

**About the edition “A Concise History of the French Post Office”:  
disruptions and progresses of the French postal history researches since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century**

The 2019 Prato conference gives the opportunity to bring out the historiography about the French Post Office. From 1995, the year of the creation of the Committee for the History of the Post (CHP), news researches has renewed as far the knowledges as the approaches on this topic.

The tradition of postal history in France was founded by Eugène Vaillé. In the early 1920s, he was the librarian of the Post Office ministry, before becoming the first curator of the postal museum opened in 1946. At this place, he had the ability, to store, consult and analyze many of Department’s archives. This is the reason why he founded the first stage of French postal historiography. In fact, Eugène Vaillé’s method is essentially an institutional, descriptive and chronological approach. And the period is mainly focused on the “ancient times” as it can be called, from the Persian area to the first third of 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The pioneer work of Vaillé is rounded off by the CHP staff’s contributions which is composed with Ph. D., researchers and historians directed by Muriel Le Roux and Sebastien Richez. The book gathers the contributions of this first and new generation of historians and sociologists-historians, more than 50 years after Eugène Vaillé; those have durably contribute to renew the historiography about Post, from the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The two objectives of the edition (2018) “A Concise History of the French Post Office” were clear. First, to make the first researches of Vaillé available again, and to put them in a longer history, as an extension of the study of time, to offer to an international readership the ability to compare with other national postal histories. Second, to allow this readership to see the two dimensions which has been exceeded: more than an institutional history, and mostly a conquest of a contemporary history of La Poste, as a social laboratory, as a middle model between administration and company (State and private relationships and business).

This paper will present the scientific ambition of this stage and the recent evolution of the thematic and problematical topics of Post, which are organizing this edition.

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