

British Asian stamps on overseas mail, 1870s

1874, Manila to Boucau, France

Until the Philippines joined the Universal Postal Union the stamps of the Philippines were not accepted for payment of mail to foreign countries except Spain and its colonies.

However, it was possible to prepay covers with stamps of the British territories of India, Hong Kong or Straits Settlements and benefit from the bilateral postal treaties from the British Empire. There are reports that British merchants in the Philippines offered these stamps on the Philippines. Therefore, these stamps were usually affixed to the covers on the Philippines. The covers were probably privately carried to the respective British territories.



The cover, franked with stamps of Straits Settlements, passed through the Spanish post office in Manila on November 14, 1874. It is **one of the few covers franked with British Asian stamps and bearing a Manila postmark.**

The cover originated in Manila as it was sent by J.M. Tuason & Company, one of the earliest Filipino-owned merchant firms.

In the following the cover was transported to Singapore by the Spanish steamer *Aurrera*. In Singapore the stamps were cancelled by a killer. Also, a cancel, dated November 28, 1874 and a "P.D." (Payé à Destination), each in red, were applied.

The cover was transported to Marseilles on the French ship *Hoogly* and marked with a transit stamp indicating its origin from a British colony "POS. AN. V. SUEZ / F. AMB. MARS.".

According to the postmarks on the back, it was then transported via Cette to Bordeaux on December 23 and reached Bayonne on December 24, 1874. It was delivered to the addressee on the same day.



The cover was franked with two stamps of the Straits Settlements, a stamp at 12 Cents as well as a stamp at 4 Cents. This corresponded to the rate of a cover weighting up to $\frac{1}{4}$ ounce to France effective from March 17, 1871 to August 31, 1876. A charge for the transport from the Philippines to Singapore is not apparent from the cover.