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3032

This 1873 cover is a new find and the first recorded complete US-Japan inbound combination cover. We have only three "reverse" covers of inbound mails with Japanese stamps (pictured e.g. in Shinohara 1978). Discussed it with Tai back in June at length (part see his blog resp. his final lot description).

Endorsed via SF and franked 15 C. from New Haven 9/21, but westbound via SF had to be fully prepaid as known (in steps of 10 C., 1873-74 tariff), so returned NY 9/22 with "Due 5" and "short paid" back to New Haven. Then updated 6 C. for 21 C. rate via Atlantic and sent eastbound New Haven Sept. 29. The 21 C. rate of the NGU closed mail (Feb. 73-June 75), see my scan in Tai's blog.

4 The "NY paid all Oct. 1" shows that it went by NGL "Hansa" via Southampton and Bremen, leaving same day. Oct. 1 departure confirmed by NYTimes "Marine Intelligence" column of 1873.10.2 p. 8. *INCORRECT SHIP*  
"NY Tribune" of 1873.9.29 announced departure of foreign mail: from New York via Southampton and Bremen by the Steamship Hansa (NGL) closed at 12m.

"Hansa" of North German Lloyd (NGL)

To Bremen/Germany, via Southampton/England (10.13)

A same day sample cover (<http://www.philamercury.com/covers.php?id=3363>) shows a Bremen transit of October 15. Not on our cover, as the postal bag remained closed until Italy.

Tais cover has "NEW YORK PAID ALL OCT. 1" but nothing else. Why not "closed mail" text in postmark? Reason: there was no postal treaty US-Japan then.

Sample covers have NY PAID ALL with additional text "direct" or "br [itish] transit". Because destinations had postal treaty with USA.

Sample cover (Siegel 1125/2016 #793 unsold, resp. 1146/2016 #1449 sold) US to Turkey, which has "NEW YORK PAID ALL OCT...":

[https://siegelauctions.com/lots.php?year=2016&sale\\_no=1125&page\\_no=26](https://siegelauctions.com/lots.php?year=2016&sale_no=1125&page_no=26)

Same case as on cover to Japan.

--> Because there was no US-Turkey postal treaty.

Bremen closed pouch by rail via Austria, then austro-italian TPO. There is no transit marking, because the postal bag kept closed until Italy. In Italy, it was opened and transit marks applied.

In general, transit mark only was applied, if the mail bag was opened and mail item was re-sorted to other direction / new mail bundle.

The italian TPO is "AMBULANTE ALA VERONA" (TPO Ala to Verona) Oct. 16.

"Ala" is border railway station to Trient/Trento (Austria).

So the cover went Germany-Austria-Italy as prescribed by NGU closed mail modus. (not british mail via France-Italy direct = Calais-Dijon-Modane-Italy)

Route Ala-Verona was newly built in 1870 to speed up connection Germany-Italy.

<http://www.japan-stamp.com/?cat=2>

Further dates are Brindisi 10.17, HK 1873.11.26, BPO Yoko 1873.5.12, These dates confirm shipping by P&O "Madras".

Japanese p.o. Yokohama 6.12.6. In Yokohama, it went into the p.o. box of the inland mail handling department.

Further japanese inland markings are N1B1 Saikyo 6.12.9 afternoon → vermilion Meiji 6.12.12 / Toyooka post office → vermilion vertical "postage paid by addressee" + vermilion "Tajima Post Office Yaga". Then, native paper cherry blossoms 4 Sen pasted and cancelled by vertical style "Tajima Yaga kensazumi".

Tai has checked for sender/receiver in his blog (<http://www.japan-stamp.com/?cat=2>).

Sender HARA Rokujiro was dispatched in 1871 on govt. costs to Yale University. He was a military which originally came from Tajima province Asagure district. We could find nothing about the addressee in Yaga. 4 sen „weight question“. In relevant literature (like Shinohara 1978) it was quoted from regulations that simple inland postage according to weight was applied to "mails incoming from overseas".

No postage due "double charge" procedure. Normal forwarding.

The single rate for this cover was per ½ from US (up to 14,35g), while the Japanese inland rate was 2 Sen per each 2 momme ( or 7,5g). 4 sen thus means the cover was rated in Japan double rate, 7.51 to 15g.

A final question remains. 15 C. US was not considered sufficient via San Francisco, according NY due mark, meaning it exceeded ½ ounce. When later on uprated only to 21 C., that meant the cover was now considered "just matching" ½ oz? Or did the sender remove a sheet to avoid 42 C. double rate?

I exclude the possibility that NY clerk just had a look on 15 C. and presumed that was not enough for a possible double weight cover. They always re-weighted a cover and then checked the rate.