

UNRECORDED(?) PRESTAMP POSTAL MARKINGS

by Nestor C. Nunez

An article on the Philippine Postal Service until 1877 written by Emmanuel Encarnacion in 1987 (1) traced important events in Philippine postal history, identified the postmasters general, listed the post offices, enumerated other various postal related information, and identified eleven types of postal markings during the prestamp era. This article adds more information to Mr. Encarnacion's article, and suggests revisions to certain information. For the benefit of readers who do not have access to the article, the eleven types are reproduced below, with permission from the IPPS Journal editor. These types will be used in the following discussions (i.e.) T.1 refers to the boxed straight-line "FILIPINAS", and will be cross-referenced to an expanded list at the conclusion of this article.

Last year, I obtained from an auction at Westpex an entire (referred to subsequently as "Westpex cover") in 1783 from Manila (Fig. 1), addressed to "Monsieur Francois Bellettz" in Rome. The item was part of a lot of mixed prestamp materials, and was in an envelope indicating it was last auctioned by Robson Lowe of London on Feb. 6, 1963 (Lot No. 363). What makes this cover interesting are two postmarks, consisting of "FILIPINAS" in italics (T. 3), and "MA/NILA" inside an upright oval, both struck in red. As the "MA/NILA" marking was not among the postmarks identified in the foregoing list, this set off a mini research on the prestamp marking, which culminated in this short article.

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1. Straight-line "FILIPINAS" in a box, in red ink, placed in Spain on letters from the Philippines between 1776-1790.



2. Straight-line "MANILA" enclosed in oblong, in black ink, applied in Spain about 1820.



3. Straight-line "FILIPINAS." with period, stamped in Manila on letters from the Philippines, in red ink about 1837-1842 and also in black ink about 1824-1842.



4. Numeral handstamp with "Rs" or reales, applied as a local postal charge in Manila on incoming mails from Spain and colonies not yet prepaid and also from countries with which Spain had no postal treaty, from 1846 to 1850, in blue or black; numerals seen are 6R's and 792Rs.



5. Oval "FILIPINAS - Manila (or Mananila or Manilla) - date", applied from 1842-1844 in black.



6. Straight-line "MARCAS DE FRANQUICIA", applied in black in 1841-1843 in Manila on prepaid outbound mail.



7. Straight-line "FRANCA", applied also in black in 1838-1843 in Manila on prepaid outbound mail.

FRANCA

8. Circular dated "MANILA - 31 date 31 - ISs. FILIPs.", applied in black in 1843-1869 and also in blue in 1849-1854; the "31" stands for the Philippine Islands being the 31st postal demarcation of Spain.



9. Enclosed straight-line "FRANCO", applied in black and in blue in 1846-1855 on all prepaid outbound mail.



10. Circulater dated "MANILA - 31 date 31 - ISLs. FILIPI.", applied in blue in 1851 and also in black in 1851-1863.



11. Numeral handstamps without "Rs.", applied as a local postal charge in Manila on all incoming mail from countries with which Spain had no postal treaty, from 1852-1872 in black; numeral so far seen are 1, 1-1/2, 2, 3, 3-1/2, 5-1/2, 7 and 9.



In the course of researching this article, I went through some auction catalogues from Spain (which I previously had given cursory reading), and uncovered a number of interesting pieces of information which I missed before! The Soler & Llach, Barcelona auctions of June 1991 and February 1992 were particular gold mines, as they included several gems as follows:

June 1991 Auction

1. Lot 2287, 1787 entire to Rome with italic "FILIPINAS" (T.3) in red and "Franca Azas" inside a scalloped-line circle (Fig. 2).
2. Lot 2288, circa 1790 entire to Guatemala postmarked with "MANILA" inside an upright oval, and "3.P" inside an oblong, both struck in red (Fig. 3).
3. Lot 2289, 1819 to Mexico, postmarked "MANILA" inside box and oblong (T. 2), struck in black.
4. Lot 2290, front to Guatemala, postmarked "FILIPINAS" (T.3) and "3.P." in oval, corrected by a superimposed "4.U." also in oval, all stuck in red. The "4.U." marking was in turn superimposed with "6" manually.
5. Lot 2292, front to Spain with "FILIPINAS" (T.3) and "FRANCA" in upright Roman type (T.6).
6. Lot 2301, 1850 cover to Cadiz via Gibraltar, with boxed "Filipinas" (T.1) in red.
7. Lot 2303, 1851 cover to Spain, with double ring marking "31 MANILA 31/ISs. FILIPs." (T.8) and date in the inner circle, identified in the catalogue as "Type II" of the postal district 31 marking.

February 1992 Auction

8. Lot 3001, circa 1800 cover to Vitoria with T.3 and "4.U." in oval, both struck in red.
9. Lot 3002, 1838 cover to London, with T.3 and "FRANCA" on an arch-shaped alignment, claimed by the catalogue to be the only one known.
10. Lot 3005, 1847 cover to Spain via Singapore with T.1 in red.
11. Lot 3006, 1850 cover from Madrid to Manila, with tax of 6Rs (T.11).

A more detailed discussion of my Westpex cover and the foregoing lots are now in order. My entire (Fig. 1) had no other external markings, and because it is very fragile, I have not opened it entirely, although I have taken a peek inside the folds. The letter mentions "galleon", giving a basis for the supposition that the letter was carried by a Spanish galleon which travelled from Manila to Acapulco. This is also the supposition of a collector of Spanish Mexican postal history

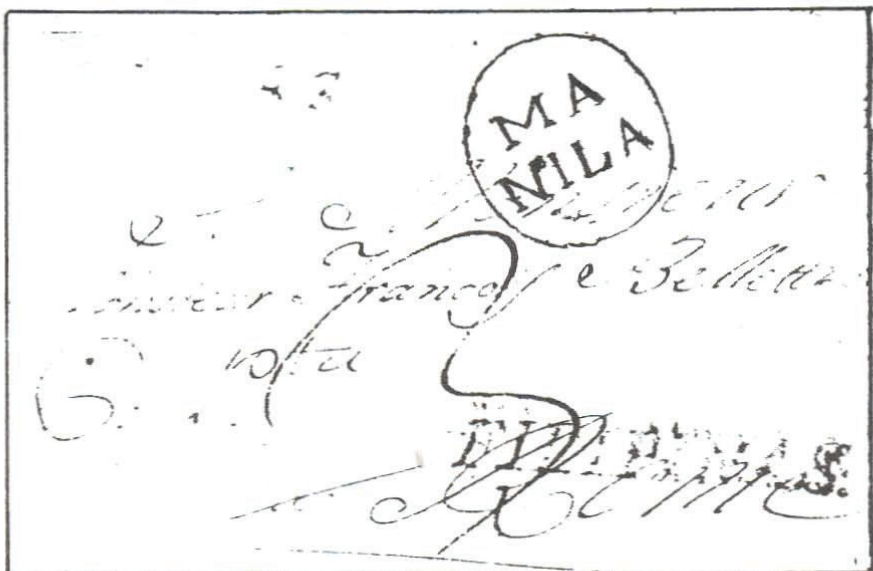


Fig. 1 "Manila" enhanced

who was an underbidder for the item. This entire shows a much earlier date of usage (by over 50 years) of T.3 to 1783, which the Encarnacion article concluded to be the year of the establishment of the Philippine postal service. Of more particular interest is the "MA/NILA" postmark. The letterings in this postmark are rather crude (compared to "FILIPINAS"), and were not strictly Roman in type. Although seriffed, the legs of the "M" and the "N" were not upright, making the letters broader at the top. The letterings are 5 mm. tall, and the upright oval measures 23 mm. at its broadest side and 27 mm. at its tallest. The inking of this marking, compared to that of "FILIPINAS" leads one to conclude that they were struck at the same time.

The Lot 2287 cover also shows very early usage of T.3, and is remarkable for the "Franca/Azas" marking. What makes this letter important, however, is that it is not only addressed to "IL Sig.r Francesco Belletti", but that a close examination of the penmanship shows that it was written by the same writer as my Westpex cover. It is slightly intriguing, however, why the writer would address this letter in Italian, compared to the French he used earlier. The writer could have been an important personage, and could have been related to the church; indeed, he could have been a member of the clergy.

Lot 2288 confirms the genuineness of my entire's "MA/NILA" marking. The marking in this cover is slightly different from mine, from comparison of the shape and position of the letters (Figs. 4a). The illustration in the catalogue was reduced, thereby not permitting

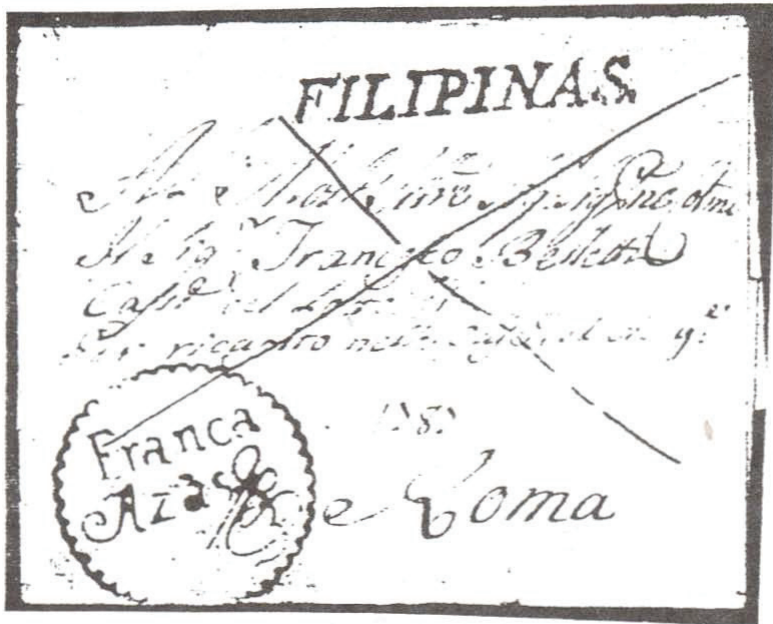


Fig 2

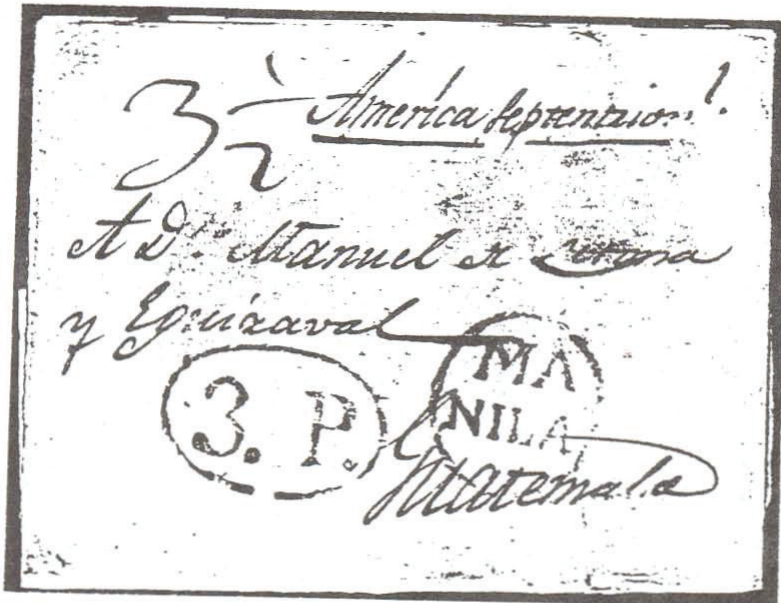


Fig 3

an accurate measurement of the letters and the upright oval; Fig 4a assumes that this other marking approximates the height of the letters of the Fig. 1 (also Fig. 4b) marking. This letter also shows an unrecorded marking, "3.P." enclosed in an oval, shown enlarged in Fig. 5.



Fig. 4a



Fig. 4b



Fig. 5

The Encarnacion article mentioned that T.1 and T.2 were "placed/ applied in Spain on letters from the Philippines..." The article cited W.R. Wellsted as the authority for this statement. Further reading of articles published by IPPS revealed that Wellsted made the following observation (2) which was quoted in an earlier Encarnacion article (3):

"In the early stages, mail was carried from Manila either via Mexico or Africa. It is impossible to differentiate which route was used, but the Bellini correspondence of 1779-1790 is useful as it shows the method of arrival of letters at Manila. It is clear that the regular service is the Acapulco Galleon but that occasional additional mails were carried by Spanish naval vessels via Africa.

At this time, letters from Manila were handstamped with the words "FILIPINAS" in black or red. This handstamp was applied on arrival in Spain and was used through until 1845."

The foregoing observation was then repeated in the article when describing one of the illustrations of prestamp letters. I do not have access to, nor have been able to read the entire Wellsted article, so I wonder on what he based the foregoing observation. I am aware of other postal systems using some type of marking to indicate a broad origin of incoming mail (for example the "INDIA" markings on letters from the East going to England). My limited knowledge of other postal histories has, so far, indicated that these markings are more generic, rather than specific. Where markings were specific,

they pertained to the point of receipt or transit handling of the mails (i.e. the various shipletter markings applied in English seaports), rather than the origin. I am therefore, more inclined to believe that the Wellsted statement is either incorrect, or if correct, does not rule out application of the postal markings at the point of origin. This is almost undisputedly supported by Lot 2288, 2289 and 2290, which were sent to Guatemala and Mexico. These letters obviously did not transit through nor reach Spain, thus disproving the theory that T.2 or other types were necessarily applied on arrival in Spain.

If one assumes that Wellsted is partially correct (that indeed such postal markings were applied in Spain), the situation raises several questions: which additional marking types were used in Spain, considering that up to 1845 (Wellsted's date), T.1 to 8 have been recorded as used during the prestamp era? Why was the practice changed in 1845? Why were some postmarks in red and others in black? (In other countries, early practice meant that a red postmark indicated prepayment, and black means postage needed to be collected). When did Manila finally start applying the postmarks? These are some which come quickly to mind.

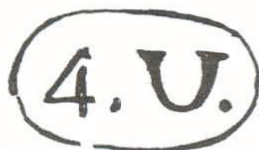


Fig. 6



Fig. 8

Moving on the other covers: the Lot 2290 cover shows another unrecorded marking, "4.U." enclosed in an oval. Again, it is not possible to measure the dimensions of the postmark in Fig. 6. The oval appears to be slightly larger than the "3.P"'s. Lot 2292 shows concurrent use of T.7 "FRANCA" with T.3, while Lot 2301 showed usage of T.1 in 1850, extending the later use of this postmark by sixty years. The handstamp had gotten so worn or dirty at this point that the top of "FIL" and the bottom of "IN" in "FILIPINAS" had merged with the border of the box.

Lot 2303 shows, at first glance, usage of T.8, dated January 3, 1851. The catalogue, however, mentioned that the postmark is Type II (Types I and III as illustrated in other lots conformed to T.8 and T.9), and indicated a reserve of 20 times the other two types. It went on to state that the postmark is exceptionally rare, having been used only during the first months of 1851, and that few are known. A closer
1:1/8



Fig. 7 (Manila) enhanced

examination of the color illustration shows that, while it is similar T.8 in inscriptions, the bars separation "31" from the upper and lower semi-circular tablets are not rounded outward; they are rather like those of T.10, except that of course, the lower inscription is "ISL. FILIPs." rather than "ISLs. FILIPI." As the separating bars are not outwardly rounded, there is more space between the bars and the lower inscriptions. A thorough examination of my collection revealed that I have one cover with this postmark (which together with T.9, is struck in blue), dated January 2, 1851! (Fig. 7). This postmark's outer circle measures 29 mm., while T.8 (Type II) is 28 mm. and (Type III) is almost 30 mm. As I assume that the postal offices were closed on New Year's day, January 2 was the first business day of the new year, thus making this date the earliest recorded usage date for this postmark.

The Lot 3001 item shows the "4.U." (Fig. 6) marking used also in the Lot 2290 item, and gives a rough estimation of usage circa 1800. The Lot 3002 "FRANCA" marking (Fig. 8, claimed to be unique so far) shows that T. 7 was not the only such marking in 1838, and raises the possibility that there could be other types yet undiscovered. A close examination of the illustration shows that the arch-like styling did not result from a deterioration of a T.7 handstamp, as the letters were crisp and not distorted. It is clearly of a style different from T.7. Lot 3005

confirms that the late usage of T.1 shown in Lot 2301 (1850) was by no means isolated. Finally, Lot 3006 adds "6Rs" to numerals listed in the Encarnacion article.

Taking the new information of the foregoing items, the list of prestamp postmarks should thus be expanded as follows:

Nunez	Encarnacion	Usage Dates, New Remarks
A.	1.	1776-1850 (new date), applied in red in Manila.
B.1	n/a	"MA/NILA" in oval (Fig. 4a)
B.2	n/a	"MA/NILA" in oval (Fig. 4b)
C.	n/a	"3.P." in oval (Fig. 5)
D.	2	1819 (new date) - 1820.
E.	n/a	"4.U." in oval (Fig. 6)
F.	3	1783 (new date) - 1842 in red - 1842 in black
G.	4	1846 - 1850 in black or blue
H.	5	1842 - 1844 in black
I.	6	1841 - 1842 in black
J.	7	1838 - 1843 in black
K.	n/a	"FRANCA" (Fig. 8)
L.	8	1838 in black 1843 - 1869 in black 1849 - 1854 in blue
M.	9	1846 - 1855 in black or blue
N.	n/a	"31" cancel (Fig. 7)
O.	10	1851 in blue
P.	11	1851 - well into the 1860s 1852 - 1872 (add "6Rs" to list)

It is the hope of the writer that this short article should stimulate more research into this fascinating period of Philippine postal history, and that other collectors should write about their finds. There could be gems unnoticed in collections, just like the T.N. which I uncovered serendipitously in the course of researching this article.

Editor's Note: As so often happens, the Franca/Azas reference has stirred a debate as to its meaning and usage. Rather than suggest a solution that might have to be rescinded later, Mr. Nunez has decided to pursue the matter further and present a more complete evaluation of this particular marking at a later date. If you can help, please contact the editor - information received will be passed on to the author.

Endnotes:

1. Encarnacion, Emmanuel, "The Philippine Postal Service Until 1877," *Philippine Philatelic News, IPPS, Vol. 9 Special Edition, November 1987.*
2. Wellsted, W.R., "Philippines Postal History to 1877," *Philatelic Magazine, London, Vol. 79, No. 5, February 1971.*
3. Encarnacion, Emmanuel, "Establishment of the Postal System of the Philippines," *Philippine Philatelic News, IPPS, Vol. 7, No. 1, January 1985* ■

PHILIPPINE COMMERCIAL POSTAGE STAMPS 1910-1936, Part IV by Arnold Warren

On stamps of the 1917-25 Regular Issue - Perforation 11. Unwatermarked

- 2c green (on Scott's No. 290b)
- 4c carmine (on Scott's No. 291)
- 10c deep blue (on Scott's No. 294)
- 20c orange yellow (on Scott's No. 297)
- 30c gray (on Scott's No. 299)
- 1p lilac (on Scott's No. 300)
- 16c olive green (Dewey) (on Scott's No. 303a)

1926 (June). Overprinted in black H MANILA P: I. in three lines of capitals between two horizontal triple lines, 19mm long. Each triple line consists of a heavy line between two thin lines. The overall height of the overprint 17.75 mm. This overprint (Type 9) was used by the H. E. Heacock Company until about 1929, when it was superseded by the overprint HEACOCK'S MANILA (Type 12).

On Stamps of the 1917-25 Regular Issue - Perforation 11. Unwatermarked

- 2c green (on Scott's No. 290b)
- 4c carmine (on Scott's No. 291)
- 6c lilac (on Scott's No. 292a)
red violet (on Scott's No. 292b)
- 8c orange brown (on Scott's No. 293a)
- 10c deep blue (on Scott's No. 294)
- 20c orange yellow (on Scott's No. 297)
- 30c gray (on Scott's No. 299)
- 1p lilac (on Scott's No. 300)