

## PLATING MOLS STAMPS

by B.P. HUDSON

### Part 2: 5 Centimes

#### Introduction

The 5 centimes is the lowest of the ten Mols values. It is found commonly on cards and covers in conjunction with other values, and on cards on its own. 5 centimes was the internal rate for postcards from 1910 to 1920, and was also the printed matter rate for both internal and foreign mail, 'printed matter' including postcards with not more than five words written on them.

The design of the stamp shows the port of Matadi in the west of the country, 30 miles east of the mouth of the Congo. The design was based on one of the paintings in the diorama exhibited by the artists Robert Mols and Piet Van Engelen at the Anvers Exhibition of 1894. The painting was in turn based on a photograph of Matadi taken by Lieutenant Wyns in 1893. It shows mountains in the background and the port in the foreground, including official buildings, a chapel, barracks and on the river, two steamers of the Anvers-Matadi line.

#### 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. This is based on the figures given by General Du Four in 'Cinquante Ans D'Histoire Postale', drawn from official and other sources, but Du Four warns that these numbers have to be treated with caution and in some cases probably understate the true figure. This is borne out by the evidence of the Waterlow file copy sheets - see Bulletin 35. The figure for the 1915 issue, for example, seems undoubtedly to be too small.

#### Belgian Congo

14	Nov. 1894	5c blue	État Independant	30,000
15	Jan. 1895	5c brown	État Independant	280,000
16	May 1900	5c green	État Independant	748,000
30B	Jan. 1909	5c green	Congo Belge Brussels	4,500
30L	Jan. 1909	5c green	Congo Belge local	124,600
40	Jan. 1909	5c green	Congo Belge typo	22,900
40P	Mar. 1909	5c green	Princes unoverprinted	100
40PB	Mar. 1909	5c green	Princes Brussels	250
40PT	Mar. 1909	5c green	Princes typo	4,650



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50	June 1909	5c green	Unilingual	200,000
54	Jan. 1910	5c green	Bilingual	390,000
64	Nov. 1915	5c green	Bilingual with 'cinq'	225,000
72	May 1918	5c+10c green	Red Cross	250,000
86	July 1921	10c/5c green	Recuperation surcharge (on 54)	292,000
96	Jan. 1922	10c/5c green	Malines surcharge (on 64)	246,000
100	Jan. 1922	10c/5c green	Boma surcharge (on 64)	147,500

### Ruanda Urundi

9	July 1916	5c green	Ruanda Tombeur (on 64)	2,750
16	July 1916	5c green	Urundi Tombeur (on 64)	2,750
28	Nov. 1916	5c green	Est Africain (on 64)	390,000
36	May 1918	5c+10c green	A.O. on Red Cross	250,000
46	Jan. 1922	10c/5c green	Malines on Est Africain (on 64)	86,000

### Plate combinations

1894	II+A	Original frame and centre plates
1900	II+B1	New frame and centre plates
	II+B2	Frames and centres re-entered
1909	II+B2	New frame plate
1910	III1+B3	New frame plate; centres re-entered and lay marks added
	III1+B4a	Extra centre lay marks added
	III1+B4b	Centres corroded with fine dots
	III1+B5	Centres re-entered
	III1+B6	Centres partly re-entered
	III2+B6	Frames retouched
	III2+B7	Centres again re-entered
	III2+C	New centre plate
	IV+D1	New frame and centre plates
	IV+D2	Centres re-entered
1915	V1+E1	New frame and centre plates
	V2+E2	Frame lay marks added; centres re-entered
	V3+E3	Frames retouched; centres re-entered
	V3+F	New centre plate
	VI+F	New frame plate
	Booklets (1)	Frame and centre plates for booklet panes
	Booklets (2)	Centres re-entered

There have been the following changes from the nomenclature first introduced by Du Four:

- (1) For the 1895 issue Du Four distinguished three states of centre plate A,



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A1, A2 and A3, A2 being caused by scratch marks on four positions and A3 with the scratch mark on one position burnished out. Accidental damage of this kind is no longer regarded as creating a new state of the plate.

(2) Du Four did not distinguish B4 from B3 nor B6 from B5. Thus he called B4 what is now called B5 and B6, and B5 what is now called B7. The partial re-entry which created B6 was not discovered until 1990 - see Bulletin 78.

(3) Du Four did not distinguish between V1 to 3 and E1 to 3, and therefore described V1+E1 to V3+E3 as V+E.

### Identifying the plate combinations

1894. Plate A produced fine, grey impressions of the centres whereas those from B are black and coarse. It is sometimes necessary to make this distinction because of the number of 5c blue stamps that are faked copies of the 5c green, chemically altered to change the colour. As well as having darker centres the fakes have paler frames than the genuine stamps.

1900. I2+B2 is differentiated from I1+B1 by the small green circle immediately under the bottom frameline in the SE corner, and by the similar circle above the top frameline in the NE corner. The upper circle is not always clear, but the lower one appears on all positions in I2+B2 except no. 30, which can be distinguished instead by the short green vertical scratch in the right margin,  $\frac{1}{2}$ mm outside the frameline and level with the top of the 5.

Princes printings can be recognised by the brighter green shade of the frames and by the centres which are brownish-black rather than grey-black as in the 1900 issue. The shades of Princes stamps are in fact close to those of the unilingual issue printed three months later. They are always p14. Where a Princes stamp has a typo overprint, as most of them do, the fact that it is Princes can be verified from the overprint since constant varieties in the overprinting plate are in different positions from those on ordinary typo stamps (see page 10 of part 1).

1910. Stamps from III1+B3 show fine, clear centres and the horizontal shading lines at the tops of the frames are thin but also clear. The frames are bluish green; in all later combinations they are green to yellow-green. III1+B4a are like III1+B3 apart from the shade; also the lines of shading at the top centre are fainter. In B4b most of the centres are peppered with fine corrosion dots. In III1+B5 the centres are heavily re-entered with signs of doubling in all positions, very markedly in some, and the shading lines in the top centre of the frame plate have almost disappeared. B6 has coarser centres than B5, especially



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in the horizontal river lines, and shows slight changes in doubling in rows 6 to 9; III1+B6 can really only be differentiated from III1+B5 in these rows, and then only by positioning the stamp.

In III2+B6 the top framelines were crudely retouched by hand; this state of the frame plate is easily recognised. In B7 the appearance of the centre plate, which had become very worn indeed, somewhat improved, but the major doubling marks remained. III2+C has the same retouching at the top of the frames but the centre plate is quite different being clear and free from flaws.

IV+D1 gives a different impression again. The top horizontal shading of the frames is strong and even, and the centres are clear without doubling, though darker than B3 or C. IV+D2 is similar but with coarser centres; where there are dots between the river lines on D1, they are enlarged on D2.

1915. In V1+E1 the frames are yellow-green and the centres are fine, clear and greyish. E2 was created by re-entering the centre plate, which shows as changed doubling in a few positions. The frame shade is unchanged, but the centres are black and coarser than E1, and this is the feature which makes it possible (but not always easy) to distinguish V2+E2 from V1+E1. In V3+E3 the re-entered centres are further coarsened, with corrosion especially in the first column, and the horizontal shading at the top and bottom of the frames is lightly retouched. This is most evident in the right panel immediately to the left of the small circle above the last E of BELGE. The lines here are wavy where in all other 1915 stamps they are even, parallel and slightly doubled. Most V3+E3 stamps are also noticeable from the dull blue-green shade of the frames, though the earliest printing was yellow-green like V2+E2.

Stamps from VI+F are easily recognised by the light centres, the black spot near the mountain top ('type III' in the Balasse catalogues) and the green shade of the frames - neither yellow-green nor blue-green.

The three printings of the booklet stamps can be told apart by their shades. The first printing is yellow-green with clear grey-black centres. The second printing is deep blue-green with deep black centres showing a little corrosion. The third printing is dull green with dull grey centres, and is on coarse grey rather than white paper. Towards the end of the first printing the centre plate was re-entered, showing additional doubling of the river lines in many positions, but stamps from the first printing with re-entered centres are scarce.

Booklet stamps from the first printing are hard to tell from V1+E1 and V2+E2, since the shades are the same. If there is a small green guide dot in the white vertical line between CENTIMES and the scrollwork on the left, or if there are



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traces of green guideline down the right margin, the stamp is from V+E. If there are traces of horizontal green guideline in the top margin, it is probably a booklet stamp. If there is no guide dot it is either a booklet stamp or from the first column or no. 42 of V+E: only positioning the stamp will determine which.

### Varieties

The following sections list the varieties of plate combination, shade, overprint and perforation known for each issue of the 5 centimes. The list covers 'normal' stamps only; errors and curiosities such as inverted overprints and imperfections between pairs are excluded. Mention is however made of the better known examples of overprints on the wrong stamps.

The list is based mainly on my own collection plus some additional varieties reported in authoritative literature. If members have varieties which are not on the list I would be glad to hear of them so that the list can be updated and made as comprehensive as possible.

Shades are given only where shade varieties are considered to be significant, and are listed in what is thought to be the chronological order of printing. Shades are abbreviated thus:

bl=blue br=brown dp=deep gr=green r=red 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 overprints, K = Kigali, G = Grysolle and H = Havre. 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. I have split the codes in this way because there are some stamps which are more common used than unused, and others which are more common unused than used - indeed some that are almost unknown genuinely used. This because some batches of sheets from the printers were all or mostly sent to the Congo for distribution to post offices, while others were all or mostly retained in Brussels for sale to dealers. Stamps cancelled by favour or with forged cancels are not taken into account in arriving at the scarcity factor for used stamps.

The scarcity codes shown are highly subjective and should not be taken too



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seriously, but readers may nevertheless find it interesting to compare them with their own experience. The codes are as follows:

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

### 1894 5c blue

I1+A                                      p14(CE), p15(BD), p12-14(DE), p14½-15(BD)

Although p14 is shown as a separate variety from p12-14, it is thought likely that all p14 copies come from sheets perforated with the p12-14 perforator - see part 1, page 13, subparagraph (6).

Colour fakes are found frequently, as are forged cancels. I have found fakes of the 5c green I1+B1 p14, p15 and p14½-15, and of I2+B2 p13½, p14 and p14½-15.

### 1895 5c brown

I1+A br                                      p14(BB), p15(CC), p12-14(DD), p14½-15(DD)  
 I1+A r-br                                    p14(AA), p15(AA), p16(DD), p12-14(BB), p14½-15(BB)  
 I1+A dp br-r                                p14(DD), p15(BB), p12-14(DD), p14½-15(DD)

### 1900 5c green

I1+B1                                      p13½(DD), p14(BA), p15(AA), p16(CB), p12-14(EE),  
     p14½-15(AA)  
 I2+B2                                      p13½(CB), p14(AA), p14½-15(BB)  
 I2+B2 Princes                                p14(EX)

### 1909 Congo Belge handstamp

I1+B1	B2	p14(DE), p15(CE), p14½-15(CE)
I1+B1	L1	p15(EE)
I1+B1	L2	p15(EE)
I1+B1	L4	p15(EE)
I2+B2	B2	p14(CE)
I2+B2	B3	p14(DE)
I2+B2	B4	p14(DE)
I2+B2	B5	p14(DE)
I2+B2	B6	p14(DE)
I2+B2	B8	p14(EX)
I2+B2	L1	p14(AA), p14½-15(BB)
I2+B2	L2	p13½(DD), p14(AA), p14½-15(BB)
I2+B2	L3	p13½(DD), p14(BB), p14½-15(CC)
I2+B2	L4	p13½(DD), p14(AA), p14½-15(BB)
I2+B2	L5	p13½(CD), p14(AA), p14½-15(CC)
I2+B2	L6	p13½(DD), p14(BB), p14½-15(CC)
I2+B2	L7	p13½(DD), p14(BB), p14½-15(DD)
I2+B2	L8	p14(EE)

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I2+B2 Princes B2 p14(EX)  
I2+B2 Princes B5 p14(EX)

The following combinations were reported by Du Four but have not been confirmed by myself or Ray Keach:

I1+B1 B5,B6,L6,L7 I2+B2 B7

Forged overprints are common. I have forgeries on I1+B1 p14, p15 and p14½-15, and on I2+B2 p14.

### 1909 Congo Belge typo

I2+B2 p14(AD)  
I2+B2 Princes p14(DC)

Some forgeries are found, one of which is dangerously accurate. I have forgeries on I1+B1 p14 and p14½-15 and I2+B2 p14.

### 1909 unilingual

II+B2 p13½(CB), p14(AA)

### 1910 bilingual

III1+B3 bl-gr p13½(DD), p14(BB), p14½-15(DD)  
III1+B4a y-gr p13½(DC), p14(AA), p15(DC), p14½-15(DC)  
III1+B4b p13½(DC), p14(CA), p14½-15(DD)  
III1+B5 p13½(DD), p14(BB), p15(DD)  
III1+B6 p14(AA), p15(BC)  
III2+B6 p13½(CC), p14(BB), p15(DD)  
III2+B7 p14(DC), p15(DD)  
III2+C p14(CB)  
IV+D1 p14(EE)  
IV+D2 p14(CB), p15(DE)

### 1915 bilingual

V1+E1 p13½(DC), p14(BA), p15(DC)  
V2+E2 p14(AA), p15(DC)  
V3+E3 y-gr p14(CB), p15(ED)  
V3+E3 bl-gr p14(AA), p15(CB)  
VI+F p13½(DD), p14(BB), p15(DD)  
1st(1) booklet p14(AA)  
1st(2) booklet p14(DD)  
2nd booklet p14(AA)  
3rd booklet p13½(CD), p14(AB), p15(CC)

### 1918 Red Cross

V3+E3 p14(AC), p15(BD)

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### 1921 Recuperation

III1+B3 bl-gr	p14(DD)
III1+B4b	p13½(DD), p14(DD)
III1+B6	p14(BC), p15(BC)
III2+B6	p13½(DD), p14(DD)
III2+B7	p14(CD), p15(EE)
III2+C	p14(CC)
IV+D1	p13½(BC), p14(AA), p15(BB)
IV+D2	p13½(CC), p14(BD), p15(EE)

The surcharge is found, erroneously, on the 1915 5c V3+E3 p14.

### 1922 Malines

V2+E2	p14(DD), p15(EE)
V3+E3 y-gr	p14(CC)
V3+E3 bl-gr	p14(AA), p15(CB)
VI+F	p13½(CC), p14(AA), p15(CB)

I have a forged surcharge on VI+F p14. It is not clear what was gained by applying this forgery.

### 1922 Boma

V1+E1	B	p13½(DD), p14(EE)
V1+E1	C	p14(DD)
V2+E2	B	p14(CD)
V2+E2	C	p14(CC)
V2+E2	D	p14(DD), p15(EE)
V3+E3 y-gr	C	p15(EE)
V3+E3 y-gr	D	p14(DD)
V3+E3 bl-gr	B	p14(BC), p15(DD)
V3+E3 bl-gr	C	p14(CC), p15(EE)
V3+E3 bl-gr	D	p14(DD), p15(DD)
VI+F	A	p13½(DD), p14(AB), p15(DD)
VI+F	B	p14(DD), p15(EE)
VI+F	C	p13½(DD), p14(BC), p15(EE)
VI+F	D	p14(DE)

I am sure that there are more combinations to be found with surcharges B, C and D. Although not many of these stamps pass through my hands, I am regularly finding new varieties.

Surcharge C is found erroneously on the 1910 5c III1+B5 p14, and the 1915 5c V2+E2 p15 and VI+F p14 are found with the 25c surcharge (plate A) normally applied to the 40c stamp. Forgeries of Boma surcharges are quite common, being often found inverted. I have examples on V3+E3 blue-green and on all three printings of booklet stamps (all p14).



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### 1916 Tombeur

V1+E1	K	p14(EE)
V1+E1	G	p14(EX)
V1+E1	H	p14(CX)

Needless to say, there are forgeries.

### 1916 Est Africain

V2+E2	S	p14(BB), p15(EE)
V2+E2	L1(o)	p14(BD), p15(BD)
V2+E2	L1(g)	p14(BD), p15(DE)
V2+E2	L1(.)	p15(CE)
V3+E3 y-gr	L1(i)	p14(CE)
V3+E3 y-gr	L2	p14(BA), p15(BB)
V3+F	L2'	p14(BD), p15(DE)

### 1918 Red Cross AO

V3+E3		p14(AC), p15(BD)
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### 1922 EAA Malines

V3+E3 y-gr	L2	p14(AD), p15(BD)
V3+F	L2'	p14(BB), p15(CC)

In all, 182 varieties of the 5c are listed above - 18,080 different stamps in the unlikely event that mint and used reconstructions of each variety were to be completed.

## GUIDES TO POSITIONING

In this section I 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. As stated in part 1, I will not attempt to provide a complete listing of the constant plate varieties, since this would make for a bulky document and would duplicate work that has been or will be done by others. Instead I will provide more general guidance on how to approach positioning of the 5c plate combinations, concentrating on the so-called 'generic' varieties which appear in more than one position; on certain of the more conspicuous individual varieties; and finally, on the harder positions where the plater is most likely to experience difficulties.

### 11+A

The 5c blue and brown of 1894 and 1895 are relatively easy to position. The frames show guidelines, guide dots or doubling in over half the positions of the sheet. The centres are clearly printed, but in most positions there are small black dots visible, especially in the white spaces between the horizontal lines of the river. These dots are present through all printings of 11+A, and since their pattern in each centre is unique they make it easy to confirm the stamp's position.

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I start by looking at the frames. If there are guide dots on each side of a corner, resting on the outer frame about 2mm from the corner point, then the stamp comes from the corresponding corner of the sheet, ie positions 1, 5, 46 or 50. (This is also a feature of plate combinations of other values, and should always be looked out for.) If the top left corner is doubled horizontally or vertically the position is 2 or 47 respectively. If there is doubling by a guideline of the right end of the top frameline the position is 16, 26, 28, 31-40, 42, 47, 49 or 50. If there is a vertical guideline visible between the vertical frames in the bottom right corner it is 37, 42-44, 47 or 48. If a vertical guideline is visible just in the left margin it is 2, 3 or 5. A strong vertical line on the lower half of the left torch indicates position 16 (Balasse V13). A curved mark in the left margin just above centre indicates position 1. In 18 there is a small coloured spot by the bottom of the left torch.

Having narrowed down the possibilities by looking at the frames, the exact position can usually be confirmed from the centre plate dots. A number of centre positions - 6, 7, 14, 24 and 30 - also show near-vertical scratches through or under the boats. The following positions show vertical guidelines to the left of the mountain ridge: 5, 6, 9, 10, 14, 15, 19, 20, 24, 27, 29, 30, 33-35, 37, 39, 46, 47. The most prominent of these, on 10, is Balasse V3. 19 and 20 show a black spot above the right horizon, a transfer roller variety. 44 and 45 have the whole centre design doubled (Balasse V1). 8 and 15 have black spots in different positions above the lower left trees. Except in early printings, 6 shows a conspicuous black mark in the left margin. In 48 there is a long curved scratch over the mountain ridge - Balasse V2.

On what used to be called centre plate A2, prominent scratch marks caused by cleaning are found on 47 (Balasse V4), 3, 8, 14 and 46. However these appeared only on the last printings of the 1895 stamp with deep brown-red frames.

The following positions are difficult, having few centre plate dots and no recognisable frame features: 11, 12, 17, 21, 23 and 25. In 11 there are two small dots close together in the lower space between the river lines. In 12 there is a single dot in that space and a short vertical black dash by the right dagger. In 17 there is a single dot in the upper space, and traces of a dotted horizontal black line crossing the middle of the right frameline. 21 has a cluster of dots at the left end of the lower water space. 23 has one or two dots in the middle water space, to the left of the left boat, and a black dot by the left dagger. 25 has two dots in the lower water space and a trace of a vertical black scratch, very faint, in the top right corner.

### I1+B1

This is another easy sheet. All the frame plate varieties present in I1+A are still clear in I1+B1 and help to identify over half the positions. The centre plate however is different. It is blacker and coarser, and instead of the fine dots there are now heavier black dots in most positions especially just above the mountain ridge, down the left side of the centre vignette and among the river lines. The dots are especially numerous in most of the positions in the second column.

Positioning is largely by these dots. Where there are few dots, there are usually one or two on or just above the mountain ridge, or to the left of it. Traces of black vertical guidelines are found crossing the upper frame above ET and the lower frame below CI, on 7, 19, 23, 24, 30, 33, 37, 47 and 50 (upper only);

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3,5,8,29 and 42 (lower only); and 2,9,10,14,18 and 40 (upper and lower). The large building shows slight horizontal doubling in many positions, most notably in the 2nd column (Balasse V6). 34 shows the black 'balloon' in the sky immediately above the central ridge which persisted through all states of this plate (Balasse V5). Traces of a long, near-vertical diagonal scratch are visible crossing either the top or the bottom frames, near the centre, in 17,22 and 37.

Difficult positions with almost no dots are 4,10,13,14,20,21,24 and 28. 4 is recognised by the trace of vertical green guideline by the spur of the left torch. 10 has a single dot in the lower water space and another 1½mm to the left of the left end of the abrupt. 13 has a tiny dot in the water space and a horizontal black guideline crossing the right frame. In 14 this line is visible on the left, and there is a dot in the upper water space. 20 has two dots in the upper water space. 21 is rather difficult: the only mark is a tiny faint dot at the right end of the lower water space. 24 shows a faint near-vertical guideline a little above the left end of the abrupt. 28 shows a faint dot in the lower water space and a near-horizontal black scratch at the right end of the bottom margin.

### I2+B2

This is a more difficult plate combination, because the re-entry of the frames caused most of the helpful varieties in I1 to disappear, though the green dot in 18 survives as does a trace of the vertical line in 16. Most positions show doubling of the vertical frameline in the lower right corner, but this feature appears too often for it to be useful for identification. There is doubling of the lower left vertical frameline on 6,11 and 16 (Balasse V14). The top right horizontal frameline is doubled on 2-4,10,15-18,32,34,35-40,43-45 and 48. A tiny green guide dot is visible above the top left frameline in many positions, and its distance from the frameline varies from position to position. The top horizontal framelines are doubled in 2-4, and the bottom lines in 8 (otherwise a difficult position).

As with the earlier plate combinations, the real help comes from the centre plate. Many of the corrosion dots in B1 are still visible, and there are others in new positions. The diagonal scratch crossing 17,22 and 37 is not only visible in B2 but for some reason is clearer. The lines at the top of the ridge show doubling upwards in 2-5, and the left ends of the river lines show vertical doubling in 2-5, 10 and 15, and to a lesser extent in some other positions. In 4,19 and 23 there is a black dot closely behind the stern of the left boat. There is a horizontal scratch across the tops of the mountains in 7 and 8, but not in all printings.

The most difficult positions in this plate combination are 13,20,33,38 and 43. 13 has a small dot just on the left end of the abrupt. 20 shows a faint black dot just above the ridge near the right abrupt, and another in the top right fleuron. 33 has two dots in a diagonal pattern above the left ridge, a little left of centre. 38 has a black spot on the ridge near the left end. 43 has two black dots at the right end of the top margin.

### II+B2

The frames of the unilingual stamps, frame plate II, show few points of interest. Neither doubling nor guidelines are visible. The most notable varieties are a short horizontal line adjoining the frame in the upper part of the left margin (no. 31) and a near-horizontal green scratch over the top right corner (no. 48).

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Of greater interest is the fact that on this plate, for the first time, lay marks appear: a green dot between positions 8,9,13 and 14, and a vertical line between 38,39,43 and 44.

The lack of interest in the frame plate means that positioning depends largely on the centre plate varieties, which are the same as in the previous combination I2+B2. One striking new variety appears, which is a diagonal black line joining the two boats in position 41 (Balasse V7). In fact, this variety appeared first with the Princes printings of I1+B2. The difficult positions with few centre plate dots are the same as in I2+B2.

### III1+B3 to III1+B6

With so many different states of the plate, the 5c of 1910 with frame plate III1 is potentially a complicated stamp to position, especially if a good selection of reference sheets is not available. The best technique is to establish from the frames which position in the sheet the stamp comes from, and then from the centres work out which state of the centre plate applies - B3, B4a, B4b, B5 or B6.

Fortunately both stages of this process are relatively easy to perform in all positions of the sheet. The frame plate is full of constant varieties which are present in all printings. The centre plate became progressively more corroded and doubled so that although the later states are a disgrace to the printing profession, they make confirmation of the position an easy task for the plater.

The feature of the frame plate which is particularly helpful is the presence of guidelines along the tops of the stamps and in the left margins. The easiest approach to finding the sheet position is to ignore other varieties, look at the guidelines that are visible, and find the position on the reference sheet that matches the pattern of these guidelines. This pattern varies from position to position, particularly in the bottom left margin, to the left of the top left corner and to the right of the top right corner.

For example, the top right horizontal guideline may be above or below the framelines. It is level with the upper half of the space between the guidelines in 3,6,9,11,12,17,18,21,22,24,25,36-38,46 and 49. It is level with the lower half in 5,7,19,28,35 and 44. It is exactly half way between in 8,13,16,23,29 and 45. It is level with the top in 4,14,27,40 and 47. It is above the top in 1,26 and 32. There is no guideline visible in this part of the stamp in 2,10,15,20,30,31,33,34,39-43,48 and 50. The vertical guideline against the lower left frame is equally helpful, because of how it varies in length and in distance from the frame.

There are many other varieties of the frame plate of which it is worth mentioning a small green dot just left of the top left corner in 16 and 45, and a transfer roller variety in the form of a green spot on the hill line under the B of BELGE in 1-3. The frame lay marks are a dot between 8,9,13 and 14, a circle between 37 and 38 and a vertical line between 38,39,43 and 44.

Having established the sheet position from the frame plate, the plate combination can be ascertained from the centres. The balloon in no. 34 is still visible, but otherwise the centre plate varieties from B2 including Balasse V7 have mostly disappeared. Since the sheet position is known from the frames,

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there is no point going through the centre plate varieties in detail, but the characteristics of the different centres are as follows:

III1+B3. The centres are clean and clear with little corrosion and few signs of doubling. The centre plate has the following lay marks: a dot between 7,8, 12 and 13, a cross and dot between 8,9,13 and 14, and vertical lines between 42 and 43 and between 43 and 44.

III1+B4a. The only difference in this plate is the addition of lay mark circles underneath the lines between 42, 43 and 44. Otherwise the centres are the same as B3. However all stamps from B3 can be distinguished from B4a because in the former, the frames are green with a slight bluish tinge whereas in the latter they are yellow-green.

III1+B4b. The centre plate is not re-entered but is affected in most positions by a thick sprinkling of fine corrosion dots, especially on the river. In positions 11,16,21,26,31 and 45 there are relatively few of these dots, but still enough to distinguish them from B3.

III1+B5. The centre plate was re-entered creating noticeable doubling in every position, especially on the mountains and the lines of the river. Some of the doubling is extremely pronounced, eg the doubled boats and trees in 8 (Balasse V9), the doubled lower left trees in 9 (Balasse V10), and the doubling of the boats and mountains in 37 (Balasse V11). Another Balasse variety, the scratch over the mountains in position 2 (V8), in fact first appeared in later printings of B4. The balloon on no. 34 is still present. Many of the corrosion dots from B4b are also still visible, though coarser and thicker, and care must be taken to look for doubling differences in order to distinguish some B5 positions from B4b.

III1+B6. The centre plate was re-entered again, but only it seems in rows 6 to 9. In all positions the horizontal river lines are coarser in B6, but it is only in positions 26 to 45 that differences in doubling can be detected. The places to look are in the roof of the church, the masts of the ships and the river lines. The differences are moreover rather slight, and difficult to find because the doublings in B5 are also present in B6 without any apparent change.

### III2+B6, III2+B7 and III2+C

The retouching of the top framelines which made III2 is so marked that all positions in the sheet are denominated as Balasse V15. For these plate combinations, identification of the sheet position is straightforward if a reference sheet is available. Every position has burin escapes and other irregularities in the top panels which are unique to it. There is similar retouching in the panels of horizontal lines at the bottom. For example, the white vertical line above the G of the upper CONGO is wholly crossed by a burin mark in 1,20,26,30,34,36,41, 46 and 47, and is partly crossed by such a mark in 4,7,9,16,17 and 21. There are burin escapes on the top frame on 3,8,13,16,18,20,21,30,33 and 50, and on the bottom frame on 5,6,9,24,29,32,34-36 and 40-42.

The centres of III2+B6 are the same as III1+B6. When the plate was re-entered yet again to make B7, the major doubling was unchanged in many positions but in others new doubling appeared or old doubling disappeared. All

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B7 centres give a worn appearance, but one that is generally cleaner than B6.

With III2+C we have a completely new centre plate. The centres are clear with no doubling and virtually no flaws. The only variety worth mentioning - though it is hardly needed because of the ease of identifying positions from the frames - is a transfer roller flaw in the form of a black spot in the river 2mm NW of the lower left tree. It is clearly visible in 16-20 and 22-25, and barely visible in 21.

### IV+D1 and IV+D2

It is a mystery why centre plate C, nearly flawless and in use for only a short period, was discarded. IV+D1 and IV+D2 were introduced late in the life of the 1910 5c, and most of the sheets printed from them were overprinted with the Recuperation surcharge. Indeed, IV+D1 without the surcharge is a great rarity, the discovery of which is enhanced by the fact that in a dealer's stockbook it is no more expensive than common 1910 5c's from other plates.

There are no lay marks on these combinations, but there are many constant varieties on both frames and centres which make positioning easy. Again, it is best to identify the position first from the frames, and then check from the centre whether the stamp is D1 or D2. The impression of these plates is of clear, even shading at the top of the frames, unlike the previous plates, and of generally undoubled centres which are darker than those of B3, B4 and C.

The frames show guidelines in many positions, particularly along the top and down the left. The left hatching in the top half extends into the left margin in 6, 34 and 42. There is a green spot in the curved white line under the EL of BELGE, and another in the white vertical line to the right of the lower part of the left torch, in 2-5 and 46-49. These are transfer roller varieties, the former of which ascends in strength being faintest in no. 2 and strongest in no. 49. A small guide dot is visible between the top left horizontal framelines in 1, 3, 6, 17, 20, 27, 29, 34, 39, 48 and 50.

Centre plate D also shows other useful varieties. There are quite marked horizontal guidelines, at the mid-point of the stamps and crossing the frames on left and right, in many positions, and also some vertical lines down the left sides. A number of positions show a distinctive cluster of dots towards the right end of the lower water space: 1, 3, 9, 11, 21, 24, 27, 41, 43, 46 and 49.

These varieties are the same in D2 as in D1, except that in D2 the dots are larger, and other corrosion dots are visible together with evidence of thickening and minor doubling. D2 centres are coarser and it is not hard to tell D1 from D2 if reference sheets of both are available. Position 8 of D2 shows a thick diagonal scratch above the lower trees, Balasse V12, which is not on D1.

As with III2, no positions on IV+D1 and IV+D2 are classified as 'difficult'.

### V1+E1

New frame and centre plates were made for the 1915 issue, with the frames modified to include the word 'CINQ' in the centre of the top tablet.

Frame plate V1 has no lay marks. Guidelines are visible down the right hand side in most positions, and faintly over the top frames in just a few: 6 (right),

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24 (left), 28 (right), 33 (right) and 41 (left and right). Other useful frame plate varieties are tiny dashes just above the right top frame and below the right bottom frame, in 5 and 50 respectively; a spot outside the top right corner in 7 and inside it in 14; doubling above the ELG of BELGE in 13; a dot just in the bottom margin under CO in 8, and under H-C in 21; a dot in the right margin towards the bottom in 11 and above centre in 36; horizontal shading extended into the top left margin in 15; horizontal doubling of the top right frameline in 19 and 20, and of the bottom left frameline in 25; doubling under the 'shoulder' of the right fleuron in 6, 11, 21 and 41; and a large spot in the same place in 46.

However the most useful variety in frame plate V is the green guide dot which appears in the white vertical line right of the torch, more or less at its mid-point. These dots are in all positions except the first column and no. 42 where it is hidden under the vertical line (in 14 the dot is present, but is hard to detect). In 4, 5, 7-10, 14, 15, 17, 19, 22, 23, 25, 27, 29, 30, 33, 35, 37, 40, 45, 47 and 50 the dot is, to a greater or lesser degree, in the left half of this space. In 3, 20, 34, 38, 39 and 49 it is in the right half. In other positions it is in the middle. In terms of vertical displacement, in 5, 8, 10, 14 and 45 it is more than one horizontal shading line above the level of the top of the tablet in the middle of the torch; in 3, 12 and 43 it is below this level. In 22, 23, 25 and 47 the dot is doubled, in 18 there is another dot 0.3mm below it, and in 37 there is a dot in the tablet in the middle of the torch.

Many positions can therefore be identified from the frames. The centres of E1, being clean and almost free of corrosion, are less informative. There are no centre plate lay marks. Most positions other than in row 1 have a small black cross at mid-height on the left of the stamp, but since it is the same in each place it does not help with positioning. Position 12 has a prominent vertical scratch in the upper left part of the stamp, under the left fleuron. The river lines are clear but are slightly doubled on the left in 12, 13, 25, 26, 27 and 41, and more widely doubled in 36, 39, 43 and 45.

A number of positions in V1+E1 are quite difficult. In the first column with no dot, 16 and 26 are hard because of the absence of guidelines in the right margin. For this reason, they are easily mistaken for 1st booklet stamps. The distinguishing mark in 16 is a faint vertical green scratch in the top margin above the C of CONGO; in 26 it is a sloping line of faint green dots in the same position.

Of the positions with guide dots, the difficult ones where the dots are all in much the same central position are 2, 24, 28, 29, 30, 32, 35, 38 and 39. In no. 2 there is a short black horizontal guideline just visible crossing the upper half of the right torch. 24 has a short horizontal line just visible beyond the top left corner, and a green dot in the top margin over the left of the last E. 28 has the guideline at the top right and a short green dash in the middle of the right margin. 29 has the hatching slightly extended into the right margin under the torch. 30 has two faint dots in the lower water space, either side of the gap, and thickening of the bottom right vertical frame. 32, 35 and 38 have traces of guideline in the right margin, and one or more dots in the water spaces. 39 has a similar dot in the water, and a green dot in the right margin level with the top of the torch.

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### V2+E2

Frame plate V2 is the same as V1 except for the addition of lay marks in the form of vertical lines between 13,14,18 and 19 and between 33,34,38 and 39, and dots between 18 and 19 and between 33 and 34.

Although re-entered probably throughout, centre plate E2 is similar to E1. The characteristic difference is that E1 centres are light grey while E2 are black and blotchier. The small black cross disappears from E2 except in the 1st column. The slight doubling visible in several E1 positions is no longer seen in E2, but new doubling can be seen in positions 1,2 and 50. There is more black corrosion around the river and mountains in E2, and for this reason it is easier to position than E1.

### V3+E3

V3+E3 is easier still to position; this plate combination seldom presents any problems. The frames are usually a distinctive blue-green shade, although the earliest printings of V3+E3 were yellow-green.

The frame varieties of V1 and V2, including the guide dots, persist, but new varieties are added because of the extensive retouching of the upper framelines on the right, just to the left of the small circle above the last E of BELGE. The lines here are uneven whereas in all other 1915 5c stamps they are straight and parallel. The shape of the retouching varies slightly from position to position. A further aid comes from wear in the top horizontal lines which shows as white patches in them. 26 and 31 have a white patch over the LG of BELGE; 26 also has 3 white patches over the N of CONGO; in 32 and 36 a line above BELGE is worn; in 42 and 43 the middle line to the right of CINQ is worn. The left ends of the lines above the C of CONGO are worn to white patches at various heights in 6,7,11,17-21,27,30-33,40,41 and 50. There is similar wear at the left end of the bottom lines, over the B of BELGISCH, in 6,7,9-11,15,17,21,23,26-28,32,43-45 and 48.

Centre plate E3 was at least partly re-entered and shows some additional doubling, eg in no. 1. More important, the plate was badly corroded especially in column 1 where heavy black spots appear in the river area. This helps to position stamps which do not have the guide dot. There is corrosion above the mountains and elsewhere in the other columns of the sheet, though not as heavy as column 1, which helps identification of the positions listed above as difficult in V1+E1. The only real difficulty remains with positions 30 and 35, where careful attention must be paid to the upper right retouching and to a few dots in the river.

### V3+F

This combination of plates was used only for stamps with the EAA overprint, with or without the Malines surcharge. Centre plate F is easily recognised by the black spot on the mountain, but is otherwise clean and free of flaws. Positioning of stamps from V3+F is therefore based normally on varieties of the frame plate and overprinting plate.



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### VI+F

A new frame plate was created, and the frames of this combination are a plain green with the centres showing the spot on the mountain. Many constant varieties in the frame plate make this a fairly easy stamp to position.

Like V2 and V3, the frame plate has lay marks in the form of vertical lines between 13,14,18 and 19 and between 33,34,38 and 39. Conspicuous curved burin marks can be seen in different places on or close to the bottom frame in 1,13 and 26. There are smaller marks in one of the lower 5's in 2,4,6-8,15,17,19,28 and 34. A horizontal guideline is visible just in the bottom margin, normally under the right half of the stamp, in 1,4,7-14,25,27 and 28. The top frameline above CINO is neatly retouched in all positions except 15 and 35. There are green dots variously placed in the M of the left CENTIMES in 1,14,17-19,27,28,30,31,47 and 50. There is a small green dot just under the bottom left corner in 36 and 41.

There is less to go for in the centre plate which has few imperfections. Some positions have horizontal scratches in the top or bottom margins. It is also worth mentioning the black vertical scratch on the left hill in no. 3, the black horizontal line over the N of the lower CONGO in 20, and the similar line just above the mountain ridge in 47.

For stamps from VI+F I classify only 32,39 and 44 as difficult. 32 has small green mark on the bottom frame under the G of CONGO. 39 has a small mark on the top frame over the C of CONGO, and a green dot in the white line over the BE of BELGISCH. 44 has two green dots just left of the N of the left CENTIMES.

### Booklet stamps

The three printings are easily distinguished by their shades, as explained on page 3. Positioning however is not always easy, especially for 1st printing stamps which can look like V1+E1 or V2+E2 stamps from positions without the guide dot.

The best start with 1st booklet stamps is to look for guidelines. If there is any trace of vertical green lines in the right margin, the stamp does not come from the booklet panes. If there are traces of horizontal guideline just above the left half of the top frameline, it is either no. 41 from frame plate V or  $\beta$ 5-8,  $\gamma$ 1,2, 4-6 or  $\delta$ 1-6 from the booklets. Other frame plate varieties of the booklets are not too numerous, but it is worth mentioning the slight doubling of the top framelines ( $\chi$ 9,10, $\delta$ 7) and of the bottom frameline ( $\delta$ 10), a short green line between the bottom frames under the lower 5 ( $\alpha$ 1,5, $\chi$ 1), doubling of the right frame near the top ( $\alpha$ 3,7) and a dot or burin escape by the bottom right corner ( $\beta$ 6,8,10, $\delta$ 2,6).

The 1st printing centres have few flaws. The best guide is the short stretch of horizontal guideline which appears in most positions at the left of the river lines, by the upper water space. (A similar line appears in V+E stamps without the guide dot, but only in positions 26,31 and 42.) The relationship between this line and the river lines varies from position to position, and is a good way of narrowing down the possibilities when positioning a stamp.

There is little doubling of the river in the first state of the booklet centres. After the plate was re-entered doubling is visible on many positions. Since re-

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entry took place before the end of the first printing, it is worth checking 1st booklet stamps for re-entry, though examples with re-entered centres are scarce.

The 2nd booklet stamps with their bright blue-green frames and dark black centres are easy to spot. The frame plate varieties are the same as before, but in addition most positions have corrosion dots just above the mountain ridge which, together with doubling of the river lines, help positioning. 3rd booklet stamps with their dull green frames and dull grey centres can also be positioned from these features as well as from those described above for 1st booklet stamps.

Difficult booklet positions without the black line in the river are  $\beta 1$  and  $\beta 9$ . In  $\beta 1$  there is a green dot in the top right margin opposite the shoulder of the fleuron. In  $\beta 9$  the left hatching is extended slightly into the margin (also visible on several other positions) and there is a short horizontal extension of the frameline in the bottom right corner.

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## PLATING MOLS STAMPS

In the September Bulletin I published parts 1 and 2 of an 11-part series of articles on the Mols issues. I had hoped to publish part 3 and 4, on the 10c and 15c values, in the December issue. Unfortunately a long spell in hospital has made this impossible, though I certainly hope to be able to write these sections in time for the March Bulletin.

Meanwhile, for those who are interested, the following amendments pointed out by readers should be made to parts 1 and 2.

### Part 1

Page 4, para 2, line 3: 'make' for 'makes'.

Page 6, para 3: change the subheading from 'Retouches' to 'Touching-up and retouches', and replace the second sentence by the following two sentences:

"If part of the design on the plate was found to be too weak, either at the start or in the course of printing, it would be re-etched by hand to strengthen it. If this was done before the plate went to press, it is known as 'touching-up; if after, as 'retouching' (though for convenience 'retouching' will be used in these articles to cover both cases)."

Page 8, para 3, line 3: 'lézarde' for 'lézard'.

Page 8, para 6, line 6: 'write' for 'writes'.

Page 9, bottom: Unfortunately, between the draft and the final version, some lines slipped out of my word processor here or got switched round. The last four lines of the page should be replaced by the following six lines:

Long overprint: positions 4,10,11,12,31 (stamps of horizontal format);  
20,39,40,45,47 (stamps of vertical format).

Broken C of CONGO: 8,34,36,37,38 (horizontal); 11,12,13,17,43  
(vertical).

Nick in lower loop of B of BELGE: 8,9,13,21,27,34,37,38,39 (horizontal);  
12,13,14,17,22,30,38,43,44 (vertical).

Page 11, para 1, line 1: 'cases' for 'case'.

### Part 2

Page 7, under '1910 bilingual - IIII+B3 bl-gr': insert 'p15(DD)' after 'p14(BB)'.

Page 9, first para of text, line 1: '183' for '182' and '18,180' for '18,080'.

Any further amendments from readers will be welcome.

BRIAN HUDSON