

BORDEAUX POSTAL MARKINGS BEFORE THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, 1690-1789

TITLE PAGE AND PLAN

The exhibit shows various types of Bordeaux postmarks, both manuscript and hand stamps, used by the "Poste-aux-lettres" in the kingdom of France up to the French Revolution of 1789. At that time linear postmarks were introduced and then in 1806 dated receiving markings became available.



Type A



Type B



Maritime mail

Although hand stamps were introduced specifically in Bordeaux as early as 1701, the manuscript markings were still in use in 1726. Bordeaux markings that have been identified differ in the type and size of the lettering as well as in the overall dimensions of the postmark. They refer to the city of Bordeaux by the letter **B**. The letter is surmounted by a fleur-de-lys and there is a crescent underneath the **B**. The whole design being placed within a circle (Type A). This first type of marking was in use until 1753. The same markings, however, without the outer circle (Type B) were used until 1787. Depending on the references consulted there may be up to eight different types of crowned **B** markings. However, because of the rapid wear and tear of the hand stamp, new type identified may only be distortions of earlier types. Furthermore, the dates of usage sometimes overlap as there were 3 or 4 hand stamps in use at a given time.

The postal markings during the Ancien régime (the reigns of Louis XIV, Louis XV and Louis XVI) are shown in this section in a chronological order. This period was followed by a reorganization of the postal system after the French Revolution. The revolution took place in 1789 but its effects on the postal system were only noted in 1792, especially in the colonies. Examples of postal markings applied to maritime mail are also illustrated.

LA POSTE AUX LETTRES

<i>Manuscript marking</i>		Page
POSTAGE PAID (PORT PAYÉ)	1691-1726	2
POSTAGE DUE (PORT DÛ)		3
<i>Handstamps</i>		
Crowned B , circled (Type A)	1701-1757	4-6
Crowned B , without circle (Type B)	1753-1787	7-13

MARITIME MAIL entering France through Bordeaux

<i>Handstamps</i>		
Crowned B + COLONNIES	1763-1776	14
Crowned B + COLONIES in arc	1778-1786	15
COLONIES + Three fleurs-de-lys	1789-1792	16