

The Cost of Postage

This exhibit allows comparison of the cost of sending domestic letter mail prior to 1860. For each country examined, the period ends when imperforate stamps were replaced by perforated issues. To determine the actual cost to the postal patron, the silver content of each country's crown coin, or the circulating coin nearest to that value, is used. To normalize these costs, the actual silver content (absolute silver weight) of the crown coin is determined by multiplying the weight in grams by the percent purity. The absolute silver content, in grams, is then converted to United States cents based on the absolute silver weight (asw) of the 1840-1860 dollar coin. This cost in cents is shown in the box placed near each cover.

During the period under consideration, various schemes were used to calculate domestic postal rates. Some countries used a single, flat rate for all destinations within their boundaries (interior letters) while others used different rates based on the distance a letter was carried. These different schemes are organized together in the display to facilitate direct comparison and different colored boxes are used. Where countries used distance to determine the postal rate, such distances are converted to miles and noted in the pale green box near each cover. In addition some countries had special reduced rates for local mail. If the rates are for local mail, a pale red box is used and for interior mail schemes, a pale yellow box is used.

At the foot of each page is a table. The top row lists the crown coin that circulated in the country which is used to calculate the costs. The lower row provides information about the postal rates.

This exhibit will compare single-weight letter rates to eliminate any consideration of the weight differences. Additional fees that could be paid by stamps, such as for registry, certification, late mail and other are outside the scope of this study as are all postal rates for mail other than letters.

Countries that used a blanket, interior rate system are shown first, arranged in ascending order from least expensive. These are followed by countries using a distance based system. The reduced "local postage" items appear together at the end of the exhibit irrespective of the primary rating scheme employed.



Great Britain

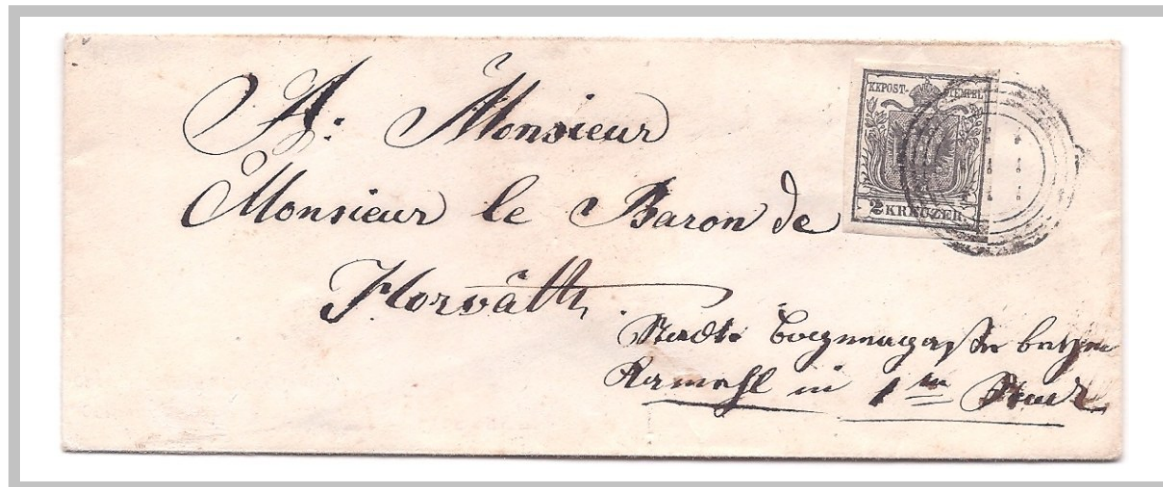


United States

Great Britain 1 crown	1839 / 1847	60 pence	asw = 26.2 grams
United States 1 dollar	1840 - 1860	100 cents	asw = 24.1 grams

AUSTRIAN EMPIRE

Austria 1850 Issue - 2 kreuzer

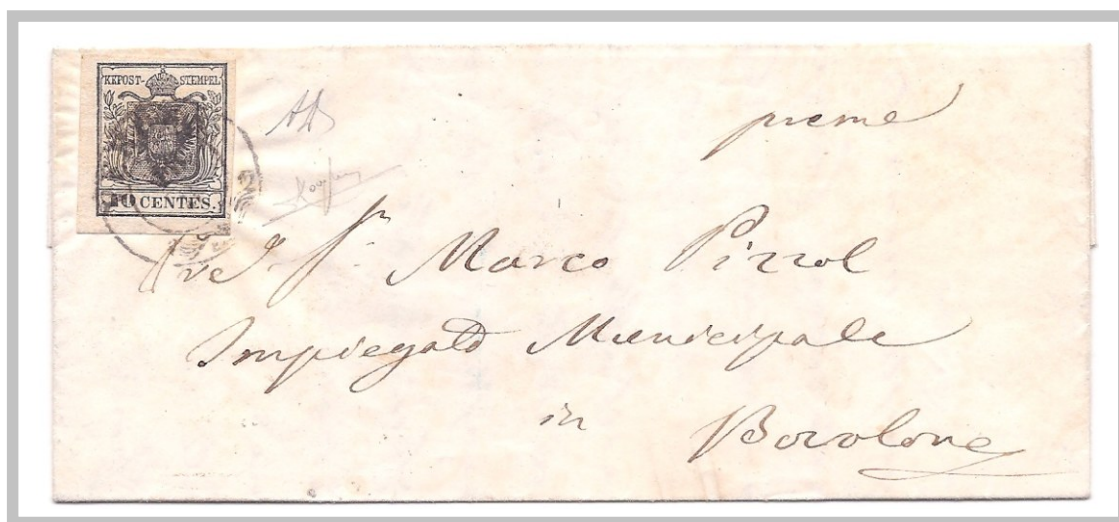


1.62¢
local

14 December 1850 Vienna local use, mute cancel

Lombardy - Venetia 1850 Issue - 10 centesimi

1.62¢
local

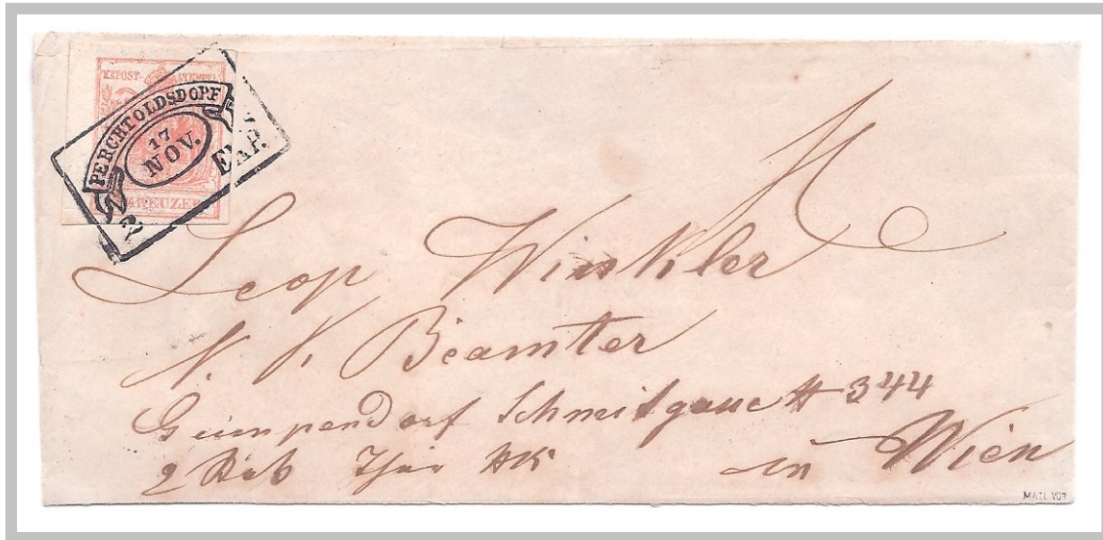


18 August 1854 Verona to Borolone

Austria convention thaler	1840 / 1856	120 kreuzer	asw = 23.4 grams
Lombardy - Venetia scudo	1840 / 1853	600 centesimi	asw = 23.4 grams
The postal rate for local district mail was the same in Austria and Lombardy-Venetia. Rates were expressed in local currency with 2 kreuzer in Austria and 10 centesimi in Lombardy-Venetia. Rate in effect until 1859.			

AUSTRIAN EMPIRE

Austria 1850 Issue - 3 kreuzer



17 November 1854 Perchtoldsdorf to Vienna

Lombardy - Venetia 1850 Issue - 15 centesimi

2.45¢
under 46 miles



27 June 1850 Rovigo to Dolo, first month use

Austria convention thaler	1840 / 1856	120 kreuzer	asw = 23.4 grams
Lombardy - Venetia scudo	1840 / 1853	600 centesimi	asw = 23.4 grams
The postal rate for letters sent under 74 km (46 miles), expressed in local currency, was 3 kreuzer in Austria and 15 centesimi in Lombardy-Venetia. Rate in effect until 1859.			

AUSTRIAN EMPIRE

Austria 1850 Issue - 6 kreuzer



4.86¢
46 to 92 miles

25 March 1851 Milano to Verona, a legal use from Lombardy - Venetia

Lombardy - Venetia 1850 Issue - 30 centesimi

4.86¢
46 to 92 miles



23 October 1850 Treviso to Montova

Austria convention thaler	1840 / 1856	120 kreuzer	asw = 23.4 grams
Lombardy - Venetia scudo	1840 / 1853	600 centesimi	asw = 23.4 grams
The postal rate for letters sent over 74 km and under 148 km (92 miles), expressed in local currency, was 6 kreuzer in Austria and 30 centesimi in Lombardy-Venetia. Rate in effect until 1859.			

AUSTRIAN EMPIRE

Austria 1850 Issue - 9 kreuzer



7.32¢
over 92 miles

23 July 1850 Neupacka to Vienna

Lombardy - Venetia 1850 Issue - 45 centesimi

7.32¢
over 92 miles



10 August 1852 Milano to Padova

Austria convention thaler	1840 / 1856	120 kreuzer	asw = 23.4 grams
Lombardy - Venetia scudo	1840 / 1853	600 centesimi	asw = 23.4 grams

The postal rate for letters sent over 148 km (92 miles), expressed in local currency, was 9 kreuzer in Austria and 45 centesimi in Lombardy-Venetia. Rate in effect until 1859.

BELGIUM

1849 Issue - 10 centimes



1.87¢
under 19 miles

3 August 1849 Berzele, rural box origin, to Steenhuysen

1849 Issue - 20 centimes

3.74¢
over 19 miles



27 August 1850 Anvers to Bruxelles

Belgium 5 franc	1847 / 1858	500 centimes	asw = 22.5 grams
The postal rate for letters under 7.5 grams, sent under 30 km (19 miles) was 10 centimes; over 30 km was 20 centimes. The rates were in effect throughout the period to 1860.			

BRAZIL

1843 Issue - 60 reis

5.23¢

interior by land



20 January 1844 S. Joao Del Rei to Rio de Janeiro

Brazil 1200 reis	1834/1847	1200 reis	asw = 24.7 grams
The postal rate was 60 reis for an interior letter to 4 octaves (15 grams) if sent by land.			

BRITISH COMMONWEALTH

VICTORIA 1850 Issue - 2 pence

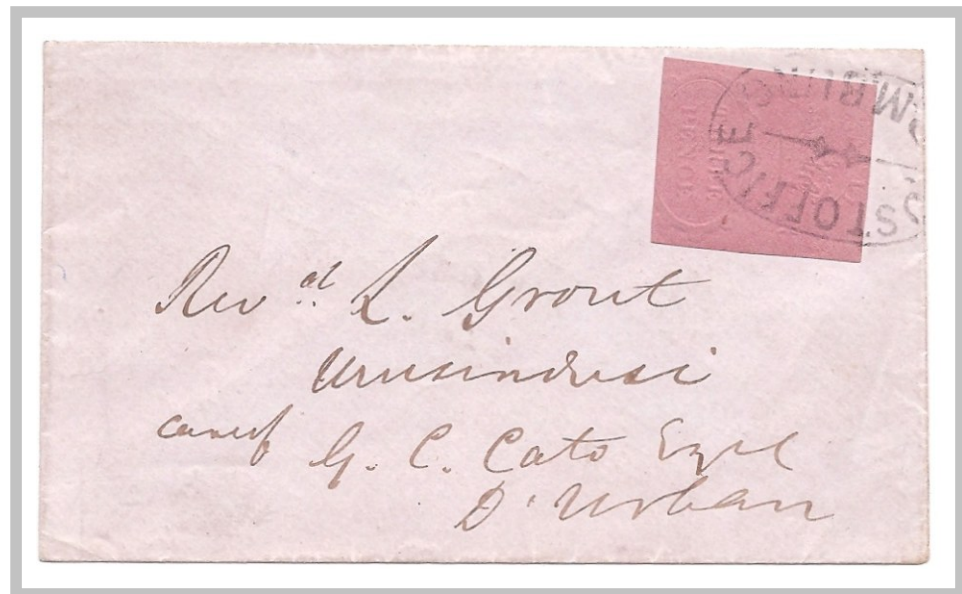


3.63¢
interior

18 April 1850 Geelong, Port Phillip to Melbourne, 2 pence, third printing
numeral 15 butterfly cancel of Geelong

NATAL 1857 Issue - 3 pence

5.45¢
interior



ca. 1857 Pietermaritzburg (PM Burg) to Durban

Great Britain 1 crown	1839 / 1847	60 pence	asw = 26.2 grams
British Colonies used the Great Britain crown. Most set interior rates at two pence such as Victoria or three pence such as Natal. The postal rates applied to interior letters to one-half ounce, prepaid.			

BRITISH COMMONWEALTH

CANADA 1851 Issue - 3 pence



5.45¢
interior

19 August 1858, Toronto to Hamilton, 3 pence soft ribbed paper

NOVA SCOTIA 1851 Issue - 3 pence

5.45¢
interior



6 June 1857 Halifax to Bridgetown

Great Britain 1 crown	1839 / 1847	60 pence	asw = 26.2 grams
British Colonies used the Great Britain crown. Most of the larger British colonies used a three pence rate. The postal rate applied to interior letters as well as to inter- Colonial in B.N.A. to one-half ounce, prepaid.			

BRITISH COMMONWEALTH

NOVA SCOTIA 1851 Issue - 3 pence



5.45¢
interior

15 August 1855, Annapolis to Montreal, CANADA

NOVA SCOTIA 1851 Issue - 3 pence

5.45¢
interior



23 July 1855 Amherst to Westmoreland, NEW BRUNSWICK

Great Britain 1 crown	1839 / 1847	60 pence	asw = 26.2 grams
British Colonies used the Great Britain crown. Most of the larger British colonies used a three pence rate. The covers above show inter-Colonial rate being the same as internal rate in British North America.			

BUENOS AIRES

1859 Issue - 1 peso

4.68¢
interior by land



12 November 1859 Buenos Aires to Goya

Argentina 8 reales	1838/1840	20 Buenos Aires pesos	asw = 22.5 grams
The postal rates in effect in 1859 were one peso to anywhere in Argentina if carried by land and three pesos if carried by sea.			

CHILE

1854 Issue - 5 centavos



4.70¢
interior by land

14 September 1854 Santiago to Valparaiso, 5c Desmadryl print

1854 Issue - 10 centavos

9.39¢
interior by water



22 December 1855 Concepcion to Valparaiso water rate, 10c Desmadryl print

Chile 1 peso	1863/1862	100 centavos	asw = 22.5 grams
The postal rate for an interior letter was 5 centavos if sent by land and 10 centavos if sent by water.			

DENMARK

1851 Issue - 2 rigsbankskilling



1.08¢
local

10 May 1853 Copenhagen local use, Thiele print

1855 Issue - 2 skilling

1.08¢
local



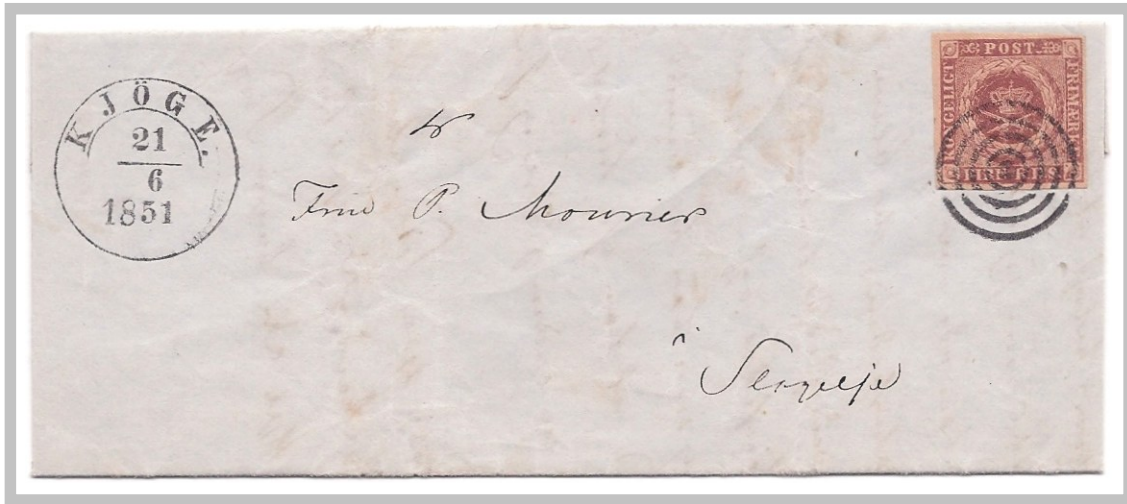
2 skilling, 13 October 1858 Copenhagen local use

Denmark 1 species daler	1840/1854	192 rigsbankskilling	asw = 25.28 grams
Denmark 2 rigsdaler	1854-1856	192 skilling	asw = 25.28 grams

The postal rate for a local letter was 2 rigsbankskilling until February 1854 when the rate was expressed as 2 skilling to reflect the new coinage that was simultaneously introduced.

DENMARK

1851 Issue - 4 rigsbankskilling



21 June 1851 Kjøge to Slagelse, Ferslew print

1854 Issue - 4 skilling

2.16¢
interior



25 April 1859 posted on Holstein railway (numeral 169) to Lehe, Schleswig-Holstein
Schleswig-Holstein was part of Denmark at this time

Denmark 1 species daler	1840/1854	192 rigsbankskilling	asw = 25.28 grams
Denmark 2 rigsdaler	1854-1856	192 skilling	asw = 25.28 grams
The postal rate was 4 rigsbankskilling for an interior letter until February 1854 when the rate was expressed as 4 skilling to reflect the new coinage that was simultaneously introduced.			

DENMARK

1858 Issue - 4 skilling

2.16¢
interior



30 December 1859 Fanø, Frisian Islands to Warde
blue postmark and numeral 205 cancel

Denmark 2 rigsdaler	1854 / 1860	192 skilling	asw = 25.3 grams
The postal rate for an interior letter was 4 skilling from February 1854.			

FINLAND

1858 Issue - 5 kopecks



3.74¢
to 83 miles

31 October 1859 Helsingfors to Tavastehus

1856 Issue - 10 kopecks

7.48¢
over 83 miles



7 July 1856 Helsingfors to Ny Karleby

Russia 1 rouble	1850 - 1859	100 kopecks	asw = 18.0 grams
The postal rates were 5 kopecks to 125 versts (83 miles) and 10 kopecks over 125 versts.			

FRANCE

1849 Issue - 20 centimes



3.74¢
interior

30 March 1850 Mascara, Algeria to Elbeuf, France

1850 Issue - 25 centimes

4.70¢
interior

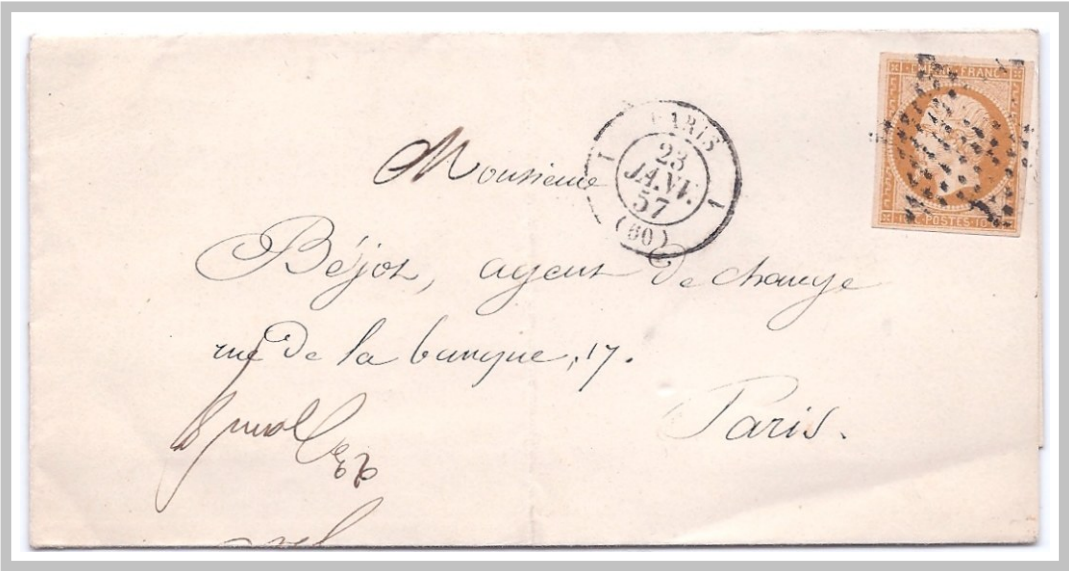


1 July 1850 Axat to Montpellier, First Day Rate and First Day of Issue of stamp

France 5 franc	1849/1860	500 centimes	asw = 22.5 grams
The 20 centimes postal rate was in effect until 1 July 1850 when it was raised to 25 centimes.			

FRANCE

1853 Issue - 10 centimes



1.87¢
local

23 January 1857 Paris local use

1859 Postage Due Issue - 10 centimes

1.87¢
local



24 February 1859 Chalon local use, postage due
missed local mail delivery on 24th, "Après Le Départ" and postmarked next day on reverse

France 5 franc	1849/1860	500 centimes	asw = 22.5 grams
A uniform 10 centimes local postal rate was introduced on 1 July 1853. A special postage due stamp was issued for unpaid local letters in 1859.			

HANNOVER

1851 Issue - 1 gute grochen

2.89¢

interior



14 June 1852 Herzlacke to Meppen

Hannover 1 thaler	1845 / 1860	24 gute grochen	asw = 16.7 grams
The postal rate for an interior letter was 1 gute grochen.			

HANNOVER to German-Austrian Postal Union

1851 Issue - 1/30 thaler



2.31¢
under 10 miles

1 September 1852 Glandorf to Münster, Prussia, corner copy with "10"

2.31¢
under 10 miles



9 January 1853 Schladen to Wolfenbüttel, Saxony

Hannover 1 thaler	1845 / 1860	30 silbergrochen	asw = 16.7 grams
The postal rate for an exterior letter to members of the GAPS was 1/30 thaler if sent under 10 miles.			

THURN And TAXIS POST SYSTEM

1852 Issue - 2 silbergrochen

4.61¢
10 to 20 miles



18 November 1853 Cassel to Frankfurt

The Thurn and Taxis Post was the name of a privately operated postal system that operated in much of Germany in the 1850's. Adhesive stamps were denominated in kreuzer currency for use in the southern areas of Germany as well as in silbergrochen for use in northern areas including Hesse- Cassel.

Hesse-Cassel taler	1851 - 1860	30 silbergrochen	asw = 19 grams
In the North, the postal rates were 1 silbergrochen to 10 miles, 2 silbergrochen to 20 miles and 3 silbergrochen over 20 miles.			

WURTTENBERG

1851 Issue - 3 kreuzer

1.95¢
under 12 miles



5 November 1854 Biberach to Buchau

Württemberg 2 gulden	1845 - 1860	120 kreuzer	asw = 19 grams
The postal rates for a letter was 3 kreuzer to 12 German miles and 6 kreuzer over that.			

GREAT BRITAIN

1840 Issue - 1 pence



1.83¢
interior

17 April 1841 Stroud, via Nailsworth to Sheffield, adhesive from plate 8

1840 Mulready Issue - 1 pence

1.83¢
interior



16 June 1840 Hull to London, misplaced stereo A68

Great Britain 1 crown	1839 / 1847	60 pence	asw = 26.2 grams
The postal rate for interior letters was one pence to one-half ounce, prepaid, from issue date of 6 May 1840.			

GREAT BRITAIN

1840 Issue - 1 pence



1.83¢

interior

1 July 1840 Bedford to Cambridge

1841 Issue - 1 pence

1.83¢

interior



14 January 1847 Bognor to Whittinge

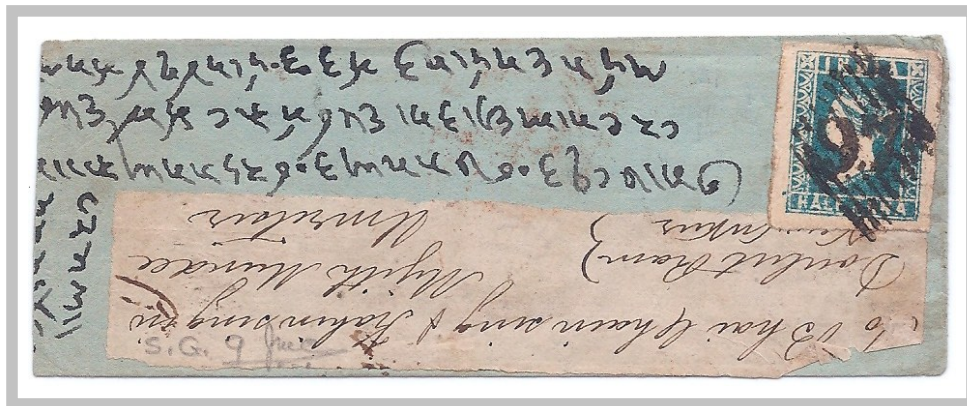
Great Britain 1 crown	1839 / 1847	60 pence	asw = 26.2 grams
The postal rate for interior letters was one pence to one-half ounce, prepaid, from 6 May 1840.			

INDIA

1855 Issue - ½ anna

1.39¢

interior



13 September 1856 Sukkor to Amristar, ½ anna die III

British India 1 Rupee	1840	16 annas	asw = 10.69 grams
The postal rate for an interior letter was ½ anna throughout the period before 1860.			

MODENA

1852 Issue - 5 centesimi



.96¢
under 47 miles

16 March 1857 Reggio to Modena

1852 Issue - 10 centesimi

1.87¢
over 47 miles



5 October 1853 Reggio to Modena

Sardinia 5 lire	1845 / 1860	500 centesimi	asw = 22.5 grams
From 4 September 1852 the letter rates were 5 centesimi to 10 Austrian miles (47 miles) and 10 centesimi beyond 47 miles.			

PAPAL STATES

1852 Issue - 2 bajocchi

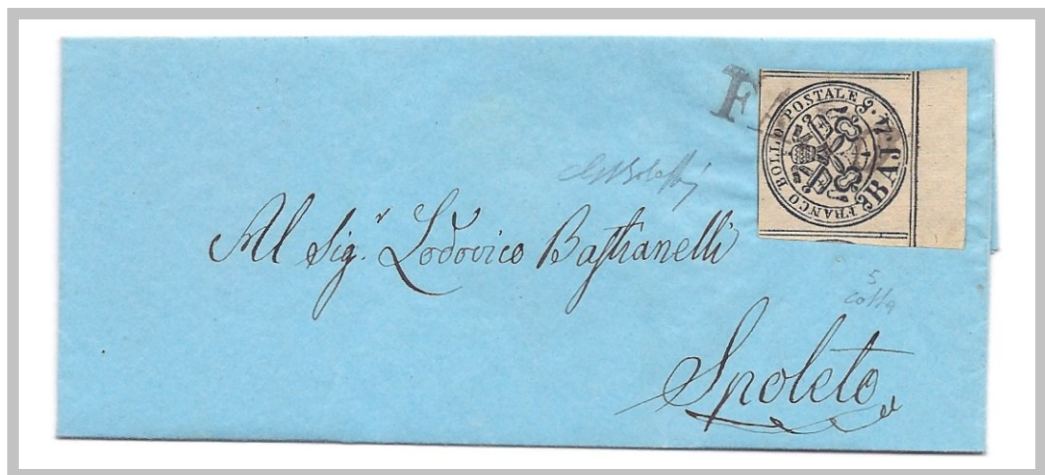


2.00¢
next district

5 October 1858 Citta della Pieve to Montefiascone

1852 Issue - 4 bajocchi

3.99¢
far district



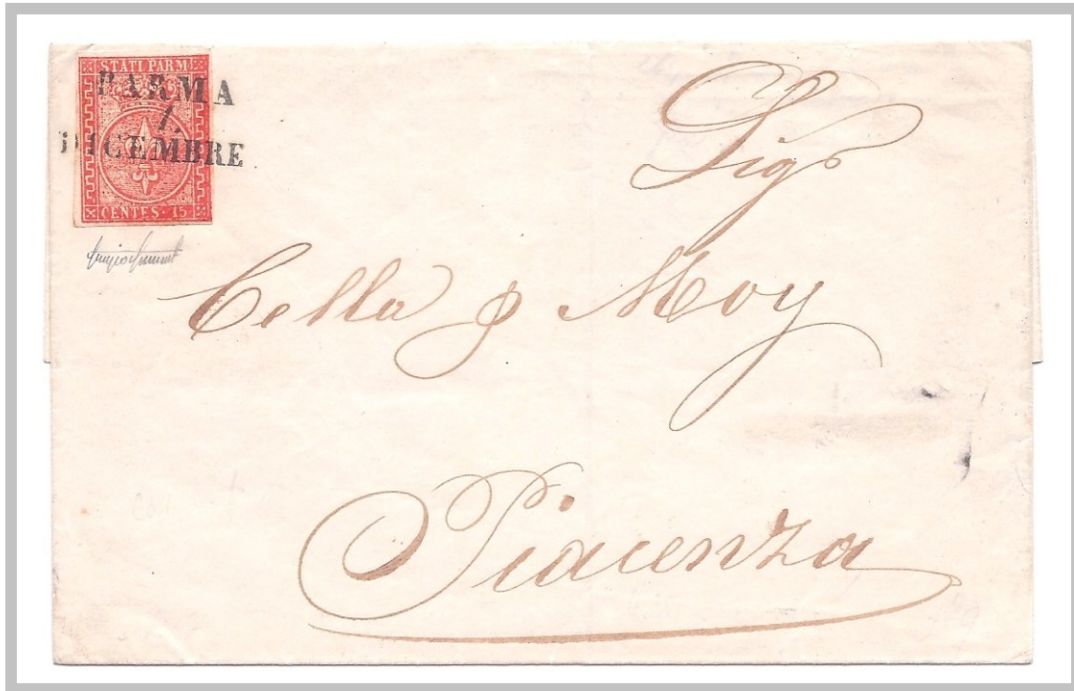
22 May 1855 Fano to Spoleto

Papal States 1 scudo	1846 / 1861	100 bajocchi	asw = 24.2 grams
Before 1868 the postal rates in the Papal States were: 1 baj within same Directorate, 2 baj adjoining Directorate, and 3 baj to non-adjoining Directorate. Adhesive stamps placed on the reverse of letters indicates use as postage due on unpaid letters and are more common than prepaid letters..			

PARMA

1853 Issue - 15 centesimi

2.83¢
under 47 miles



1 December 1854 Parma to Piacenza

Parma 5 lire	1832 - 1858	500 centesimi	asw = 22.5 grams
The postal rate for letters was 15 centesimi for a letter to 17.5 grams sent under 10 Austrian miles (4.7 miles) and 25 centesimi if sent over 47 miles.			

ROMAGNA

1859 Issue - 1 bajocco



1.01¢
within district

15 October 1859 Copparo to Ferrara

1859 Issue - 3 bajocchi

3.03¢
far district



15 September 1859 Firenze to Bologna

Papal States 1 scudo	1846 / 1861	100 bajocchi	asw = 24.2 grams
Before 1 November 1858 the postal rates were the same as Papal States: 1 baj within same Directorate, 2 baj adjoining Directorate, and 3 baj to non-adjoining Directorate.			

SARDINIA

1855 Issue - 5 centesimi

.94¢

local



1 January 1860 Torino local use, 5c brilliant yellow green shade

Sardinia 5 lire	1845 / 1860	500 centesimi	asw = 22.5 grams
The postal rate for local letters to 7.5 grams was 5 centesimi.			

SARDINIA

1851 Issue - 20 centesimi



3.74¢

interior

22 July 1853 Chambéry to Samoens

1853 Issue - 20 centesimi

3.74¢
interior



10 June 1854 Torino to Chiusa di Cuneo

Sardinia 5 lire	1845 / 1860	500 centesimi	asw = 22.5 grams
The postal rate of 20 centesimi for interior letters to 7.5 grams was in effect until January 1860.			

SARDINIA

1854 Issue - 20 centesimi

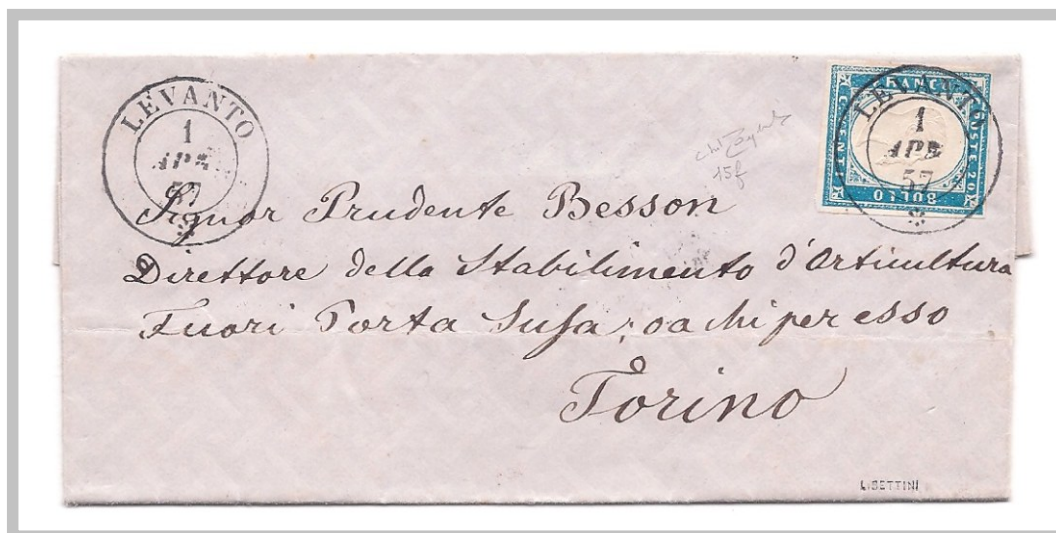


3.74¢
interior

23 December 1855 Pontestura to Vercelli

1855 Issue - 20 centesimi

3.74¢
interior



21 April 1857 Levanto to Torino

Sardinia 5 lire	1845 / 1860	500 centesimi	asw = 22.5 grams
The postal rate of 20 centesimi for interior letters to 7.5 grams was in effect until January 1860.			

TUSCANY

1851 Issue - 2 crazie

2.62¢
interior



2 July 1852 Livorno to Massa Carrara

Tuscany 4 fiorino	1845 / 1849	80 crazie	asw = 25.19 grams
The postal rate of 2 crazie for interior letters was in effect until January 1860.			

TWO SICILIES

NAPLES 1858 Issue - 2 grana



1.58¢
interior

16 January 1858 Naples to Campobasso per S. Elia, 2g plate I, double transfer

SICILY 1859 Issue - 2 grana

1.58¢
interior



15 February 1859 Palermo to Messina

Two Sicilies 120 grana	1849-1859	120 grana	asw = 22.9 grams
The postal rate of 2 grana for a letter sent within the Neapolitan Kingdom was established when Naples issued stamps in 1858. After Sicily issued stamps in 1859, the rate was extended to include Sicily.			

KINGDOM OF NAPLES

1858 Issue - 1 grana

.79¢
local district



22 December 1859 Castrovillari to Cerchiara, local district use

Two Sicilies 120 grana	1849-1859	120 grana	asw = 22.9 grams
The local postal rate of 1 grana for a letter sent within the same district in the Neapolitan Kingdom was established when Naples issued stamps in 1858. After Sicily issued stamps in 1859, the rate was extended to include Sicily.			

LUXEMBOURG

1853 Issue - 10 centimes

1.87¢

interior



14 June 1853 Remich to Luxembourg, 10c first printing, mute cancel

France 5 franc	1849 / 1860	500 centimes	asw = 22.5 grams
The postal rate for an interior letter was 10 centimes throughout the period before 1860.			

MEXICO

1856 Issue - medio (one-half) real



6.34¢
interior

17 December 1856 Mexico City to Puebla
used three days prior to rate increase

1856 Issue - one real

12.68¢
interior



28 July 1859 Soyaniquilpan to Mexico City

Mexico 8 reales	1840-1860	8 reales	asw = 24.4 grams
The postal rate for an interior letter was one-half real until 20 December 1856 when it was raised to one real.			

NORWAY

1855 Issue - 4 skilling

3.49¢
interior



29 February 1856 Trondheim to Steinkjor

Norway 1 specie daler	1844 / 1857	120 skilling	asw = 25.3 grams
The postal rate of 4 skilling for interior letters was in effect throughout the period before 1860.			

PORTUGAL

1855 Issue - 25 reis

2.38¢
interior



10 February 1858 Mirandella to Lisbon, numeral "184" cancel

Portugal 500 reis	1844 / 1860	500 reis	asw = 11.5 grams
The postal rate was 25 reis for an interior letter.			

RUSSIA

1857 Issue - 10 kopecks

7.48¢
interior



23 June 1858 Kovno (now Lithuania) to St. Petersburg

Russia 1 rouble	1850 - 1859	100 kopecks	asw = 18.0 grams
The postal rate of 10 kopecks applied to interior letters sent within the Russian Empire.			

SPAIN

1850 Issue - 6 cuartos



3.70¢
interior

10 February 1850 Valencia to Orense

1856 Issue - 4 cuartos

2.45¢
interior



1 January 1856 Barcelona to Vich, First Day of Issue of stamp

Spain 20 reales	1850/1860	160 cuartos	asw = 23.66 grams
The 6 cuartos postal rate was in effect 1 January 1850 until 31 October 1854 when it was lowered to 4 cuartos.			

CANTON GENEVA

1850 Issue - 5 centimes

.96¢
local



14 December 1850 Geneva local use

Geneva 5 franc	1848	500 centimes	asw = 22.5 grams
From 1 January 1850 the rate in Canton Geneva was 5 centimes for a local district letter to 10 leagues (47 miles)			

SWITZERLAND

1850 Issue - 5 rappen



.96¢
under 30 miles

18 November 1850 Lausanne to Moudon

1854 Issue - 15 rappen

2.83¢
over 30 miles



18 May 1855 Chur to Brigles, 15r Munich print

Switzerland 5 franc	1850 - 1851	500 rappen	asw = 22.5 grams
Until 1 January 1852 the rate for a letter sent to 10 wegstunde (30 miles) was 5 rappen. After that date and continuing to 1860, the rates were: 5 rappen to 6 miles, 10 rappen to 30 miles and 15 rappen over 30 miles.			

UNITED STATES

1847 Issue - 5 cents



5.01¢
under 300 miles

20 August 1847 Syracuse to Albany, New York, second month of use of stamp

1847 Issue - 10 cents

10.02¢
over 300 miles



16 May 1850 Cincinnati, Ohio to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

United States 1 dollar	1840 - 1860	100 cents	asw = 24.1 grams
From July 1845 to July 1, 1851 the postal rate for a single letter sent under 300 miles was 5 cents. If sent over 300 miles the rate was 10 cents. Letters to and from California were 40 cents.			

UNITED STATES

1851 Issue - 3 cents



3.01¢
under 300 miles

28 July 1851 Lowell to Roxbury, Massachusetts, first month of use of stamp

1855 Issue - 10 cents

10.02¢
over 300 miles



1 April 1856 Auburn, New York to San Francisco, California

United States 1 dollar	1840 - 1860	100 cents	asw = 24.1 grams
The postal rates were reduced from July 1, 1851. A letter sent under 3,000 miles was 3 cents prepaid and if sent over 3,000 miles the rate was 6 cents. The 6 cent rate was increased to 10 cents effective 1 April 1855.			

UNITED STATES

1851 Issue - 1 cent

1.00¢

local



15 April 1854 New York "City Delivery Delivery Paid 1"

United States 1 dollar	1840 - 1860	100 cents	asw = 24.1 grams
On 1 July 1851 a reduced rate of 1 cent was introduced for local mail. The rate remained in effect until 1863.			

VENEZUELA

1859 Issue - 1 real

8.65¢
interior by land



15 February 1859 Valencia to Caracas, second month use of stamp

Venezuela 5 reales	1858	5 reales	asw = 10.4 grams
The postal rate was one real for an interior letter sent by land.			