz, 100% Czech). *Note: The author has serious doubts about this statement, as will be discussed in Section 5.*



Fig.16 Winterberg*Vimberk* 14-8-1903



Fig.17 Kolinec*Kolinetz* 5-5-1909

The authorities thought that equality of language rights was achieved but they did not realize that it was still up to the postmaster which name appeared at the left-hand side: he only had to turn the date in the inner circle by 180 degrees if he wanted to reverse the left/right position! Müller claims to have seen examples of this action and suggests that the postmasters are making a deliberate political statement.



Fig.18 Ringsteg Budweis/Budějovice,
G/Cz, 2-7-1915



Fig.19 Ringsteg Nížkov/Nischkau,
Cz/G, 7-7-1908

According to Müller, such abuse was impossible to prevent (*note: the author does not agree with this statement*) and the problem disappeared only with the introduction of the 'Ringsteg' canceller around 1904 in the whole of Cisleithenia which made it impossible to cheat since the inner circle with the date could no longer be turned against the outer circle, see Figs.18 and 19. According to Müller, this move finally achieved the equality of language rights.

One can imagine that this thrilling story brings you to investigate your own post-stamp collection in search of interesting examples of cancellations which fit (or don't fit) with Müller's hypotheses, and that is exactly what the author did. What he found is described in the next sections.

5) Analysis of the data in Klein's Handbook

By combining all cancellations given by Klein [Ref.4] of the Austro-Hungarian provinces which currently form Czechia, with the demographic data from the Gemeindelexicon of 1900 [Ref.3], the author investigated Müller's monograph [Ref.1]. We will first analyze the cancellations in their historical sequence in the period between 1867 and 1900 (where Klein's Handbook ends and the population census was held). The developments of the postal cancellations in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia will be discussed after each type of cancellation. The bilingual left/right cancellations are not mentioned in Table 2 for reasons which will be explained in Chapter 6.

First we show in Table 2 a list of the relevant cancellation types. We will explain how Table 2 should be read by taking Bohemia as an example.

Table 2

Places with:	Bohemia, 1365 places	Moravia, 604 places	Silesia, 158 places
Only Monolingual cancellations	575	148	108
German majority	523	123	91
Czech majority	52	25	6
Polish majority	0	0	11
Bilingual top/bottom German/Czech, Polish	731	418	44
German majority	67	48	3
Czech majority	664	370	21
Polish majority	0	0	20
Bilingual top/bottom Czech/German	63 incl. 32 PM ¹	4 incl. 3 PM ¹	0
German majority	0	0	0
Czech majority	63	4	0
Polish majority	0	0	0

Footnote 1: PM = Postmaster Cancellation

In Bohemia, 1365 post offices were active in the year 1900. The light grey horizontal rows represent the 6 types of cancellations that existed, 5 of which were used in Bohemia: the *German*Polish variant did not exist there. Of these 1365 offices, 575 used (during their activity between 1867 and 1900) only monolingual cancellations. In 523 places a German majority was present, in 52 a Czech majority. This does not necessarily mean that the place names in the cancellation were German or Czech, respectively. We will see that in 2 places with a Czech majority the place name was German although a Czech name existed.

For the 731 bilingual top/bottom cancellers with the German name in top, which were introduced after 1871, the table data say that in 67 places a German majority existed, in 664 places a Czech majority and so on. We

should also remark that a post office could have various types of cancellations during the period between 1867 and 1900, except the ones in the first rows that only used a monolingual type.

Before proceeding with the analysis of Klein's data the author wants to make clear which points he will highlight because there he disagrees with some statements of Müller [Ref. 1].

- 1) Müller states that it is necessary that in order to use a bilingual canceller the place should be "important" with clearly different names in German and Czech. The author wants to show that using a bilingual canceller was actually an option for all places (i.e. no condition applied).
- 2) Müller states that in the top/bottom bilingual cancellation the German name should be on top, which is often not the case and which he attributes (at least partly) to a nationalistic motivation on the part of the postmaster. The author wants to show that a simpler explanation is possible.
- 3) Müller states that in the left/right cancellers the name of the place in the majority language had to appear at the left-hand side. The author wants to show that this is not the case.

With this in mind we start discussing Klein's data.

5.1 *The monolingual cancellations*

Let us first look at the situation in Bohemia. We will start by giving some pictures of monolingual cancellations. In Fig. 20 one can see the oldest, dateless type.



Fig.20 Date-less cancellation,Neustraschitz, Bohemia



Fig.21 Načeradec, Bohemia 30-8-1896



Fig. 22 Butsch, Moravia 17-10-1872



Fig.23 Irritz, Moravia 17-2-1905

In Fig. 20 one can see the oldest, date-less type. Fig.21 is an example of a single-circle dated type, Fig. 22 is a 'Fingerhut' (thimble) cancellation (see also Fig. 28) and Fig. 23 shows an example of the "Schraffen" (hatched) cancellation.

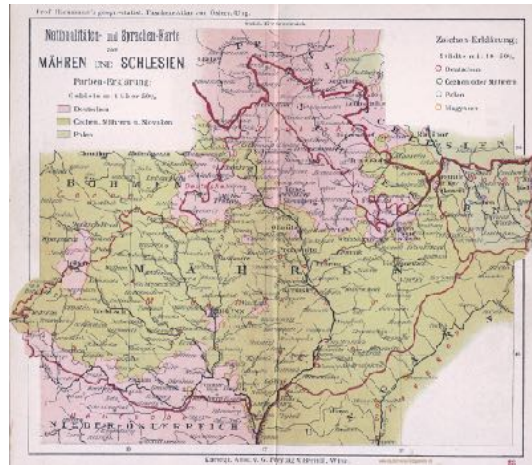
As already said, 575 out of 1365 places in Bohemia were found with only monolingual cancellations, from which 523 have a German and 52 a Czech majority. From the 521 German-speaking places 520 are found in Sudetenland. The only place situated in the central part of Bohemia, is Schlappenz near Deutschbrod in the green-colored area in Fig.5 at the border between Bohemia and Moravia, which can be considered as a German language island in a Czech region.

From the 52 Czech-speaking places 50 are situated in Central Bohemia. Two places are found in Sudetenland, namely Maltheuern in the district of Leitmeritz (3093 inh., 64% Czech) and Ploschkowitz in the district of Brůx (457 inh., 61% Czech). These are 2 out of the only 20 Bohemian places (with a post office) which had such a mixed population, see Table 1. Both districts are indicated with a green color in Fig.5 in the North-West corner of Sudetenland, meaning that these are mixed-language districts. One sees German names on the cancellation instead of the Czech names given by the Gemeindelexicon (Maltheyr and Ploškovice, respectively).

In Moravia, out of 148 places with a monolingual cancellation, 25 places with Czech majority are located in the Czech-speaking central part of Moravia. The other 123 places with German majority are in Sudetenland except for Ober-Gerspitz (1303 inh., 90% German) which is located in the German-language island around Brünn (see Fig.5).

In Silesia the situation is more complicated because it is a trilingual province (German, Czech, Polish) as can be seen from Fig.24. The red encircled areas represent the two parts of Austrian Silesia; in the most eastern part Polish is the dominating language, see also Fig.6. Table1 for Silesia should be read from the viewpoint of the majority, the other two languages together being the minority. For instance, a place like Oderberg (Bohumín in Czech, Bogumin in Polish) has 1888 inhabitants with 55% German, 6% Czech and 39% Polish-speaking people and is, therefore, to be found in the category 40-49 % minority in Table 1.

The eastern part of the town of Teschen is not situated in current Czechia but in Poland since the end of World War 1.



An intriguing question for these places with monolingual cancellations is, why didn't they introduce bilingual cancellations after 1871? This will be discussed in the next sub-section 5.2.

5.2 The bilingual top/bottom cancellations

According to Müller (Ref.1) in April 1871 the decision was made that for the *more important* places, where the Czech or Polish name is completely different from the German name, top/bottom bilingual cancellations had to be prepared. The author believes that this statement would be incorrect on both counts, certainly after Nov 1871. Perhaps Müller knows this because he goes on to say that in November 1871, it was ordered that newly opened post offices in bilingual places had to use this bilingual canceller; in all places the German name had to come first, be it on top or as the first name in a sequence (see Figs. 9/11). He does not repeat the requirement that this rule is limited to important places with clearly different names in both languages.

There is a special group of 29 places that use top/bottom cancellations but from Klein's work, you cannot tell whether it is German/Czech or Czech/

German! The names only differ by a caron or acute accent like in ř or í , see Fig.25 with a German/Czech cancellation (one has to look carefully to see the difference between i and í !), and these differences are omitted in Klein's book. This is a regrettable shortcoming in this otherwise superior work. Luckily, in [Ref.6] these names are written with the correct letters and it turns out that all 29 places are Czech-speaking.



Fig.25 Krčín / Krčín 31-1-1899

A first glance at Table 2 already shows that Czech-speaking places have introduced far more bilingual cancellations than the German-speaking places. However, these data are difficult to compare because they cover the whole time-span from 1871 until 1900. During that time many post offices were opened, others closed, long after the time when the question arose which offices would introduce bilingual cancellations.

Müller states that most of the confusion was settled around 1884. For that reason, the author made a comparison that is much more consistent by splitting up the data in two periods, before and after 1884.

He looked up how many post offices existed before 1867 and checked whether they introduced a bilingual cancellation in the period 1867-1884 or between 1884-1900. That can be done because the period 1867-1884 happens to be the validity period of the post stamp issue with the emperor's head of the type shown in Figs.20 and 22, and Klein's data give all cancellations on this issue separately. The results can be found in Table 3.

Tabel 3

Number of post offices which existed before 1867 and introduced a bilingual cancellation							
In Bohemia 451				in Moravia 188			
German majority 189=42%		Czech majority 262=58%		German majority 64=34%		Czech majority 124=66%	
Introduction Bilingual Cancellation:		Introduction Bilingual Cancellation:		Introduction Bilingual Cancellation:		Introduction Bilingual Cancellation:	
1867-1884 16=9%	1884-1900 12=6%	1867-1884 147=56%	1884-1900 99=38%	1867-1884 15=23%	1884-1890 8=12%	1867-1884 71=57%	1884-1890 48=39%
Total 28 = 15%		Total 246=94%		Total 23=35%		Total 119=96%	

Let us first focus in Table 3 on the situation in Bohemia. We see that 451 post offices which existed already in 1867 introduced the bilingual cancellation . From these, 189 are in German-speaking places; nearly all are situated in Sudetenland (the colored border area in Fig.5) and a few in German language islands in Central Bohemia. The other 262 are in Czech-speaking places, nearly all situated in Central Bohemia. The Table concludes with the number of post offices that have introduced bilingual cancellations during the

periods 1867-1884 and 1884-1900. So, 16 out of 189 places with German majority (9%) introduced a bilingual cancellation before 1884; another 12 places (6%) did that between 1884 and 1900. Also for the places with a Czech majority these data are given and the conclusion is clear: compared to the German-speaking places, far more Czech-speaking places introduced bilingual cancellations. That is logical, because it were the Czechs who asked for this bilingual cancellation in the first place.

Table 4a

Places with German Majority in Bohemia which:								
Introduced bilingual cancellations before 1884			Introduced bilingual cancellations after 1884			Did not introduce bilingual cancellations between 1867-1900		
Name place	Inh.	%Cz	Name place	Inh.	%Cz	Name Place	Inh.	%Cz
Bergreichenstein JS	2,200	6	Böhm. Aicha JS	2,700	41	A selection from 161 offices		
Bodenbach	10,800	8	Dobruška	5,200	42			
Eger * DC	23,500	1	Dux DC	12,000	25			
Freiheit *	1,700	0	Kaplitze DC	2,400	9	Bilin JS	8,000	6
Horosedl	655	14	Neubitz JS	2,500	1	Brüx DC	21,500	20
Jechitz * JS	1,342	1	Oschitz	775	1	Hohenelbe DC	4,800	10
Komotau * DC	15,900	3	Prachitz DC	4,300	22	Kosten	3,900	19
Krumau DC	8,700	15	Rokitnitz JS	1,100	10	Lobositz JS	4,600	13
Leitmeritz DC	13,000	15	Stecken JS	1,300	11	Nieder Georgenthal	3,900	23
Liebenau	3,200	12	Wegstädtl JS	1,700	10			
Marschendorf * JS	1,265	1	Winterberg JS	4,700	10			
Reichenberg * DC	34,100	8	Wscherau	1,200	5			
Teplitz DC	20,500	7				+ 25 DC's, all less than 3 % Czech		
Theresienstadt	7,000	34						

Places with German Majority in Bohemia which:								
Trautenau DC	12,700	10						
Ullitz	680	16						

Table 4b

Places with German Majority in Moravia which:								
Introduced bilingual cancellations before 1884			Introduced bilingual cancellations after 1884			Did not introduce bilingual cancellations between 1867-1900		
Name place	Inh.	%Cz	Name place	Inh.	%Cz	Name Place	Inh.	%Cz
Auspitz DC	3,600	10	Böhm. Rudoletz	519	8	A Selection from 40 Offices		
Brünn DC	94,500	36	Brüsau	1,700	8	Bodenstadt	1,500	5
Fratting	528	1	Göding DC	10,200	44	Frain JS	1,100	5
Grussbach	2,400	8	Hosterlitz	1,300	2	Frainersdorf	641	11
Hohenstadt DC	3,000	26	Mähr. Aussee	1,800	8	Mähr. Schönberg DC	11,600	3
Iglau DC	24,400	18	Nieder Eisenberg	416	21	Mähr. Trübau DC	7,700	3
Kromau DC	2,200	40	Pohrlitz	2,900	21	Nikolsburg DC	6,000	2
Mähr. Neustadt JS	5,100	2	Schildberg JS	1,900	7	Piesling	799	18
Misslitz	2,000	26				Römerstadt DC	4,800	0
Müglitz JS	4,200	4				Schattau	2,500	7
Neutitschein DC	12,000					Stannern	1,400	9
Olmütz DC	21,700	33				Sternberg DC	15,200	1
Privoz	10,900	39						
Wolframitz	539	6						
Znaim DC	16,200	12						

Legend for Tables 4a and 4b

*	These places withdrew their bilingual canceller and reintroduced a monolingual canceller.
DC	District Capital (92 Districts in Bohemia from which 37 have a German majority and 34 in Moravia from which 13 have a German majority)
JS	Judicial Seat of District (126 in Bohemia from which 54 have a German majority and 43 in Moravia from which 13 have a German majority)

We now look in more detail to the offices with a German majority that changed from monolingual to bilingual cancellations between 1867-1884 and

1884-1900; for Bohemia they are listed in Table 4a, together with a selection of the places which did not change their monolingual cancellation. The number of inhabitants and the percentage of Czech-speaking people are given, together with labels whether places are a District Capital (DC, 37 places) or a Judicial Seat (JS, 54 places).

The author uses them as a criterion to recognize a place as being “important”, because Müller stated that only “important” places with clearly different names in German and Czech should introduce bilingual cancellations. We see that till 1884 indeed 10 “important” places switched to bilingual, whereas another 9 places did the same after 1884, i.e. 13 years or more after the possibility was offered. That means that 25 DC’s and 43 JS’s never introduced the bilingual canceller, some of which were rather populated with a considerable Czech minority and sound Czech names like Brůx = Most and Hohenelbe = Vrchlabi.

This is in sharp contradiction with the situation in the Czech speaking areas in Central Bohemia. The numbers are too large to list them in a Table but we can give the most important global results. As can be seen in Table 3, 147 places became bilingual before 1884. Among these are 40 out of the 55 Czech DC’s and 45 out of the 72 Czech JS’s become bilingual, most of the rest followed in the period 1884-1900. Only 3 DC’s never used a bilingual cancellation for good reasons: Chotěboř, Kladno and Polička did not have an official German name according to the Gemeindelexicon. From the JS’s, 5 never used a bilingual cancellation. Jaromer and Sobotka did not have a German alternative, whereas in Humpolec and Kouřim probably no one asked for adding the German name Humpoletz or Kauřim in the cancellation. The Czechs in these 4 places were completely comfortable with their monolingual cancellation!

The case of the 5th place, Liban (1966 inh. from which 1964 Czech), is different. There the German name is on the canceller and not the Czech name Libáň and it lasted until the introduction of the Ringsteg canceller to become bilingual.

All this brings us to a logical explanation to understand which places introduced bilingual cancellations (different from Muller's blunt hypothesis that all bilingual places had to introduce bilingual cancellers):

The German-speaking places had no reason to add a Czech name on their cancellers. Only where the Czech minority insisted on their rights, they gave in. The other places let everything unchanged. This is underlined by the fact that some places soon regretted their change; they withdrew their bilingual and reintroduced their monolingual canceller. They are marked in Table 4a with an asterisk. Also Müller was surprised that "nearly purely German cities like Eger (Cz. Cheb) and Reichenberg (Cz. Liberec) got bilingual cancellers". (it seems that Müller was not aware that Reichenberg had an 8% Czech minority). Note in Table 4b that in Moravia there were no places that regretted their choice.

On the other hand the Czech-speaking places, big or large, with clearly different names or not, 100% Czech or less, took their chance to add their Czech name on the canceller. The officials obviously agreed because these were official cancellers. This shows that the introduction of bilingual cancellers in Bohemia was more like an option rather than a rule, as Müller's believed.

Now we have to verify this conclusion by looking how Moravia handled the issue of bilingual cancellers. It is clear from the Tables 3 and 4b that the data are comparable to Bohemia, which means that the same conclusions we

drew above hold. We will only give a few extra data on top of those mentioned in the Table 4b. From the 21 DC's in the Czech-speaking areas 16 went to bilingual cancellers before 1884 and 4 between 1884 and 1900. One DC, Mistek, did not get a bilingual canceller because there was no German name for this place. From the 30 JC's 18 became bilingual before 1884 and the other 12 between 1884 and 1900. Only 5 out of the 124 places in the Czech-speaking part did not have a bilingual canceller; 4 of them had no German name and the other one was a small village with 2 % Germans, where the post office was closed in 1882.

In Silesia the issue of bilingual cancellers is more complicated because it is a trilingual province. On the other hand it is simpler, because in all cases the German name came on top. It is interesting to see that both Czech and Polish are treated as absolutely equal minorities, so depending on whether the Czech or the Polish population is larger, a G/Cz or a G/P cancellation is used.

Now we will look to the next issue we want to discuss: why is in some cancellations the German name not on top, thus violating the "Müller rules"? The fact that the Czech name came quite often on top brought Müller to the idea of possible nationalistic actions of the postmasters, although he does acknowledge that also some officially delivered cancellers violated the "Müller rules" as shown in Figs.14 and 27.

In the third section of Table 2 one can see the number of "top/bottom" Czech/German cancellations. Bohemia had 63, Moravia had 4; Silesia did not have such cancellations at all.

In Bohemia, the 63 places with Czech/German cancellations are all dispersed in the central part of Bohemia, but especially along the border with Sudetenland. It is certainly feasible that political/nationalistic intentions play a



Fig. 26 Postmaster cancellation of Horní Moštěnice / Ober Moschtenitz, 19-6-1880

role, especially since 32 of them have postmaster (PM) cancellers, to be compared with the only 8 PM cancellers out of the 734 offices with the German/Czech cancellation. These postmasters took, until 1882, a large degree of freedom in designing their cancellers. All Postmaster Cz/G cancellers were later on replaced by the official single-circle German/Czech cancellers, except for the 2 villages Načeradec and Rožd'alovice. They replaced around 1884 their PM Czech/German canceller by a monolingual Czech one. Načeradec never used another one during the period of investigation, see Fig. 21; Rožd'alovice accommodated and used after 1890 the official German/Czech cancellation.

In Moravia only 4 offices used a Czech/German cancellation and 3 of these had a postmaster canceller, namely:

- 1) Napajedla(Cz) / Napagedl(G), 3769 inh., 98% Czech. It was used simultaneously with the G/Cz variant until around 1890.
- 2) Horní Moštěnice / Ober Moschtenitz, 1415 inh, 99% Czech, used this cancellation until around 1884, then it was replaced by the G/Cz variant. Note that in the author's copy the date is upside down (Fig.26).

3) Město Přerov / Stadt Prerau, 16727 inh., 96% Czech, used the Cz/G cancellation only a short time, it was around 1880 replaced by the G/Cz cancellation.

4) Vracov / Wratzow, 3594 inh., 100% Czech, did not use a postmaster canceller but an official Czech/German canceller. It was used until about 1895 and then replaced by the G/Cz variant (See Table 5 and its explanation)

For the official cancellers with the Czech name on top it is difficult to understand how they can be in conflict with the official rule that the German language has to be on top. Often the G/Cz and the Cz/G cancellation were used in the same period like next example shows. The author will give an explanation in the text after Table 5.

In the author's collection is a beautiful Czech/German cancellation Sušice / Schüttenhofen, dated 1-12-1881, not mentioned by Klein [Ref.4] or Votoček [Ref.6]. Next to this also the official German/Czech cancellation is used, see Fig.27. It is an important district-capital in the South of Bohemia, close to the Sudeten border. The city is for 98% Czech.



Fig.27 Sušice / Schüttenhofen, 1-12-1881, not mentioned in Klein, and Schüttenhofen / Sušice 16-8-1883

In order to get more insight in the top/down discussion the author split up the places with Cz/G cancellers in a group that already had a post office before 1867 and a group that opened an office in the years between 1-7-1867 and 1-1-1874. Analysis of the data of Klein [Ref. 4] shows that offices that opened after 1874 never used a Cz/G canceller. The surprising difference between these two periods is shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Officially delivered Cz/G cancellers (X) used in the three post stamp issues between 1867 and 1900 and their replacement by single-circle (S) or double-circle (D) cancellers								
	Name	Inh.	Issue 1867-1884		Issue 1884-1890		Issue 1890-1900	
			Cz/G	S or D	Cz/G	S or D	Cz/G	S or D
Post office opened before 1-6-1867 Bohemia	Beneschau	6,800	X		X	S		
	Chlumetz	3,700	X	S				
	Königgrätz	9,800	X	S				
	Leitomischl	8,100	X		X	S	X	
	Lissa	4,000	X		X			S
	Prag	202,000	X	S				
	Rakonitz	6,600	X	S				
	Schüttenhofen	6,700	X	S				
	Selčan	2,700	X		X		X	S
	Starkenbach	2,600	X		X	S		
	Tinischt	2,100	X		X	S		
	Wottitz ¹	2,100	X	S	X	S	X	S
Post office opened between 6-7-1867 and 11-12-1873	Čestice	531	X		X		X	D
	Čischkau	482	X		X		X	S
	Holoubkau	889			X		X	D
	Hrochowteinitz	1,274	X		X		X	S,D
	Hostiwitz	1,356	X		X		X	D

Officially delivered Cz/G cancellers (X) used in the three post stamp issues between 1867 and 1900 and their replacement by single-circle (S) or double-circle (D) cancellers								
Bohemia	Jinetz ²	1338	X		X		X	*L*R
	Kratenau	867	X		X		X	D
	Mieschitz	886	X		X		X	D
	Miröschau ³	1,957	X		Mono			
	Nemčitz	298	X		X			D
	Neuschloss	727	X		X		X	D
	Okroulitz	312	X		X		X	D
	Raubowitz	1,851	X		X		X	D
	Sazau	1,789	X		X		X	S
	Swojschitz	892	X		X		X	D
	Windig Jenikau	981	X		X		X	D
	Wollenitz	620	X		X		X	D
	Wrnbo	474	X		X		X	D
	Ždirez	710	X		X			D
	Zetoraz	689	X		X		X	D
Žižkov	59,300	X	S					
Moravia	Vracov	3,594	X		X		X	D

Footnotes 1 Wottitz used the Cz/G and the single-circle G/Cz simultaneously through the whole period.

2 Jinetz replaced around 1895 the Cz/G by a *left*right (*L*R) canceller.

3 Miröschau withdrew the Cz/G and used a monolingual canceller (Fig.28).

4 Žižkov opened its new post office because of a reclassification and has thus the same characteristics as the group that opened office before 1867.

Let us first explain the information this Table. During the period under investigation three types of post stamps were issued: between 1-6-1867 and 31-10-1884 the emperor's head like in Figs.27 and 28a; between 15-8-1883 and 30-6-1891 the double-eagle type like in Fig.28b; between 1-9-1890 and

30-9-1900 another type of the emperor's head as in Fig.25 . The value was in Kreuzer, after 1900 other issues had their value in Kronen.



Fig.28a Miröschau 20-8-1874 (see Table 5)



Fig.28b Miröschau, 29-6-1884

Table 5 shows the places which used the Cz/G canceller; in the upper half one sees the places which had a post office before 1-6-1867 and in the lower part those places with offices which opened after 1-6-1867, incl. the Moravian village of Vracov. The cross shows during which period the Cz/G canceller was used according to Klein. Also is indicated which canceller took over after the withdrawal of the Cz/G canceller. Most often that was the official G/Cz canceller of the single-circle type (S) or the double-circle type (D) (like in Fig. 25), but in the case of Miröschau the monolingual tumble cancellation takes over, see Fig. 28b. According to [Ref.6] the monolingual canceller was introduced at the opening of the post office in 1869, was then replaced by the bilingual canceller in 1879 and again re-introduced somewhere before June 1884.

Important is that the double-circle top/bottom type only had the German name on top which was the main objection of the Czechs when this canceller was introduced.

Very surprisingly, the characteristics between the upper and lower half differ greatly. In the lower half which opened after 1867 in most cases the non-

official Cz/G canceler was used during the whole period until it was replaced by the official double-circle G/Cz canceller (D). In the upper half which opened before 1867 in most of the places the Cz/G canceller was withdrawn during the first or second period and always replaced by the regular single-circle canceller.

Initially, influenced by Müller's ideas, the author thought that during these politically troubled times young, enthusiastic postmasters in new post offices would massively support the Czech case but that is not correct. Out of the 229 post offices that after 1867 opened in the Czech-speaking area in Bohemia only 21 used the Cz/G canceller (see Table 5), that is 9%. From the 151 places that already had a post office before 1867 12 used the Cz/G canceller, that is 8%. It seems that the new postmasters were politically not more active than those already in function.

The question remains: what has the date of the opening of a post office to do with the large differences between both groups in Table 5? The author thinks that the answer is not explicitly found in the date of opening but implicitly in the number of inhabitants.

In the upper half one finds places with a large population, in any case more than 2000 inhabitants, whereas in the lower half all but one have a very low number of inhabitants, less than 2000. The only exception is Žižkov, a place that is now situated in the cadastral district of Prague and had at that time 59.300 inhabitants. The point here is that Žižkov got an own post office because of a formal reclassification and has, therefore, the same characteristics as the places in the upper half. All other places in the lower group were before 1867 simply not important enough to get a post office.

The author sees only one explanation: the (very) low population will not write many letters and the canceller will not have been used often. It will take years

for that tool to get worn out and Müller mentions in his article: “It was allowed to use up the cancellers until they were worn out but they had to obey the rules” and then in between brackets: “That means that the German name has to be in top”. The author thinks that this latter assumption is not correct. It would have been impossible for 21 places to use during 20 years a canceller that is officially not allowed. There will originally have been a rule that the German name had to be in top, and most probably a number of places (around 8 %) will initially have purchased for political reasons a canceller with the Czech name in top. An official body will then have asked them to withdraw this illegal canceller and replace them by the official G/Cz one. The larger cities did this indeed but the small ones waited until their canceller was worn out and that simply didn’t occur. Vienna didn’t care and turned a blind eye.

5.3 The bilingual left/right cancellations

According to Müller, the introduction of this cancellation should have been the solution for the language struggle in postal cancellations until it became clear that this stamp was vulnerable for fraud or errors by the postmaster. Let us look to the aim of the introduction of these stamps and the actual outcome. Apart from the equal rights issue there was the advantage that according to Müller you could see what was the dominant language in the place of concern. The name used by the majority had to appear at the left-hand side of the cancellation. This statement will be challenged by the author as will be seen in Chapter 6.

Since the introduction of the double-circle left/right cancellers started in 1897 and for many places took place between 1900 and 1910, it is important that we find data on the cancellations during this whole period, and Klein’s data are only up to 1900. Late in this investigation the author learned about the existence of a series of catalogues in Czech language (but luckily with a

German or English summary) on cancellations in current Czechia from 1850 till 1919, entitled: Monografie Československých Známek by Emil Votoček [Ref.6]. Volumes 13, 14 and 16 contain the data we need: Vols.13 and 14 deal with the data up to 1918, whereas the 2 parts of Vol.16 treat the data between 1918 and 1920. This enables us to investigate the history of all bilingual left/right cancellations, double-circle as well as Ringsteg, in the next Chapter 6.

6) Analysis of the bilingual left/right cancellations during the period 1897-1919

We will focus first on the Double-Circle bilingual left/right cancellations (see Figs.16 and 17) in the period 1897-1919. Table 6 shows for Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia the number of places where they were used.

Table 6

Bohemia, 685 places	German Left, 25 places		German Majority, 22 places
			Czech majority, 3 places
	Czech left, 660 places		German majority, 0 places
			Czech majority, 660 places
Moravia, 129 places	German left, 115 places		German majority, 22 places
			Czech majority, 93 places
	Czech left, 14 places		German majority, 1 place
			Czech majority, 13 places
Silesia, 12 places	German left, 12 places	Czech right, 4 places	German majority, 0 places
			Czech majority, 4 places
		Polish right, 8 places	German majority, 1 place
			Polish majority, 7 places

In 20 Czech-speaking places in Bohemia and 3 in Moravia the initial German-left were soon replaced by Czech-left cancellations and are as such treated in Table 6.

Our main question was: does the majority-language in a place appear at the left-hand side of the cancellation as the Müller rule claims? If we look to Bohemia, we see that from the 684 places only 3 places deviate from this rule (indicated in red in Table 6). Kameniček (883 inh., 100% Cz), Nürschau (5602 inh., 62% Cz) and Trebnitz (1722 inh., 67% Cz) have the German name at the left-hand side.

When we look to Moravia, however, we see a completely different picture. From the 129 places, 94 are in conflict with Müller's rule from which 93 have a Czech majority and yet the German name at the left. Marienthal bei Olmütz is the only place with a German majority and the Czech name left.

In Silesia only 12 places used this type of canceller. They all have the German name at the left-hand side, whereas only Bistrai (587 inh., 54% German, 0% Czech, 46% Polish) has a (tight) German majority.

In conclusion one can state that in the three provinces the policy on this item was completely different. In Bohemia Müller's rule is obeyed with a few exceptions, in Moravia a strong tendency for the German name left is seen and in Silesia only the German name shows up left. So it was not 'Vienna' nor the local post masters that made the rules but most probably the post officials of the individual provinces.

The second question arose from Müller's statement that it was impossible to prevent cheating by reversing the date plot in DC-left/right cancellers.

According to him only the introduction of the Ringsteg canceller did stop this



Fig.29 Double-Circle left/right cancellation with serial letter c. Prague 25-1-1893 (not mentioned in Klein [Ref.4] but mentioned in [Ref.6]). Prague was 90% Czech-speaking.

misuse since with that type cheating was impossible. Let us look why this is so.

The Ringsteg canceller had, apart from a horizontal date, one star on the top and a serial number or letter at the bottom of the ring for certain postal-technical reasons, see Figs.18 and 19. If the date plug was reversed and one wants to read the date then the serial number is found on top but upside-down and this makes cheating impossible (see Fig.34). But Müller didn't

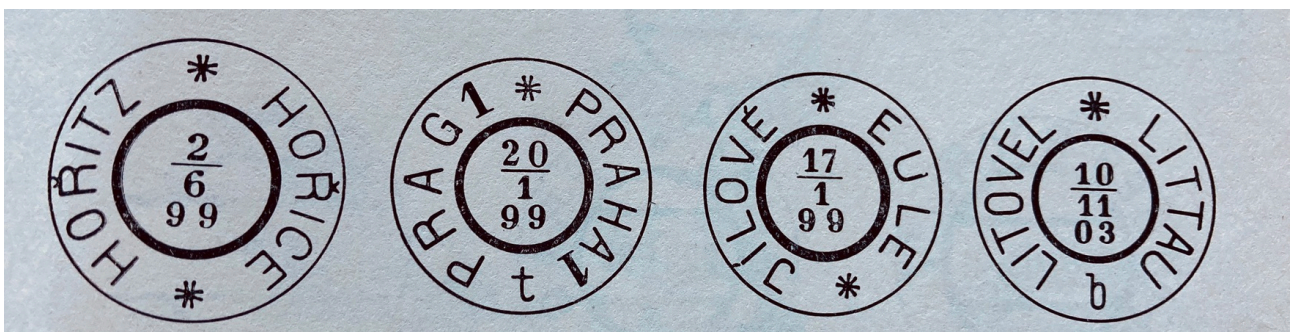


Fig.30 DC-G*Cz*

DC-G*Cz^

DC-Cz*G*

DC-Cz*G^

mention that *this serial number was also used in Double-Circle left/right cancellers!* In Fig.29 an example is shown, where no cheating is possible and where the Müller rule is not obeyed!!. In Table 6 all DC-cancellers with and without serial numbers are mentioned.

In fact, there are 4 main types of these cancellers, apart from (for our purpose) non-relevant varieties like the posting time as the big number 2 appearing in Fig. 29. They are shown in Fig.30, taken from [Ref.6], where the sign \wedge stands for the serial letter t and b, respectively. The first two have the German name at the left-hand side, the last two the Czech name. These cancellers were used between 1898 and 1919.

The point is: If it had been important to the authorities that no cheating should be possible with left or right they only had to replace one star by an asymmetrical sign, like a number, letter or something else.

Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether the left/right positions in the DC types with serial letter and in the two Ringsteg types (R-G*Cz \wedge and R-Cz*G \wedge) will follow Müller's rule. From Table 7 it can be seen that this is generally true for the DC type but with 6 exceptions in the DC-G*Cz \wedge cancellations out of 22 (deviations of Müller's rule are indicated in red).

Table 7

	Bohemia		Moravia	
	German Maj.	Czech Maj	German Maj.	Czech Maj.
DC-G*Cz*	12 pl.	2 pl.	16 pl.	89 pl.
DC-Cz*G*	0 pl.	550 pl.	1 pl.	10 pl.
DC-G*Cz \wedge	10 pl.	2 pl.	6 pl.	4 pl.
DC-Cz*G \wedge	0 pl.	110 pl.	0 pl.	3 pl.
R-G*Cz \wedge	17 pl.	0 pl.	16 pl.	7 pl.
R-Cz*G \wedge	1 pl.	13 pl.	0 pl.	51 pl.

In Bohemia these exceptions are Trebnitz (1.722 inh., 67%Cz) and one cancellation from Pragues as already shown in Fig.29, which is not mentioned in Table 6 since all other cancellations from this big city have the Czech name at the left-hand side. In Moravia 4 Czech places have the

German name at the left-hand side, viz. Přerau (17.000 inh., 96%Cz), Třebitsch (11.000 inh., 93%Cz), Ung. Hradisch (5.000 inh., 82%Cz) and Mähr. Ostrau (30.000 inh., 56%Cz). This is characteristic for Moravia: these are the largest cities with a Czech-speaking majority and they show a preference for the German name at the left-hand side, as shown in Tables 6 and 7.

That is also the case in the Ringsteg cancellations. In Moravia 7 Czech-speaking places are found with German at the left-hand side. The one German-speaking Bohemian town with the Czech name at the left-hand side, Prachatitz, will be discussed after Table 8.

When reading Müller's article, one gets the impression that the Ringsteg substitutes for the Double-Circle canceller because of its ability to prevent cheating. However, it turns out that actually by far the most DC cancellers have been used till 1919 as shown in Table 8. That could be done simultaneously with a Ringsteg canceller or not.

Table 8 - Presence of DC - Left/Right canceller from 1900-1919

	DC-left/right together with R-left/right from 1900-1919	DC-left/right without R-left/right from 1900-1919	DC-left/right Stopped between 1900-1919
Bohemia	208	326	135
Moravia	25	57	54
Silesia	3	5	1

In one case the left/right situation is different between the DC- and the R-canceller, while being used simultaneously: Prachatitz in Bohemian Sudetenland (4.300 inh., 22% Czech) appears as DC-Prachatitz*Prachatice[^] and as R-Prachatice*Prachatitz[^](see also Table 7)!

To close Chapter 6 we will now concentrate on an issue that seemingly has nothing to do with the Austro-Hungarian cancellations. We will have a look into the two parts of Vol. 16 [Ref.6] which treat the period between 1918 and 1920, the time in which Czechoslovakia became an independent state. The new country issued her first post stamps in December 1918 but had to design her own cancellers. That took time and meanwhile one started with a procedure that was called “Nationalization of Cancellations of Austrian Origin”. That meant that all German names and words had to disappear from the canceller used until then in one way or the other.

An easy way to do this was changing the German name with a small correction into a Czech name. In that way two “identical” names appeared in the cancellation. An example was changing the German letter “W” in the Czech equivalent “V” as shown in Fig.31. This and some other pictures are taken from Reference 7, a very nice website with a lot of information about cancellations between 1918 and 1939.



Fig.31a DCWelehrad*Velehrad*13-4-1920
The “W” has been transformed into “V”
[Ref.7]



Fig.31b R-Včelákov*Wčelakow^ 19-3-1919
Two letters “W” transformed into “V” [Ref.7]

It is clear that one took away half of the letter W, leaving a narrow letter V. In Fig.31a one can see a remnant of the W, see arrow. In Fig.31b by changing

two times the W by a V the names are still not identical because the Czech accent on the letter Á has been overlooked at the right-hand side!

In Manětín, Fig.32, one first tried to make the names identical by putting an accent on the í in the German name at the right-hand side, but then they also had to change the German e into the Czech ě and that was not very



Fig.32a DC-Manětín*Manetin* 27-1-1920 [Ref.7]

The e and i were transformed at the right-hand side into ě and í.



Fig.32b The German name has been removed [Ref.7]

successful.

Maybe for that reason one removed 2 months later the German name completely. That became the most popular way to solve the question.



Figs.33 This happened with the Battelau canceller in 1918 and 1919 [Ref.6].

For us the most relevant changes can be seen in Fig.33. Before the end of WW1 in November 1918, the Czech-speaking place of Battelau in Moravia had a DC-Battelau*Batelov* canceller with the Czech name on the right-hand side, see Fig.33 at the left.

Immediately after the end of World War 1 *the sequence of names was changed by reversing the date plug*. The author didn't find a picture of that cancellation, unfortunately. Half a year later one sees the German name made unreadable by blackening and again half a year later the German name is removed completely. So, one ended with only the Czech name at the left-hand side.

This even happened with cancellers with a serial letter. In the chaos of the time one didn't take care of the fact that this letter ended on top of the ring in an upside-down position. In Dux, however, one took the effort to re-engrave the serial letter, see Fig.34!

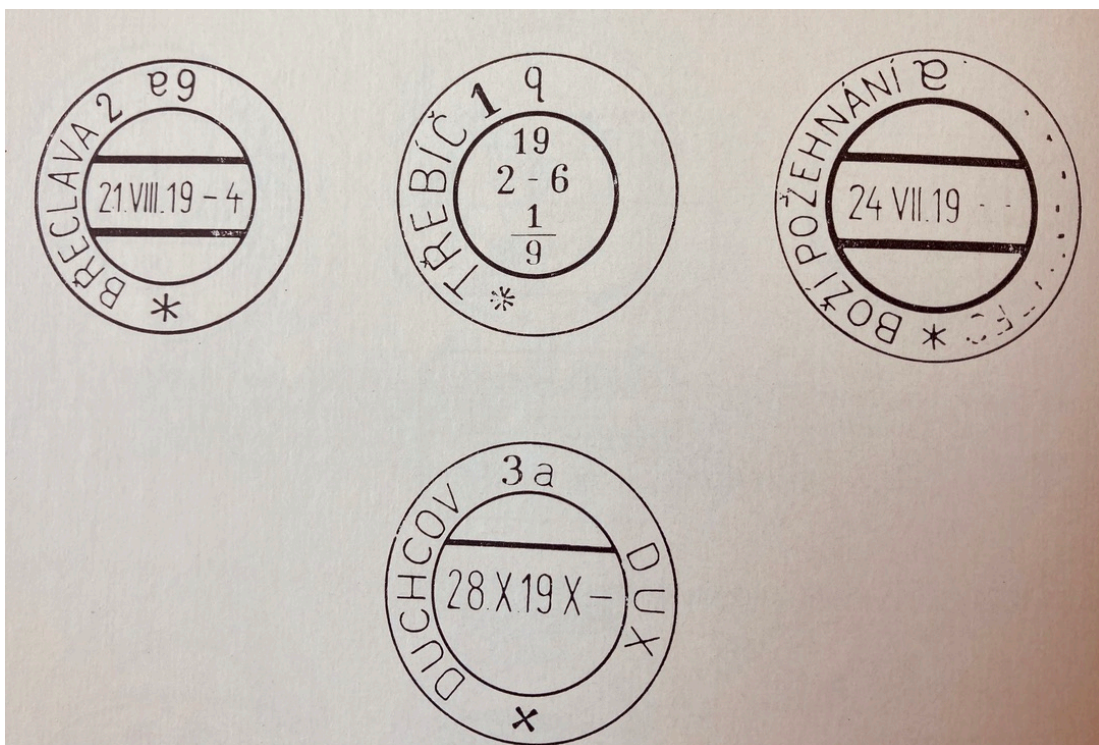


Fig.34 Some examples of the reversal of the date plugs in cancellers with a serial letter. Only in the case of Dux this serial number was re-engraved to put it in the readable position.

What is the logic here? Let us see what Votoček [Ref.6] says about this subject. He shows three examples of DC-G*Cz* cancellations were reversal took place and he writes:

“The reversal of the date plugs on the originally German-Czech cancellers of the above mentioned type cannot be regarded as typical for the post-Independence Day period. Similar adaption of cancellers is known from the years preceding 1918. Then it was the easiest and, at the same time, the less conspicuous method how to secure the dominating position on the postmarks for the Czech language”.

The subscript of Fig.35 is quoted from his Fig. 54:

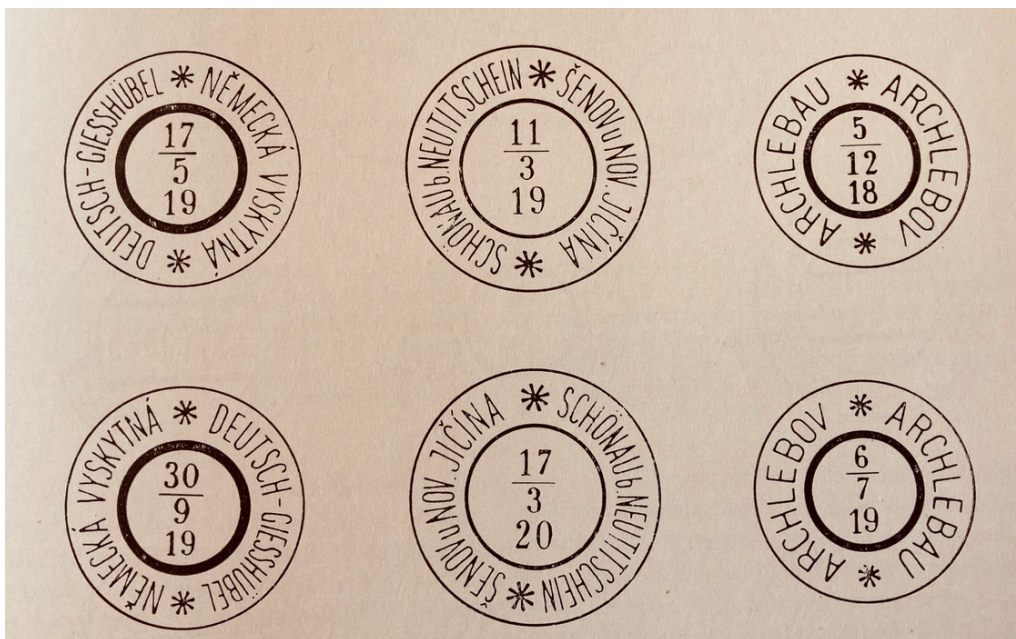


Fig.35 “In 1919, the originally German-Czech cancellers were changed into Czech-German ones by reversal of the date plugs” [Ref.6, Vol.16 Part2, p.39]

A very interesting case is the city of Znam (Znojmo). This important German-speaking city was very much in favor of using the German language and their reaction can be seen in Fig.36. They removed the Czech name!! The authorities of the new Czechoslovakia were not very amused and according

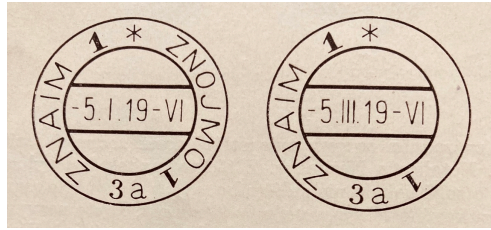


Fig.36 “The original German-Czech postmark from Znojmo and its Germanized form”.
Subscript quoted from [Ref.6 Vol.16,2, p.394]

to Votoček they forced the post master to replace, probably at his own expense, the Czech text! [Ref.6, Vol.16,2, p.394].

From these citations some important conclusions can be drawn. Votoček speaks about the dominating position of the left-hand side and describes them by German-Czech. Obviously he reads the left/right text in this way, with the left-hand side in front position which was always felt as the dominant position and which was even the reason that the Czechs wanted to get rid of the cancellers were the German language took by definition the dominating position. Now their language could do so if they liked by taking the left-hand side of the left/right cancellers.

This idea will have grown gradually which explains the slowly growing number of cancellers with the Czech name at the left-hand side which manifests itself especially in the Ringsteg cancellers.

If this is true then it is not necessarily the percentage of Czech inhabitants which is decisive but the influence and power of the ethnic group. So, a place with a majority of Czech inhabitants could be dominated by a smaller group of influential Germans, leading to the German name at the left-hand side.

However, this cannot explain the systematical differences between the three provinces. So, a guiding role of the provincial authorities must have been present.

7) CONCLUSIONS

The author would like to start with stating that he experienced his investigation into the Austro-Hungarian postal cancellations in current Czechia as very interesting and surprising. Although the continuous and politically motivated language struggle between post masters and post officials as suggested by Müller is certainly exaggerated as has been shown, there are still items where the author got excited when exploring this subject.

A number of questions could be solved, but others need detailed research into the Austro-Hungarian postal archives or the help of collectors and specialists in this field, for which the author would be very grateful.

The aim of the author was to find an answer to three main questions after reading Müller's article [Ref.1]:

1. Which conditions were required for a post office to introduce a bilingual top/bottom cancellation in 1871? Müller states that it was necessary that it should be in an important place with two clearly different names in German and Czech.

The author argues that for this introduction there were actually no requirements for a post office.

2. Is it a requirement that in top/bottom cancellations the German name has to be on top and , if so, why are there so many exceptions? According to Müller it was a requirement but some postmasters, driven by nationalistic intentions, did not obey this rule, much to the frustrations of official bodies who asked the postmasters to follow the rules. The author agrees with Müller, but makes clear that the important cities indeed obeyed the rule upon request by the authorities. However, these turned a blind eye to some places with only a small number of inhabitants (less than 2000) that opened their post office after 1867.

These offices could use their “illegal” cancellations with the Czech name in top until the canceller was worn out and that was often after 1890.

3. Müller states that the left/right canceller was introduced in 1897 to satisfy the Czech wishes for replacement of the bilingual top/bottom canceller. The Czech felt it as an abuse that the German name had to be at the dominating position in top of the bilingual cancellation and the authorities met their concern by introducing the left/right canceller where no preferred position of names existed. But then Müller adds another condition: the language of the majority of the people in the place of the post office had to appear at the left-hand side. However, because of the construction of the canceller it was possible for the postmaster by reversing the date plug to put the language he preferred at the left-hand side and this led, according to Müller, to nationalistic issues which the authorities wanted to prevent.

The author argues that the left/right canceller indeed was meant to satisfy the Czech wishes, but he does not agree that there was a general rule for the majority-language to be at the left-hand side. For example, in 80% of the cancellations in Moravia before 1900 the wrong name appears at the left-hand side and it is impossible to state that 80% of the Moravian postmasters is either too stupid to understand rules or is politically corrupt.

If the position of the name had been important then the authorities would had taken care that the left/right canceller was made fraud-proof. As an example: one could have put whatever asymmetrical sign instead of one of the stars in the canceller, which makes cheating by reversing the date impossible.

In the opinion of the author, the left/right canceller was initially not

meant for indicating which language was dominant. It is clear that the policy in this respect was completely different in the three provinces Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia. On the other hand, it is also clear that gradually the idea grew that the left-hand side in the canceller was the most dominant place, which explains the growing number with the Czech name at that side.

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