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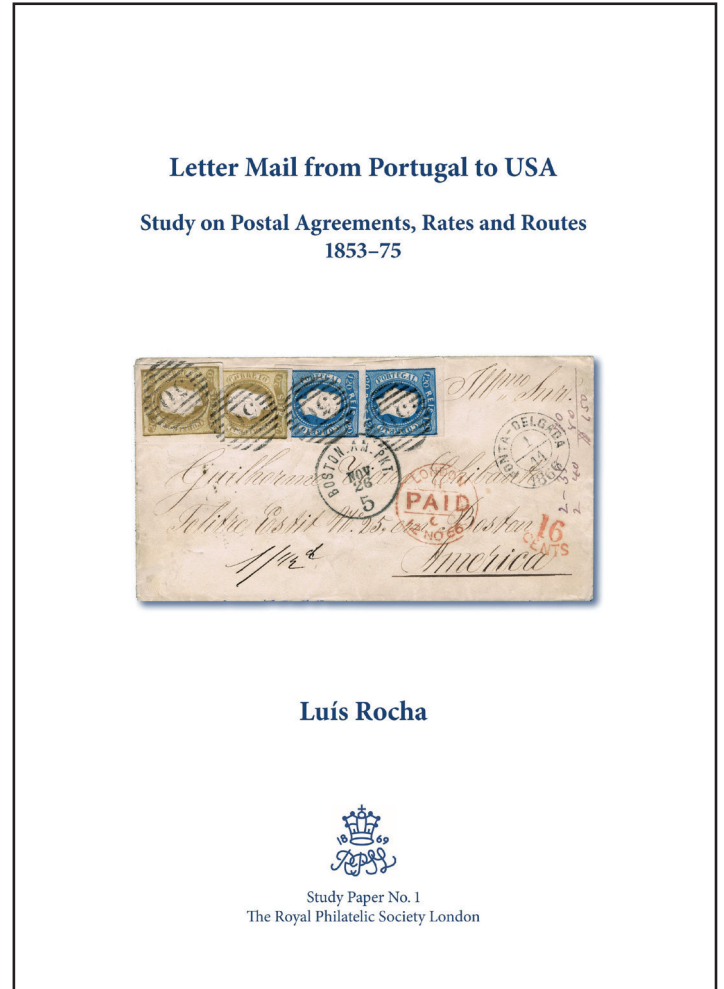
Letter Mail from Portugal to USA Study on Postal Agreements, Rates and Routes 1853–75

by Luís Rocha

A Study Paper from the RPSL

This scholarly work analyses the complex postal regulations and procedures for mail sent from continental Portugal, Madeira, and the Azores to the United States of America between the introduction of Portugal's first adhesive stamps on 1 July 1853 until its entry into the General Postal Union on 1 July 1875. It details how mail transit relied on intermediary countries, primarily the UK, via various Anglo-American postal conventions. The study provides a thorough examination of the different conventions and arrangements to interpret the complex accounting systems, diverse postage rates, and markings found on this transatlantic mail.

The work's uniqueness lies in its narrow and deep focus. While literature exists on Portuguese, British, and US postal history, this study concentrates specifically on the outbound mail from Portugal and its islands to the USA during this 22-year, pre-UPU period. By excluding alternative routes (e.g. via France, Belgium, Prussia), it provides a highly focused analysis of the dominant role of the British postal system as the transit hub. This allows for a unique interpretation of postal markings by systematically breaking down the complex accounting systems and diverse postage rates under the various Anglo-American and Portuguese-British conventions.



About the author

Luís Rocha is a Portuguese philatelist specialising in the philately and postal history of Portugal during the second half of the 19th century. A member of the Royal Philatelic Society London, the European Academy of Philately, the Clube Filatélico de Portugal, and the Portuguese Philatelic Society, he has published numerous articles in national and international journals and continues to research various themes in philately and postal history.

Further information

This is the first in a new series of Study Papers from the RPSL. A 52-page softbound book, printed in full colour in A4 format, this first Study Paper will be published in April 2026 and costs £9.50 for members of the RPSL and £10.50 for non-members (plus postage). It can be ordered through the RPSL website (www.rpsl.org.uk).

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