

# Dutch Postmarks Prior to the Modern Kingdom of the Netherlands – 1581 to 1814

## Synopsis

### Background

This exhibit presents an overview of Dutch philately from 1581, when the Dutch provinces secured their independence from Spanish rule, to 1815 when Willem I of the House of Orange declared himself King of the Netherlands. An earlier version was shown in 2024 for a members-only competition at the Collectors Club of Chicago where it scored 89 points and was awarded the third-place trophy. Apart from that, this material has never been exhibited before.

### What is presented?

This exhibit shows Dutch manuscript and handstamp postmarks beginning with a manuscript mark from 1593 followed by the late 17<sup>th</sup> century Amsterdam 3-stuiver marks – the earliest handstamps in the world that showed the origin, destination, and postal rate for a letter. Other postmarks from the period of the Dutch Republic (1579 – 1795) are shown, as well as marks from the period of occupation and annexation by France (1794 – 1813). The exhibit concludes with material from the transition period between the removal of Napoleon following his defeat at Leipzig in October 1813 and the modern Kingdom of the Netherlands (1815 – present). The organization is largely chronological. However, marks of a similar type are arranged together even though this has resulted in some deviation from a strictly chronological order.

### Principal resources:

Adema, Kees, *The First Postage Dues: Holland's '3S' Markings, 1667 – 1811*, 2002.  
Korteweg, P.C., *300 Jaar Postmerken van Nederland, 1570 – 1870*, 1985 reprint.  
Stomp, W. (adapted by Rozema H.P.), *De Departementstempels*, reproduced in N.V.P.H.,  
*Specialiteiten Catalogus* 2006 – 2011.  
Vellinga, O. M., *de poststempels van nederland, 1676 – 1915*, March 1967 reprint.

### Selected Highlights

- Page 1 Letter from Middelburg to London, 30 August 1593, with manuscript postal marking **G 1** (1 groot) written by the postmaster at Middelburg.
- Page 2 Amsterdam 3-stuiver “**R**” mark on letter dated in 1677, just 10 years after the first use. Clear examples that early are uncommon.
- Page 8 Military letter dated 30 November 1794 with scarce (unlisted) **Com<sup>on</sup> de l’org<sup>on</sup> et du mouv<sup>t</sup>/des armees de terre** mark. Roumet certificate dated 2014.
- Page 9 Two 1794 letters with the scarce manuscript military marking **Bois le duc** (’sHertogenbosch) in the prescribed violet color. (Only 5 examples recorded)

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## Exhibit Plan

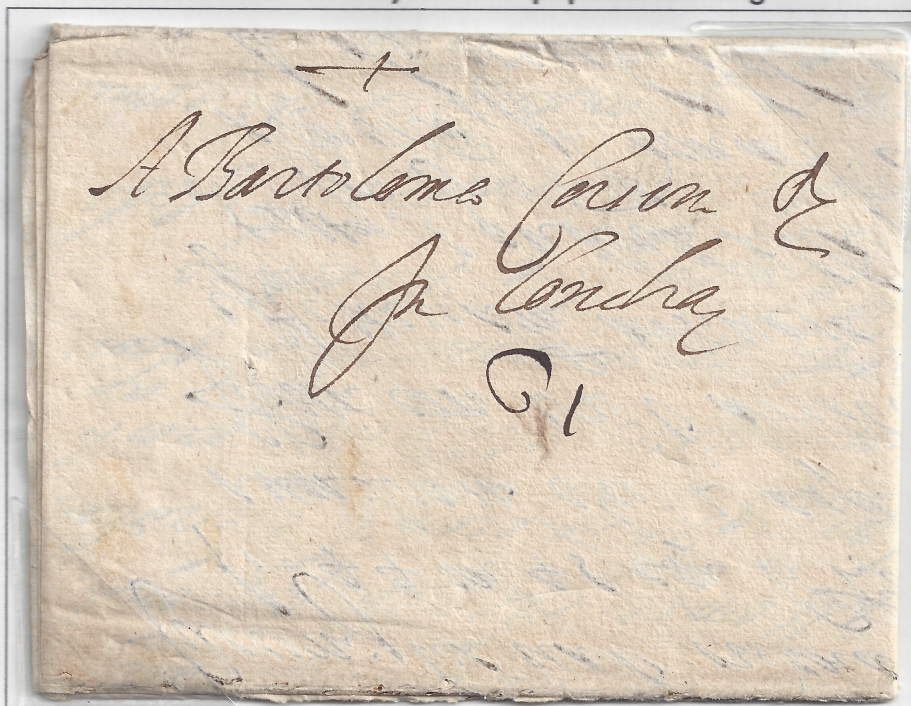
This exhibit documents Dutch manuscript and handstamp postmarks prior to 16 March 1815 when Willem I of the House of Orange declared himself King of the Netherlands. It begins with a manuscript mark from 1593. This is followed by the late 17<sup>th</sup> century Amsterdam 3-stuiver marks – the earliest handstamps in the world that showed the origin, destination, and postal rate for a letter. Other postmarks from the period of the Dutch Republic (1581 – 1795) are shown, as well as marks from the period of occupation and annexation by France (1794 – 1813). The exhibit concludes with material from the transition period between the removal of Napoleon following his defeat at Leipzig in October 1813 and the modern kingdom of the Netherlands (1815 – present).

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## I. The United Provinces of the Netherlands (Dutch Republic), 1581 -1795

The Dutch Republic was formed when seven Dutch provinces revolted against Spain, formed a mutual alliance in 1579, and formally declared their independence in 1581. Postal services during this period were considered the province of individual municipalities which designated their own postmasters. Prior to the introduction of postal handstamps in 1667, postal markings on Dutch mail, to the extent that there were any, were handwritten.

A late 16<sup>th</sup> century manuscript postal marking



Letter from Middelburg to Bartolomeus Corsini, a merchant in London, 30 August 1593. The **G 1** mark (1 groot) was written on the letter by the postmaster at Middelburg to show his share of the fee for sending the letter.