



THE DORMANT RAILWAY POSTCARDS 1948-9

By M. Arif Balgamwala (T.I.)

Usually when a country is being formed many rare instances occur and provisional measures that are taken in a routine flow, later become historic records and archival material. The classic philatelic period of Pakistan like most countries of the world is the period of its birth and the following years, which in this case is 1947-1949.

International philatelic markets have recognized the 'PAKISTAN' overprints on Indian stamps as a classic subject of the forties, and it achieving Gold standards in international philatelic exhibitions it has established its scores. While all the aspects of the subject, that is stamps and postal stationery, remain within boundaries of rarity, some have been ignored in ignorance.

At the time of Partition of British India and formation of Pakistan, mass migrations bringing about displacement of many families, gave birth or shortages of experienced and qualified personnel in various fields. Most of the Hindus occupying the official and clerical seats left for India, leaving the inexperienced Muslims to handle grave situations on their own.

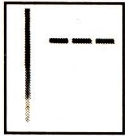
Railway department had to face unintentional haphazardness as migrants from India kept pouring in at the Lahore Railway Station. Loss of goods was a common daily affair for which the government reacted very late, in about April 1948. Special forms were printed on the back of ½a KGVI Service postcards to report missing goods, with an additional 3p KGVI stamp affixed to it, to make up the then prevailing postcard rate of 9 pies. The stamp always bore a (local) Lahore Service machine overprint. The 'Genl.78' and the 'C.M.189' forms occupy the largest part of the quantities. Other forms on reverse of Nasik postcards is the 'C.M.18', 'C.M.83' and 'T.M.176', otherwise all other types exist on reverse of the Lahore postcards.

As the introduction of these postcards came in late, a system of reporting 'loss goods' had already developed which continued and all these postcards remained '**Prepared but Never Used**'. Though large numbers landed in philatelic hands and the monotony and availability never stimulated any keen interest, the subject was bracketed as '**philatelic**' and filed down in chapters of history as a '**dead topic**'.

The items in question may be 'dead' as it seems but the presence of five different (living) angles which in their own dimensions are of great philatelic importance, collectively give them life, which are as follows.

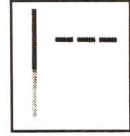
1. The study of the Original Plates (Stereos) of the Indian KGVI postcard itself.

This is truly fascinating when we learn that there are over two dozen different settings (stereos) recorded. A study of these stereos appear on the next pages. The illustrations show the main distinguishing features although there may be many other minute differences. These stereos, if ever found on the Indian (unoverprinted) KGVI postcards, will change the course of history. As they have not been seen so far, and that their stereos are totally different from the ones found with (Nasik) 'PAKISTAN' overprints they totally relate to Pakistan subject.

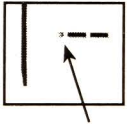


STEREO 1: Colon type stop at the end of 1st address line. Dividing line faded at lower end.

STEREO 1A: Colon type stop at the end of 1st address line. Dividing line faded at lower end. The 'fade-out' is slightly bigger.



STEREO 2: A stop at the end of three dash-lines also at the start of the last one.



Dividing line thin at top & thicker at base.

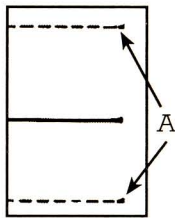
STEREO 3: A stop at the end of 1st dash-line.

Dividing line tapered at top



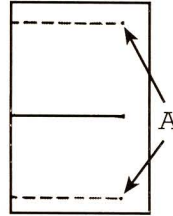
4th dash in the last line is smaller

STEREO 4: A stop each at the end of three dash-lines larger after 2nd & 3rd. Solid address line also blobbed at end.



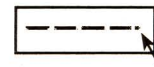
Last address line shows a smaller and faint dash in the start.

STEREO 5: A stop each at the end of three dash-lines larger after 1st. Solid line also blobbed at end.

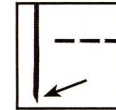


Last address line shows a smaller and faint dash in the start. Dividing line thin at top thick at base

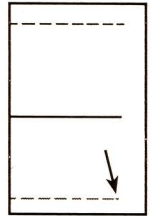
STEREO 6: 1st dash-line is slightly smaller from right, showing a stop at end. All dashes fine and regular in strength.



Dividing line tapered at lower end.

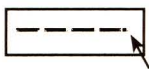


STEREO 7: Very small dashes at the start and end of last line. Generally dashes are very thin.



Dividing line regular in strength, only tapered at top

STEREO 8: 1st dash-line is slightly smaller from right, 2nd shows a stop at end. All dash-lines show thicker dashes at start.



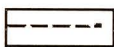
'P' of 'POST' shows smaller lower right serif.



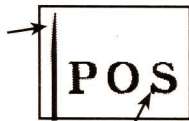
4th to 7th dash in the last line are weak.



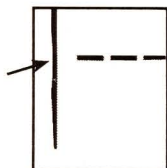
STEREO 9: Small stop-like dash at the end of last line.



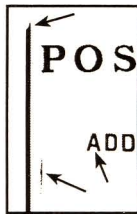
Dividing line tapered at top, 'S' of 'POST' shows blobbed lower serif.



Dividing line damaged near lower end



STEREO 10: Central dashes of 1st and 2nd dash-lines are thicker.



'A' of 'ADDRESS' tilted to right and a line appear parallel to dividing line.

The dividing line extends 9.5mm below level of last address line.

STEREO 10A: Same as Stereo 10 but later state.

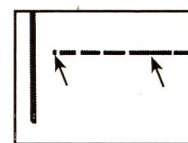


The line that appears parallel to dividing line is longer and strengthened

STEREO 11: 9th & 10th dashes in the 2nd line are tapered and tilted. Stop after 2nd line and at both ends of last line.

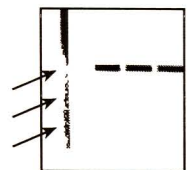


4th & 5th dashes in the last line joint as one long dash.

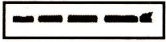


STEREO 12: Stop after 1st & 2nd dash-lines. Last line slightly longer than the rest.

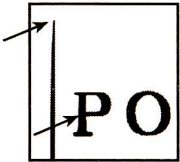
The Dividing line is damaged at lower end.



STEREO 13:
Stop after 1st address line. 17th to 19th dashes in 2nd line are faded.



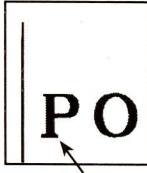
4th & 5th dashes in the last line joint as one long dash.



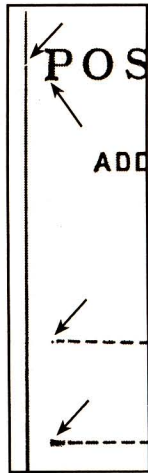
STEREO 14:
Stop after 1st, 2nd & 3rd dash-lines. 1st dash in top line missing.



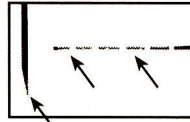
The 'P' of 'POST' shows smaller lower right serif.



STEREO 15:
Dividing line tinned at top with a break at left of 'P'. Curved base serif of 'P'.

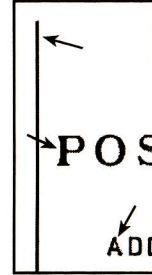


STEREO 16:
Stop after 2nd dash-line. 1st Dropped dash at end if 1st and smaller dash at end of last line.



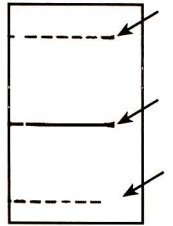
Dividing line tinned at top and sharply tapered and shortened at base. first 5 dashes of last line weak.

STEREO 17:
2nd, 3rd & 4th address lines thickened at end. Dividing line placed upwards. Extending only 2.5mm below level of last line and 8.5mm above 'P'.



'P' of 'POST' curved in and narrow 'A' in 'ADDRESS'.

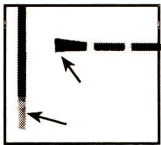
STEREO 18:
1st & 2nd dash-lines thickened at start & end. 3rd line thick and squarish at end, 4th last dash omitted. Dividing line placed upwards extending only 2mm below level of last line and 7.5mm above 'P'.



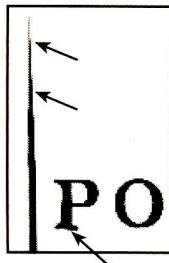
STEREO 19:
All address lines thickened at both ends except solid line which is normal at start. The 1st and last dashes of the 4th line are peculiarly thick.



Lowest 1.5mm of dividing line is faded.

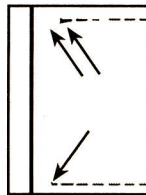


STEREO 20:
'P' of 'POST' shows slightly tilted base serif. Dividing line sharply pointed at top.

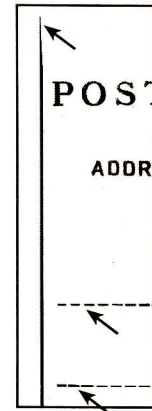


2nd & 3rd dash lines show thicker dashes in centre and ends, 1st shows thicker dashes in centre and at right.

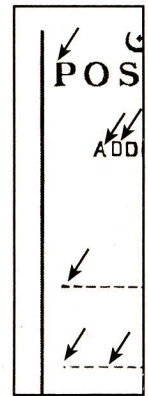
STEREO 21
2nd dash-line shows the first dash omitted. The starting dash pressed & thickened, 4th dash smaller, with larger spacing. The first dash of last line is smaller accompanied by a dot. Most of the dashes in 2nd line are thin.



STEREO 22
1st dash-line shows thinner dashes at left and thicker in middle. 2nd line shows thick dashes at ends and thinner in middle except for dash 17-19 which are thick.



STEREO 23
Almost no top serif of 'P', weak right side of 'A' and narrow 1st 'D' in 'ADDRESS' First 21 dashes in 2nd line thin and the remaining 10 thick. Solid line blobbed at end.



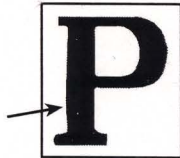
STEREO 23A

Same as Stereo 22 but later state, showing dash 20 in 2nd line almost omitted, last dashes of 1st line weakened and right side of 'A' damaged further.



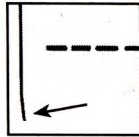
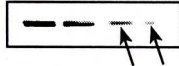
STEREO 24

Vertical of 'P' in 'POST' swelled. Starting dashes of 1st & 2nd lines slightly thicker. Last address line has an extra dash at end (32 instead of 31 dashes)



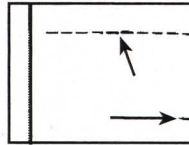
STEREO 25

Last two dashes of 1st and last lines weak. Dividing line thin with lower tie turned towards right.



STEREO 26

'P' of 'POST' weak. Dashes 5 & 6 of 2nd line thick. Solid line tapered from left and thickened at right with a break at 6mm before end.



STEREO 27

Thick base serif of 'P'. Though there are many minor peculiarities of this stereo but the Thick Base Serif of 'P' is the most significant characteristic.



**Superintendent,
Lost Property Office,
N. W. R., Lahore.**

N.W.R.—1224/1-B.—1947-48—1,300 P.C.

CM83

for **General Manager.**

NOTE—If the amount is not received within one month please refer to this office again quoting this letter as reference.

N.W.R.—4507/1—1949—5,000 C.

CM126

Yours faithfully,

N.W.R.—4505/1—1949—23,000 C.

CM18

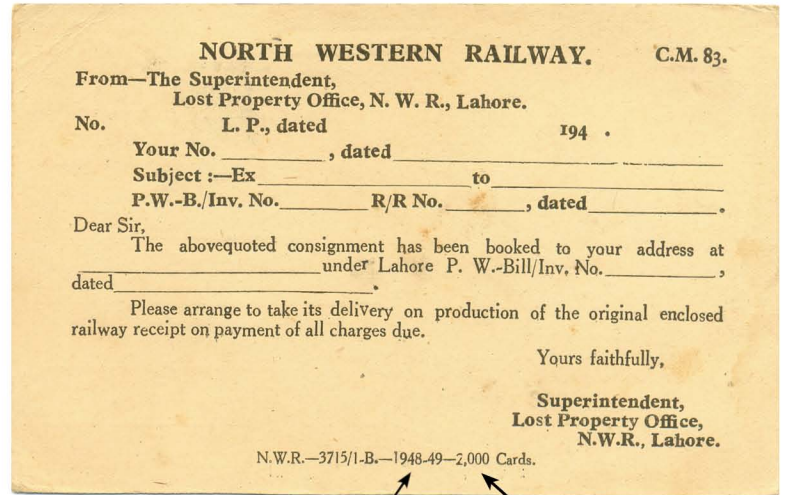
2. **The study of the (PAKISTAN/SERVICE) Nasik Overprint, on the imprinted stamp:** Almost totally ignored but recent study has identified about 6 different sub-types of the Nasik Opt.

3. **The study of the (PAKISTAN) Lahore II Overprint, and the 'SERVICE' opt. on the imprinted stamp:** Recent study has identified several different sub-types of the Lahore and 'SERVICE' opt. 14 New discoveries included.

4. **The study of the (PAKISTAN) Lahore Overprint on 3p KGVI Service stamp:** This had been thoroughly studied in the past. The study automatically becomes an essential part of the Railway postcards as the 3p Lahore Service stamps is always affixed to it.

5. **The study of the forms printed on the reverse of these Railway Postcards:** This includes a study in light of the knowledge already cultivated in the past + new 8 different sub-types + the errors, varieties not studied before.

Most interesting part of this section is that there are four types that exist only in small numbers CM83 1947-48 1300 cards each. This quantity, which is considered low even for modern item, is extremely low for an item of the forties and an awakening for philatelists. An example with 'C.M.83' 1948-49 form printed on the reverse of a Nasik optd. postcard, shows the quantity expressed in the last line as '**2,000 Cards**'



THE NEW FACTS:

Combining Chapters 1 & 2, it has been proven, that at the time of Independence (or a little before) when the Nasik Press was to overprint the current 'Half Anna' KGVI postcards with the words 'PAKISTAN' (bilingually) and its 'SERVICE' version, new plates were prepared, probably comprising 24 stereotypes of the postcards. The **mother sheets** were printed and soon after overprinted with a **mother plate of 24 overprints**, and then cut into single pieces. This is established by the fact that each of the sub-types of the opt. falls in combination of a particular stereo. Eg. 'Rounded P' always falls on Stereo 1, 'Large P & N' on Stereo 2, 'Slant P' on Stereo 3, 'Tapered P' on Stereo 7, 'Slant P' on Stereo 8, 'Thick N' on Stereo 10, etc.

Previously it was thought that the available postcards of KGVI, already printed and cut, were overprinted when ordered which is not so. Further it has not been mentioned anywhere in previous literature that for the Service postcards Nasik Press used a **composite plate** comprising of the Urdu word, 'PAKISTAN' and 'SERVICE'. The later two words are always slightly over 1mm apart.

At the end, just for the enthusiasts, the **Urdu word is spelt wrongly as 'Paksitan'** with the slant stroke under the word placed wrongly under the 3rd letter 'se' instead of the 2nd letter 'ka'. I suppose nobody bothered to note, as many of the other aspects of the Railway Postcards, a subject apparently dead, assumed to be dormant, and now ready to blow.

Left: Issued version (wrong), and Right: Correct (unadopted) version at right.

This is certainly the reason nobody cared to accumulate a collection or prepare a study exhibit on the subject. Probably in last 65 years this exhibit is the first, hopefully not the last. These Railway postcards still stack ignored in cartons, seemingly with no future but my opinion is totally vice versa.