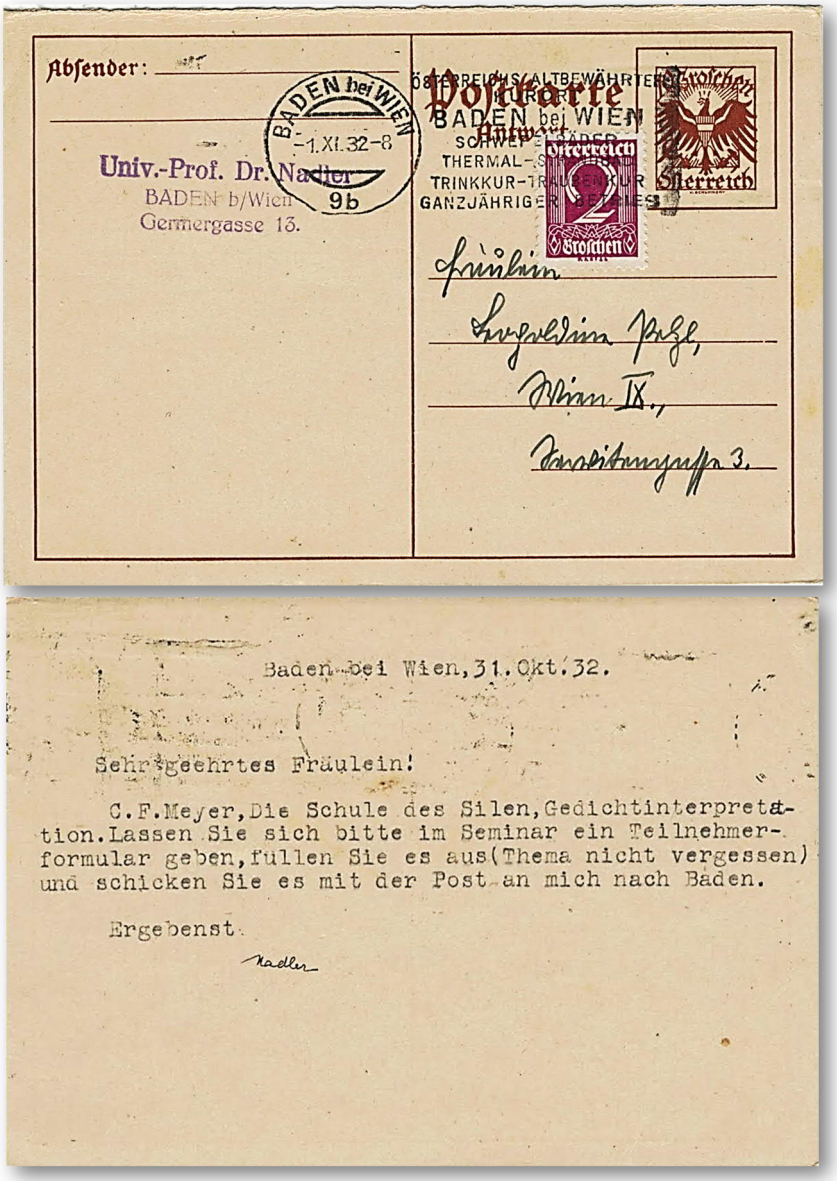
A card from a health resort tells stories

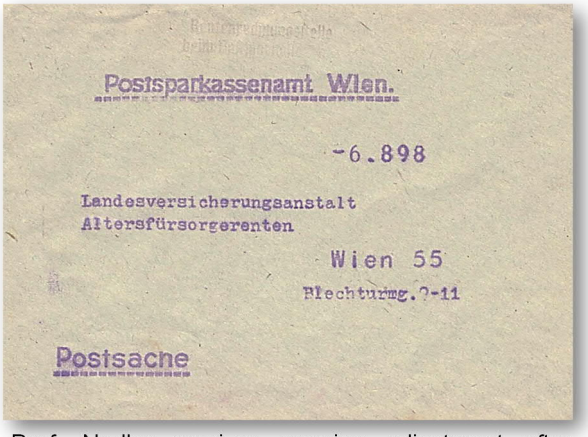


A card from the spa town of Baden, inconspicuous at first glance, is a testimony on its front and back for times passed.

I bought this postal stationery yesterday at the Innsbruck stamp exchange event only because of the advertising postmark of the little town of Baden in Austria. I could use this postmark in my medical collection, to thematize baths, drinking cures and thermal baths. However, since this is a postal stationery postcard (1.11.1932 postage paid with 12 Groschen), one can take a closer look at the sender and addressee. And indeed, this is where it gets interesting. This is a reply card filled out by University Professor Dr Nadler regarding a term paper to a student at that time, Leopoldine Pelzl. The latter is probably the latter in Amstetten very well known and appreciated teacher, professor, local historian, and author of several contributions to the history of Amstetten.

The sender Prof. Nadler was and is also known beyond the region. He is probably Germany and Austria's most controversial literary historian. Born in 1884 in northern Bohemia, a childhood there, he studied German literature in Prague with August Sauer. Sauer´s approach to literary history, with its demand for a "spatial" view of it, i.e. an ethnographically structured literary history, shaped Nadler for the rest of his professional life. Thus, he became the most important representative of a “tribal” approach of literary history which includes folklore and the landscape. Based on this, he writes what is probably his most famous and controversial work already at the age of 27: *“Literary History of German Tribes and Landscapes”*. Based on the "spatial turn" in cultural studies that took place in the 1980s (i.e. one no longer focuses on the time in which a work is created, but on the respective space and its social construction), Nagler's work could even be considered forward-looking. If it were not for the anti-Semitic polemics and the explicit references to a German national identity based on blood and soil and the exclusion of all those who did not belong. This is particularly evident in the 4th edition, published in 1941, which now was renamed *“Literary history of the German people: poetry and literature of the German tribes and landscapes”.* He wrote this version already in Vienna, where he was appointed professor in 1931 after holding a professorship in Fribourg/Switzerland.

Because of his activities at the time of National Socialism, Nadler is taken out of service at the University of Vienna in 1945, and in 1947 he is forcibly retired. In 1950, the proceedings are resumed, and Nadler succeeds in having him removed from the list of former NSDAP members and his pension reassessed. However, there is explicitly no annulment of the retirement.



Prof. Nadler receives pension adjustment after rehabilitation - Öster. Postal matter

Whether this rehabilitation was justified or not is disputed until today. In any case, according to Franz Graf-Stuhlhofer, he lives the life of a perfect opportunist during his time as a professor in Vienna. At times when the german NSDAP is banned in Austria (until Austria's "Anschluss" to Germany in 1938), he defends himself in court against a possible location of himself in the National Socialist haze. In 1938 - after the "Anschluss" - he applies for membership in the NSDAP on June 13, 1938. He is admitted retroactively to May 1 (membership number 6196904). The entry date of May 1, 1938, is assigned to all National Socialists already active before the Anschluss. Indeed, he also confirms his active participation in the party starting in 1939 at the beginning of 1944. However, by 1940 at the latest, he is caught between the fronts of competing party offices, and so, for reasons of power politics, he is denied admission to the Prussian Academy of Sciences as well as the Mozart Prize of the Johann Wolfgang Goethe Foundation. His National Socialist views are questioned. Thereupon he initiates self-correction proceedings against himself at the Viennese Gaugericht, accusing Goebbels, among others, of discrimination. The proceedings drag on until 1944 and are then postponed until after the war.

After Austria's "Anschluss" by Germany, Prof. Nadler is among the first to join the NSDAP.
Frankatured registered letter from Innsbruck to Kufstein, postmarked one month after the invasion of Austria by the German National Socialists. Such mixed frankings with Groschen (Austria) and Pfennige (German Reich) were valid from 4.April to 31.October 1938. Between the pennies and the pfennig stamp necessary for the franking, a red 50 Groschen and a black 10 Groschen so-called Schuschnigg election donation vignettes without franking character are affixed. These can be found mostly on letters from Innsbruck.

After his rehabilitation until his death on January 14, 1963, Nadler teaches at the Vienna Catholic Academy. He also receives several honours: In 1952, for example, he was awarded the Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Prize of the Johann Wolfgang Goethe Foundation, which he had been denied in 1940, and in 1960 he was awarded the Adalbert Stifter Medal of the Austrian Ministry of Education. He also continued to work as a literary historian and continued to publish until his death.

Sources: https://www.mostwiki.at/amstetten-chronik
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