

FROM THE PAPAL STATES TO CANADA – 1852

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The cover shown below in figure 1 is one I purchased some 30 years ago when I was busy trying to work out the differences between genuine and forged stamps from the Papal States. It is an entire sent from Rome to Wilton PO in Canada via France and England in March 1852 and it has taken me much of the last 30 years to work out the rating and route taken by this unusual cover.

It is franked with a strip of three, a pair and a single 7 Baj stamps and a 5 Baj stamp of the 1852 issue of the Papal States making 47 Baj postage paid.



Fig 1. March 1852 entire from Rome (Papal States) to Wilton, Canada. Routed via France, London UK and Liverpool.

Postal Markings

The stamps are cancelled with the double circle “ROME/ 31 MAR 52” postmark. There are three transit postmarks: a red French entry mark “TOSC / 3 / 8 APR 52 / PONT DE BEAUVOISIN/3; a red London single circle transit mark “PAID/ EC/ 9 APR 9 / 1852” and a black octagonal Liverpool transit mark “L/APR 9/ C”. The Liverpool transit mark indicates the likely date of sailing of a British packet which was most probably the *SS Asia* leaving on 10th April and arriving in New York on 21st April.

Postal Rates

The contents of the letter states that other letters were enclosed which implies it was a double weight letter. The postal rate for a double weight letter from the Papal States to the border of North America was 54 Baj. 47 Baj was paid at source but there is a French

style “3” next to the 5 Baj stamp which means 3 decimes (30 centimes) postage due. (see fig 2). 30 centimes was equivalent to 6 Baj at that time. These unusual French manuscript rate markings were documented by John West in 1975 (1). Whilst many different types exist, they are only found for whole numbers (e.g. 1, 2, 3, 4 etc). There was no equivalent marking for 7Baj which would have required a 3½ mark and so it seems that the French opted to charge below the correct amount, rather than above.

The front also shows a large red “2” right of centre (see fig 3). This was the amount to be paid (2d Sterling) for delivery from the arrival point in North America to the destination in Canada.



Fig 3 Detail of the large red '2' mark for the collect charge in Canada.



Fig 2. Detail of the unusual manuscript French postage due mark indicating a payment of 30 centimes was required.

References:-

1. The French Manuscript Rate Marks by John C. West FRPSL. Postal History International, November 1975 page 378.

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DISPLAYS - SHORT OR LONG FOR OUR 2025 VIRTUAL CONVENTION.

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