

## PLATING MOLS STAMPS

by B.P. HUDSON

### Part 10: 5 francs

#### Introduction

The 5 francs is the second highest of the ten Mols values. It is by no means uncommon and was used mainly on parcels and registered packets. Large multiples are known that were genuinely postally used, probably for sending high value registered parcels from the Congo to Belgium.

The design of the 5 francs was based on a photographic portrait of a magnificent black warrior standing with his wife seated at his feet. The photograph was taken not, as might be supposed, in the Congo, but at Anvers, where a native village was reconstructed in the precincts of the 1894 exhibition. The warrior, presented as the chief of the village, was called Morangi and came from the Bangala tribe.

#### Main issues

In the following table the number on the left is the Catalogue Officiel number. The right-hand column shows the number printed, excluding those that were subsequently overprinted or surcharged, as listed by General Du Four in 'Cinquante Ans D'Histoire Postale', and drawn from official and other sources. But as the General warns, these numbers have to be treated with caution and in many cases, as has now been confirmed by study of Waterlow's file copy sheets, understate the true figure. This is particularly true of the figure given for the unoverprinted 1915 issue which is undoubtedly too low.

#### Belgian Congo

28	Nov. 1894	5fr carmine	Etat Indépendant	58,500
38B	Jan. 1909	5fr carmine	Congo Belge Brussels	200
38L	Jan. 1909	5fr carmine	Congo Belge local	10,750
48	Jan. 1909	5fr carmine	Congo Belge typo	25,550
48P	Mar. 1909	5fr carmine	Princes unoverprinted	100
48PB	Mar. 1909	5fr carmine	Princes Brussels	250
48PT	Mar. 1909	5fr carmine	Princes typo	4,650



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62	Jan. 1910	5fr carmine	Bilingual	90,000
71	Nov. 1915	5fr orange	Bilingual	75,000
79	May 1918	5fr+5fr orange	Red Cross	15,000
93	July 1921	5fr carmine	Recuperation overprint (on 62)	40,750
103	Jan. 1922	25c/5fr orange	Boma surcharge (on 71)	50,500

Ruanda Urundi

15a	July 1916	5fr orange	Ruanda Tombeur (on 71)	50
23	July 1916	5fr orange	Urundi Tombeur (on 71)	50
35	Nov. 1916	5fr orange	Est Africain (on 71)	74,400
43	May 1918	5fr+5fr orange	A.O. on Red Cross	12,500

Plate combinations

1894	I+A1	Original frame and centre plates
Princes	I+A2	Centres re-entered
1910	III+A3	New frame plate; centre lay marks added
1915	III+A3	
	III+A4a	Centres re-entered and lay mark line removed
	III+A4a	Frame lay marks added
	III+A4b	Blurred centres

There has been only one change from the nomenclature first introduced by Du Four. He described centre plates A3 and A4 as A2 and A3 respectively; subsequently the view was taken that the dot at the top right of no 22 and the line above 29 were lay marks which therefore created a new state of the plate.

Identifying the plate combinations

1900. As with the other values, Princes printings can be recognised by the brownish-black rather than grey-black shade of the centres. In addition, the frames are reddish-carmine rather than carmine, a difference in frame shade which is quite distinctive, more so than in the other Princes values. If their sheet position is identified Princes stamps can be confirmed by the re-entry of the centre plate, while those with typo overprint can also be confirmed by constant varieties in the overprinting plate (see page 10 of part 1).

1915. Stamps from the first combination, III+A3, are in yellow-brown or in a wide range of ochre to orange shades. Those with the re-entered centres A4a



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are found in ochre shades only. They are sometimes not easy to distinguish from A3 without positioning them in the sheet (which itself can sometimes be difficult). The best guide is that the A3 centres show clear, sharp horizontal lines in the sky above and to the right of the standing native's head, while in A4a those lines are thickened and give a smudged impression.

II2+A4a was created by the addition to II1+A4a of lay marks in the form of a horizontal line plus a dot between 13,14,23 and 24 and between 17,18,27 and 28. In other positions II1+A4a and II2+A4a cannot be differentiated.

In II2+A4b the sky in the centre design is noticeably worn and blurred, particularly in the first three rows (positions 1 to 30). Stamps from this combination show a characteristic brownish ochre shade. It has been suggested that A4b might be a re-entered state of A4a (in which case it would be designated A5), or even an electrotype reproduction of A4a, but it has not been possible to confirm either theory.

### Varieties

The following sections list the varieties of plate combination, shade, overprint and perforation known for each issue of the 5 francs. The list covers 'normal' stamps only; errors and curiosities such as inverted overprints and imperforated pairs are excluded.

Shades of stamps or surcharges are given only where shade varieties are considered to be significant, and are abbreviated thus:

br=brown ca=carmine d=deep oc=ochre ro=rose y=yellow

The middle column indicates the overprint or surcharge type. For handstamped Congo Belge overprints, B = Brussels, L = Local. For Tombeur RUANDA and URUNDI, K = Kigali and G = Grysolle. For the nomenclature of EAA overprints, see page 11 of part 1 and Bulletin 46.

For details of the perforation varieties, see page 13 of part 1. Each perforation variety is followed by a two-letter code in brackets. This code gives my judgement of the relative scarcity of the variety in question. The first letter indicates the scarcity of unused copies of the stamp, the second the scarcity of postally used copies. Stamps with forged cancels are not taken into account in



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arriving at the scarcity factor for used stamps. The codes are as follows:

A: Very common  
 B: Common  
 C: Fairly uncommon  
 D: Scarce  
 E: Rare  
 X: Probably unknown

1894 carmine

I+A1 d-ca	p15(CB), p14½-15(CB)
I+A1 ca	p16(EC)
I+A1 ro-ca	p14(DE), p15(DB), p12-14(EE)
I+A2 Princes	p14(EX)

1909 Congo Belge handstamp

I+A1 d-ca	B2	p14½-15(DE)
I+A1 d-ca	B6	p14½-15(DE)
I+A1 d-ca	L1	p15(DE), p14½-15(DE)
I+A1 d-ca	L3	p14½-15(DE)
I+A1 d-ca	L4	p15(DE)
I+A1 d-ca	L5	p14½-15(DE)
I+A1 d-ca	L6	p14½-15(DE)
I+A1 d-ca	L7	p14½-15(DE)
I+A1 ca	L7	p16(DE)
I+A1 ro-ca	B1	p14(DE)
I+A1 ro-ca	B2	p14(CE), p12-14(EE)
I+A1 ro-ca	B5	p14(DE), p12-14(EE)
I+A1 ro-ca	B6	p14(DE), p15(DE)
I+A1 ro-ca	L1	p14(CB), p15(CC)
I+A1 ro-ca	L2	p15(DD)
I+A1 ro-ca	L3	p15(DD)
I+A1 ro-ca	L4	p15(DD), p14½-15(DD)
I+A1 ro-ca	L5	p15(DD), p14½-15(DD)
I+A1 ro-ca	L6	p15(DD), p14½-15(DD)
I+A1 ro-ca	L7	p15(DD)
I+A2 Princes	B2	p14(EX)

Forged overprints are common. As with the other values with local overprints, this list is unlikely to be comprehensive. Du Four also reports B3, B4 and L8, but these cannot be confirmed by Ray Keach or myself.

1909 Congo Belge typo

I+A1 d-ca	p15(DD), p14½-15(DD)
I+A1 ro-ca	p14(BA), p15(DC), p12-14(DC)
I+A2 Princes	p14(DC)

1910 bilingual

III+A3	p14(BB), p15(BB)
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### 1915 bilingual

II1+A3 y-br		p13½(DB), p14(BA), p15(DB)
II1+A3 oc		p14(CB), p15(CB)
II1+A4a		p13½(DD), p14(BB)
II2+A4a		p14(AA), p15(DC)
II2+A4b		p14(CB)

### 1918 Red Cross

II2+A4a		p14(BD)
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### 1921 Recuperation

I+A1 ro-ca	L1	p14(EX)
I+A1 ro-ca	Typo	p14(DX), p12-14(DX)
II1+A3		p14(AC), p15(DD)

### 1922 Boma

II2+A4a		p14(AC), p15(EE)
II2+A4b		p14(CD)

Forged surcharges are common: I have examples on II1+A3 y-br (p14 and p15), II1+A3 oc, II+A4a and II2+A4b (all p14).

### 1916 Tombeur (Ruanda and Urundi)

II1+A3 y-br	K	p15(EE)
II1+A3 y-br	G	p15(EX)

There are many forgeries.

### 1916 Est Africain

II1+A3 oc	S	p14(DC), p15(DE)
II1+A3 oc	L1(o)	p14(BC), p15(CD)
II1+A3 oc	L1(t)	p14(CE), p15(CE)
II1+A3 oc	L2	p14(BB), p15(DC)
II2+A4a	L2	p14(CC)

### 1918 Red Cross AO

II2+A4a		p14(BD)
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This gives a total of 77 varieties of the 5fr.

## GUIDES TO POSITIONING

The following pages assume that the reader has a complete sheet of the plate combination he wishes to reconstruct, and will make his own plating notes as he studies individual positions. The guides do not list all the constant plate varieties, but describe the more important ones, particularly the 'generic'

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varieties which appear in more than one position in the sheet. They also describe the more difficult positions in each sheet where the plater is most likely to experience problems.

### I+A1 and I+A2

Complete sheets of the 1894 issue are not easy to find, but if one is available individual stamps are easy to position in the sheet.

There are no lay marks. Positions 1, 14, 19, 25 and 29 of the frame plate show the famous parasitic entry (see page 7 of part 1) caused by the impression of part of the 25c die on the 5fr plate. The entry takes the form of portions of curved and horizontal lines on or close to the 'CINQ' of CINQ FRANCS. It varies in each position. Position 1, Balasse V6, is the most marked; positions 25 and 29 are Balasse V12.

Many frame plate positions show doubling marks caused by re-entry in the lower left corner. The figure 5 shows doubling in 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 10, 34, 40 and 45. The circle round the 5 is partly doubled in 2, 6, 31 and 42. The curved line at the foot of the white 'calyx' is doubled or trebled in 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 20, 22, 32, 34, 40, 45 and 48. 4 is Balasse V7 and 8 is Balasse V8. Other frame plate Balasse varieties are: doubling of the upper frameline on 15 (V9); on 18, red 'teardrops' in the semi-circular space to the left of the standing native's head (V10); and on 21, horizontal lines on the lower left 5 (V11). Faint lines show in the bottom margin, at a shallow angle from the horizontal, in 22, 26, 27 and 28.

Centre plate varieties are less numerous. There are doubling marks on the top of the standing native's head in 35, 49 and 50. In 16 there are slanting black lines to the left of his head. In 3 there is a large black spot 9mm above the head (Balasse V1).

The following are the most difficult positions. 7, 36 and 39 have a faint vertical red line in the lower part of the right margin; in 7 the line slopes slightly to the right, while in 36 it is a little closer to the frameline than in the other two positions. In 17 there is a similar line in the upper part of the right margin. In 24 a short vertical red line is just visible at left centre between the inner and outer framelines, and there is slight doubling in the horizontal white line at the bottom of the 'netting' under the F of FRANCS. In 30 there is a red vertical mark rising from the left of the small circle in the upper left corner. In 46 there is a tiny red dot in the upper left of the lower left 5.

Plate combination I+A2 is found only with Princes stamps. The constant varieties of A2 are the same as those described below for A3, the only difference between the two plates being the addition of lay marks to the latter.

### III+A3

This plate combination is found with the carmine stamps of 1910 and the yellow-brown or ochre stamps of 1915. Because of the darker shade of the frames, the former are much easier to position than the latter. There are a few positions of the latter which are almost impossible to identify, especially after a heavy cancel and (for example) an EAA overprint have been superimposed.

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The first place to look for frame plate varieties is the top right corner. If there is a dot in the top part of the 5 the position is 5,42 or 43; if in the bottom part it is 45 or 47. If there is a smudge or spot to the right of the 5, it is 15,24, 26,36,41 or 46. If there is a line at the top of the 5 it is 6,19 or 30; if there is a line above the top of the 5, it is 3,13 or 47. 1,9 and 10 have a dot to the NE of the small upper right circle; 49 has a dot to the right of that circle. The circle is just doubled in 16 and 40.

Many positions show portions of horizontal guideline close to the top frameline. In 17 and 28 the guideline is long and marked. In 23 it is heavy over the first O of CONGO. There is a short horizontal dash in the top margin over the left corner in 2 and over the N of CONGO in 5. Several positions have dots in the upper or lower lettering which show clearly on the 1910 stamps but less so on those of 1915.

Centre plate A3 has lay marks in the form of a black spot at the top right corner of 22 and a rather uneven horizontal line at the top of 29 (Balasse V3). Other Balasse varieties are two long horizontal scratches across the lower part of the sky on 8 (V2), and two slanting scratches to the right of the spear on 22 (V4, found only on the later printings of the 1915 stamps). A few other positions on the yellow-brown or ochre stamps have noticeable centre plate scratches which are not present on the carmine stamps.

Otherwise centre plate varieties are few and far between, with one important exception which is of great help to positioning. These are the small doubling marks which appeared around the tip of the spear from A2 onwards. Some are on the left of the tip, some on the right and some on both sides. In positions 1,2,12, 14,32,35 and 42 there are several such marks, in different patterns in each position. They are less visible, with only one mark or sometimes two, in 6,11,15,16,17,18,19,20,27,29,30,31,33,34,35,38,41,43,44,45,48 and 49.

Difficult positions on III+A3 are the following. 7 has a faint near-horizontal black scratch through the NG of the upper CONGO. 11 has a faint vertical guideline between the outer framelines above the lower right 5. 18 has short lengths of guideline above the upper left and upper right corners, and the middle dot on top of the circle surrounding the upper right 5 is doubled. 27 has a faint vertical black scratch in the upper right margin. In 34 a small near-horizontal black scratch can be perceived among the sky lines just over 1mm to the left of the standing native's right shoulder (or left shoulder as we see it).

### III+A4a to II2+A4b

The frame plate varieties are the same as those described above for III+A3. The only difference in II2 is the addition of lay marks: a horizontal line and dot between 13,14,23 and 24, and between 17,18,27 and 28. The centre plate lay mark line on A3 (but not the dot) was removed for A4.

Doubling marks around the spear tip are still present in A4, but in most positions take a slightly different form. There are three or more such marks in 1,2,12,14,32 and 42. There is a mark to the right of the tip in 4,6(far away), 13(close),23 and 30(two marks),35,38,43,44 and 46. In 16,17,19,27 and 31 a mark can just be seen to the right of the tip, but it is very faint. The mark is to the left of the tip in 10,29(two marks),33(close),36,45 and 47, or very faintly in 34 or 48. There are marks on both sides in 15,39 and 41.

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In 6, 16 and 26 there is a transfer roller mark in the form of a short horizontal arc a little to the right of the spear. The horizontal lines on the right, in the sky or under the hill, are doubled in 21, 31, 39 and 42. More prominent centre plate marks are a 'comma' to the right of the spear in 1 (Balasse V5); spots 2mm NW of the head in 6; a vertical mark on the upper right 5 in 40; and a dot just above the head in 41 (also found on A3).

A4b is the same as A4a except for the heavy wear and thickening of the horizontal sky lines, especially in the first three rows. On some positions the sky lines appear to be doubled, but close inspection shows this to be merely the effect of wear. Until definite signs of re-entry are found on A4b it will continue to be regarded as sub-state rather than as a new state of the plate which would be designated A5.

The following positions on II+A4 are relatively difficult. 7 has a black splotch normally just to the right of the AN of FRANK. 8 has a short near-horizontal line a little above the first O of the upper CONGO. 11 has a short black mark under the B of BELGE. 17 can be identified by the long horizontal guideline in the top margin, still just visible in the ochre stamps. 25 has two coloured dots, diagonal to one another, in the bottom margin under the N of CONGO; if these dots are concealed by the perforation, the only guide to this position is a faint near-vertical black scratch in the left margin. 27 has a short black line, nearly vertical, under the right end of the right hill. 28 has a horizontal black line towards the top of the left margin; like 17, this position can also be identified by the sections of coloured guideline in the top margin. 34 has a diagonal black scratch through the EL of BELGE. 35 has a tiny black dot between the first pair of skylines immediately above the standing native's head, and a pattern of faint dots on the second O of the upper CONGO. 38, a particularly difficult position, has a short horizontal black scratch just visible and normally a little below the L of BELGE. 48 has a tiny vertical black scratch 2½mm SW of the left haunch of the sitting native.

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