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Volume 46/4



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Magazine Editor

Ben Jansen
1308 Pin Oak Drive
Dickinson, TX 77539-3400
asnpmagazine@gmail.com

President

HansPaul Hager
465 Potter Rd.
North Kingstown, RI 02852
hphager@aol.com

Vice President

Franklin Ennik
3168 Tice Creek Drive #3
Walnut Creek, CA 94595
ennik123@att.net

Treasurer

Hans Kremer
50 Rockport Ct.
Danville, CA 94526, U.S.A.
hkremer@usa.net

Secretary

Ben Jansen
1308 Pin Oak Drive
Dickinson, TX 77539-3400
bjansen@uh.edu

Board of Governors

Jan Verster, Vancouver, Canada
John Hornbeck, Washington D.C.
Benjamin Bump, Hampden, MA

Advertising Manager

Meindert Mossel
Lijsterlaan 21
1971 KT IJmuiden
The Netherlands
Mgry21@planet.nl

Librarian

Stuart Leven
stulev@ix.netcom.com

Auction Manager

Hans Moesbergen
12739 W. Wilshire Drive
Avondale, AZ 85392-6563
hans@moesbergen.net

Webmasters

Alex Nuijten
stampculture@gmail.com
Arno Kolster
akolster@mindspring.com

British Representative

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Meindert Mossel

German Representative

Peter Heck

Magazine Editorial Committee

Tony Schrier
tschrier@aol.com

Editor's Message

March, 2022

Dear Fellow Collectors,

Believe it or not, but Spring is near in the Houston area, Covid cases are way down and we may be back to 'normal' soon, unless another variant pops up, of course.

I am hard at work preparing for the Greater American Stamp Show to be held in Sacramento in August (see page 90). If all goes according to plan, I will present two Netherlands exhibits, both dealing with undeliverable mail. One is an expanded version (seven frames) of the five-frame exhibit that received Large Vermeil at last year's GASS in Chicago. The second one is a four or five-frame new exhibit dealing with forms, labels and markings used to deal with incorrectly addressed mail. Hopefully some of you will be able to attend the show, and if you do, let me know so that we can meet.

(International) travel plans are plentiful, but the realization waits for an easing of the Covid restrictions and mandatory tests. In the mean time, cheers,

Ben

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Advice to Authors

Please submit your text in MS Word, and indicate where each illustration belongs. Submit illustrations as full color scans (at 300 dpi or better). Contact the Magazine Editor in case of questions.

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Coding place identifiers and coding ribbons in Amsterdam (1979-1999). Part 2.

by Jos. M.A.G. Stroom

THE END OF THE TEST FACILITY IN AMSTERDAM

April 1985 can be marked as the end of the Test facility in Amsterdam. The printers had taken their final form whereby the KPK was printed via the orange-red coding ribbon with a hammer mechanism. However, Amsterdam was not at the forefront of this.

THE STATE OF AFFAIRS IN THE COUNTRY

Between June 29 and August 5, 1982, forty HIAs with KPK hammer mechanism were put into operation at the APVS department in Expedition Hub Rotterdam. The main purpose was to gain experience in the exchange of indexed mail between two offices.

The HIAs in Rotterdam had three-digit KPKs with the Basic Right position. Right from the start they were applied via the coding ribbon. The first KPK number sequence was a bit strange and consisted of 40 numbers from an (incomplete) sequence between **103** and **175**. In October 1982 this was changed to the KPK consecutive series **101 - 140** [6].

Thus, Rotterdam had printers with hammer mechanism long before they were used in all the HIAs in Amsterdam (Figure 24). Arnhem too was ahead of Amsterdam. On 5 July 1983 the APVS department in Expedition Hub Arnhem started, primarily set up for the Giro Service. It happened even before the final decision was taken to set up a APVS department in all Expedition Hubs.



Figure 24: Letter from June 29, 1982, the first day of indexing in Rotterdam, with high KPK number **150** (Base Right). At the end of October 1982 all KPKs above 140 were replaced by the missing numbers in the series 101 to 140.

In Arnhem, the KPK series was continued with the numbers **141** to **166**. From 1 February 1984, sooner than planned, also ordinary mail was included in the indexing and sorting process (Figure 25). The Arnhem KPKs are a little smaller than those from Rotterdam as can be seen in Figure 25.



Figure 25: Starting February 1st, 1984, ordinary mail was also indexed and sorted in Arnhem, such as this letter of February 23, 1984 with KPK **150**. A slightly larger version of KPK **150** was part of the first KPK series used in Rotterdam.

In the other AVPS departments the KPK numbering was continued up to KPK **387** in Groningen. After that, as we shall see later, alpha-numerical KPKs were introduced in each Expedition Hub.

SPARE PRINTERS

For the sake of clarity, I deviate from the chronological order in this paragraph.

Simultaneously with the commissioning in April 1985 of the three-digit KPKs (series **001** to **020**), Amsterdam received three spare sprinters with the three-digit KPKs **021**, **022** and **023**. In September 1986, a fourth spare printer with KPK **024** (Figure 26) was added.



Figure 26: KPK **024**, Base Right, (enlarged at right) from a spare printer in Amsterdam on a letter of October 26, 1995.

Spare printers were only used in case of a malfunction or maintenance of one of the regular printers and therefore their KPKs occur at irregular intervals on mail items.

It is remarkable that these three-digit spare KPKs remained in use in Amsterdam for quite some time (until 1995/1996). So even long after the alphanumeric KPKs were introduced.

In the spare printers at other Expedition Hubs, R-numbers (R = reserve; spare) were commonly used (e.g., **R01** to **R04** in Rotterdam). Subsequently, this also happened in Amsterdam: in addition to the KPKs from the spare printers with the KPKs **021** to **024**, KPK **R22** appeared in July 1986 (Figure 27) and **R033** in February 1987 (Figure 28).



Figure 27: KPK **R22**, Base Right, (enlarged at right) from a spare printer from Amsterdam on a letter dated February 2, 1991.

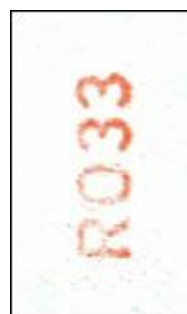


Figure 28: Letter from December 19, 1988 with KPK **R033**, Base Right, (enlarged at right) from a spare printer from Amsterdam.

R22 had already been used for a short time in Rotterdam in April and May 1986, and I know of one imprint with **R22** from Haarlem from June 1986. It is doubtful whether the printer with **R22** was actually present in Expedition Hub Haarlem. It was not unusual that postmarked mail from Haarlem, when it was very busy there, was sorted during the evening in Amsterdam.

In any case KPK **R22** was used in Amsterdam with great regularity in the period July 1986 till September 1998.

KPK **R033** was first encountered in February 1987. It remained in use for several years. The last imprint known to me is from August 1986.

I cannot explain why **R22** was issued without the number **0** while **R033** included the number **0**. It can be observed however that there was little coordination nationwide regarding the numbering and the letter- or number sizes. The result is quite some variation in the HIA KPKs and spare KPK's lay-out!

THE NATIONWIDE INTRODUCTION OF ALPHANUMERICAL KPKs

On April 18, 1986, the twenty numerical HIA KPKs in Amsterdam were replaced by alphanumerical KPKs. Now the KPKs started with the letters **ASD**, followed by a serial number starting at **1**.

This change was implemented in all Expedition Hubs. All APVS departments received a series of alphanumerical KPKs, everywhere starting with serial number **1** and preceded by two or three letters corresponding to the initials of the place name where the Expedition Hub was located.

Table II lists, in chronological order of introduction, the Expedition Hubs that received alphanumerical KPKs in April and May 1986, together with the initials and the numbers of the first-issued series. The Expedition Hubs Zwolle, 's-Hertogenbosch and Leeuwarden were opened later. They had alphanumerical KPKs from the start.

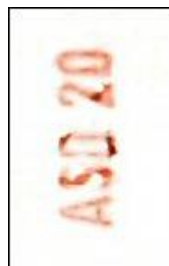
Table 2: Overview per EKP of the nation-wide introduction of the first series of alphanumerical KPKs.

In April and May 1986, these KPKs replaced the existing series. For the final three EKPs on the list the alphanumerical KPKs were the first series issued.

April, 18	1986	Amsterdam	(ASD 1 – ASD 20)
April, 22	1986	Haarlem	(HLM 1 – HLM 39)
April, 24	1986	Rotterdam	(RT 1 – RT 28)
April, 25	1986	's-Gravenhage	(GV 1 – GV 50)
April, 28	1986	Utrecht	(UT 1 – UT 44)
April, 29	1986	Arnhem	(AH 1 – AH 26)
May, 2	1986	Roosendaal	(RSD 1 – RSD 28)
May, 13	1986	Sittard	(STD 1 – STD 30)
May, 14	1986	Groningen	(GN 1 – GN 22)
August, 18	1986	Zwolle	(ZL01 - ZL12)
May, 26	1987	's-Hertogenbosch	(Ht01 - Ht46)
September, 1	1987	Leeuwarden	(Lw01 - Lw19)

THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT IN AMSTERDAM

On April 18, 1986 Amsterdam had the honor of being the first Expedition Hub to use the new alpha-numeric KPKs (Figure 29).



*Figure 29: Letter dated April 18, 1986, the first day of the new alpha-numerical KPKs, with KPK **ASD 20** (enlarged at right), at that time the highest number in the series.*

On May 5, 1986, barely three weeks later, Amsterdam got 35 new HIAs and KPK stamping devices with the serial numbers **21** to **55**. To everyone's surprise however not with the letters **ASD**, but with only the two capital letters **AS** (Figure 30).

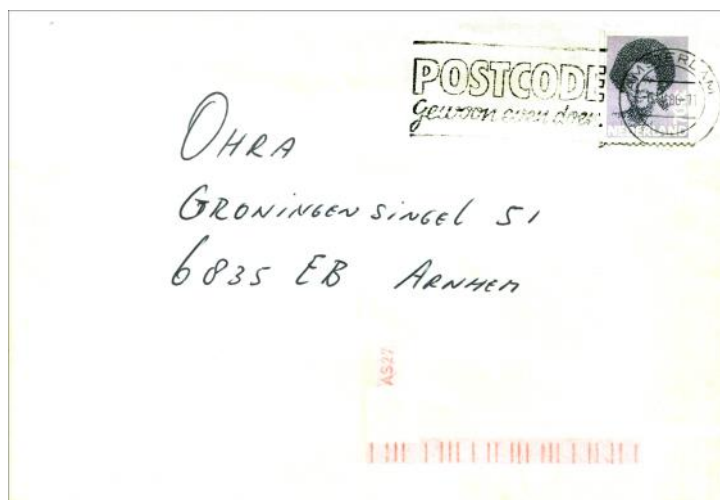


Figure 30: Early letter of 6 May, 1986, with a KPK with the letters **AS** and serial number **27**. Note the different font. Enlarged detail at right.

This KPK series was short lived, because on August 12, 1986 they were replaced by **ASD21** to **ASD55** (Figure 31). Apparently something had gone wrong when ordering the KPK stamping blocks!

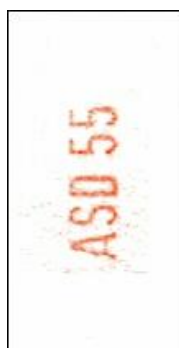


Figure 31: Letter dated November, 10 1986, with the new KPK **ASD 55**, replacing KPK **AS55**. Enlarged detail at right.

KPK **AS31** was an exception. It was never replaced and remained in use until 1998. In contrast, KPK **ASD31** has never existed (Figure 32).



Figure 32: Late use of KPK **AS31** (enlarged at right) on a letter of June, 23 1995. All other KPKs with the letters **AS** had been removed from circulation about 10 years earlier.

Apart from some details that will be discussed below, this brings me to the end of the listing of the KPKs from Amsterdam which were printed by means of and in the color of the coding ribbon.

In the overview in Table 3, they are all listed once more in chronological order.

Table 3: Chronological overview of the KPKs in Amsterdam, printed via the coding ribbon, in the period October 1980 until the end of the use.

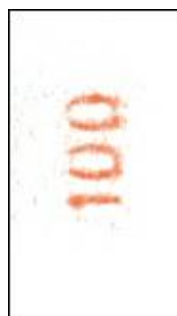
October 1980 – May 1981	HIA nr. 10	trial with 238 (horizontal position)
October 7 – 21, 1981	HIA nr. 10	trial with 010 (BR)
June 1984 – May 16, 1986	Alimas	Letters between A and N (BR)
April 1985 – April 17, 1986	HIAs	001 - 020 (BR)
April 1986 – 1995-1996	HIAs	spare 021 - 023 (BR)
April 18, 1986 – end of use	HIAs	ASD 1 – ASD 20 (BR)
September 1986 – 1995	HIA	spare 024 (BR)
May 5, 1986 – Aug. 11, 1986	HIAs	AS1 - AS55 (BR)
May 5, 1986 – end of use	HIA	AS31 (BR)
July 1986 – end of use	HIA	R22 (BR)
Aug. 12, 1986 – end of use	HIAs	ASD 21 - ASD 30 (BR)
Aug. 12, 1986 – end of use	HIAs	ASD 32 - ASD 55 (BR)
February 1987 – end of use	HIA	R033 (BR)

TWO SPECIAL CODING DEVICE IDENTIFIERS

The first KPK from Amsterdam that deserves special attention is KPK **100**, which is applied by the so-called Socodex-100. Socodex-100 is the original name of the Philips ‘Handindexerapparaat’ (HIA) (manual coding device). This device was used a number of times during demonstrations and also as a test or extra device in various EKPs.

The word Socodex is probably an abbreviation of ‘Sorteercode index’ (sorting code index), a precursor of the name ‘Handindexerapparaat.’

In late May and early June of 1986 this device was used in Amsterdam. The reason or occasion is unclear. From that period only one letter from Amsterdam with KPK **100** is known to me (Figure 33).



*Figure 33: Letter dated May 28, 1986 with KPK **100** (enlarged at right), Base Right, sent from Amsterdam to The Hague and indexed with the Socodex-100. Why this coding device was in use there is unknown to me, .*

A second remarkable KPK is **ASD 20**, printed in an unusual position. From mid-December 1990 to late January 1991 this KPK was printed in a Basic Left position (Figure 34) instead of the normal Basic Right position. The only reasonable explanation for this anomalous position is that the stamping device was incorrectly mounted on the hammer mechanism. This suspicion of a wrong mounting seems to be confirmed by the fact that on all imprints the letters ASD are almost completely missing, suggesting that it was not well-positioned.

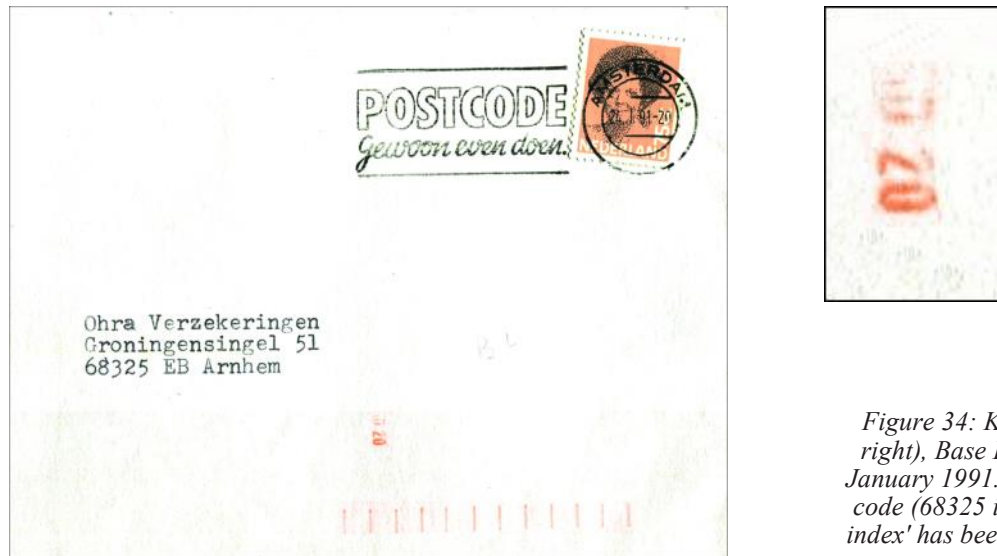


Figure 34: KPK **ASD 20** (enlarged at right), Base Left, on a letter dated 24 January 1991. Due to a mistyped postal code (68325 instead of 6835), a 'reject index' has been applied to the envelope.

NEW RED CODING RIBBONS

During the period January - March 1990, the color of the sorting index and the KPK was different, being more red than orange. A different brand of coding ribbon was used during this period. Problems had arisen with the timely delivery of the orange-red fluorescent silk coding ribbons. A switch was made to red fluorescent nylon ribbons from another supplier. After some time it turned out that the quality of these nylon ribbons was not satisfactory (too much wear and tear) so the silk ribbons in the familiar orange-red color were put back into use (Figure 35).

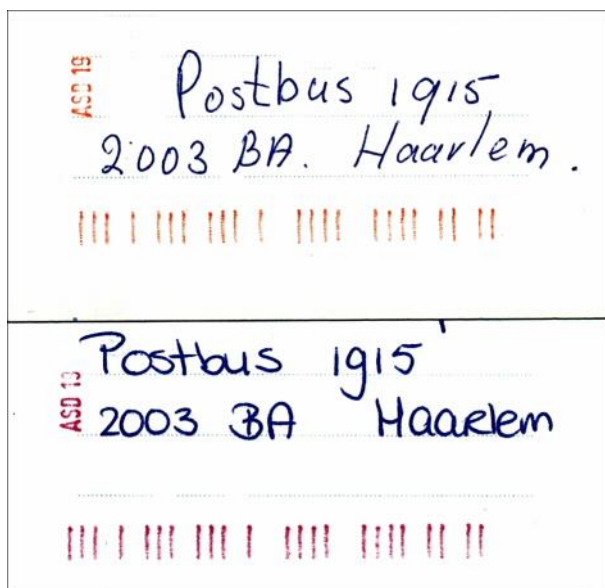


Figure 35: Sorting indexes and KPK **ASD 19** in different colors. On top the original orange-red color applied with a silk coding ribbon, below the much redder color applied with a nylon coding ribbon.

The temporary use of the nylon coding ribbons was not unique to Amsterdam. For several months these ribbons were used in all EKPs and also in spare printers that had been deployed in that period (Figure 36).

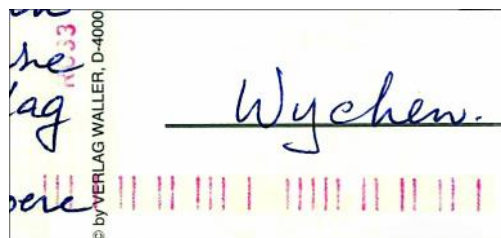


Figure 36: Postcard of March 21, 1990 showing a red sorting index and spare KPK R033 both applied with the temporarily-used nylon coding ribbon. Enlarged detail at right.

THE LAST DATES OF USE OF THE KPKs

In many philatelic collecting areas it happens that the start (FDC, first day of use, earliest known date, etc.) is carefully documented. But often less attention is paid to accurately recording the last dates of use because interest is then waning. Unfortunately this is also the case with my coding device identifier collection. So unfortunately I cannot give accurate dates of the last use [7].

It is striking that in my collection a large number of late-date mail pieces processed in Amsterdam originate from abroad. To conclude this article, two of these letters are shown in Figures 37 and 38.



Figure 37: Letter dated December 23, 1998 and sent from France to Honselersdijk. Indexed upon arrival in the Netherlands in Amsterdam in HIA 3. With KPK ASD 3, Base Right. Enlarged detail at right.

In 1999 and beyond a considerable part of the mail was processed in new advanced sorting machines which were equipped with address recognition software. As far as the addresses could not be read automatically, the mail was processed in Alima, Vicoma and OVIS systems and no longer in HIAs. As from 2000, these manual coding devices became things of the past.

More about the Alima, Vicoma and OVIS systems can be found in recent issues of Netherlands Philately [8].

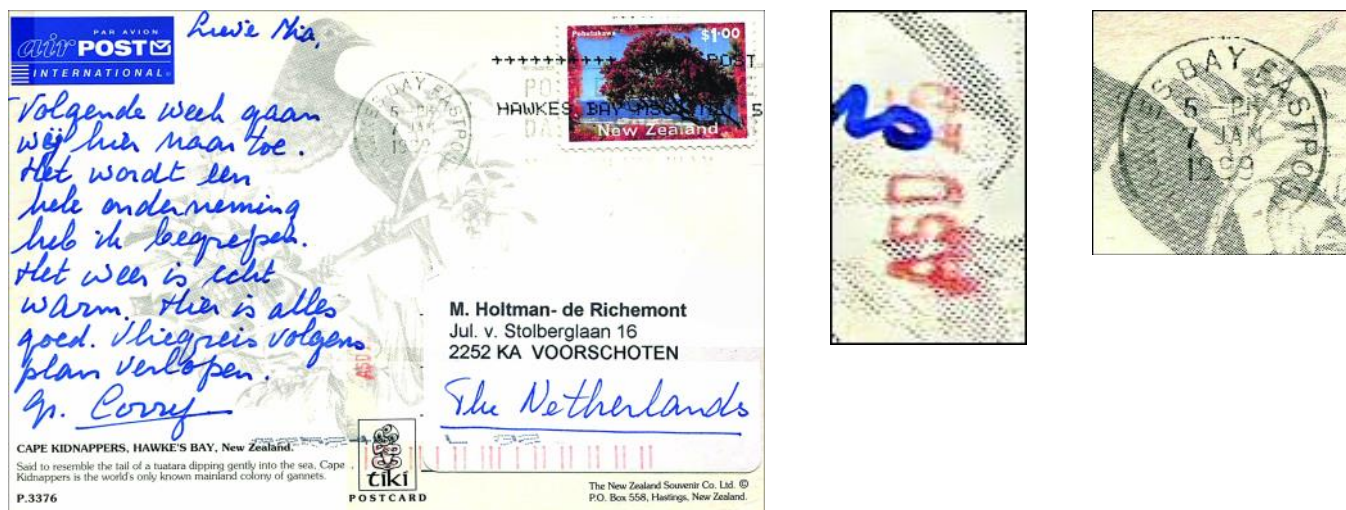


Figure 38: At left, a postcard dated January 7, 1999 sent from New Zealand to Voorschoten. Upon arrival in the Netherlands, HIA 25 in Amsterdam applied a sorting index and KPK ASD 25 to the postcard (enlarged detail in center). At right an enlargement of the postmark.

NOTES

6) Jos M.A.G. Stroom, Postcode in Nederland, Lijst van KodeerPlaatsKentekens (KPK's) 1978 – 1988, Publication No. 3 of UV, Studiegroep voor Postmechanisatie, October 1988. This publication can also be found on the website of Po & Po: Lijst van KodeerPlaatsKentekens – Po & Po (po-en-po.nl)

7) Ultra Violet, magazine of UV, Studiegroep voor Postmechanisatie, 1970 – 1999. In May 2017 a CD-ROM was released containing all periodicals of UV, Studiegroep voor Postmechanisatie and her successor the Groep Postmechanisatie.

8) Eddie IJspeed, Dutch coding- and sorting systems and their effect on mail items, in Netherlands Philately Volume 45/5 to 46/2.

[This is the second (and final) part of the third chapter of 'In de ban van UV-licht, merktekens en codestreepjes.' Future issues of Netherlands Philately will have subsequent (parts of other) chapters of this book issued upon the 50-year jubilee of the Post Mechanization Group of Po & Po.]

Security markings on Dutch East Indies stamps, c. 1880 – 1910.

by Allan F. Westphall

The use of security markings applied to stamps is a minor but complex field of philatelic study. The application of security marks was widespread on Asian mail, especially from Hong Kong and Singapore, from the final decades of the nineteenth century. The website of the Hong Kong Security Markings Study Group records more than 1000 different markings (including company perfins) on mail dating until the first decades of the twentieth century (<http://rodsell.com/hksmsic/hksmsic.html>). Similarly, and in another online study, several hundreds of company markings, displaying either full name or initials, have been identified on stamps from the Straits Settlements (<https://michelhoude.com/BMSM/Index.html>).

In this short study, I present a few recent discoveries of company security markings from the Netherlands East Indies, and I show examples from my own collection. I argue that this field, albeit limited in scope and evidently not as extensive as in the case of Hong Kong and Straits Settlements postally used letters and stationery, is most definitely not without interest. It should be acknowledged as one facet of the complex landscape of classic Netherlands Indies postal history.

Definition

I take the terms “security marking” and “company/firm chop” to be synonymous. These markings were private or company marks applied to stamps after these had been affixed on envelopes but before they were cancelled by the postal authorities. In some territories the postal authorities permitted companies to mark their stock of postage stamps [1]. As such, these markings were private and non-postal, or at most quasi-postal, and their use was intended to safeguard against illicit re-cycling of stamps or prevent their being stolen. Usually they were applied by trading companies to prevent staff from using or selling stamps for their own profit. Later the perfin (i.e. perforated identification marks or company initials on adhesive stamps) became the standard method of indicating that postage stamps were company property, and were to be used solely on the company’s official mail. Thus, both security markings and perfins serve the double function of identifying the firm to which a postage stamp belonged and preventing it from being stolen or misused. These security measures were sometimes related to the hand-stamps and other markings that were applied by forwarding agents. Private and commercial forwarding agents were responsible for handling mail and organizing its dispatch through private and public carriers, and such agents sometimes had an interest in placing their forwarding markings on covers and on valuable adhesive stamps to document and advertise the forwarding operation and to prevent stamps from being removed and misused during transit.

Below, I will show examples of recently discovered security markings used in the Netherlands East Indies between circa 1880 and 1910. I wish to show the variety of security marking designs, and to argue that the use of security markings on stamps and postal stationery was predominantly a feature of large trading companies and plantations on the vast island of Sumatra. My research into this unexplored field is ongoing and new company chops come to light at regular intervals that may change the conclusions drawn in this brief study.

L. Platon, Batavia, Gouvernements Wijnleverancier

The cover presented in Figure 1 shows the red, oval company chop of L. Platon, one of the major trading companies in Batavia, which specialized primarily in the import of French wines, as well as sundry French delicacies and glassware. The company advertised their wines extensively in Dutch Indies newspapers and trading bulletins through the 1870s and 80s, and they called themselves “Gouvernements Wijnleverancier”, i.e., a supplier of wine to the government.

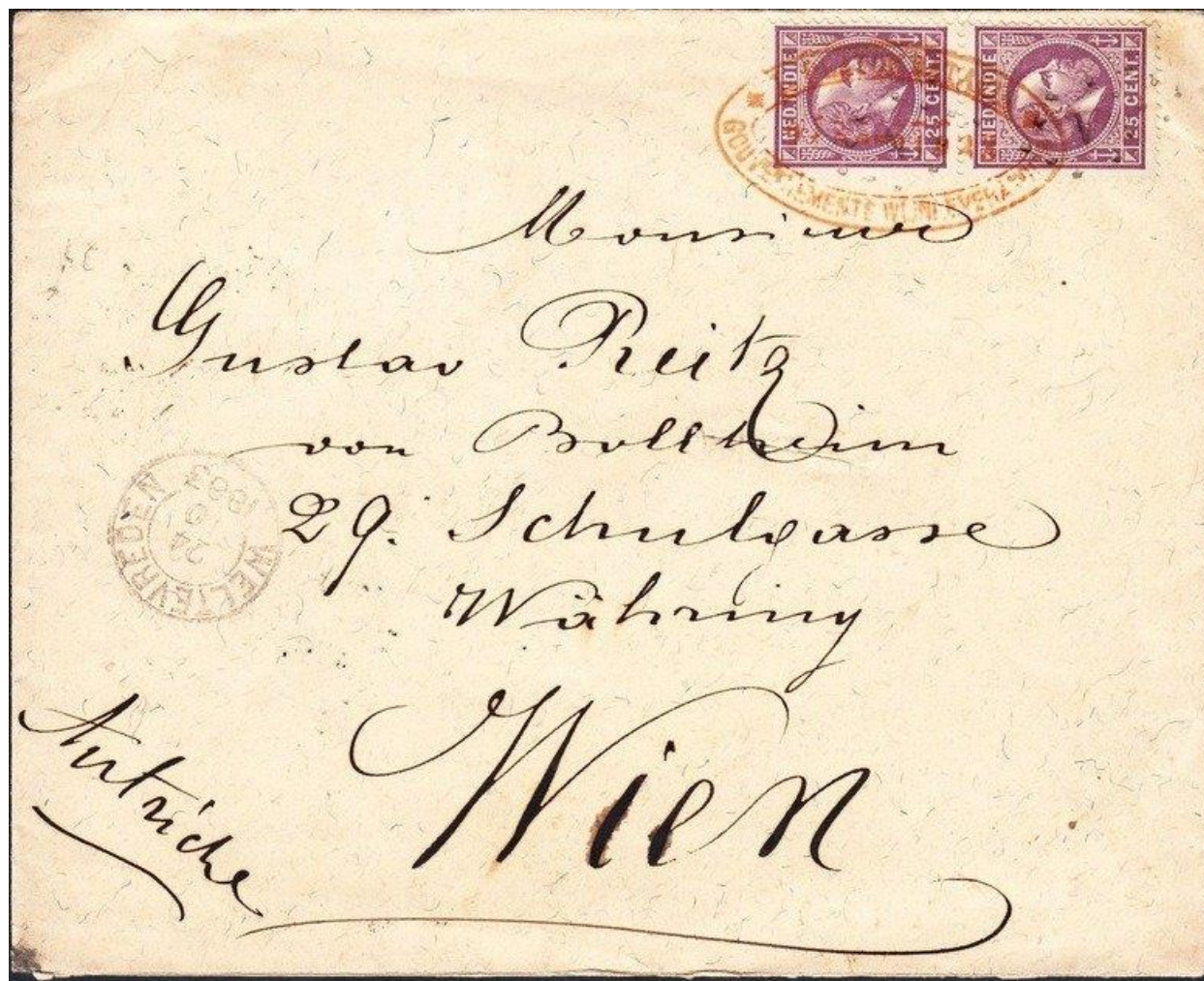


Figure 1: Weltevreden (Java) to Vienna (Austria) mailed on October 24, 1883.

The security marking that was struck on the stamps and cover carries the wording “L. Platon, Batavia, Gouvernements Wijnleverancier” and in the center of the oval is the date “24 OCT 1883”. This is one of only two dated security markings that I have come across (see also Nassauer & Co. below). The marking was struck partially on the stamps and partly on the cover, representing the typical practice of applying the marking in a way that carefully tied the stamps to the envelope or postcard.

The letter was of the second weight class and was franked by a pair of 25 cent stamps; it was sent from the Weltevreden district that was the administrative center of Batavia to Vienna in Austria and the stamps were postally cancelled by the numeral 1 of the Weltevreden Post Office. On the cover was placed the Weltevreden circular datemark of the “kleinrond” type of 24 October 1883, the same date as on the security marking. On the back of the envelope is printed the company name L. Platon, Batavia, where we also find the Vienna arrival mark of 25 November 1883.

Pabst & Schoop, Pagoerawan, North Sumatra

From the trading firm Pabst & Schoop, based in Pagoerawan, a small settlement east of Tebing Tinggi on the north east coast of Sumatra, was sent a letter to Ganterschwil in Switzerland in August 1888 (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Pagoerawan (Sumatra) to Ganterschwil (Canton Sankt Gallen, Switzerland), August 1888.

Unusually, the letter was not cancelled in Sumatra but instead in the Dutch Indies postal agency in Singapore. The stamp was obliterated with the comparatively scarce numeral 89 and beside it is the circular datemark Ned. Ind. Singapore 9 August 1888. In Singapore was also struck the framed routing cachet NED-INDIE VIA BRINDISI.

Tying the 25 cent stamp to the cover is a purple name stamp in a most peculiar typography, “E. P. Lijferman” (as best I can decipher it). I have been unable to learn anything about this individual, but my guess is that he was an administrator with the firm Pabst & Schoop and that his personal name stamp, obviously non-postal in nature, was applied in the company office to prevent misuse or theft of the postage stamp before it was obliterated by the postal authorities.

Krüse & Kaufmann, Deli, North Sumatra

The Swiss immigrant H. C. Bluntschli came to Deli in North Sumatra in the year 1885 to work for the German-Swiss Plantation Company. He was stationed with the Swiss company Krüse & Kaufmann, and sometime in the 1880s he sent the cover shown in Figure 3 to Nikolsburg in Austria (today Mikulov in the South Moravian region of the Czech Republic); the year we cannot know with certainty because the Deli datemark on the front and all transit and arrival marks on the obverse have been very poorly struck (but most likely 1886).



Figure 3: Deli (North Sumatar) to Nikolsburg (Austria).

On the back of the envelope the sender signed “H. C. Bluntschli, Laboean-Deli”, and franked the letter with 35 cent to match the registered UPU rate to Europe. The two stamps were then tied to the cover by the circular security marking in purple, “Krüse & Kaufmann – Deli”, and they were subsequently cancelled by the number cancel 84 of Deli. In the transit office in Penang the envelope was struck with the rectangular directional marking in purple for British packet steamer “NED: - INDIE, VIA BRINDISI”. The letter was transmitted from Penang on a British mail steamer that journeyed through the Suez Canal and into the Mediterranean before landing in the Italian port of Brindisi [2].

Nassauer & Co. in Atjeh, North Sumatra

Another trading firm that also resorted to security marking of mail was the tobacco trader Nassauer & Co. of Kotaradja in North Sumatra (today called Banda Aceh).

In fact, we know two different markings used by this firm. The first one is found on a little piece (Figure 4) with a 12½ cent stamp and is a reddish-pink circular mark with the wording “Nassauer & Co., Atjeh, Sumatra,” and in the center is the date “30 SEP 87”. The marking was struck centrally on the stamp and ties it to the piece. On top of the security chop is the numeral cancel 105 of the nearby expediting office Olehleh, which was opened as a postoffice in March 1882.



Figure 4: Security mark of Nassauer & Co., Atjeh, Sumatra.

The other type of marking is shown in Figure 5, and is a large, bold type that used the official town name in the Dutch era, Kota-Radja, and the marking is a double circular stamp, “Nassauer & Co., Kota-Radja – Atjeh”. This mark, struck in a dark purple ink, did not show a date. I have it on a postcard of the 7½ cent denomination that was issued in May 1892. The security chop was applied over the postcard face value and on top of it was struck the datemark of the “vierkant” (square) type Kotaradja 25 Apr. 1895. The card that contains a personal, non-commercial communication on the back was mailed to Frankfurt in Germany and shows the “vierkantstempel” dated 30 April 1895 applied by the Netherlands Indies postal agent based in Penang, British Malaya.



Figure 5: Kotaradja (North Sumatra) to Frankfurt am Main (Germany), April 25, 1895.

Tabak Maatschappij Amsterdam, Langkat, North Sumatra

The Amsterdam Tobacco Company in Langkat, North Sumatra used an oval cachet to secure stamps to a postcard sent to Escholzmann in the Canton of Lucerne in Switzerland in December 1899 (see Figure 6). The undated purple marking reads “Tabak Maatschappij Amsterdam, Langkat – Sumatra”. The postcard is in fact a picture postcard with pictures and prospects from Deli, a place that was the center for tobacco commerce. Like the postcard of Figure 5, it contains a brief personal greeting. The postcard was postmarked in Bindjei on December 5, 1899 and transited via the city of Medan and the postal agency in Singapore to finally arrive in Escholzmann on January 1, 1900.



Figure 6: Langkat (North Sumatra) to Escholzmann (Switzerland, December 1899.

Naudin Tencate & Co., Medan – Deli, North Sumatra

Naudin Tencate & Co. was an insurance company based in Medan, and we find them advertising extensively in various Dutch Indies newspapers around the year 1905.

The picture postcard shown in Figure 7 was sent from their company in February 1905 to a gentleman residing at the Hotel Montaigne in Paris. The two stamps that make up the 7½ cent UPU rate for a postcard to Europe were tied by an ornate, boxed marking in purple and with the text in three lines “Medan–Deli, Naudin Tencate & Co., Sumatra”. Subsequently the stamps were postmarked Medan 6 February 1905 and the following day the card transited via the Penang postal agency. It was not postmarked on arrival in Paris. The postcard is of a Japanese type, and the picture side shows a young, demure Japanese lady clad in traditional clothing.



Figure 7: Medan (Sumatra) to Paris (France), February 1905.

Zorab Mesrope & Co. Boeleleng, Bali

The importer and general trading company Zorab Mesrope & Co. had their head office in Surabaya on Java but also operated a branch in Boeleleng (the Dutch colonial capital for Bali; now Singaraja) on the north part of the island of Bali. A small oval company stamp of the Bali office was used to tie a 2½ cent stamp to a postcard that was sent to the British Telegraph Office in Isfahan (Figure 8).



Figure 8: Boeleleng (Bali) to Ispahan (Iran).

The same small company cachet was also applied to the bottom of the card, as well as to the correspondence side. The sender added the directional marking “via Batavia & Bombay”, and moreover indicated in the top left corner the English vessel *Ban Hin Guan*, a steamship that sailed regularly between Boeieleng via Soerabaja to Singapore.

The card was not cancelled on Bali, probably because it was delivered directly to the ship while in the harbor of Boeieleng. In Soerabaja the card entered the postal system and received a transit mark of 23 August 1893 and the face value was cancelled soon after on 26 August in the Weltevreden district of Batavia. Surprisingly, and surely contrary to regulations, the postage stamp was not postally cancelled en route, but was struck only by the Zorab Mesrope security chop. Next the card transited in Singapore 4 September and Bombay 18 September. Arriving in Persia, the card was postmarked in Boushir (today Bushehr, the port city in south Iran) 7 October 1893, before it arrived at the destination in Isfahan (date uncertain).

This postcard is remarkable, not merely for the rare destination and for having the only so far recorded security mark of the firm Zorab Mesrope & Co., and indeed from the island of Bali, but also for being the only example known to the author of a stamp that was cancelled solely by a security marking and not by any postal cancellation.

Conclusion

This article has introduced the subject of Dutch Indies security markings applied on postally used stamps and stationery around the year 1900. The very limited selection of security marks illustrated here point to the overwhelming use of such markings in the major trading firms and plantation offices in the northern parts of Sumatra and much less with the larger company headquarters on the island of Java. The letters here also show the rather consistent tendency to strike the company chops in purple color, and in such a way that they struck the stamps centrally while carefully tying these to the letter or postcard. It is noteworthy that a few of the company chops are found on personal and picture postcards, that is to say on non-commercial mail. These private postcards, with their succinct greetings and correspondence and exotic pictures, have a status as souvenir items from the Far East, and it seems that the elaborately designed security markings from remote trading stations in Sumatra also sometimes added to the exotic nature of this type of private postal correspondence.

Notes

- [1] In the postal guide from the Hong Kong Post Master General, issued in 1878, we find the following wording: “Box holders may mark stamps. Box holders (but box holders only) are at liberty to mark their postage stamps on the face or back, or by perforation, so as to prevent their being stolen. If the mark is on the face, it must be such as not to interfere with the clean appearance of the stamp. Stamps so marked will not be purchased.” I have not seen any similar directive from the Netherlands Indies.
- [2] This letter is in the collection of my fellow collector Dennis Purwoko, Surabaya, Indonesia, and I thank him for his help in writing up the comments for his letter and for granting permission to illustrate it here.
- [3] I wish to thank ASNP member Marinus Quist of Covington, Louisiana, USA for generous help and several helpful suggestions with this article.

Great American Stamp Show

As you may know, the Great American Stamp Show will this year take place in Sacramento, California in the SAFE Credit Union Convention Center, from August 25-28, 2022. [The Great American Stamp Show](#) is the largest annual stamp show held in the USA.

Those of you planning to attend (I will be there), please let me know, and perhaps we can organize an informal get-together.

Ben Jansen

Recent Issues

The year of the Tiger December 30, 2021

The sheet with two stamps celebrates the Chinese New Year; 2022 is the Year of the Tiger. The Tiger is the third animal in the twelve-year cycle of the Chinese zodiac.



Typically Dutch: Ice Skating January 3, 2022

Skating is one of the sports in which the Dutch excel, and the sheet with six stamps shows a speedskater with a stylized skating rink as background.



Experience Nature: Fort Ellewoutsdijk January 3, 2022

The sheet with ten stamps pays attention to the Fort Ellewoutsdijk, situated on the coast of Zuid-Beveland in the Province of Zeeland.



See also <https://www.postzegelblog.nl/>

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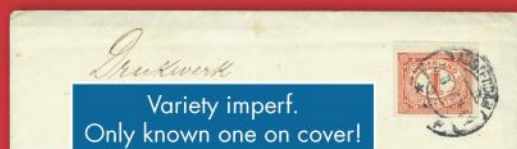
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