



Folded letter sent from Manila to Madrid,  
carried by Spanish Frigate "Antonia/Victoria, charged 8 Reales, 29 JUL 1840

In a pre-Facebook era, and centuries prior to the rise of postal systems, *Messenger* referred to a human courier carrying just one letter to be delivered to one person. Long before Rizal had "set his fatal pen to paper", the Philippine Postal System had been established dating back to the Manila-Acapulco Galleon Trade in 1571. Prior to Royal Decree issued by King of Spain in 1764 calling for establishment of maritime postal system in all Spanish colonies, including a domestic postal system in the Philippines, there were the *badageros*. Working without pay, these human couriers hiked or rode horses to deliver mails mainly for government officials, dignitaries and priests.

Before the introduction of postage stamps and envelopes, letters were simply folded with name of recipient and destination city. Called the *Pre-Stamp Covers*, the *badageros* hand-carried these stampless covers from the point of origin and passed them on to *badageros* of the next towns until the last mail reached its recipient.