

Cinderella Time: **Occussi-Ambeno** *A Philatelic Invention*

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Is there really a place called Occussi-Ambeno? Since 1968 there have been postage stamps reaching the philatelic marketplace from this mysterious sultanate and which have baffled collectors for years.



Occussi-Ambeno really exists. It is an exclave on the island of Timor and it is part of the independent nation of East Timor which used to be a Portuguese colony. Thus from a geographical point of view the place really can be found on a detailed map of the Indonesian archipelago (although with a different name today). However, the sultanate is the invention of New Zealand collector and printer Bruce Grenville, also known as Bruce Henderson.

The very first stamps were rather primitive productions but recent issues are far more sophisticated.

Bruce Henderson has created a sultanate with an extensive administration. The current Postmaster General is Sir Hantuk Belagar and according to the press releases Occussi-Ambeno's stamps are produced by the Government Printer, KDPN, in Baleksetung. However, there is much more to suggest that the printing takes place in Henderson's print shop in Auckland, New Zealand. The Occussi-Ambeno Overseas Philatelic Bureau (P.O.Box 876, Auckland, New Zealand) is probably to be found at the same location.



On 20 March 2015, the Occussi-Ambeno postal service released a set of four stamps marking pioneers of space travel. The 60c value is devoted to Robert Goddard (1882-1945) who is credited with building the very first liquid-fueled rocket.

Wernher von Braun (1912-1977) was a German aerospace

engineer who moved to the USA after World War II to help with the U.S. space program.



On 1 June 2015, there was a set of two stamps marking the 150th anniversary of the birth of Jean



Sibelius (1865-1957) who was a famous composer living in Finland. Apart from the portrait of the composer, the stamps show the cathedral in Helsinki and the mosque in Järvenpää. Exactly why these two buildings were chosen is unknown to me.

Occussi-Ambeno is one of many imaginary nations and the stamps are of course completely bogus. I believe the Occussi-Ambeno stamps have denominations in Australian dollars.

Many other producers of these kinds of Cinderellas, which can only be used to dress up your mail, are supplying their “stamps” for free to interested collectors.

Strangely enough, Occussi-Ambeno’s stamps hardly ever feature designs of local life in the sultanate. Instead, they generally commemorate international events and anniversaries of very limited significance to the people of the Timorese exclave.

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