

POSTAL HISTORY OF THE DANISH SETTLEMENTS IN INDIA AND AFRICA

The Danish King Christian 4 was eager for his country's commerce to take part in the booming Asiatic trade that was opening up throughout Europe. In 1616, he therefore issued a charter (oktroj) giving the *Ostindiske Kompani* monopoly on trade between Denmark and Asia. The first naval expedition resulted in the establishment in 1620 of Tranquebar in the Tanjore province of India with support of the local ruler (nayak). The first company lasted until 1650, after a period of dwindling activities with only seven company ships reaching Tranquebar between 1629 and 1668. In 1670, the Danish interest was renewed and a new charter was issued by King Christian V to a second *Ostindiske Kompani* and Tranquebar was miraculously revived under Danish control. This situation lasted until 1729, when the company again was dissolved. The third company was chartered by King Christian VI in 1632 under a new name of *Asiatisk Kompani*. This gave birth to the most successful period of the Danish activities in East India lasting till 1772. The reason for this change in fortune was related to a higher independence from the Crown and an attractive financial structure. Another factor was the China trade that the company engaged in with the first Danish *Chinaman* dispatched in 1730 from Copenhagen. By 1772, the trade was made free allowing private enterprises to operate from Tranquebar, provided the import 2 % and export 8 % customs were paid to the company. This late period, lasting to 1845 when the colonies were sold, is the only one for which postal history material is available and thus can be covered in this exhibit.

Serampore (Frederiksnagore) was finally established as a Danish settlement in 1755 under *Asiatisk Kompani's* control. Serampore was located along the Hooghly River just north of the *British East India Company's* administrative center in Calcutta. The transport of collected goods was transported by smaller boats to Tranquebar because the large company ships only with difficulty could reach Serampore. With time, Serampore took over the importance of Tranquebar and became the center of Danish trade in East India.



Trade destinations were the Coromandel and Malabar Coasts, Siam, Batavia, Mauritius, and Indonesia. The important types of goods included pepper, wood, saltpeter, sucker, tea, and textiles obtained in exchange for luxury goods and firearms and ammunition. The goods were transported to Europe to be sold at auction by the company in Copenhagen.

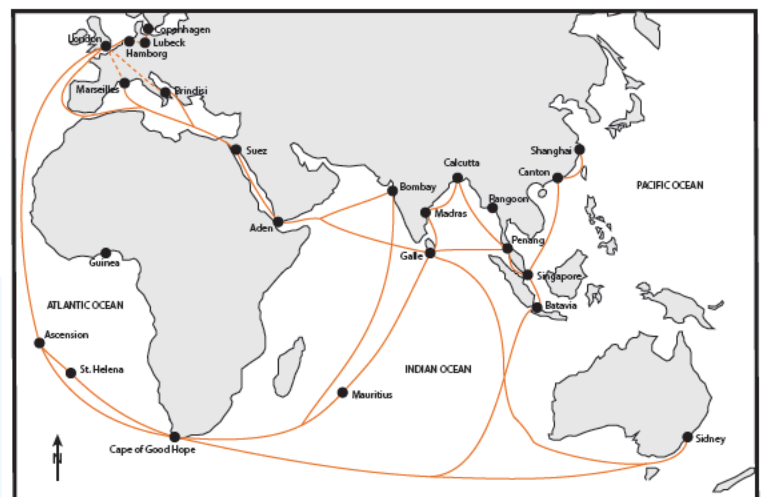
The role of the missionaries in the Danish territories are remarkable. At the same time as the establishment of the Danish enclaves, the Dutch and British forbid missions mainly because of a fear of inferring in the Indian caste society religious and social norms. The Danes, however, permitted a Protestant mission in Tranquebar and a Baptist mission in Serampore.

Dansk Guinea on the Gold Coast of West Africa was closely tied to the Danish slave trade between Guinea and Danish West Indies. In 1674, the Danish King Frederick 4 issued a charter to the *Vestindisk-guineiske Kompani* giving them rights to the Danish Guinea-West Indies trade, meaning essentially the slave and sucker trade across the Atlantic. When the slave trade was prohibited in 1803 by the Danish government, other sources of income such as coffee plantations were without successes attempted.

The early postal arrangements were based on transport in locked and sealed mail bags transported by company ships directly between custom offices in either Copenhagen or the East India possessions. The by far majority of communications were official and did not require payments and thus would be received without any markings. Early private letters would be transported by ship captains by agreement. A 1803, Royal regulation required post offices to be opened and lists the fees to be paid on private letters in Danish as well as local Indian currencies; in Serampore in *annas* and in Tranquebar in the local Danish minted currency of *kas*. A similar Royal regulation from 1781 for the Danish West Indies were likely in effect in Danish Guinea. Despite these attempts to regulate the mail, the private flow of mail went through the Indian/British post offices.

The purpose of the exhibit is to show examples of correspondences from and to the Danish Eastern territories. It is arranged geographically and subsequently temporarily starting with Serampore, then Tranquebar and connections to St. Helena. Finally, an example from Danish Guinea is shown. The available material is extremely restricted with probably less than forty known in private hands.

Common Shipping Routes after 1850



Further Readings

Feldbæk, O. and Justesen, O., 1980. *Kolonierne i Asien og Afrika. Danmarks Historie*. Politikens Forlag, Copenhagen (in Danish).

Giles, D.H., (1960). *Handstruck Postage Stamps of India*. Philatelic Society of India, Bombay.

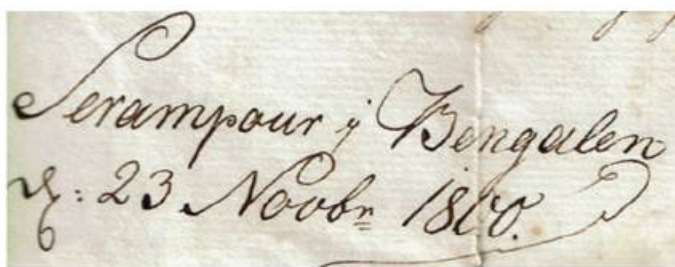
Scherer, E., 2022. *The Struggle for Dominance on the Indian Subcontinent 1494-1819*. Museum des Timbres et des Monnaies, Monaco.

Serampore / Frederiksnagore

1800-1801. From Serampore to Copenhagen With Company Ship: Christian Kornerup

Dated: Serampour i Bengalen, 23 Novbr 1800
Serampore (i Bengalen) 5 Martz 1801
Addressed to: Christian Kornerup
Fuldmægtig under
General Told Kammeret.
i Kjøbenhavn

Serampore was occupied by the British on May 8, 1801, shortly after the last of the two letters were written.



Christian Kornerup (1765-1851) to whom the letters are addressed was born Roskilde and died in København. He served until 1841 in administrations of three Danish monarchs: Christian VII (1766-1808), Frederik VI (1808-1839), and Christian VIII (1839-1848), variously as *kopist*, *justistråd*, *fuldmægtig*, and *sportelkasserer* in *Generaltoldkammeret*, Copenhagen. He became *Ridder of Dannebrog* in 1843. In 1793, he was married in Zionskirken in Tranquebar to Anna Frederikke Møller (1775-1867), who was born in Tranquebar and died in Copenhagen.



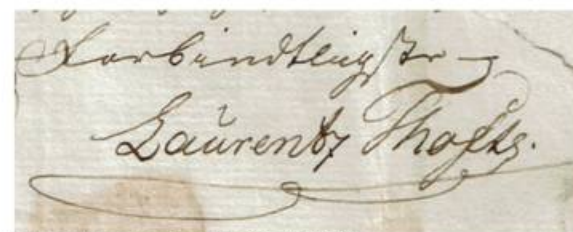
1800 (no writings or markins on reverse).



1801 (no writings or markings on reverse).

Christian Kornerup was born into a well-established commercial trading family around Roskilde in Denmark. We know little about his early life but can make some well qualified guesses. After his university entrance examination (*studentereksamen*) in 1783, he was hired by the King to join the governmental administration at Tranquebar. As such he was allowed, and expected, to develop his own trading contracts that he would take back home with him. In 1793, he married Anna Frederikke in Tranquebar. The next year they were both back in Copenhagen where their first child Peter was born. Returning after nearly ten-years of experiences with the trade in India, he naturally accepted a position as *fuldmægtig* with the *Generaltoldkammeret*, handling the administrations of the colonies in the Indias (East and West) and the Gold Coast.

The letters do not show any signs of having gone through postal services. Thus, they went likely via Danish Asiatic Company vessels to Copenhagen or perhaps in diplomatic porches with British vessels calling in Hamburg. The Indian post office in Serampore was first established shortly after 1820. Correspondences would thus have had to be privately delivered at the General Post Office at Fort William near Calcutta about 20 miles away. Or alternatively, brought to an ocean-going vessel calling in one of the ports along the lower parts of the Hooghly River. In 1800 and 1801, there were annually only three-four Danish company vessels that may have called at the Hooghly ports. It was first in 1804 that a Royal Danish Packet was organized to reach Serampore and Tranquebar, but this collapsed in 1807 because of British French hostilities in Europe.



Signed Laurentz Thofte (1801)

Serampore / Frederiksnagore

1806. From Serampore to Cornwall With Private Ship: Missionary Mail

Dated: Serampore, 30 May 1806
Addressed to: Rev'd Malachy Hitchens
St. Hilary
Marazion
Cornwall

Yours Most Sincerely, (signed) H(enry) Martyn

The sender writes on top of the envelope front:
Revd Mr. Henry Martyn, Serampore, 30 May, 1806.



(Reconstructed)



Rev. Henry Martyn

The letter written on May 30th was received the following day at the Calcutta General Post Office and received a dispatch ship letter marking.

It took nearly seven months before it was received at the London ship letter office on November 21 and the main post office in the afternoon the same day.

It was assessed a 1s/3d charge.

There are no indications about how it reached St. Hilary in Cornwall.



(Reconstructed)

Henry Martyn (1781-1812) writes to his friend and former colleague at St. Hilary to announce he has arrived safely. He describes in detail his travels and mention Maderia, with orange trees, stopping somewhere in South America, then spending several weeks in the Cape Town, where he nearly died, continuing to Madras and observing Ceylon, Tranquebar and Pondicherry along the coast line. He stopped at Fort St. George (Madras) and reached Bengal and Calcutta on May 15, where he was met by a Rev. Brown, who accompanied him to Serampore.

British Occupations of Serampore as results of the Napoleonic wars:
May 8, 1801 to 19 July 1802 and 29 January 1808 to 15 December 1815.

Aldera Gardens. Serampore, East Indies May 30, 1806

1818. Incoming Packet Letter from Salisbury to Serampore: King's Postage

Dated: Salisbury, August 10, 1818
 Addressed to: Mr. (Joel) Randall, Mission House,
 Serampore, Bengali
 Endorsed: p Carron

Salisbury August 10, 1818
 My dear Bro. Joel Randall
 Your basket with all its contents
 was rec^d May 22. A person brought it to our Association at Hove. I
 had thought at Plymouth I have not seen her, but hear she

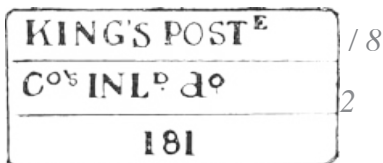
London Main Post
 Office, afternoon
 date stamp, AU 18
 (1)818, counter A.



(Reconstructed)

Crowned India
 Packet Letter
 marking dated
 18 AU 18 / 1818
 applied in Lon-
 don.

King's Postage marking applied in Calcutta. King's postage given as 1 rupee and 8 anna, inland postage 2 anna, and date as 22 March 1819 (suggesting a 7 month transit).



(Reconstructed)

The letter was carried by the Royal Navy's *HMS Carron* that departed Portsmouth commanded by Captain Furneaux and arrived Cape Town on December 9, 1818, bound for India. This may thus explain the long transit time. *HMS Carron* was wrecked on 6 July 1820 in the Bay of Bengal still commanded by Captain Furneaux.

The letter paid on arrival the 3/6d (3 shilling and 6 pence) packet (also including Naval vessels) rate for a single sheet.



'The brethren at Serampore, having earnestly requested that a paper-maker might be sent out, who should not only be fully competent to the superintendence of their manufactory, but well disposed to the labours of the mission; Mr. Joel Randall, a member of the (Baptist) church at Salisbury, offered himself, and was accepted by the committee, as well qualified for the requisite services. His wife, a pious woman, cheerfully consented to accompany him with her only child, an infant daughter. The Moira, in which, Mr. Randall is about to proceed to India, is the property of Captain Kemp, who is a member of the church in Calcutta.' Baptist Magazine for 1816, pp 175-6.

Joel Randall died a couple of years after having arrived in Serampore, possibly before this letter had arrived. In 1820, his widow Ann and child had returned to Salisbury.

1822. From Serampore to Boston with Private Ship: William Ward

Dated: Serampore, January 29, 1822.
Addressed to: Revd Mr. Jacobs
 Baptist Minister
 Cambridge
 Near Boston
 United States
Endorsed: Forwarded by C.A. Newton
 P. Sally -

Serampore, Jan. 29, 1822.

SHIP



(Reconstructed)



No markings on the reverse.

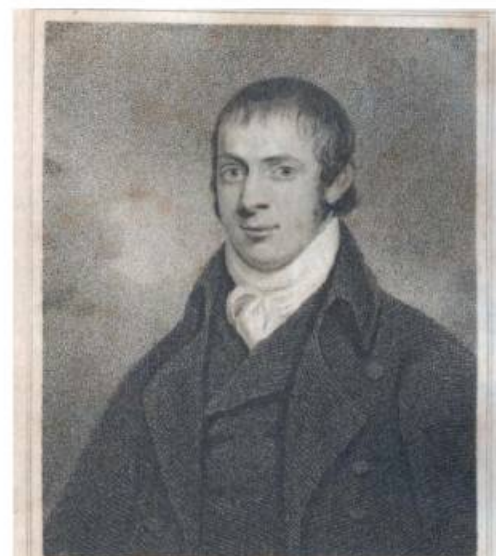
The letter was transmitted by private ship probably from Calcutta and when arriving in Boston was accessed at 8 cents. This was likely calculated as 2c ship and 6c local charge for less that 30 miles distance.

William Ward writes to his colleague Revd Jacobs in Boston to tell him that he has shipped a box containing various asthma medication that has been very helpful to his colleague William Carey. He finally hopes that Jacobs would consider sending a few dollars to the *Bengali Doctor* and finally asks for prayers from all the dear Brethren in Boston.

The letter was mailed in late January and arrives sometime in August in Boston after a seven month transit. At that point, the writer had died in Serampore from an outbreak of cholera. William Ward died 54 years old on March 7, 1823, just a couple of months after having written the letter to his colleague in Boston.



The Baptist Church rejected infant baptism and practiced baptism when the subjects were old enough to understand the consequences of this action. Here is baptism shown at Serampore probably with Ward and the first Hindu convert Krishna Pal in the 1820's.



Rev. William Ward.
 Baptist Missionary at Serampore.

1817. William Ward, 48 years old

The letter was forwarded by a 'C.A. Newton Esqr', who may have been the captain (or a passenger) of the ship that carried the letter. Further a 'P. Sally' handled the letter, probably at the church at Cambridge.

Revd. William Ward (1769-1823) was trained as a printer and editor and assigned to the Serampore Mission in 1799. Here he joined Joshua Marsman (1768-1837) and William Cary (1761-1834). At Serampore, he superintended the printing press overseeing the Bengali translation and printing of the New Testament into several languages. Ward traveled widely to Europa and America to collect money for the Mission at Serampore.

Signed W. Ward.

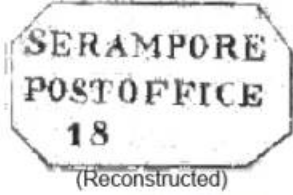
1825. Local from Serampore to Calcutta: The Mysore Princes

Dated: Serampore, October 13, 1825
Addressed to: Lieut. Colonel H. Huthwaite
 in Charge of the Mysore Princes
 Calcutta



Serampore 13rd Oct. 1825

Letter marked on reverse by Serampore/Post Office, and Calcutta/General Post Office, Oct. 14, 1825, dated handstamps. Manuscript marking applied at Serampore reads Oct. 13 and specify an 2 annas charge. An AM marking at Calcutta indicate an early morning receipt.



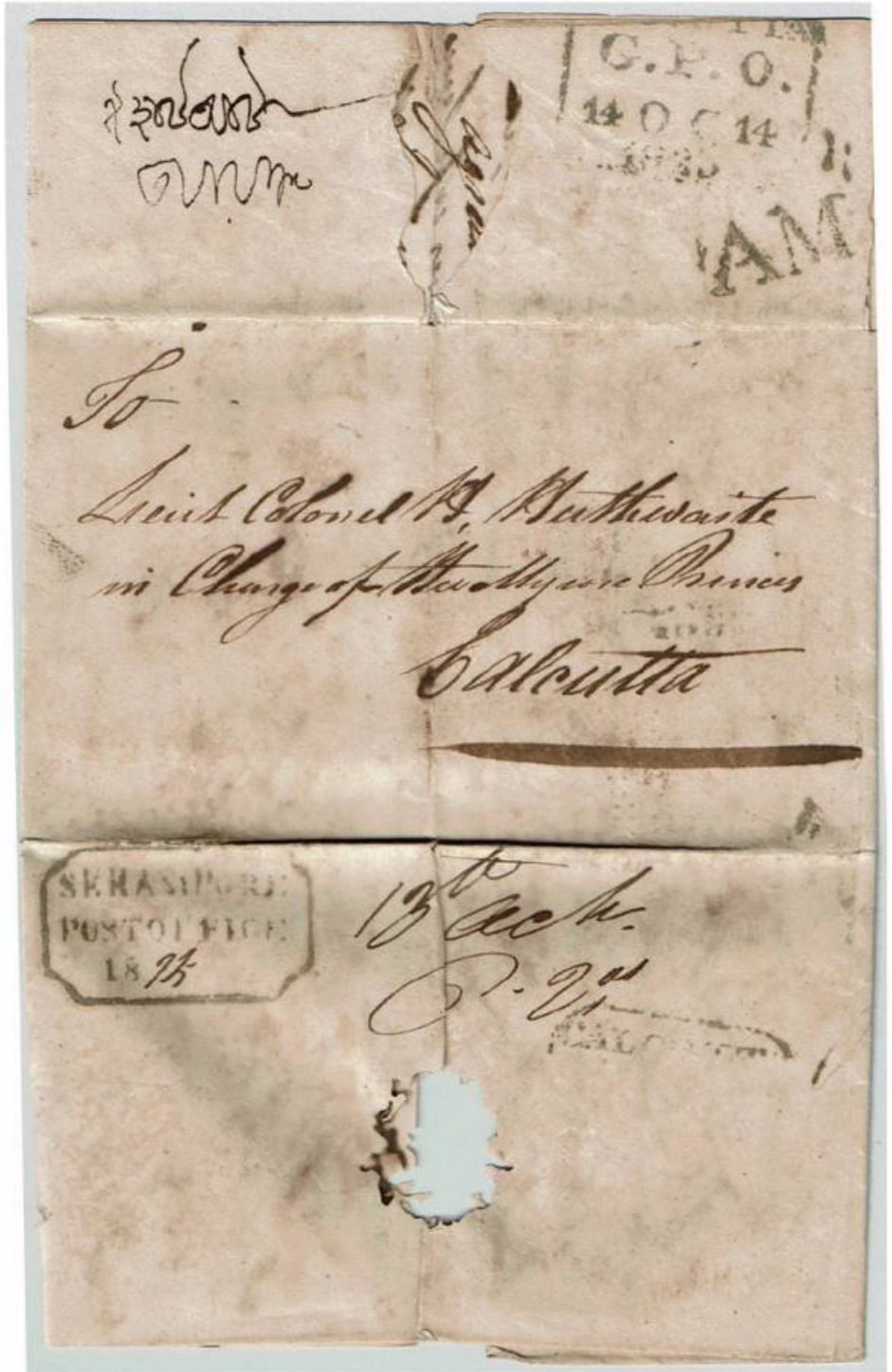
AM



The history of the Mysore Princes can be traced back to 1792. The princes are the sons of Sultan Tipu of Mysore. During 1767 to 1799, a series of wars between the Sultanate of Mysore and the British East India Company were fought. In 1762, a temporary peace deal was reached where Tipu lost half of his territory and had to pay a large sum of money. Part of the latter, he had to give two of his sons to the British as hostages. Two years later, the sons were returned after the full sum had been received. The final battle occurred during 1798-1799 where the Sultan was slain and the remaining Mysore territory was annexed by the British. Sultan Tipu's 52-member family were moved under British army control to the nearby Vellore. In July 1806, a mutiny broke out amongst the native troops in the British army at Vellore. It was thus decided to move the whole family across the continent to a suburb of Calcutta. The sons did not live long and in 1824 the last-born son of Sultan Tipu died. Other of Tipu's twelve sons survived to the early 1850's. The letter is written a year after the death of Tipu's last-born son. The identity of the writer and the content of the letter cannot be read with clarity.



Prince Ghulam Ahmed (1797-1824) was the last-born son of Sultan Tipu of Mysore (-1799).

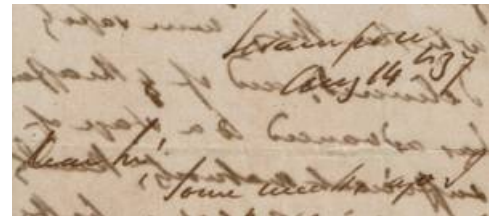


The letter paid two annas for a distance not exceeding 20 miles (18 miles) and one tola by weight (about 24 g). This rate was in effect until October 1, 1837, when reduced to one anna.

1837. Local from Serampore to Calcutta: Serampore Press and Sheriff of Calcutta

Dated: Serampore, August 14, 1837
Addressed to: R. Beid Esq, Deputy Sheriff, Calcutta

PAID
(Reconstructed)

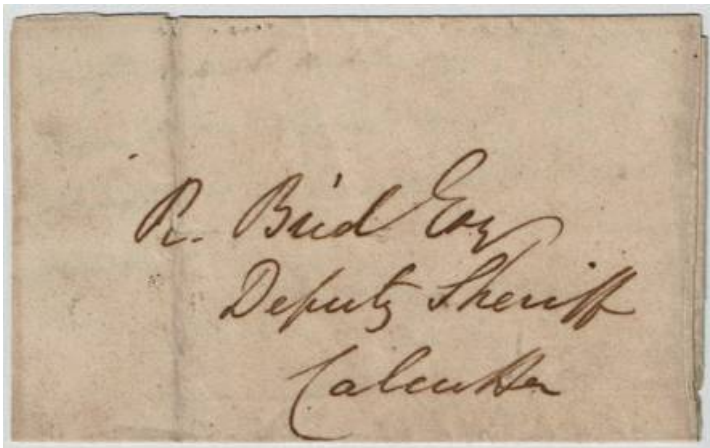


Serampore / Aug. 14th 37.

Letter marked on reverse by Serampore/Post Office and indistinct Calcutta/General Post Office dated handstamps. In addition, part of red PAID marking, handwritten 2 anna charge, and 14 Aug date marking are on the reverse.



(Reconstructed)



75 % of original front

It is possible that the oval framed, red Calcutta cancel can be a Sheriff's receiving mark.



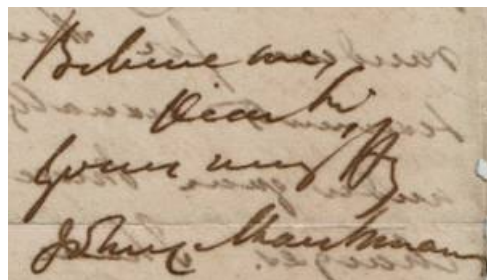
(Reconstructed)

Joshua Marksman writes in 1837 to the Sheriff's office at Fort William near Calcutta to inquire about a lack of payment for previous advertisements and about the possibility of future contributions. Marshman was the editor of the daily Bengali newspaper *Samachar Darpan* published by the Serampore Press between 1818 and 1841. Joshua Marksman dies a few months later on the 6th of December and is replaced by his son John Clark Marshman (1794-1877).

In 1837, the Sheriff of Calcutta was Thomas Holroyd (1799-1893). He was appointed sheriff for one year after having arrived in India in 1832 as member of a mercantile trading house. He left India to settle in Gloucestershire in 1839.

The Serampore Baptist Mission was established in 1799 when they found a welcome shelter at Serampore from the then Governor Ole Bie (17133-1805) and the Danish King Frederik VI. In contrast to the British authorities, the Danes allowed missionaries to operate in the territories they controlled. Prominent missionaries at Serampore were Joshua Marksman (1768-1837), William Carey (1761-1834), and William Ward (1769-1823). This trio founded Serampore University in 1818, many primary and secondary schools, and translated and published a large number of works, including translations of the Bible. Marshman was an accomplished scholar, linguist and theologian and a prolific author and polemicist.

The letter paid two annas for a distance not exceeding 20 miles (18 miles) and one tola by weight (about 24 g). This rate was in effect until October 1, 1837, when reduced to one anna.



Signed Joshua Marshman (1768-1837).

1792. Company Letter from Tranquebar to Copenhagen: von Scholten



Dated: Tranquebar,
 20th October 1792
Addressed to:
 Fur / S.T. Hrn General Major
 C.W. von Scholten
 Bnz Pr. Konigl. Gesant das ...
 Prins Regiment zu Fuss* / in /
 Kopenhagen (Copenhagen)

*Arveprins Frederiks geworbne (recruited) Infanteri-Regiment (~1790) or Prinsens Livregiment (more recent).



Casimir Wilhelm von Scholten



The oldest known letter from Tranquebar is from 1783 mailed to Malacca.

The early official letters from Tranquebar did not receive postal dispatch and arrival markings. They are likely freely dispatched using a postbox at the fort and gone by government ship eventually reaching Denmark, although probably via a British port and Hamburg. The first Tranquebar postmark was used in 1800 on local mails signaling the presence of at least a rudimentary postal function in the town prior to the 1837 postal reform and the establishment of local British/Indian offices and dispatch runners/riders.

Jost Heinrich von Scholten (1767-1799) writes in 1792 in German from Tranquebar to his older broder Casimir Wilhelm von Scholten (1752-1810) in Copenhagen. Jost Heinrich was a Danish lieutenant attached to the small military guard unit at Tranquebar. After arriving in Tranquebar, he married a local European girl, Harriet Stevenson, in the Zion's Church. He died only 32 years old in Tranquebar in 1799 from a drowning accident, leaving the widow with two surviving childeren to remarried the following year.

The recipient of the letter was his broder in Copenhagen. Casimir Wilhelm (1752-1810) was at that time a commanding officer of the rank of major in a Royal infantry unit. By 1795, he had reached the rank of oberst (lieutenant colonel) and was serving on the Danish West Indies and later becoming governor of the islands of St. Thomas and St. Jan over two periods between 1800-1807. He is perhaps better known as being the father of Peter van Scholten, who continued as the governor of St. Thomas and St. Jan and eventually became Governor General of the Danish West Indies during 1818-1848.



1800. Local from Tranquebar to Cochin of Travancore: Jens Koefoed

Dated: Tranquebar, October 10, 1800
Addressed to: J. G. La Personner Esquire
Cochin



The letter was manuscript accessed at 9 fanams (9/12 of a Madras rupee) on the upper right of the front. It must be assumed that it went to Madras and further via coastal ship to Cochin around the southernmost tip of India and on to Travancore and Cochin.

The letter writer, Jens Koefoed, was born 1775 in Christiania (Oslo), Norway, and died 1833 in Tranquebar, 54 years old. He must have arrived to the administration in early or mid-90's, still a teenager. He married and got his first child, a girl, in 1795. During the illness and later death of Governor Hermansson, he served as acting governor. In 1822, Koefoed was appointed full governor. However, only a few years later, he was removed by the governing board (*kommercekolligiet*) in Copenhagen due to local accusations of having favored trading partners belonging to a *rather low caste*. He however stayed in Tranquebar to his death involved in the administration and trade.

The letter is written in Dutch to a trading contract in Cochin of the State of Travancore along the southern Malabar coast. Cochin has had a past history as Portuguese and later Dutch trading posts, particularly known for the pepper trade. By 1800, the Dutch influence in India had, however, declined due to European conflicts and the shifts in the needs for goods from India.

British Occupations of Tranquebar as results of the Napoleonic wars: May 12, 1801, to 17 August, 1802 and 12 February, 1808, to 20 September, 1815. The letter were therefore sent just before the first British occupation.

Signed
J(ens)
Koefoed.
Alternative
spelling
Kofoed.

1834. Local from Cuddalore to Tranquebar: Zion's Church



*attid hængivne
Sara Ruhde*



Dated: Cuddalore, 17th April (1834)
Addressed to: Mrs. Möhl, Tranquebar
Sender initials at lower left corner: S.R.

Letter endorsed *P.N.P* (Postage Not Paid) at upper right corner as also said by the Post Office marking on the reverse. Cuddalore (location of the British Fort St. David) is located about 10 miles south of Pondicherry and about 60 miles north of Tranquebar. The calculations on the front assess the charges to be 3 anna to be paid by the recipient as written on the reverse together with the date of '17 of April 1834.'

**CUDDALORE
POST NOT PAID**

(Reconstructed)

Sara Minerva Ruhde, writing the letter, was born at Tranquebar in 1811 as the daughter of a British surgeon.

The letter was written in Danish after Sara had arrived in Cuddalore traveling the 60 miles from Tranquebar in a palanquin. She expresses her gratitude and talks about her difficulties of saying goodbye, particularly to the Pastor and his dear 'Mutter.' Then she described her travel, her beareas need for rests, one being bit by a scorpion, an enter counter with soldiers and sepoy's transporting money to Madras, and her arrival at destination where she would be taken care of the local pastors children.


A year latter she married at Tranquebar a British missionary from Tanjaur. And presumably moved with him as Mrs. Coombes to support his mission the way she had seen Mrs. Möhl supporting her husband in Tranquebar.

Pastor Möhl and his wife had arrived at Tranquebar in 1829.

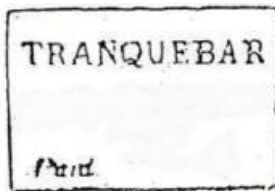
Min kære, gode Mutter og Pastor Möhl!
"Min kære gode Mutter og Pastor Möhl" (My dear good Mutter and ...)

1842. Local from Tranquebar to Negapatam: Money Transfer

Dated: Tranquebar, July 15, 1842
Addressed to: Kindersley Esquire
Principal Collector of Tanjore
Negapatam



From Mrs A Schuare
Tranquebar
Dated 15th July 42



The postage paid stamp is dated '16 July 1842' and paid '1 A' (one anna). The letter is further marked in upper right corner by 'Paid.'

Negapatam served after in 1781 having been conquered by the British East India Company as the capital of the Tanjore district under the British Madras Presidency. If a trader in Tranquebar thus would need official government help to collect outstanding dept, he would need to contact British authorities in the capital of the district he resides since the Danish administration would have no authority outside their Danish territory.



Police, Peon, Watch Man.
British Library Collection.



The sender representing a trading firm asks the Principal Collector on how to transmit money they own to a person outside Traquebar: *This gentleman wants money to be sent to him - Am I to dictate order to Cash Keeper to send it to him by a Police Peon or to ... saying that it is impossible for us to comply with his request?* (Signed). The answer is affirmative as written on the letter front that they should use the Cash Keeper and a Police Peon (text not shown).

The Danish interests in East India were sold to the British East India Company in 1845. The transition occurred for Serampore on 10 October and for Tranquebar on 7 November. The agreements secured the Christian missions in both territories, the Serampore College, inhabitants, and the rights for future Danish trade.

Tranquebar

1846. Packet Steamer Letter from Tranquebar to Denmark: Governor Rehling

The letter was most likely written on 8th of November to Mrs Möller by a sibling or friend left behind in Tranquebar after she had departed for Denmark earlier the same year.

It initially went the 100 miles further north along the coast to Madras where it arrived three days later to reach the P&O* steam packet coming from Calcutta and continuing to Pt. Galle of Ceylon, Aden, and finally Suez. From where it went overland to Alexandria to be pickup by another P&O packet boat this time to Southampton. It continued to London where it reached the forwarder probably late in the year.

The letter was then the following year forwarded to Denmark on 5th of January. It would probably have gone via the Thames packet to Altona (Danish), then via land to Lübeck and continuing by boat to Copenhagen.

The letter did not receive arrival postal markings in London, Copenhagen, or Helsingør. The reasons are probably that the letter was prepaid throughout and thus did not require handling and furthermore may have traveled in presorted mail bags.

*, Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company

Posted: Tranquebar 8 November 1846

Transit: Madras 11 November 1846

Forwarded: London 5 January 1847

Endorsed: Pre Paid and Via Southampton

Paid 1 A for inland postage and 8 As for steamer packet.

Forwarding paid as accessed in London at 1/-.

Addressed to:

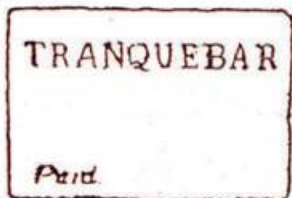
Mrs A. Möller (born Rehling)
Kind care of B.R. Lund Esq.
Elsenore / Denmark

Forwarding Agent:

To the care of
Messrs John Chapman & Co.
No. 4 Leaden Hall / London



Slightly trimmed.



(Reconstructed)



Dark blue sealing wafer reading *Written in friendship and surrounded by decorative florals.*

Addressed to Frederikke Augusta Rehling (1825-1878) formerly of Tranquebar. She was the daughter of Metta Marie (1796-1860) and Johannes Rehling (1775-1841). In 1841, she married in Tranquebar Carl August Møller (1810-1902) with whom she raised 12 children.

Her Father, Johannes Rehling, was from 1838 and until he died in 1841, the Governor of Tranquebar. After the territory was sold to the British in 1845, his widow moved the following year to Helsingør in Denmark with part of her family, including Augusta and her children and husband Carl August Møller.

The name of the forwarding agent and his London address rise some interesting possibilities. The address 4 Leadenhall given for John Chapman & Co was an office building a couple of blocks away from the East India Company's headquarter in central London (12 Leadenhall). The name John Chapman was 'also' the name of a well-known writer and activist with strong interests in India's cotton production and railway construction. He had arrived back in 1846 in London from a trip to India surveying possible rail lines, perhaps in time for receiving the letter. Whoever the forwarder could have been, here is no doubt that the forwarding was done as a favor to the sender or recipient.

Saint Helena

1805. Ship Letter From St. Helena to London: Forwarding Agent

Dated: Saint Helena, 31st August, 1805
Addressed to: W. Chole Esqre
Windsor, Berks

Forwarded by Body Schere & Co
Agents to Danish E.I. (East India) Compy
Plymouth 9. Nov 1805

Sent 31 August and received
9 November in Plymouth. Accessed
at the 3s/6d ship letter rate. Transit
time just above two months.

The letter is written to the brother of a high ranked British naval officer stationed with his ship at Saint Helena.

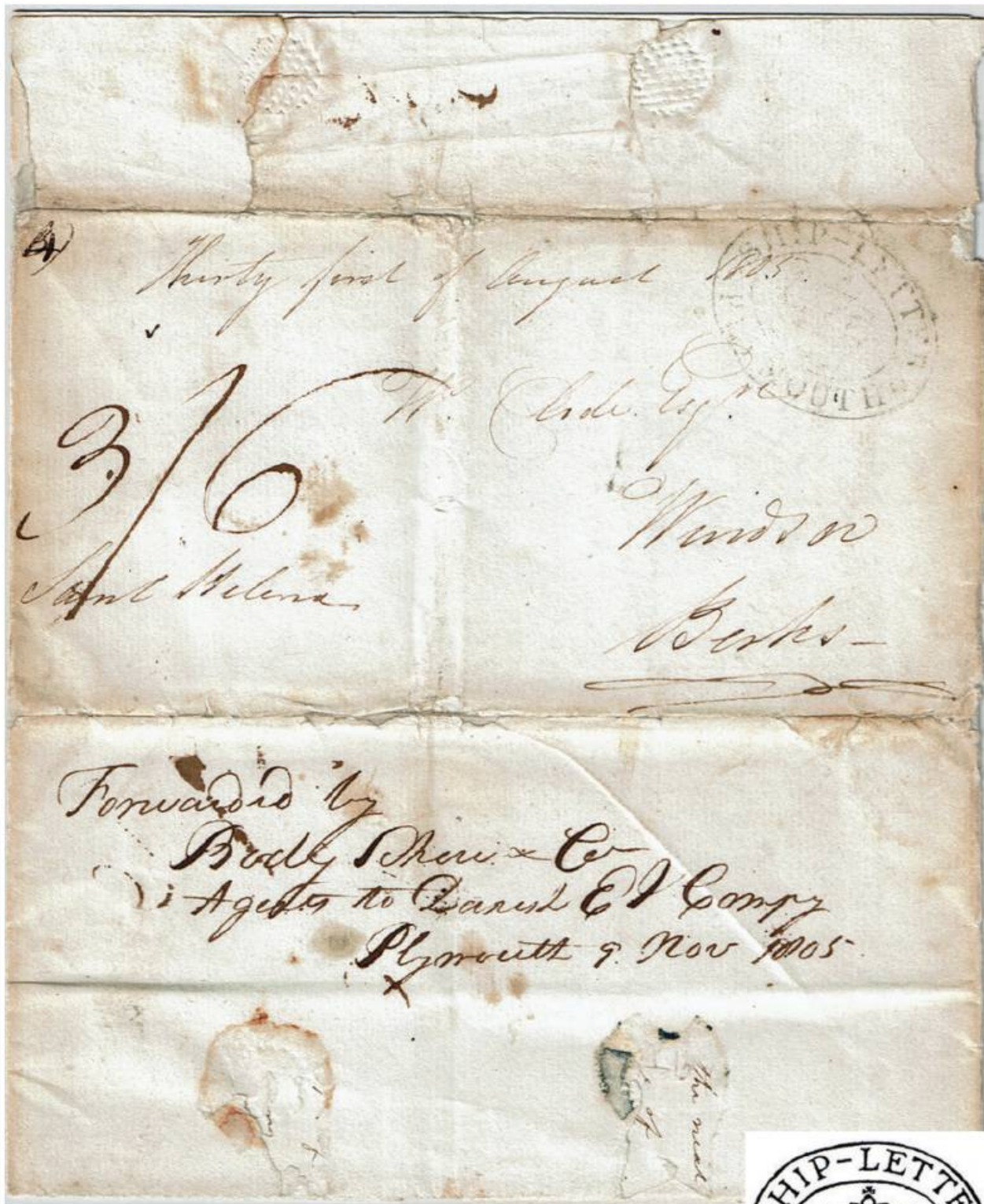
He starts writing in July and describes his life, including dining with the governors and the activities of his crew.

He then lists the various ships passing, including whalers and a suspected French frigate in the distant looking for prizes among the passing Indiamen.

He finishes his letter when a Danish ship arrives from Mauritius on her way to Europe. The captain of this takes his letter to be delivered.

When the ship docks at Plymouth, the letter is turned over to the Danish East India Company's local agent

Denmark had managed to stay neutral during the early Napoleonic Wars. However, in September 1807, the British army occupied and bombarded Copenhagen. The Danes capitulated having to surrender their naval fleet. Thus Denmark was then at war with Britain, siding with France, and Danish ships could no longer call at St. Helena.



Thirty first of August 1805
Saint Helena



(Reconstructed)

1834. Ship Letter From St. Helena to Tranquebar: Forwarding Agent

Dated: St. Helena, 8th Janur 1834
 Addressed to: The Revend K.E. Móhl
 Tranquebar
 East Indies

*St. Helena d. 8^{de}
 Janu. 1834.*

Forwarded by S(aul) Solomon,
 St. Helena, 20 Jan. 1834



Letter is written by a Danish traveler while stopped shortly at St. Helena on his way home from Tranquebar for his ship to take in fresh provisions and water. He is approached by a forwarding agent, who convinces him to write the letter and is helpful in providing writing material. The agent is the then 17 year old Saul Solomon (1817-1892). The traveler writes in Danish to his friend and college, the Rev. Pastor K.E. Móhl at the Zion Church in Tranquebar.



The letter, forwarded from St. Helena by Solomon, received an incoming ship letter marking at the General Post Office in Cape Town for forward transport without any indications of any fees being paid. On arrival at Madras the letter was accessed 4 annas ship postage and 6 annas local postage (upper right on reverse). The total transit time to India was nearly five months, not counting the local transport.

*Forwarded by your obedt Servt
 S. Helena S. Solomon
 20 Jan 9, 1834*

The forwarding agent, Saul Solomon (1817-1892), was born on Saint Helena. In 1834, he was an enterprising teenager probably living with his parent. Later he moved to Cape Town where he became an apprentice in a printing business. He later acquired the business and built it into the largest printing business in the country, founding the daily newspaper, Cape Argus, as well as the largest South African insurance company. He was elected to the Cape Parliament when it first opened in 1854 and served until retirement in 1883.

1839. Company Ship Letter From Danish Guinea To Copenhagen: Wulff Joseph Wulff



The letter bears no postal markings and no indications that it went through postal services and that a fee was paid. Wulff describes in his letters and diary* that he posted the letters in a postbox at Christianborg Fort. Sometimes, he also indicates that knowing a ship had arrived at the nearby British fort, he would walk down to deliver the letter(s) to the captain. A Danish ship (company or private) reaching the colony would likely carry the letters sealed in a post bag and deliver them at the *Ostindiske Brevcontoir* in Copenhagen. Alternative route would have involved a British port and continuation via Hamburg and onward to Copenhagen. Official company ships were rare, perhaps once a year in a good year.

* The majority of his letters and diary were edited and published in 1917 by Carl Behrens.

Dated: Christianborg Fort, den 24. September, 1839

Addressed to:

Hrr. Vexelmaegler (*broker*) J. W. Behrens, Bagved? Gammelstrand No. 16, 2 sal. Kjøbenhavn

Afsent den 24 September 1839.

Wulff writes in Danish to his Broder-in-law and thus also to his sister married to him and the rest of the family. He reports on news - good or bad - and discusses his required financial actions often related to his trading arrangements. Also found is frequent referenced to old friends and many that he have had been in contact with in the past.



Wulff's seal on reverse of letter (75 % of original)

Jacob Wulff Behrens (1792-1844) resided according to the 1840 sensus on the second floor of Gammelstrand 16 with his wife Jette Behrens (born Wulf), their five children (aged three to ten), a wet nurse, and a maid. He died just a year after his Broder-in-law on the Gold Coast. Today Gammelstrand 16 is no. 52.

Wulff Joseph Wulff (1809-1843) was born into a prominent jewish family from Randers in central Jutland, Denmark. After received his law degree in Copenhagen, he applied for service in Danish Guinea (Gold Coast) and was accepted as *surnummerair assistent* (extraordinary assistant) appointed by the King in 1836. He came to a colony in sharp decline with the sole assignment of finding means of boosting the profits by such activities as cotton or coffee plantations. After six years of service he was about to return home when he suddenly died in 1843. He is buried in the floor of his house and his decedents are still living in his house in present days Osu/Accra. In 1850, all Danish interests on the Gold Coast were sold to the British for 10,000 pounds.



Wulff painted in 1836 in Copenhagen in his new uniform as he had received his commission



Only five letters are known to exist

W.J. Wulff (sign)

East Asiatic Company (Østasiatiske Kompani, ØK): Precursor in Rangoon

Addressed to:
Sailor Søren Lamb
Danish bark 'Emily' /
(Capt. Arentzen)
Rangoon
Recommended
To Mr. Riebour

The sender paid 64 shilling by affixing four 16-shilling stamps. This would cover 55 shilling for a basic-rate letter and 8 shilling for registration. The stamps used are first 1864 issue of the large oval type.

In London, the letter received a 1d accountancy mark and a 6d red crayon handwritten marking.

After the sale to the British of the Danish trading posts in East India, the Danes held on for another couple of years to an island of the Nicobar chain in the eastern part of the Indian Ocean. The Danish interests in the east Asian trade routes have had a much longer history with the first dispatched in 1732 of a Danish Chinaman. When this letter was mailed, Denmark had official representations in Bangkok, China at several locations, and Shanghai.

In 1858, the King of Siam signed a treaty with the Danish King and Denmark opened a consulate in Bangkok. The presence of the bark *Emily* in Rangoon is likely related to this opening of Siam for foreign trade. A few years later in 1897, the East Asiatic Company was well established in Bangkok and Copenhagen and operated plantations in Siam and a world-wide transportation network.



G. Arentzen was captain of the bark *Emily* owned by A.N. Hansen & Co of Copenhagen. The company owned two similarly-sized, three-masted, sailing ships.

Mailed March 29 (1866) from Viborg in central Jutland, Denmark. It went to Copenhagen and continued with boat to Lübeck, which it reached on March 31. It likely continued by the newly in 1865 opened rail line to Hamburg. In Hamburg it would have reached the packet line to London, where it arrived on April 2.

It continued to Southampton to catch the Peninsular and Orient Steam Navigation Company (P&O) packet to Alexandria and continuing by rail to Suez from where it was carried again by the P&O packet via Aden, Ceylon, and Madras to Calcutta where it arrived on May 13. From here it was forwarded as a ship letter to Rangoon. A indistinct red marking may be a receiving mark.

Total transit time was probably about 50 days and a flight distance of 8,200 km for a payment of 64 shilling, equivalent to British 1/6d.