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POSTAL HISTORY AND POSTMARKS  
OF THE AUDIENCIA OF QUITO

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From one such report <sup>1</sup> dated between 1720-22 and dealing with the mail service between Quito and Popayán, we are told that the mail service between the two cities was always dispatched and received by two Royal Treasury officials whereas the actual transportation of mail was conducted by individuals under contract. The contract was usually for one year, subject to renewal and for a fixed amount. The city of Pasto served as a midway point between Quito and Popayán. The mail carrier from Quito would reach Pasto and receive the south-bound mail. He would, in turn, hand over his mail to his counterpart in charge of mail between Pasto and Popayán. The time a mail carrier could spend on route as well as his rest periods were specified by contract and heavy fines were imposed in case of an infraction. One such case involved mail carrier Joseph Moreno who left Popayán for Quito after eleven days, or three more than allowed by contract. Being late at his destination, the Royal Officials sent someone out to look for him, causing additional expenses to the Crown. Moreno was fined one hundred pesos for his tardiness, an amount which must have surely exceeded his monthly earnings.



Seal of the Correo Mayor. Quito, 1723.

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<sup>1</sup> ANQ. Presidencia de la Real Audiencia de Quito, VOL. 24, exp. 758, 1720 - 22.