



The Afghan Bulletin

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The First UPU Postmarks

After Afghanistan joined the UPU, with effect from 1st April 1928, a new round Western style postmark was introduced at Kabul (and also at Kandahar, from a date unknown). Patterson gives the date of introduction at Kabul as 4th April and records that for the first few days of use the Western date slugs were apparently not available and so the date was impressed separately with a rubber stamp. The postmark was in purple during this brief period, thereafter in black. I don't believe this temporary use of a handstamped date has been illustrated before. It is rather indistinct on the cover below, but it shows up rather better on the block of four. Both show '4 APR. 1928'.



The date slugs were in use by the 7th April so the handstamped date cannot have been in use for more than 3 days, possibly only two days if the post office did not operate on a Friday (4th April 1928 was a Wednesday).

As Afghanistan had now joined the UPU the Indian stamp on the cover was not actually needed.



At the same time as the KABOUL DEPART cancel was introduced, an equivalent KABOUL ARRIVEE cancel also appeared. In theory this should be easy to find. In practice it isn't. It seems only to have been used as a transit mark on mail passing through Kabul, and even then the KABOUL DEPART often seems to have been used instead. I haven't yet seen a KANDAHAR ARRIVEE, although Patterson seems to suggest that it exists¹.

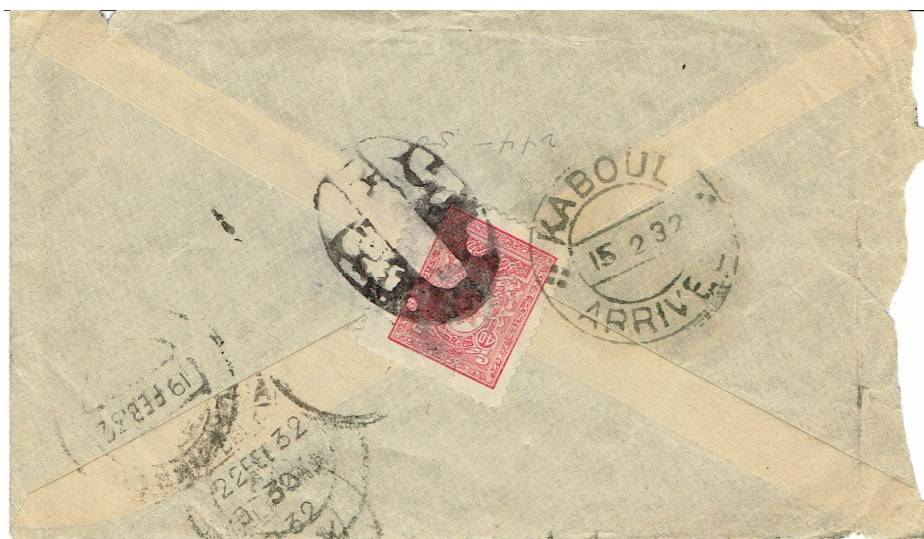
Use as a transit mark on inbound mail

Cover from Qissa Kwani – the Storey Teller's Bazaar – in Peshawar to Mazar-e-Sharif, via Kaboul. There is a postage due "T" mark on the front, but no charge appears to have been made. Qissa Kwani had been the scene of a massacre just a few months earlier on the 23rd April 1930 when troops had opened fire on unarmed 'non-violence' anti-British demonstrators.



Qissa Kwani 21st December, Landikhana 23rd December, Kaboul 27th December, 1931.

Use as a transit mark on outbound mail



Cover from Turkestan to India, via Kabul, February 1932.

¹ *Afghanistan: Its Twentieth Century Postal Issues*, Patterson, 1964, p.169.

1907: Used Multiples

It's a grubby tatty mess, but with 1 x 1 abasi and 11 x 2 abasi (all imperf), it is the largest multiple franking I have recorded. It was sent from Peshawar on 7 Jamedi II 1325 = 18th July 1907.

The total franking of 23 abasi would be for a weight of 23 misqal or approximately 108g.



Eleven *single* 2 abasi stamps: this piece made me realise that used multiples of this issue are actually quite scarce. This is one of my favourite issues and I'm always on the lookout for it

but all I can muster are: a block of 4 of the 1 abasi imperf (illustrated below); a pair of 1 abasi imperf, a block of 4 of the 2 abasi perf, and a pair of the 1 rupee perf (and two almost certainly CTO panes of the 2 abasi imperf which don't really count).



This block is also used from Peshawar, but the date is indecipherable.

Why are used multiples so scarce? Mint panes, even sheets, of the 2 abasi abound, but these probably emanate from remainder stock. Were the sheets routinely cut up into singles before distribution to the post offices?

Pakistani Censorship of Afghan Mail

In late 1965, Pakistan censored incoming Afghan mail. Covers show that this seems to have occurred between October and December 1965, but it may have lasted a month either side.

The censor markings I have seen on Afghan mail include—

- Type A Purple double ring outer circle with scalloped inner circle containing coat of arms. PAKISTAN CENSORSHIP around top half of the design, a star at the bottom (seen Oct 1965).
- Type B Black single ring design, PAKISTAN CENSORSHIP around top, PASSED BY CENSOR in two lines in lower half of the circle and a censor number in the centre. The circle is slightly flattened at bottom left (seen Oct-Dec 1965).
Censor numbers seen: K-1, K-2, K-10
- Type C As Type B, but in purple (seen Dec 1965).
Censor number seen: K-10
- Type D Rectangular boxed censor number.
Censor number seen: K-164 (seen Nov 1965)

The censorship was in connection with the Indo-Pakistan War of 1965 which began when Pakistani forces crossed the Kashmir line of control on the 5th August. A UN brokered ceasefire took effect on the 23rd September 1965 and was followed by the Tashkent Declaration of 10 January 1966 which brought the two sides back to their original positions.

Type A

Official Afghan stationery envelope, addressed to the Afghan National Bank, Karachi.
Registered from Deh Afghanan (Kabul) 17th October; Karachi 19th October.



Type B.

All examples seen (also of Type C in purple) have been poor strikes.

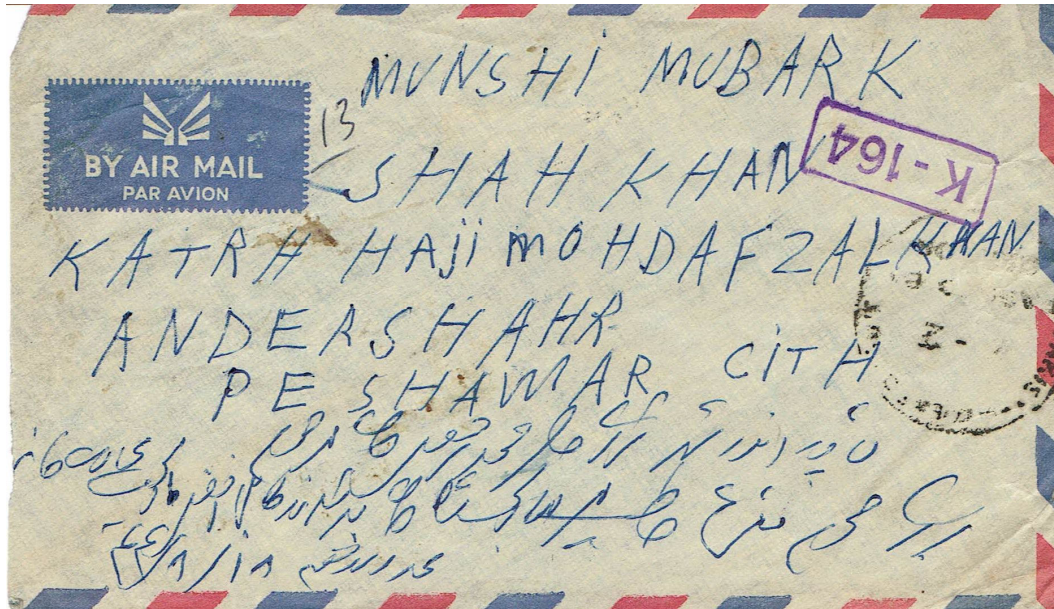


Types B and D.

Type B Censor Number K-2

Type D Censor Number K-164

Sent from Kabul, 9th November 1965.



The Batila Cancel in Bright Red

The Batila cancel comes in a variety of colours which have traditionally been assigned as follows—

- **Kabul**, ruby-red (sometimes called brick-red)
- **Peshawar**, orange red
- **Tashkurghan**, green
- **Kandahar**, violet

Black is problematic to assign and dull grey-purple or dirty greyish black are forgeries. There is also a batila in a brighter red (magenta?) quite distinct from either Kabul or Peshawar. I have only one example – on the pair of stamps illustrated alongside – and it has puzzled me as to its location. Or whether it was just a wrongly made up batch of ink for say, Kabul. The pair also has a nice pre-printing paper fold, but that's by the way . . .

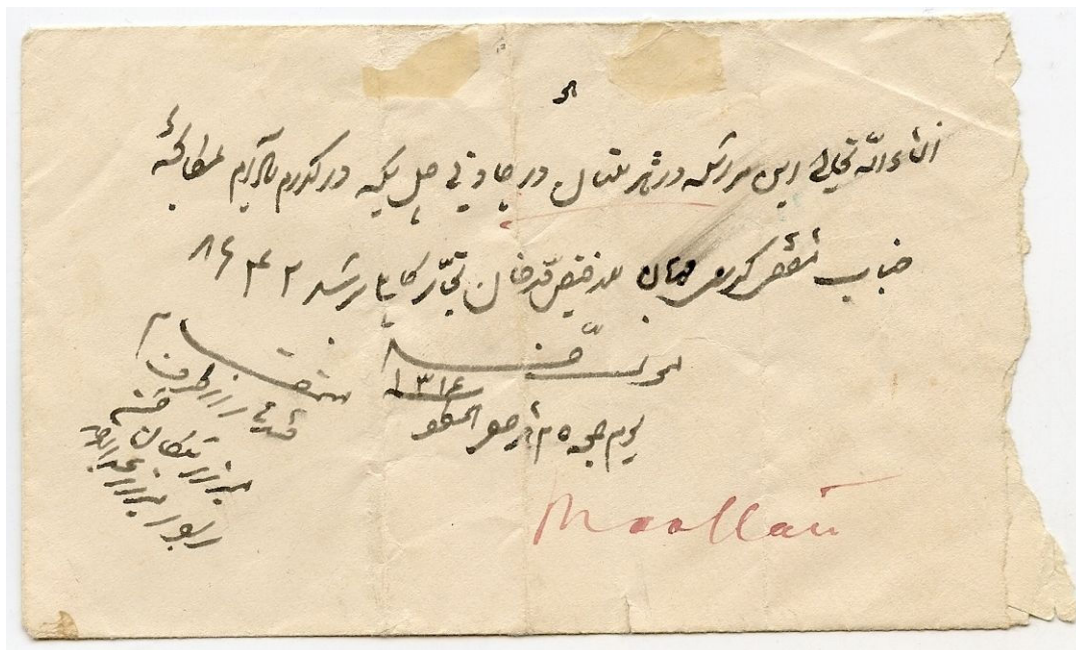
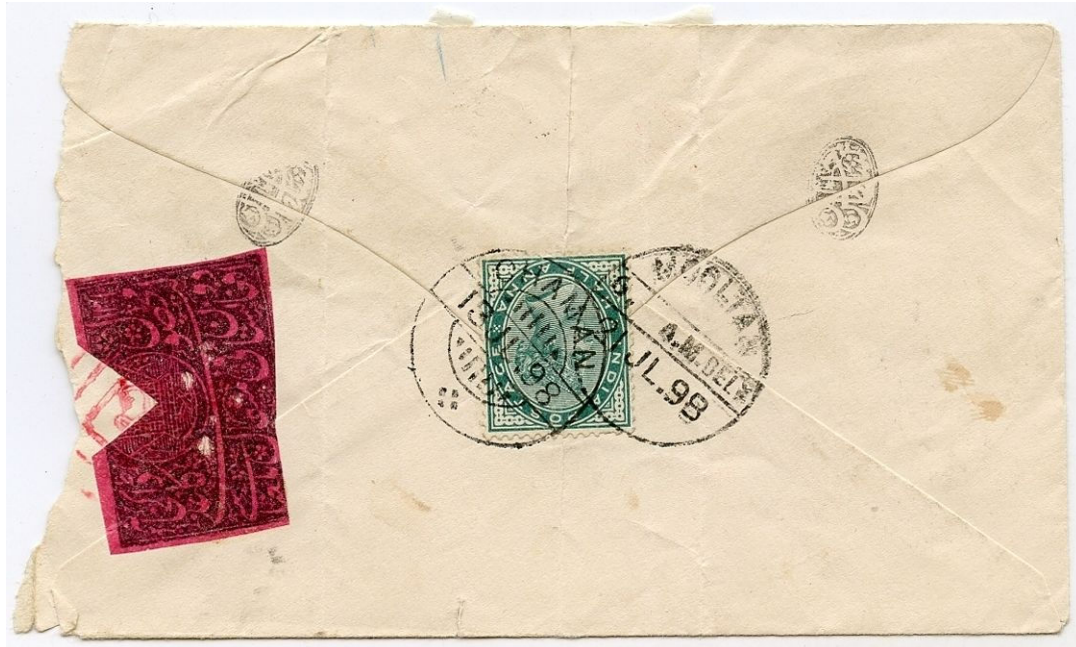


The cover on the next page which showed up recently in an online auction also bears this bright red batila and offers some clues as to its location.

The cover is addressed to Mooltan (as a postal official has helpfully annotated on the front in red ink) and has Indian transit markings of Chaman and Mooltan for the 13th and 21st July 1898 respectively. The cover also has a manuscript date on the front of 1316 which corresponds to 1898.

The fact that the entry point into India was Chaman indicates that the cover originated from somewhere in the south of Afghanistan – covers through Chaman

usually emanate from Kandahar. But where exactly did this one start its journey? Definitely not Kabul or Peshawar which seems to rule out the badly made batch of ink theory. One candidate is possibly Ferah, but it was thought that the post office there didn't open until 1908, although it did then often use red ink for its postmarks. The writing on the front may contain the sender's address details and so solve the puzzle, but unfortunately I can't decipher it.



This cover is also interesting for another reason: dual frankings from the Sher Ali period (up to 1879) are to be found and are keenly sought after; dual frankings from the Habibullah and Amanullah periods (from 1901) can also be found. But dual frankings from the reign of Abdur Rahman (1880-1901) seem to be very difficult. I can see no reason for this. One would have thought that after the Second Afghan War trade, and hence correspondence, would have flourished.

So a very nice cover for two reasons: congratulations to the new owner!

Essays for the 1932 Definitive Series.

Patterson gives details² of the known essays for this series and it is nice to illustrate a couple of them in colour. Both are printed on good quality vertically laid thin card. I think these may be what Patterson describes as 'light turquoise-blue' and which he recorded as being in sheets of 36 (6 x 6).

As there was some spare space at the foot of the page, I've enlarged them to 150%.

The 15 poul

The Memorial Pillar of Knowledge and Ignorance, Kabul.

The monument was erected by King Amanullah following the rebellion (March 1924 - January 1925) of the southern provinces around Khost. Inscribed on it are the names of the Royalist soldiers who fell during the rebellion. The design of the issued 40 poul stamp is similar.



The 40 poul

Possibly a view of part of Darulaman Palace, but not one used on the issued stamps. The semi-circular part of the building at right looks like Darulaman but I can't find a picture of the Palace which matches this one.



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² *Afghanistan: Its Twentieth Century Postal Issues*, Patterson, 1964, pp.155/156.