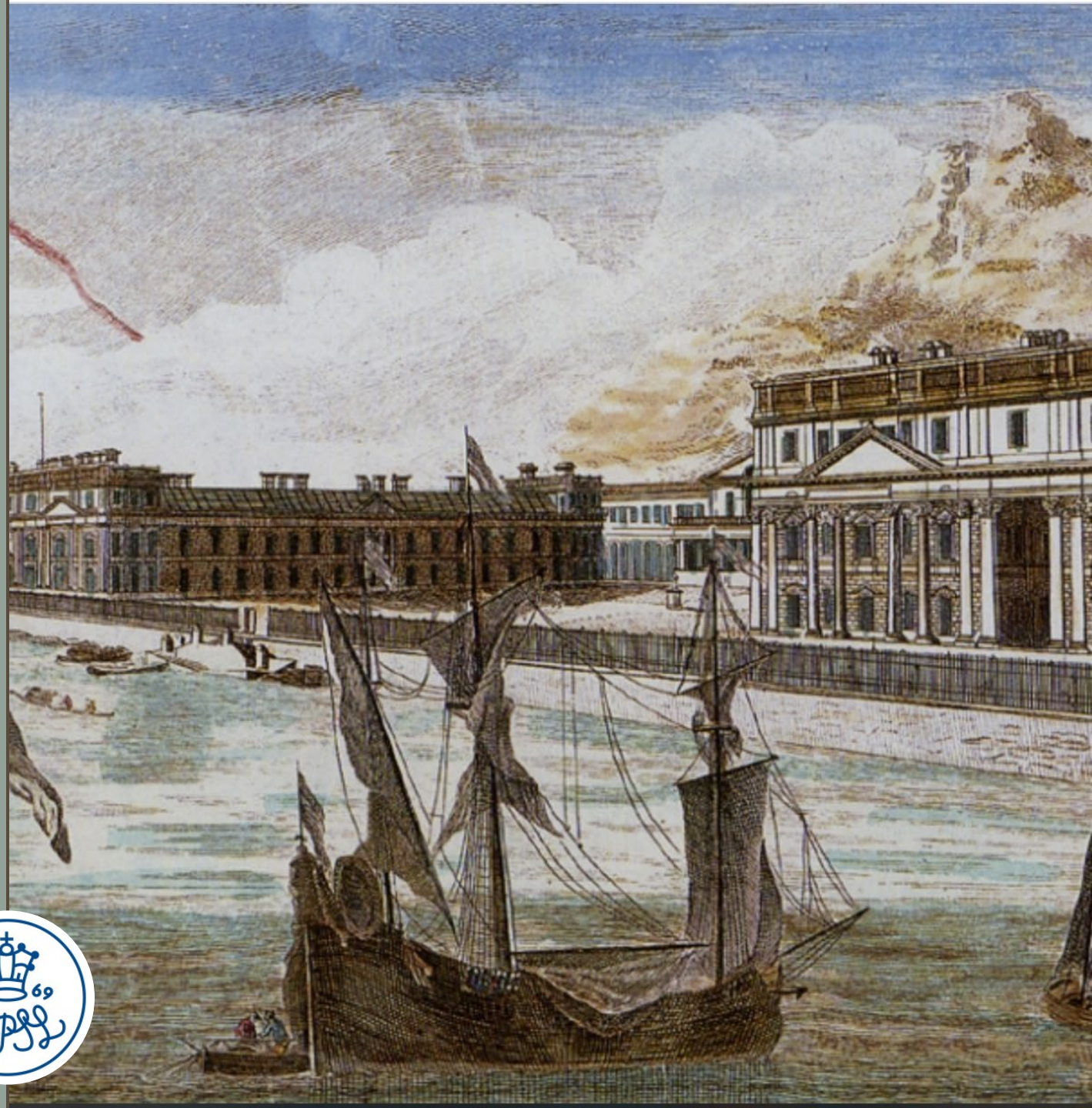


# THE STRUGGLE FOR DOMINANCE: COLONIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF POSTAL SERVICES FROM 1498 UNTIL 1816 ON THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

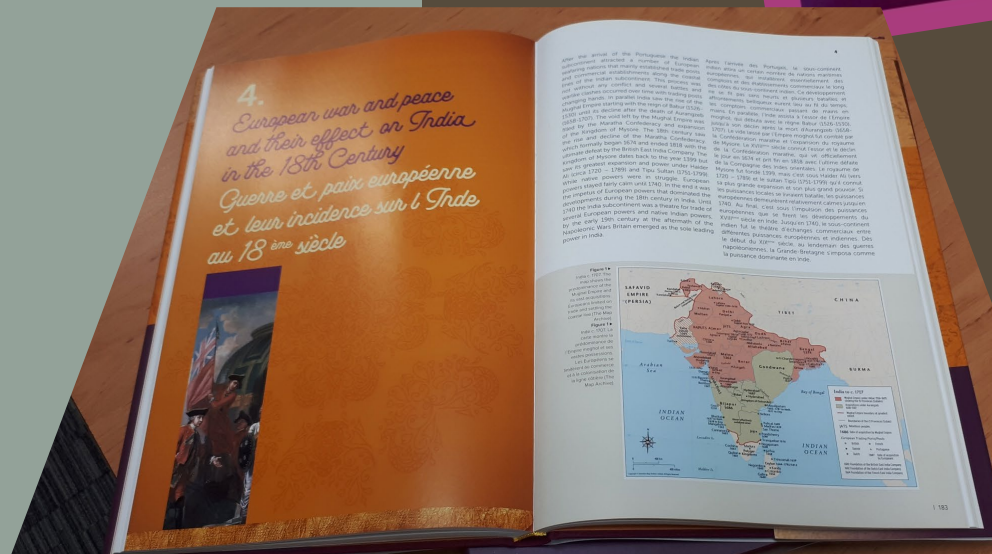
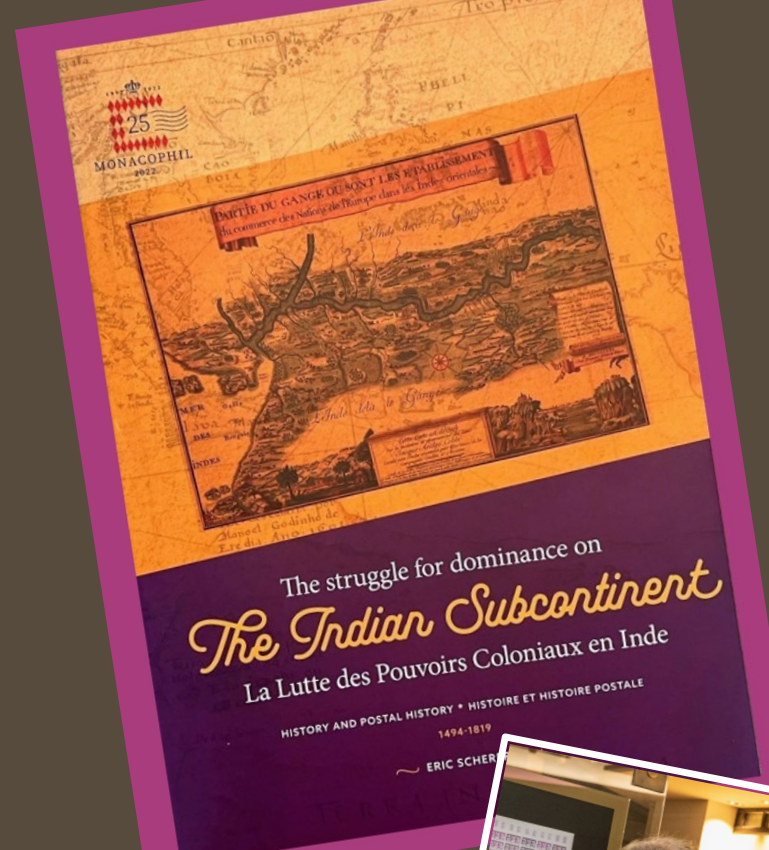
Dr. Eric Scherer, FRPSL, AEP  
Lenzburg, Switzerland

Royal Philatelic Society London Zoom  
Presentation  
09.01.2024



# FURTHER READING: THE STRUGGLE FOR DOMINANCE ON THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT 1498-1819

The book costs EUR 80 including postage and can be ordered from the Club de Monte Carlo, c/o Musée des Timbres et des Monnaies, Terrasses de Fontvieille, MC - 98000 Monaco. One can also find an order form online at [https://www.monacophil.eu/MonacoPhil2022\\_CatalogueOrderForm.pdf](https://www.monacophil.eu/MonacoPhil2022_CatalogueOrderForm.pdf)





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# INDO EUROPEAN RELATIONS: TRADE AND CONFLICT

Battle of the Hydaspes 326 AD  
Pompeii Lakshmi 79 AD

# IT IS ALL ABOUT SPICES

- India's spices are luxury products in Europe
- Trade traditionally is handled by the Arabs through Alexandria and Constantinople
- Fall of Constantinople 1453 forces Europeans to take action



# EUROPEANS ARE «FORCED» TO FIND THEIR OWN ROUTE TO INDIA





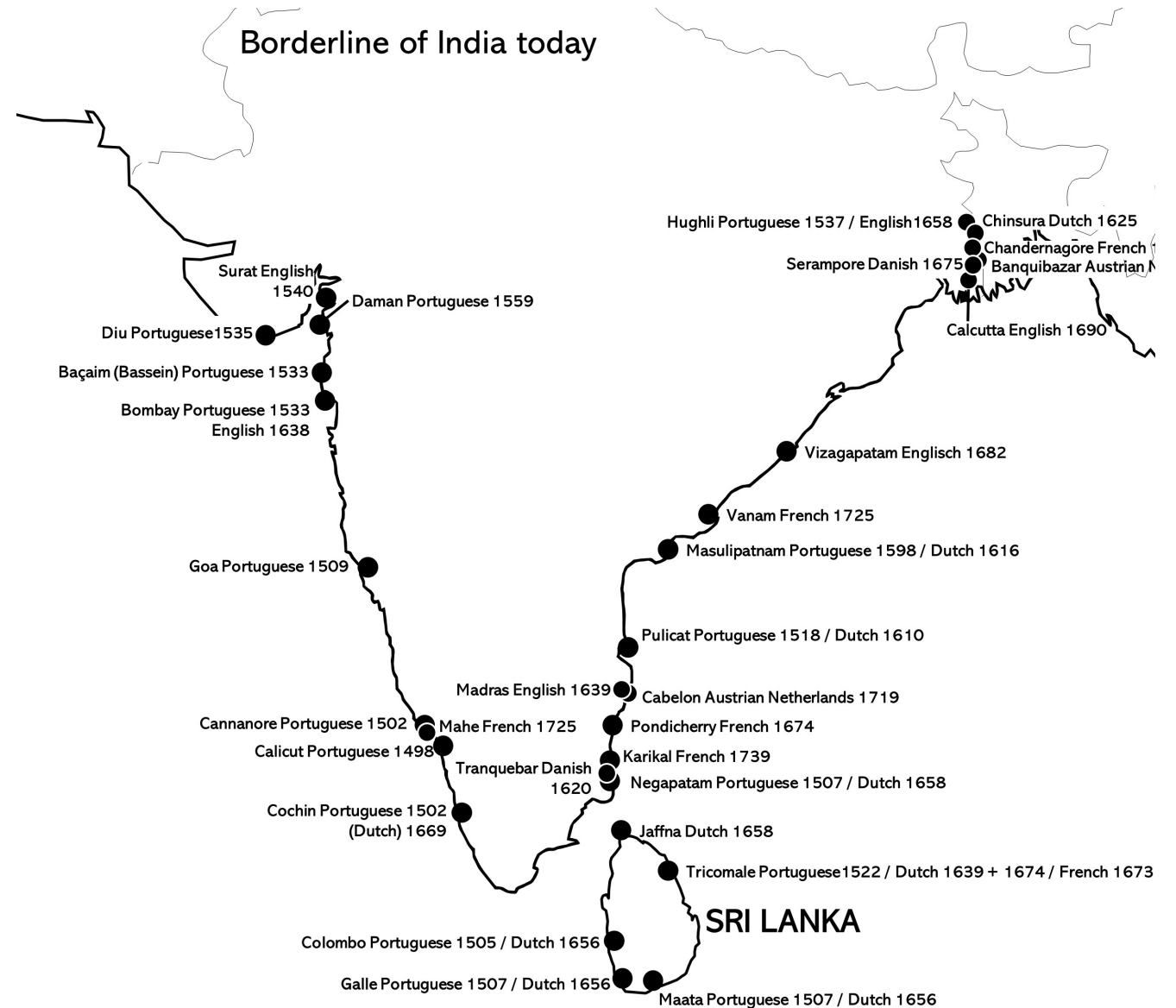
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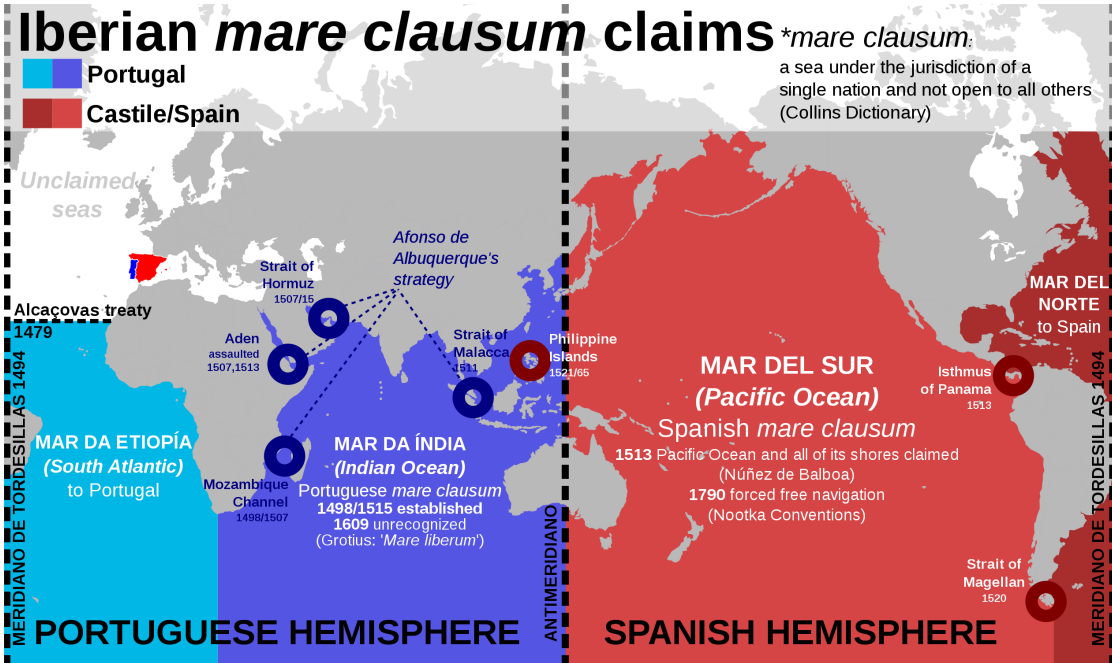
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# EUROPEAN SETTLEMENTS ON THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT 1498-1739

- (1) The Portuguese
- (2) The Dutch
- (3) The English
- (4) The Danish
- (5) The French
- (6) The Austrian/Belgians

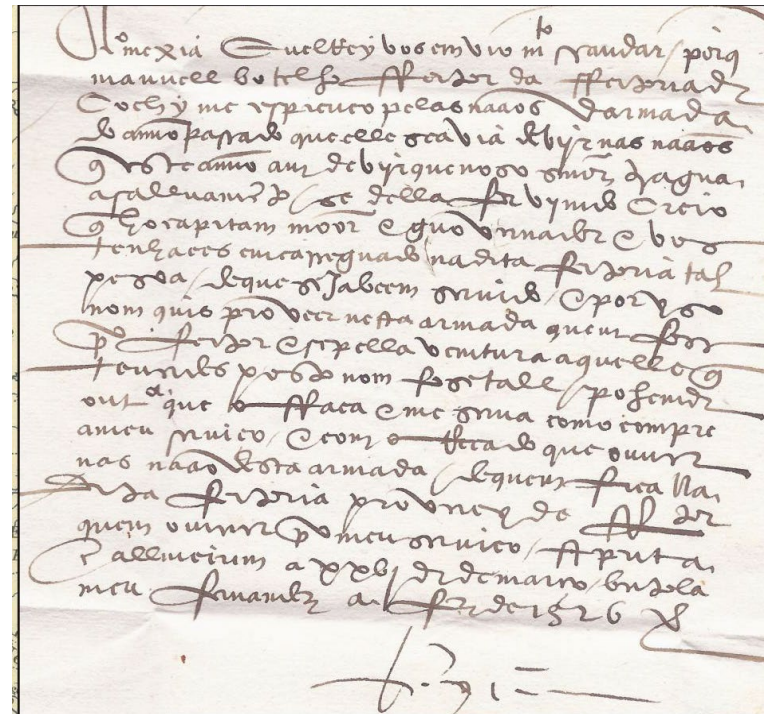
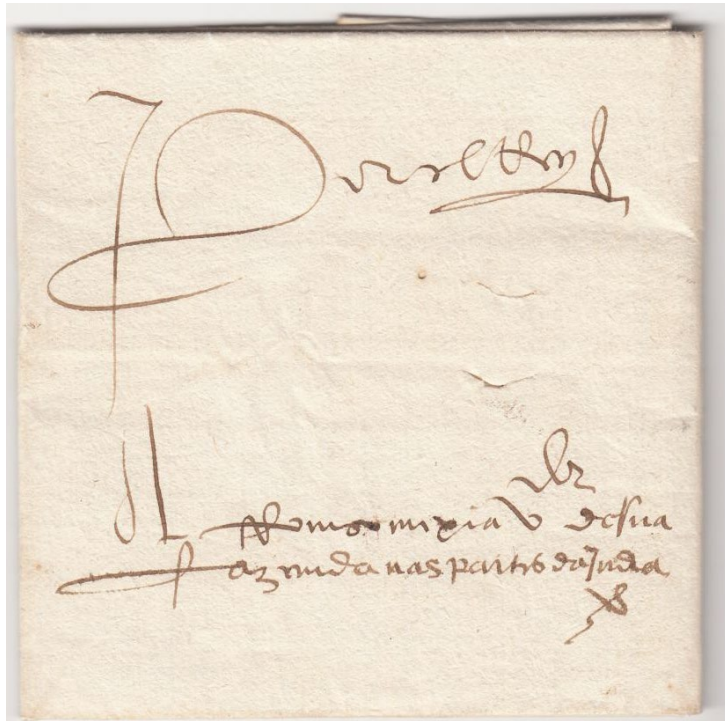




1494 - TORDESILLIAS KEEPS THE SPANISH OUT  
 1498 — THE PORTUGUESE ARRIVE IN INDIA

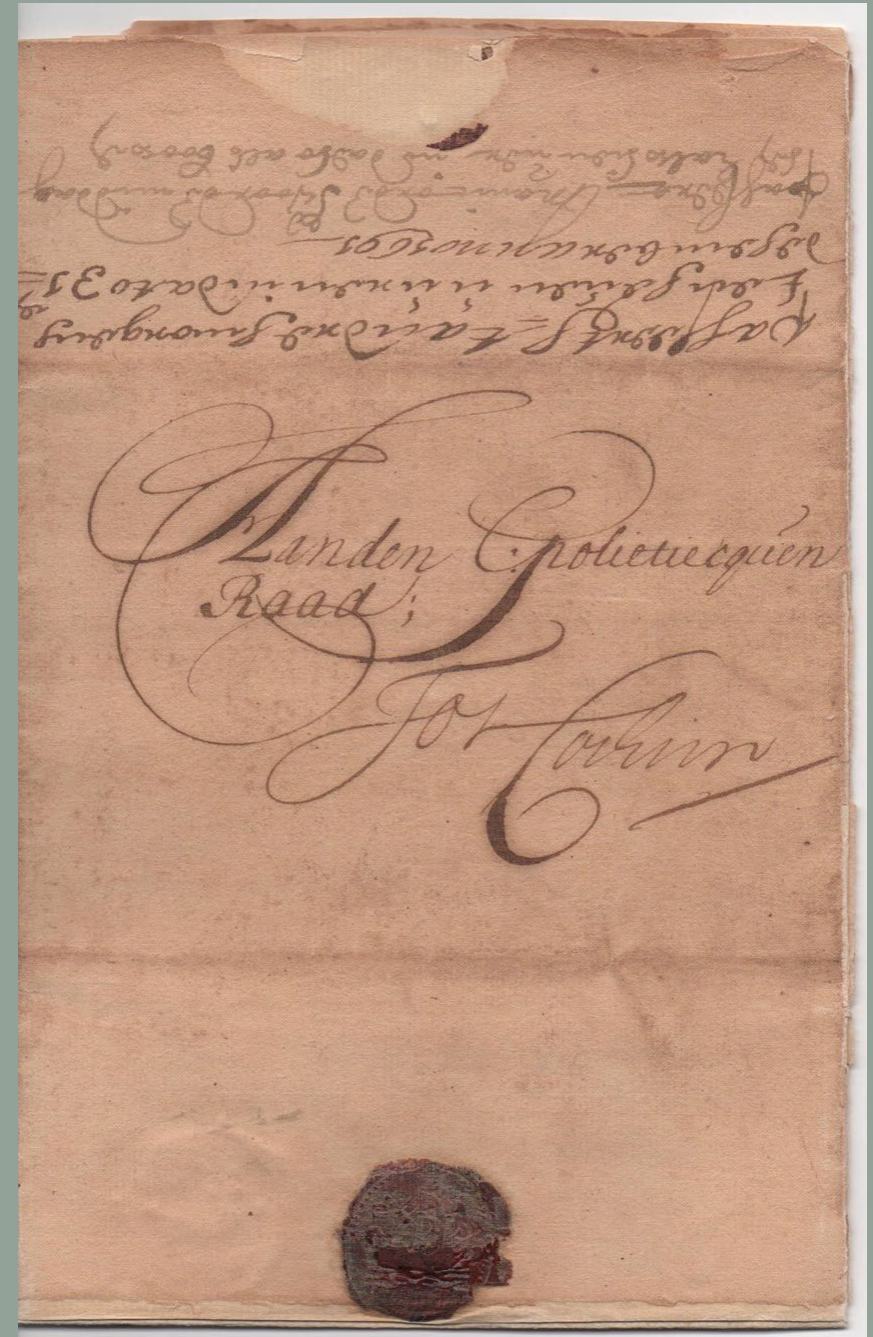
# LETTER FROM KING JOAO III. OF PORTUGAL (1502-1557) TO ALFONSO DI MEXIA. THE LETTER DEPARTED LISBON ON 08.04.1526, ON BOARD OF THIS YEAR'S FLEET TO INDIA. THE LETTER ULTIMATELY REACHED MEXIA IN COCHIN

(COURTESY OF MARTIN HOSSELMANN)



# 1605: THE DUTCH ARRIVE

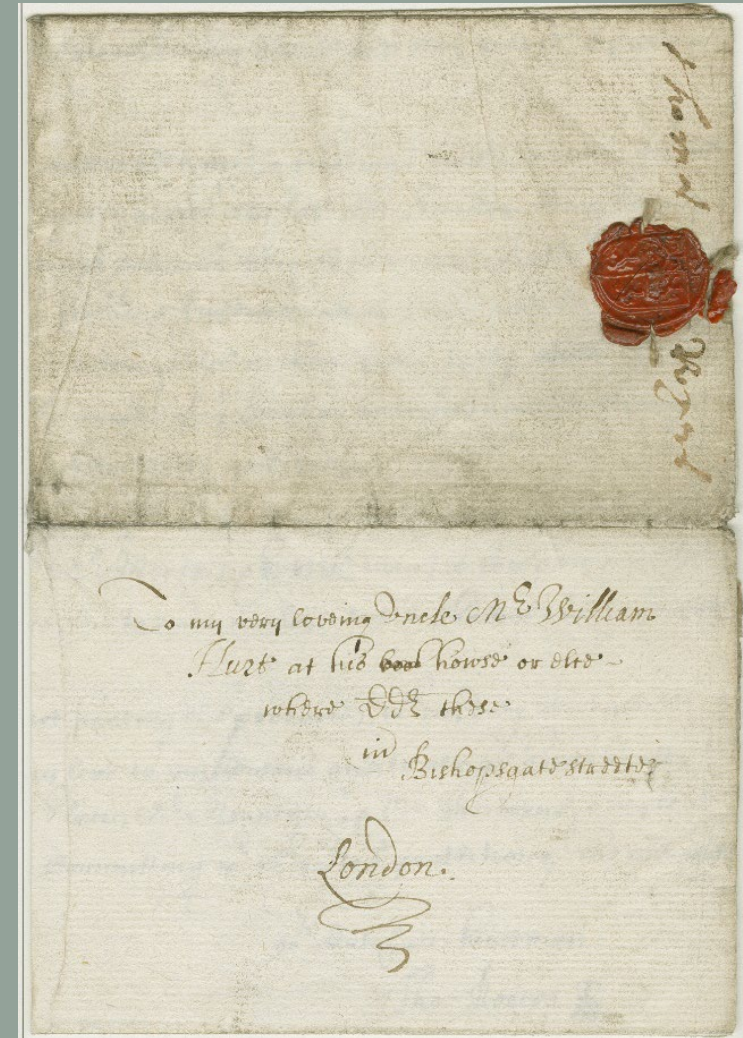
Letter written by Commander Isaac van Dielen,  
governor of the Dutch possessions in India on  
30.12.1691



# 1612: THE ENGLISH ARRIVE

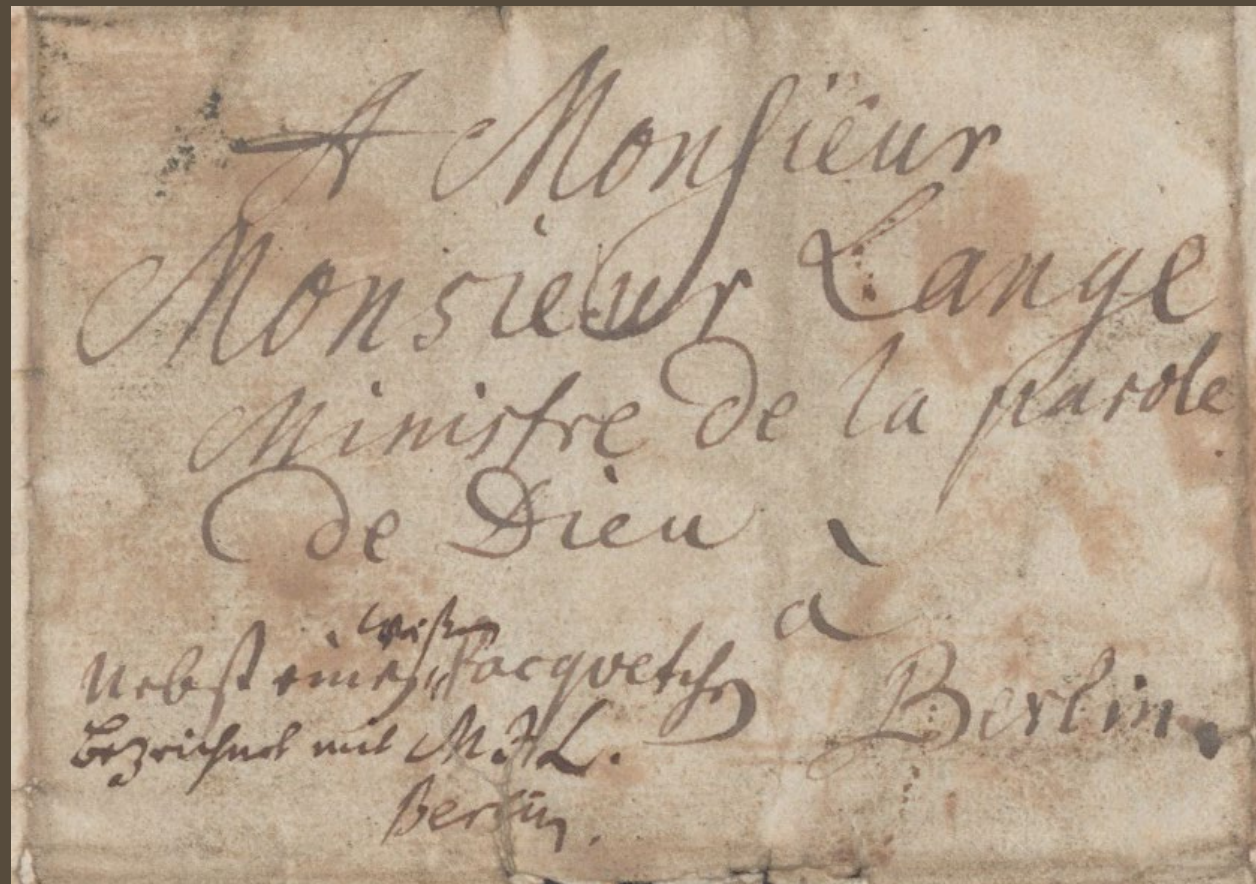
Letter written in Surat on 12.01.1632, carried  
by ship around the Cape of Good Hope to  
London.

(Courtesy of Jochen Heddergott)



# 1620: THE DANISH ARRIVE

Folded letter and content sent by Bartholomeus Ziegenbalg from Tranquebar 22.10.1709 to the minister Lange in Berlin (Frankesche Stiftungen)



View of Tranquebar  
(Collection of Skoklosters Castle)

# 1684: THE FRENCH ARRIVE

Letter dated 25. October 1731 from the garrison Bernaffa in Poland. The letter is addressed to Jean Denis, servant of the French India Companie in Pondichery or Bengalle (i.e. Chandernagore).

The Bernaffa garrison was located close to Berestia in today's Ukraine. The French king Louis XV. was married to Maria Leszczyńska, a daughter to the King of Poland. This is the reason for the presence of French military in Poland. The letter does not bear any markings concerning rates.

It shows the mark „Dieu garde le porteur“ – God save the carrier.

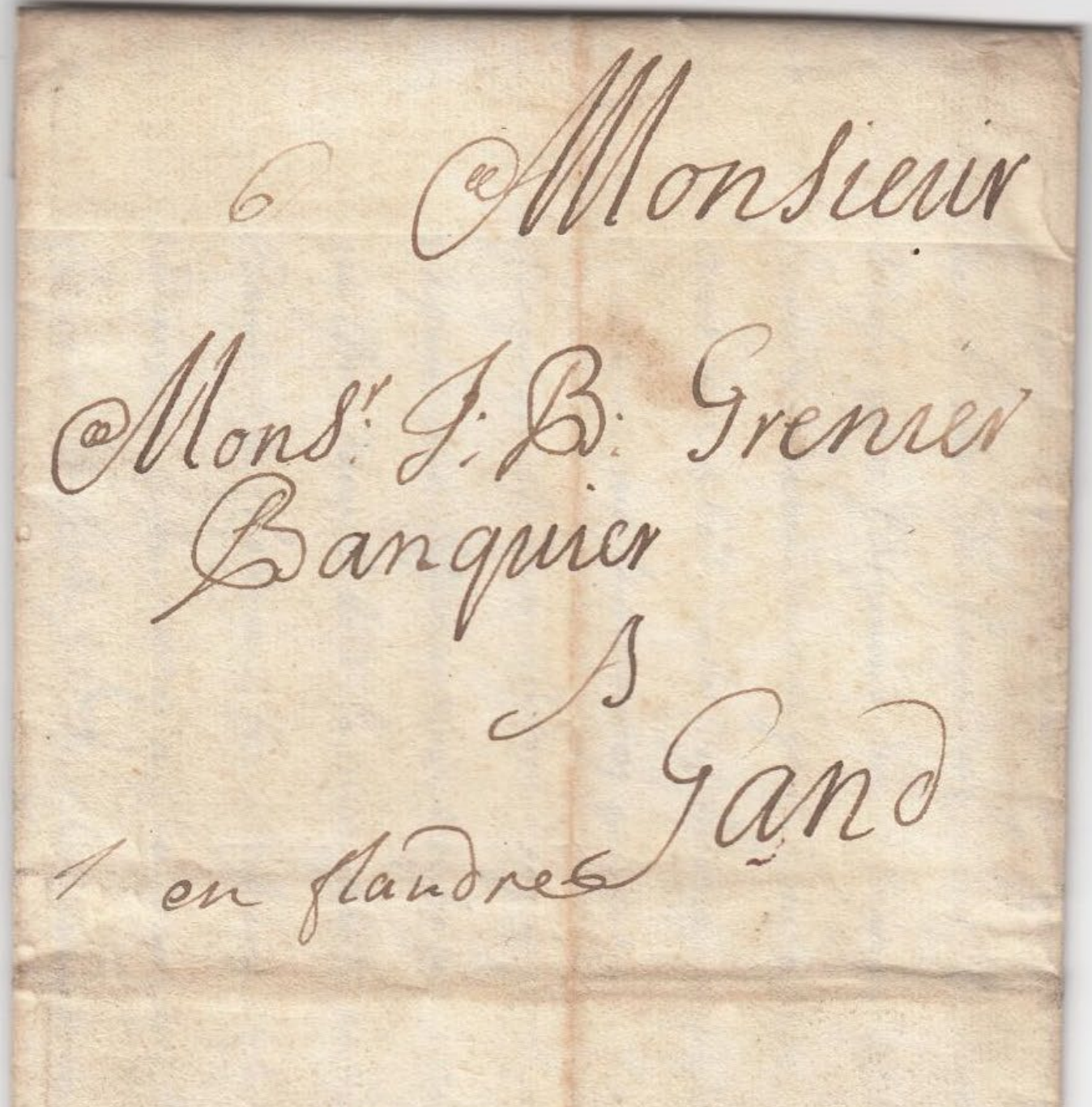


1722:  
THE  
AUSTRIANS/BELGIANS  
ARE THE LAST

---

Letter addressed to a Mons. J.B. Grenier, a Belgian banker in Gent. The letter is datelined 24.07.1724, shortly after the Ostend Company established its settlement in Banquibazar.

(Courtesy of Martin Hoselmann)



à Monsieur  
à Monsr J. B. Grenier  
Banquier  
S  
à en flandres Gand





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# THE SEVEN-YEAR WAR 1756-63

## THE FIRST WORLDWIDE WAR

Great Britain,  
Prussia, Portugal and  
Allies



France, Spain,  
Austria, Russia,  
Sweden and Allies



### War Zones:

Central Europe

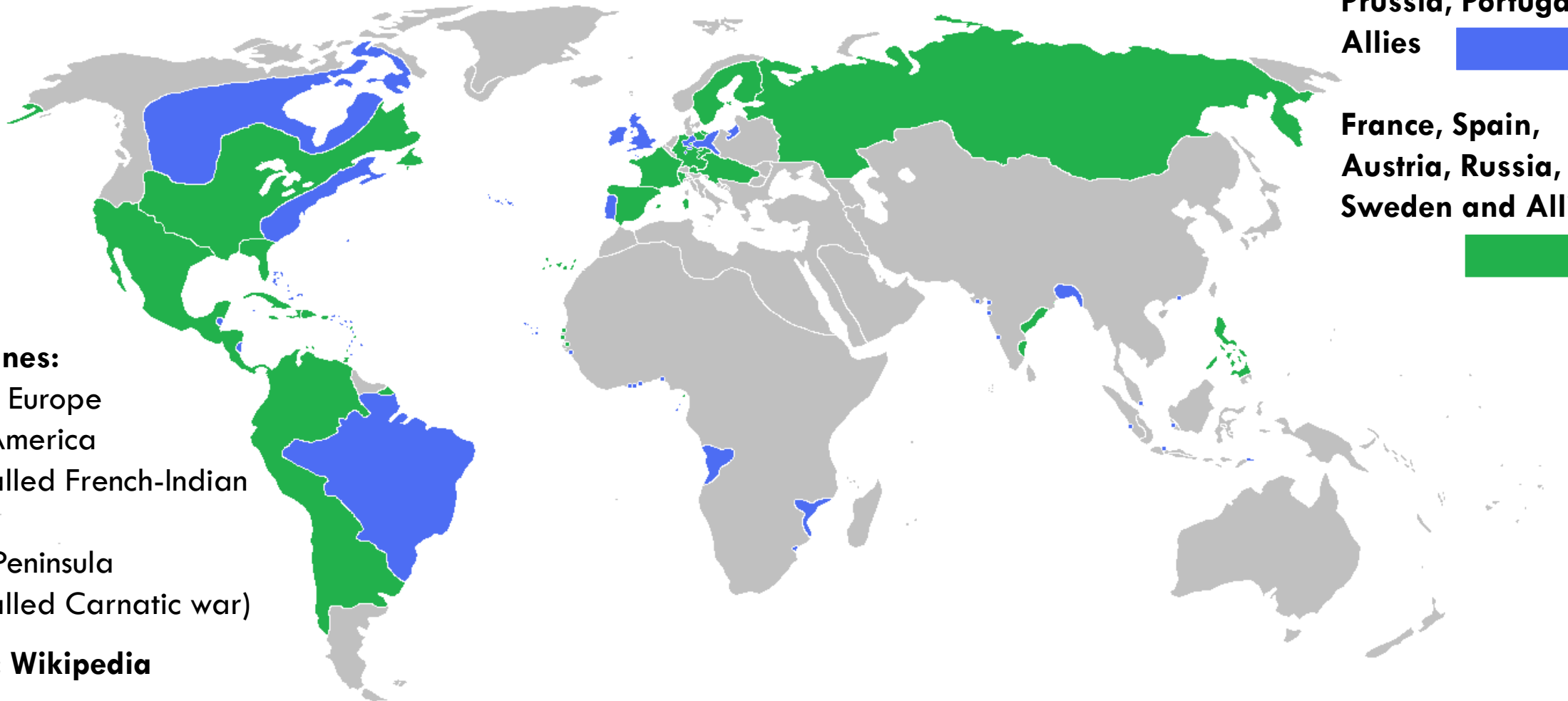
North America

(also called French-Indian  
War)

Indian Peninsula

(also called Carnatic war)

Source: Wikipedia



# 1754 - 1815: THE ANGLO-FRENCH STRUGGLE FOR DOMINANCE

## 1755 LETTER FROM A FRENCH OFFICER IN BENGAL

à Bengal le 20. Aoust 1755.

ma très chère votre sœur  
10 Juin 1755. J'ay eu d'une joie  
nouvelles, rien au monde ne me flatte davantage  
souvent de vos lettres, mais vous les m'avez peu passées  
serais à peine une lettre toute les années, le séjour de mon pays vous  
donne trop d'occupations & vous oubliez le Saave, seroit pas  
cependant que j'approuve très fort les dépenses que vous y faites  
rien ni le mérite ni le mérite, je ne vois rien de plus futile que le  
monde, & rien de plus grand que l'aller d'Arbes que vous avez  
fait faire & couvrir aussi que vu l'état, et d'une grande  
recourse surtout en guerre, en un mot vous aimez mourir et vous  
faites fort bien de chercher de quoy vous y amusez, cependant  
le tout est de voir si vous n'avez pas les cartes d'Inde'

During the 18th century several nations, namely Britain, France, The Netherlands and Denmark, struggled for dominance in India. In the mid 18th century the struggle resulted in the three «Carnatic Wars» (1746-48, 1749-54, and 1756-63) between the French East India Company and the British East India Company. These conflicts involved numerous nominally independent local rulers and their vassals and switched between military struggles and diplomatic entanglement.

In his letter dated 20<sup>th</sup> August 1755 he gives account of the presence of the British («Les Anglaises»), Dutch («Les Hollandaise») and Danish.

«I did arrive 15 days ago. This is the most I've seen: Bengal is much more charming, richer, more people and more abundant in everything than Pondichéry. The fortification and French city we call Chandernagor is the banks of the Ganges [to be exact: it is the Hoogly river, remark of the editor]. The English have their fortification 6 miles from here and they call it Calcutta. The Dutch also have their fortification and their city about ¼ of the way from here. The Danes also have a trading post and all nations make trade in the country. ...».

# BATTLE OF PLASSEY 1757 IS A GAME CHANGER

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Clive meeting Mir Jafar after  
the Battle of Plassey  
(oil on canvas, Francis  
Hayman, c. 1762)  
(National Portrait Gallery)



# TROUBLE IN EUROPE: THE FRENCH REVOLUTION 1789-1799 AND THE NAPOLEONIC WARS 1803-1815



Folded shiplotter written in Chandernagor, 12.02.1793. The letter bears a French entry mark «COL[onies] PAR BREST» and the seal of French revolutionary censorship comite.



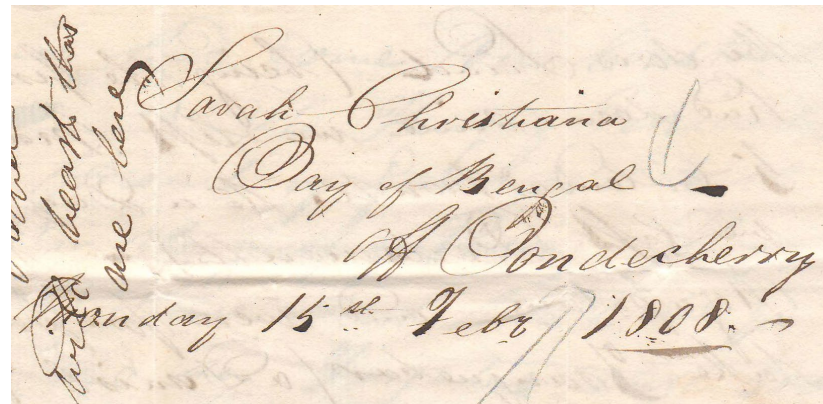
# 1808 LETTER FROM A BRITISH OFFICER IN BAY OF PONDICHERRY



Letter datelined 15<sup>th</sup> February 1808 written on board of the warship "Sarah Christina" in the Bay of Bengal, off Pondicherry, giving account of the conflicts between the British, French and Danish. The letter is addressed to Banff and shows a mark dated 17. Oct. (?) 1808 reading «Shiptetter London»

«... We have taken a Danish merchant ship from the Isle of France [= Reunion] bound for Tranquebar and have been chased and have chased a French 44 gun frigate the Piedemontese. [...]

We made Negapatam and were prepared to take Tranquebar, a Danish settlement about 9 miles from us.»





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INTERNAL MAIL IN  
INDIA FOR  
CENTURIES:  
DAWK RUNNERS

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## BRITISH ESTABLISH THE FIRST PUBLIC AND DOMESTIC MAIL SERVICE IN INDIA

Warren Hastings had taken the initiative under East India Company and starts the first Postal Service in india in 1766.

Warren Hastings

First Governor-General of Bengal

6 December 1732 – 22 August 1818

(National Portrait Gallery)



# SECURING THE BRITISH DOMINANCE 1784-1796: OPENING OF BRITISH POST OFFICES IN FRENCH AND DANISH INDIA

“Post Paid  
Pondicherry”,  
which is only  
documented in  
1795

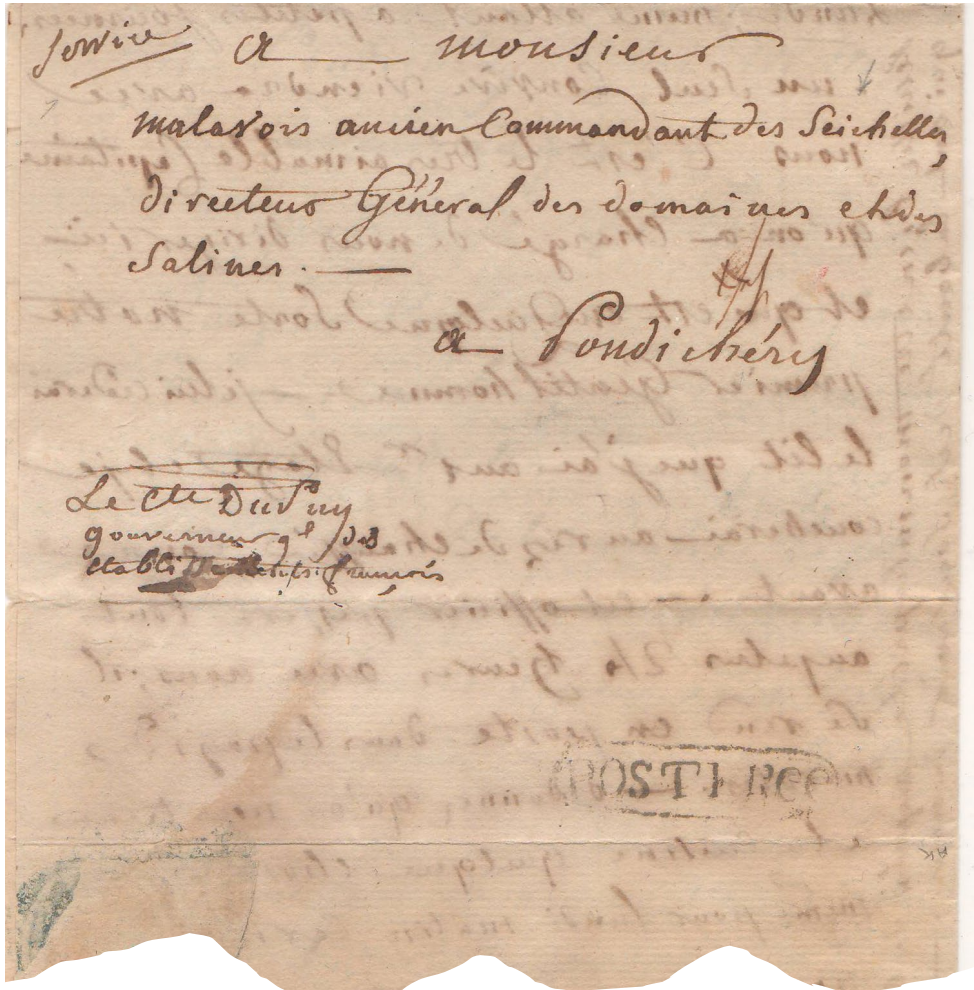




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# 1816: THE 2<sup>ND</sup> TREATY OF PARIS AND THE FINAL ESTABLISHMENT OF (MINIMAL) FRENCH COLONIAL RULE



After the end of the Napoleonic Wars the conflict was finally settled with the Treaty of Paris in 1816. The Conte Dupuy was appointed as governor and sent to Pondichéry to rebuild the French administration. This finally led to the permanent founding of the «Etablissements Française dans l'Inde» as a French colony. Still, the colony always was dependent on the benevolence of the British which catered for most of the settlements' infrastructure as well as their connections to the rest of India and the world. As a key function, the British had a monopoly on the postal service and remained responsible for all local deliveries of mail.

Letter datelined Madras, 20<sup>th</sup> Novem[=nine]ber 1816, written by the new governor of the French settlements, André Julien Conte du Dupuy, showing the new title a «Gouverneur des Etabliment».

It holds the handwritten annotation «Service» and the mark «Post free». This is the **earliest known letter** there the French authorities in India were allowed to use the British postal system for **official matter free of charge**. This agreement must have been informal since it was not settled before the 1839 Anglo-French convention in writing.



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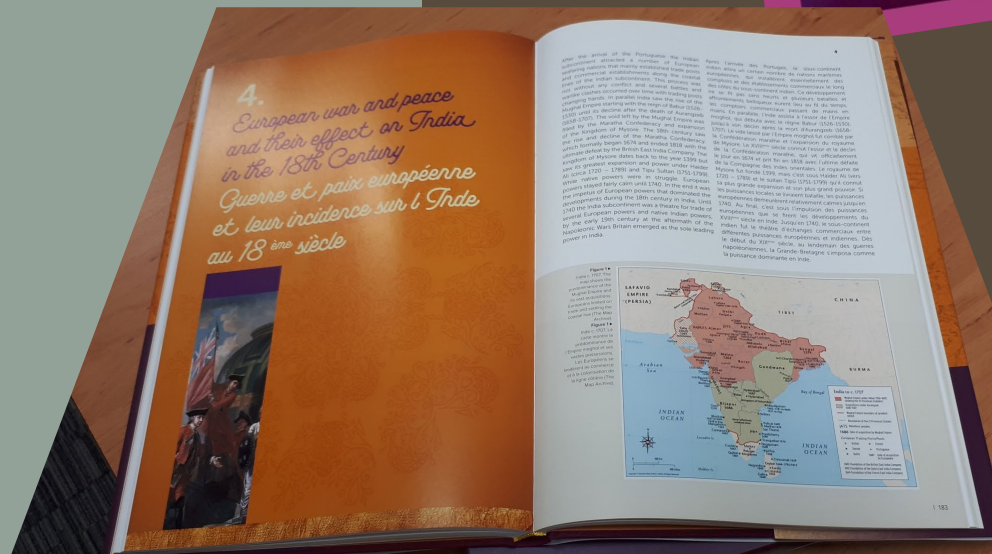
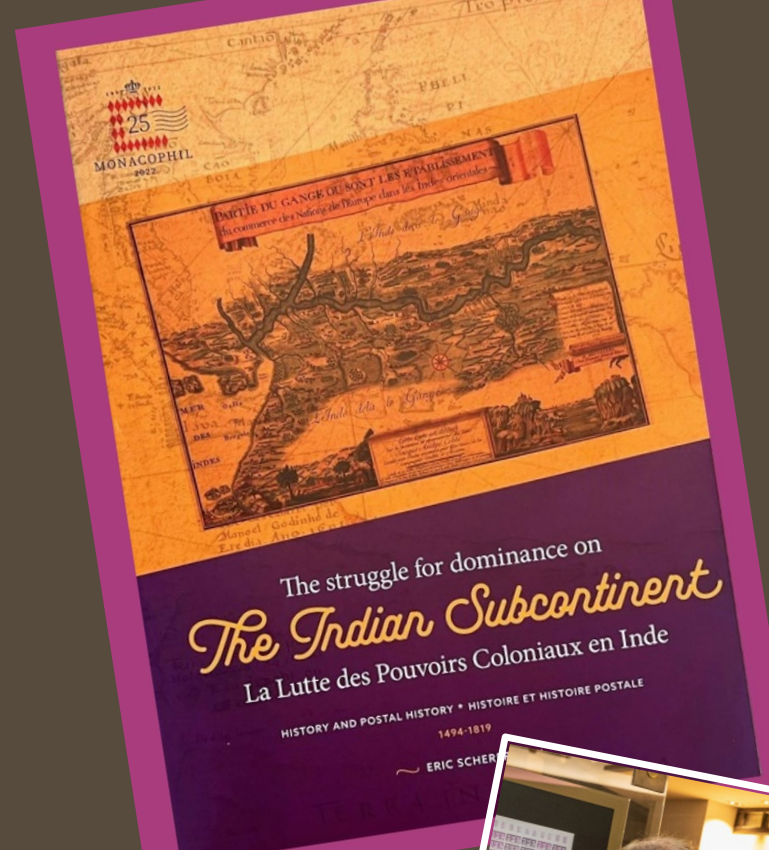
POST 1816:  
INDIA REMAINS A LIGHTHOUSE FOR  
DEVELOPMENT OF POSTAL SERVICES:  
A STORY WELL KNOWN TO PHILATELISTS

- Postage Acts 1814 | 1815 | 1819
- Anglo-French Postal Convention 1836
- India Post Office Act 1837 (Handstruck Stamps)
- Scinde Dawk 1852
- 1st «All India» stamps 1854



# FURTHER READING: THE STRUGGLE FOR DOMINANCE ON THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT 1498-1819

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# ERIC SCHERER - CV



## CONTACT

e.scherer@bdph.de

**Dr. Eric Scherer** is an avid philatelist and postal historian. He first participated in an exhibition in 1978 and is exhibiting ever since. He concentrates on a few topics, among them the Postal History of French India, Reply Postcards in International Mail, and Mail posted «Out of course».

He is member of several clubs and societies, like the Royal Philatelic Society London, the India Study Circle, Col.Fra and the Swiss Society for Postal History.

He was named Fellow of the Royal and member of the European Academy of Philately AEP. Since 2021 he serves as a board member of the German Philatelic Association BDPH.