

ARTY CATS, *continued*

Lion's Head Door Knockers & Mail Slots By Greg Balagian

From ancient times, door knockers appeared on the entrances of palaces, temples, castles, churches, homes, and other buildings to notify people inside of someone's presence.

The door knocker normally consists of two parts, one attached to the door, and the other one, which is usually made of metal, hanging on the hinge which allows it to be lifted to strike either the door or a metal plate to make a noise.

Throughout the centuries artisans used their imagination to make door knockers ornate, so the simple hardware turned to a decorative element of the door and the whole structure.



Romanesque lion's head door knocker, 14th cent., Czechoslovakia 1538 (1968)



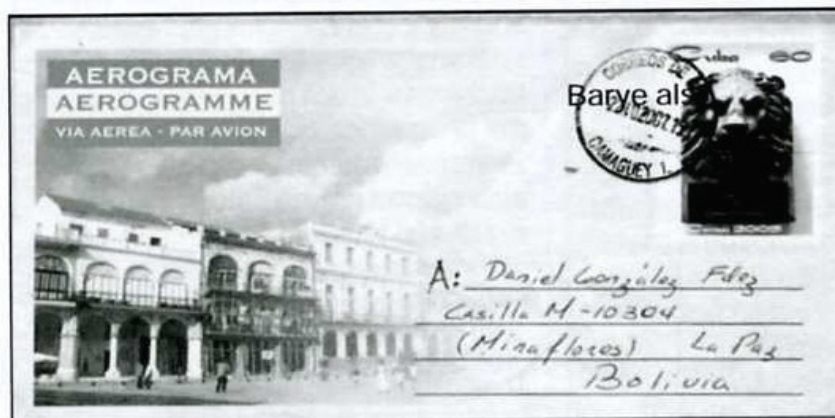
Lion's Head Mail Slot, 19th cent., Spain 2806 (1995)

Numerous styles and motifs of decorative door knockers exist, but perhaps the most prevalent one is the lion's head. In many cultures lions are associated with guardianship. Thousands of lion sculptures guard entrances of various buildings, so naturally lion's head appeared on the door to scare off invaders or evil spirits.

Another type of entrance door hardware which often bears an image of a lion's head is the decorative letter box or mail slot. Not as prominent as door knockers, they were popular in Romanesque, Baroque, and Rococo design.

In my lion collection I have eleven stamps depicting door knockers and five that are mail slots. I also have a Cuban aerogram with an imprinted original stamp picturing a lion's head mail slot.

For a checklist, you can contact me at gregbalagian@cox.net. 🍀



This 2005 aerogram from Cuba has an imprinted stamp with a lion's head mail slot.

-From the author's collection