

SIAM

The Provisional Att Surcharges 1889 – 1899 on Second Issue and its Study

The exhibit shows the extraordinary measures taken by postal authorities during one decade to meet shortages of low value stamps of second issue. Stamps were surcharged with new values in "Att(s)". This exhibit shows the wide range of provisional "Att" surcharges on second issue, including the various settings, hand stamps, constant and minor varieties, errors of surcharge, and uses on cover.

The first issued stamps in Siam in August 1883 were intended only for inland use. As Siam joined the UPU in 1887 it had to issue bilingual stamps for international use. With this second issue comprising values from 2 Atts to 64 Atts the most important period for the development of the postal system in Siam began.

The reason for such a quantity of provisional issues was based in the high production costs for new stamps in Europe. It was simply cheaper to regularly surcharge already existing higher value stamps to meet shortages in low values.

The surcharges were applied by wooden or metal hand stamps, typeset in a hand press, cylindrical press or machine press. For typeset, the printer had to assemble many separate pieces of type to compose the surcharges, clamp them together to form a printing base, and fit them in a frame. When additional surcharging of a value was required, the printer would re-compose the many pieces of type to form a new printing base, thus giving rise to a new setting. Where pieces of type did not fit tightly together, thin cardboard or paper was used to make the type secure. However, during the printing process, type sometimes worked itself loose leading to movement and, thus, varieties in the surcharge. The English surcharges are found with many constant varieties resulting from the use of different numeral types and the mixing of antique and roman type. In addition, type was sometimes broken or mis-sorted when removed from the frame and tossed into the cases holding the type. Many of the varieties in the Siamese surcharges were created when damaged type was re-used.

The exhibit presents **new discoveries** of plate positions of surcharges that are not recorded in the philatelic literature, as well as uncatalogued subtypes and varieties (constant or minor), and misprints.

Important items are:

	Frame	Page
• Stamp 1 Att on 2 Atts, type 4 with plate flaw B5	1	3
• Large block (59 stamps) of 1 Att on 2 Atts, setting A	1	5
• Complete sheet of 1 Att on 2 Atts, setting B	1	9, 10
• Cover with strip of four 1 Att on 2 Atts, setting A (3 operations)	1	11
• Stamp 1 Att on 3 Atts, type 2	1	12
• Stamp 2 Atts on 3 Atts with type 4 completely misplaced	2	19
• Block of 4 Atts on 24 Atts with different combination of Siamese surcharge	2	28
• Registered letter with block of six 4 Atts on 24 Atts, type 1A	2	32
• Cover with single franking 4 Atts on 24 Atts, type 2A	3	34
• Registered letter with multiple franking	3	36
• Registered letter with multiple franking	3	37
• Registered letter with multiple franking	4	60
• Large block of 2 Atts on 64 Atts, setting A with stamp numeral type 2	5	66, 67
• Letter with multiple franking 1 Att on 64 Atts	5	74
• Registered letter with multiple franking	6	90
• Two pairs of roman 4 Atts on 12 Atts on reverse – used	6	92
• Large block of roman 4 Atts on 12 Atts	7	98, 99
• Registered letter with multiple franking	7	101
• Large block of antique 3 Atts on 12 Atts	7	104, 105
• Postcard with rare usage of 3 Atts on 12 Atts, setting C	7	107
• Block of four and single stamps of antique 10 Atts on 24 Atts	8	124