

THE LIMNER COMPANY



FRENCH SCHOOL (19th century)

Bronze Bookbinding Stamp with the Arms of King Charles X (Imprimerie Royale)

Circa: 1824–1830

1824–1830

Paris, France

Engraved bronze matrix mounted on an original turned wooden handle, used for impressing the royal arms on leather bindings

89 mm (3 1/2 in.) in length

A bronze bookbinding stamp mounted on a well-preserved, dark-stained, turned wooden handle with ring mouldings. The tool was produced for the Imprimerie Royale (Royal Printing House) during the reign of King Charles X of France (1824–1830). The engraved face bears the crowned arms of France as used by the Bourbon monarch, designed to be impressed in blind or gilt tooling on the covers of official state publications. The handle shows natural age cracks consistent with prolonged use in the bindery, but remains structurally intact, offering a rare survival of a functional matrix as once employed in the royal workshops of the Imprimerie Royale.

Since its foundation in 1640, the Imprimerie Royale maintained a tradition of binding presentation copies of royal publications in fine morocco, tooled with the reigning monarch's arms. Under Charles X, this practice continued with bindings recorded in 1828 bearing his distinctive supralibros (see OHR 2498, no. 4). The present tool is representative of those used by the court's professional finishers, applying the monarch's arms centrally on large-format morocco bindings destined for royal libraries, diplomatic gifts, and prestigious state commissions.

Comparisons:

- National Library of Russia, Livre de poste... pour l'an 1828 (Paris, Imprimerie Royale, 1828), red

morocco with the arms of Charles X (OHR pl. 2498, no. 4):
https://expositions.nlr.ru/eng/ex_ofo/king_bindings/CharlesX_t.php

- Sotheby's, Livres et Manuscrits, 15 December 2020, Lot 6: armorial morocco binding of *Traité des droits de la Reyne très-chrestienne* (Paris, 1667): <https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2020/livres-et-manuscrits/traite-des-droits-de-la-reyne-tres-chrestienne>
- Le Bibliomane Moderne, "Quelques in-folio aux armes de Louis XIV" (2021), discussion of royal supralibros and Imprimerie Royale armorial stamps: <https://le-bibliomane.blogspot.com/2021/09/quelques-in-folio-aux-armes-de-louis.html>
- National Library of Russia, Publications of the Royal Printing Works: overview of the Imprimerie Royale's role and armorial bindings from Louis XIV to Charles X:
https://expositions.nlr.ru/eng/ex_ofo/king_bindings/king_typography.php