GERMAN REPLY CARDS USED BACK TO GERMANY FROM GERMAN POST OFFICES IN EAST AFRICA

This exhibit shows examples of properly used German reply cards from the German post offices in East Africa back to Germany, including cards used from the short-lived German post offices at Lamu and Zanzibar as well as cards used from the German post offices in German East Africa ("GEA") proper. Germany's formal efforts to colonize East Africa began in 1885, when Carl Peters was granted an Imperial Charter by Otto von Bismarck for the German East Africa Company. In 1890, pursuant to the Heligoland-Zanzibar Treaty, the Germans gave up existing claims to Lamu and Zanzibar, while the British acknowledged Germany's claim to what became German East Africa. The German government took over the administration of this area from the German East Africa Company in 1891, and the colony of German East Africa ("GEA") was born.

During the German administration of GEA, the German post office issued message-reply cards for Germany proper which allowed the sender to pay for a postal card in Germany to pay for the addressee's response via postal card back to the sender. Message-reply cards were first sanctioned by the UPU in 1878. They consisted of a "message half" and an attached "reply half." The sender would write a message on the "message half" and address the message recipient, with the attached. The recipient would detach the "reply half" and mail it to the sender with a message. The sender paid the postage for the time the sender purchased the message-reply card from the post office. Occasionally the reply was returned to the sender without messages or with a short "greetings" message. Non-philatelic reply cards with full messages are very difficult to find. All examples shown in this exhibit have messages, and nearly all have full messages.
The German post office at Lamu was established as a German post office abroad on December 21, 1888. It closed on March 31, 1891.

Above is a German 10pf “Pfennig” reply card with a full message written in Lamu on July 17, 1890 and mailed from there one week later to Dresden, Germany. The “Pfennig” postal cards, first issued in 1880, were replaced in Germany with “Crown and Eagle” postal cards first issued in late 1889. These “Pfennig” cards retained postal validity through January 31, 1891. German reply cards used from Lamu are exceedingly rare.
When the German Empire was officially formed in 1871, Bavaria retained the right to issue its own postage stamps, even though Bavaria became part of the German Empire. Bavaria issued its own stamps valid for international postage, including message-reply cards, until 1920.

Above is a Bavarian 10pf “Coat of Arms” reply card, first issued in 1886, mailed from Lamu to Weissenburg auf Sand, Bavaria, on February 3, 1891, with message. Bavarian reply cards used back to Germany from all German colonies and post offices abroad are very elusive. The use of this Bavarian reply card from Lamu may be unique.
The German post office at Zanzibar, established as a German post office abroad, was opened on August 31, 1890. It closed on July 31, 1891. Above is the reply half of an intact German 10pf + 10pf Crown and Eagle message-reply card used both ways between Germany and Zanzibar. It was returned intact to Berlin from Tanga via Zanzibar on November 17, 1890. There are full messages on both cards. The message half is shown on the next page.
The message half was mailed from Berlin to Tanga via Zanzibar on September 20, 1890. This is likely the only existing intact message-reply card sent to Tanga and back to Germany through the German post office at Tanga. The German post office at Tanga did not open until May 5, 1891.
The first post office to open in what became GEA opened at Bagamoyo on October 11, 1890. At that time, this post office was officially a German post office abroad. On January 1, 1891, it became a colonial post office in GEA, but it retained the “Kaiserl. Deutsches Postagentur” postmark until late 1892. The post office at Bagamoyo remained open until August 22, 1916.

Above is a German 10pf “Crown and Eagle” reply card sent from Bagamoyo on January 4, 1892 to Greiz, Germany, with a full message. The card has transit markings from the British post offices in Zanzibar and Aden, along with a French seapost “Ligne N” marking.
Sent From the German East Africa Post Office at Bagamoyo

Above is a German 10pf “Crown and Eagle” reply card sent from Bagamoyo to Wilhelminenhof, Germany on April 4, 1892, with a full message. This card has a French “Reunion a Marseilles” seapost marking, so the card took a different route back to Germany than the previous card. The routing of mail in this time period varied depending on shipping schedules of the various lines that served this part of the world. The later establishment of regular German postal steamer service between Germany and GEA allowed mail between Germany and GEA to be carried almost exclusively on German ships.
Above is a Bavarian 10pf “coat of arms” reply card sent from Bagamoyo on November 8, 1899 to Wuerzburg, Germany, with message. The card has a transit marking from Dar es Salaam and a receiving marking dated December 16, 1899, along with a Bavarian mail carrier marking.
The second post office to open in what became GEA opened at Dar es Salaam on October 14, 1890. At that time, this post office was officially a German post office abroad. On January 1, 1891, it became a colonial post office in GEA, but it retained the “Kaiserl. Deutsches Postagentur” postmark until September of 1892. The post office at Dar es Salaam remained open until September 1, 1916.

Above is a German 10pf “Crown and Eagle” reply card mailed from Dar es Salaam on December 3, 1891 to Altona, Germany, with full message. The card was received in Altona on Christmas Eve, December 24, 1891.
The card shown above is a German 10pf “Pfennig” reply card mailed from Dar es Salaam on June 8, 1892 to Berlin, with a full message. “Pfennig” stamps and cards, which were replaced by the “Crown and Eagle” stamps and cards in late 1889, were only sent to the German Post Offices in Lamu and Zanzibar. They were not sent to the German Post Offices that opened in GEA at Bagamoyo and Dar es Salaam. Furthermore, “Pfennig” cards lost their postal validity as of January 31, 1891. Thus, the use of this card is remarkable.

The reverse of the card shows a Zanzibar receiving mark dated November 2, 1890. Thus, the message half of this card was mailed to Zanzibar long before the reply half was mailed back to Germany. Why the recipient of the message card mailed the reply card to Germany many months later is unknown.

The card was forwarded from Berlin, with instructions to send it to Bamberg (in Bavaria), but the post office mistakenly sent the card to Bromberg. The card was delivered in Bamberg, as evidenced by the Bavarian postal carrier’s marking.

The mailing of the “Pfennig” reply card after these cards had lost their postal validity created a dilemma for the German post office. They initially treated the card as being completely unpaid, as shown by the “20” written in blue crayon. Someone in the post office later decided to not charge postage due, as evidenced by the crossing out of the “20” in blue crayon. This is very likely a unique usage. The message side is shown on the next page.
Above is a German 10pf "Crown and Eagle" reply card sent from Dar es Salaam on March 10, 1894 to Furstenwalde, with full message. By this time the prior postmark device had been replaced with a new device. This new device remained in use until February of 1909.
When the German Empire was officially formed in 1871, Wurttemberg, like Bavaria, retained the right to issue its own postage stamps, even though Wurttemberg became part of the German Empire. Wurttemberg issued its own stamps valid for international postage, including message-reply cards, until 1902.

Above is a 10pf Wurttemburg “Numeral” reply card, first issued in 1887, sent from Dar es Salaam on March 26, 1897 to Stuttgart, with message. The card was received in Stuttgart on April 15, 1897. Wurttemberg reply cards used back to Germany from all German colonies and post offices abroad are rare.
The German Post Office at Lindi was the fourth post office to open in GEA on May 17, 1891. (Tanga was the third, opening on May 5, 1891.) Above is a German 10pf “Crown and Eagle” reply card sent from Lindi on April 4, 1892 to Wilhelminenhof, Germany with a full message. The card transited Dar es Salaam on April 8.
The German Post Office at Marangu opened on June 29, 1895. It closed on May 18, 1901. Mail from this post office is difficult to find.

Above is a German 10pf Crown and Eagle reply card sent from Marangu on May 12, 1897 to Hamburg, Germany, with message. The card was received in Hamburg on July 2, 1897.
The German post office at Ujiji was opened on April 8, 1898. This post office remained open until July of 1916.

Above is a German 2pf Germania reply card, Michel P66A, originally issued in 1902 to pay the local intra-city postal card rate in effect at that time, uprated to pay the normal rate between GEA and Germany. The card has a full message. The sender of the message card apparently affixed a 3pf Germania stamp, which, with the 2pf card, would have been sufficient to pay postage back to Germany. The sender of the reply card, however, affixed a 4 heller yacht stamp, perhaps in the belief that additional postage was required. Any such belief was mistaken. The 4 heller stamp was not needed. On May 1, 1899, the German post office had lowered the rates of all first class mail between Germany and GEA from the international UPU rate to the German domestic rate.