



Lugano Cancels on League of Nations Stamps

by Edward Duliba

In response to a question raised at a recent AHPS Zoom meeting, I illustrate Lugano cancels found on League of Nations (SdN) stamps. The 53rd session of the League of Nations was held in Lugano from Monday, December 10, 1928 through Saturday, December 15, 1928. Twenty-one different overprinted SdN stamps were current and available as of that date. For only the second time, cancellations other than the usual Geneva postal stations were used on SdN stamps. Occasionally, one comes across single stamps with the Lugano cancel, and those are what I will use to illustrate this summary. I have seen an example in a philatelic exhibit of all 21 SdN stamps favor-cancelled on a single sheet of paper, but that circumstance is rare.

As an aside from philately, the reason for the SdN move was superficial. The relocation was motivated primarily by a desire to avoid winter weather in Geneva. The choice of Lugano was at the behest of Dr. Gustave Stresemann, the imperious German Foreign Minister. Supposedly, his doctors told him to avoid Geneva in the winter and he chose to seek a warmer clime in Lugano at the Kursaal for his health.

The Lugano session accomplished nothing, being primarily concerned with the growing conflict between Paraguay and Bolivia over petroleum deposits in the Gran Chaco region. Paraguay was backed by Royal Dutch Shell and Bolivia was backed by the Standard Oil Company in the subsequent Chaco War (1932-1935).

The other rare cancel to watch for on SdN stamps is the Locarno cancel from the international peace conference held there October 5 - October 18, 1925 (ref. 4).

The only other League session held outside of Geneva was the 55th session, held in Madrid on June 10 - June 16, 1929, which resulted in an overprinted Spanish set of stamps and special cancels.

There are three types of Lugano cancellations. I illustrate two types in Figure 1 using examples from my collection. One type has three stars at the bottom (Fig. 1: SdN 15 and SdN 21). The second type has LETTERE at the bottom (Fig. 1: SdN 17 and SdN 27). The third type is an undated circular



Figure 1: Examples of Lugano cancels. (Zumstein catalog numbers are used throughout.)

cancel with LUGANO in the cross-bar, instead of a date. This third type is illustrated in the booklet by Misteli (ref. 1). It was not used as a cancel on stamps, but struck on covers from the SdN session.

Essays of the Cross and Numeral Issue

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by Roberto Lopez, CPhH

In the 1870s, the demand for postage stamps increased considerably, and the directive of February 1, 1878, stipulated that "the franking of all postal items, both national and international, must be covered in its entirety by means of ordinary postage stamps"¹ Consequently, between 1877 and 1878, stamp consumption increased from 47 to 67 million, such that the Federal Mint, then responsible for printing stamps, could no longer supply the necessary quantities.

In order not to deplete the stamp reserves, the General Directorate of Posts decided on December 16, 1878, that "to facilitate franking by means of higher value stamps and avoid the use of unnecessary postage stamps"², postage due stamps could be used to prepay the fees for C.o.D. (Cash on Delivery) items which were sent by the parcel-post service". Postage due stamps used as emergency stamps are rare and highly sought after.

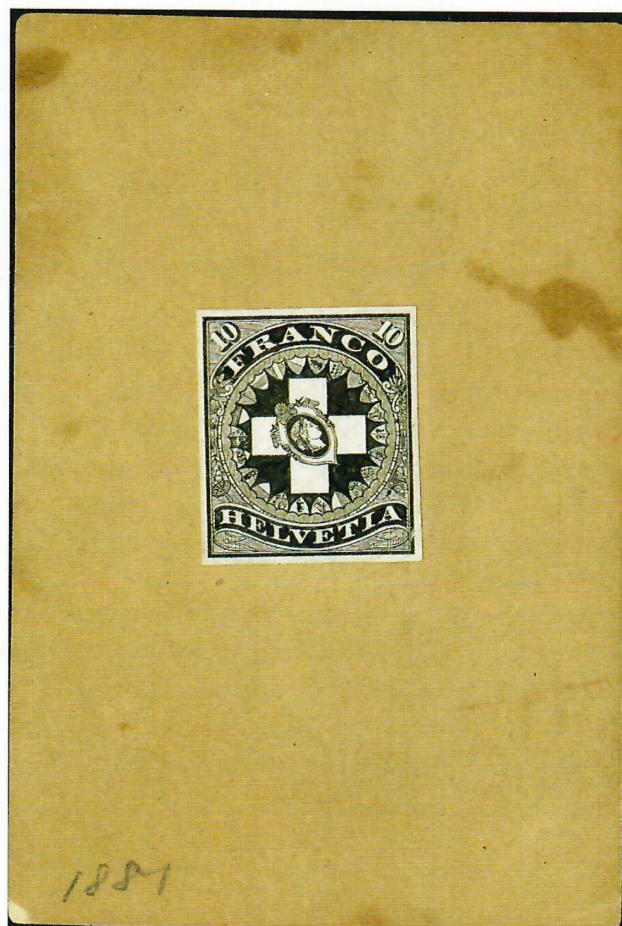


Fig 1 - Prof. Carl Hasert's essay on a backing paper.

In 1879, the postal management began preparing a new series of stamps. Section head Lutz, the future general director of the Post Office, traveled to Stuttgart in November of that year and signed an agreement with Professor Carl Hasert for a possible contract. Hasert reportedly had in stock, in addition to various drafts, the original clichés for 11 face values and 250 standard clichés. The management intended to produce all the price lists for the new edition using letterpress, even though this form of printing was time-consuming and expensive.

On November 30, 1879, Hasert sent seven drawings to the postal administration. The Federal Council ordinance of March 2, 1880, "Concerning the Creation of Stamps for the Post and Telegraph Administration," entrusted the Federal Mint with the creation of original and commonly used stamps, as well as the cutting, erasing, and perforation of postal and telegraph stamps.

On May 5, 1880, the Stämpfli printing house in Bern received ten sketches from Hasert and recommended the creation of the numeral design we know today. However, the contract with Stämpfli was not signed until more than a year later.

Hasert's only surviving design proved completely unsuitable for letterpress printing, as reducing the design to the size of the stamp rendered the details unrecognizable. The image shows the portrait of the Helvetia surrounded by the coats of arms of the 22 cantons and the inscription "10 Franco Helvetia." (Fig.2)



Fig 2 - The magnification allows you to see details clearly.

Footnotes -

1 - Official Gazette of December 24, 1877. On May 14, 1877, it was initially decided: "In order to assess whether and to what extent Swiss postage stamps can be used for the transport of goods, we have decided to use them for the transport of mail. We have ordered that the main post office in Bern conduct a trial between May 15 and May 28 inclusive." The decision of December 24, 1877, was repealed on July 15, 1893; since 1892, 3-franc postage stamps had been available.

2 - Decision of December 16, 1878.

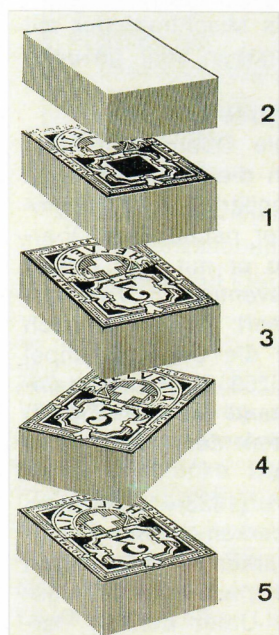


Fig 3

- Original matrix (steel, right-side-up design, hollow)
- Original cliché (steel, mirrored design, embossed) A proof of the original cliché provides a test that allows one to assess the effect of the image. The value number has not yet been engraved.
- Six clichés with value number (steel, reversed design, embossed). The six value clichés were engraved with the denominations of each value.
- Six clichés with value number (steel, right-side-up design, hollow)
- Customary cliché (brass, mirrored design, embossed)

4,220 were made for each denomination (probably only half as many for the lesser-used 3, 12, and 15 centimes). The customary clichés were assembled by the printer to form the printing form.

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Excerpt from "Switzerland -- The 1882 Buchdruck-ausgabe im Ziffermuster", Max Schio, 1968, Verlag Zumstein & Cie, Bern.

On June 1, 1880, the values and colors were set for the eleven new stamps, but the relevant departments did not seem very satisfied, so at the beginning of August, the Müllhaupt & Sohn company in Bern was commissioned to engrave and print the values starting at 20 centimes. The Standing Helvetia was born.

On October 19, the Federal Council approved the "Numeral" design for the new issue. The Postal Service Department, however, reserved the right to have face values from 20 centimes upwards produced in intaglio with a different image.

On October 27, Mint Director Platel was able to confirm to the postal management the receipt of the original steel dies made by the engraver Burger (1 original die, 11 stamps for the 11 types of values, and 11 dies).

Director Platel further indicated that the customary stamps for the 2-cent stamp were ready, and that the brass clichés for the other denominations would also be ready by January 1, 1881. His letter was accompanied by three sheets of finished 2-cent stamps ("proofs, ungummed") in yellow-brown, pink, and purple-brown.

Platel estimated that the Federal Mint was capable of gumming, die-cutting, and perforating 400,000 stamps per day.

The Essays demonstrate the problem of the border lines, which were so thin that they were shattered by the stresses of printing. The brass cliché was too "soft" for the required printing. The marginal areas were simplified, and by May 1, 1881, 100 clichés were available for each of the denominations from 2 to 15 centimes.



Fig 4 - Schio 2a



Fig 5 - 58A

The illustrations above clearly show the difference in the fineness of the border lines. Furthermore, the proof value numeral is also finer, unlike the stamps issued at the end. (Fig 4,5)

This work not only presents the proofs in a list documented by images, but also shows the unsuccessful attempts by the private firm Keller-Kehr in Bern and the Hofer-Burger company in Zurich in the years 1879/80. (Fig 6,7)



Fig 6 - Original drawing in brown ink with the value indication "2 centimes" from Hofer-Burger in Zurich, on cardboard in 75 x 90 mm on a cardboard backing.

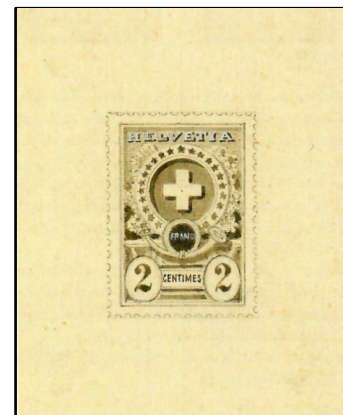


Fig 7 - Another original drawing with the value indication "2 centimes" from Hofer-Burger in Zurich mounted on cardboard in the 105 x 134 mm on a cardboard backing.

In his work published in the "Berner Briefmarkenzeitung" (BBZ), Max Schio incorporated the numbering of the Zumstein manuals from 1914 and 1924. This allows us to show the evolution of discoveries over a period of 10 years. Max Schio's three-chapter structure is logical and easy to remember:

- White paper without control mark
- White paper with control mark and
- Granite paper with control mark

Unaccounted shipments from the years 1879/80

The designs of the Keller-Kehr company, which were not taken into account, are regularly found on the market in the the most diverse colors. They are reminiscent of the Girardet Essays.

Three different types of essays can be distinguished, listed in order of decreasing frequency: Essays on cardstock of varying thicknesses (from 0.18 to 0.29 mm), individual proofs on horizontally striped paper (approximately 0.16 mm), and individual proofs with the inscription "O Keller-Kehr, Bern" at the bottom (0.14 mm thick paper).

The Essays are subsequently listed on card-stock of varying thicknesses and in a wide variety of colors. The thickness of the card-stock was measured with a micrometer and is indicated for each essay.

Fig 8 a-m



Fig 10



Fig 9 a, b - Individual prints in blue and dark green on horizontally striped paper.



As you can see, the thicknesses vary from 0.18 mm for the thinnest cardstock to 0.29 mm for the thickest. The design includes the inscription "HELVETIA 10 FRANCO" and the number "10" is found on an envelope under the coat of arms with the Swiss cross. The perforation is drawn and the Essays are imperforate. (Fig 8 a-m)

The above Essays have the same characteristics as those described on left, except that they are individual prints on horizontally striped paper with a thickness of 0.16 mm. (Fig 9 a,b) (Fig 10)



The third print is also an individual print, but it also bears the inscription "O Keller-Kehr, Bern" under the perforation drawn at the bottom. (Fig 11)

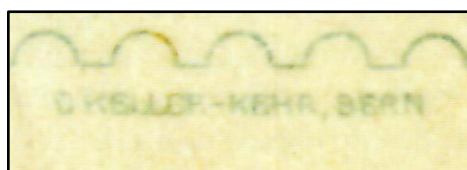


Fig 11 - The perforation is drawn and the Essays are imperforate.

Figure 11 was printed on white paper with a thickness of 0.14 mm.

Next comes the catalog of the proofs themselves, listed according to Max Schio. To track the evolution of the cataloging, the respective numbers of the Zumstein catalog for the years 1914 (Z 1914) and 1924 (Z 1924) are listed.

The catalog is divided into three main sections:

- White Paper without Embossing,
- White Paper with Embossing, and
- Fiber Paper with Embossing.

The symbols used in the list indicate:

- 1 - - Known Stamp
- 2 - Unknown Stamp
- 3 ? Not known, possible existence

As you can see, proofs with a control mark are extremely rare. Schio proofs 1 to 9 are found in most exhibition collections of this edition. The print run figures are not known, nor are they mentioned in Axel Herms's work ("Ziffermuster 1881-1908: Neue Forschungsgrundlagen und erste Ergebnisse", Axel Herms, 08/2011).

Finally, I would like to present a proof used on a letter to the detriment of the postal service. A few letters are known, all of which are listed in the Max Schio brochure mentioned at the beginning, published by Zumstein & Cie in 1968.

This is a letter dated January 6, 1908, addressed from Guggisberg to Bern (Bern arrival postmark dated January 7, 1908 on the back) (Fig 12). The letter was correctly franked at 10 centimes with a strip of three Tell son stamps in the frame and an additional individual stamp (SBK 101) and a 2 centime proof (Schio 2b).



Fig 12- One of the known letters with a proof that was used to the detriment of the post office.

The illustrated letter cutout is also listed in Max Schio's brochure. (Fig 13)



Fig 13- Letter cutout with 3 centimes of gray and a 2 centimes proof stamp (Schio 2b).

The following letter, however, is not mentioned, and I wouldn't want to deprive you of it. It is a registered letter from Baden to Kleindöttingen (Fig 14), correctly franked at 20 centimes itself, if it didn't have a Schio 2b proof on the left. This philatelic production was nevertheless mailed.



Fig 14 - Registered letter with a proof on the left (Schio 2b).

My goal is to complete this catalog with the missing images. To do this, I need your help. You can send me the images (at least 400 dpi), ideally with the corresponding certificate, by email:

roberto.lopez@cabinetlopez.ch.

I hope this article has provided you with a simple overview of the proofs of the Numeral issue and that you will find what you are looking for.

I decided to submit this article to the SBZ because, through fortunate circumstances, I was able to obtain a considerable number of proofs. A generous person (whom I warmly thank here) entrusted me with their proofs (which is not a given) in order to complete the catalog. +

Answers to Historic PO quiz in September TELL.



Aarau



Luzern



Chur



Neuchatel



St Gallen



Zürich