

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

PLATING MOLS STAMPS

by B.P. HUDSON

Part 3: 10 centimes

Introduction

Parts 1 and 2 of this series were issued with Bulletin 85, part 1 providing a general introduction and part 2 covering the 5 centimes. Part 3 and future parts should be read in conjunction with part 1.

The 10 centimes is the second lowest of the ten Mols values, and is the value found most frequently on postcards. From 1889 to 1910 10 centimes was the postal rate for postcards sent internally in the Congo, and from 1910 to 1921 it was the rate for postcards sent to Belgium and other overseas countries.

As with all the Mols values, the design of the 10 centimes 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. It shows an important incident in Congo history, when a force led by Commandant Tobback, supported by Commandant Chaltin in the gunboat "La Ville de Bruxelles", captured the village of Stanley-Falls from a larger and well-armed Arab force. The vignette shows the village on the right, part of it already set ablaze by canon fire, with the Belgian force approaching in the gunboat and smaller craft on the left, and the cataracts of Stanley-Falls in the background. The battle left 800 Arabs dead, with numerous taken prisoner, and freed 1100 black slaves.

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 figures given for the unoverprinted 1910 and 1915 issues which are undoubtedly far too low.

Belgian Congo

17	Nov. 1894	10c brown	État Indépendant	30,000
18	Jan. 1895	10c blue	État Indépendant	250,000



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19	May 1900	10c carmine	État Indépendant	704,000
31B	Jan. 1909	10c carmine	Congo Belge Brussels	3,000
31L	Jan. 1909	10c carmine	Congo Belge local	126,100
41	Jan. 1909	10c carmine	Congo Belge typo	16,900
41P	Mar. 1909	10c carmine	Princes unoverprinted	100
41PB	Mar. 1909	10c carmine	Princes Brussels	250
41PT	Mar. 1909	10c carmine	Princes typo	4,650
51	June 1909	10c carmine	Unilingual	200,000
55	Jan. 1910	10c carmine	Bilingual	375,000
65	Nov. 1915	10c carmine	Bilingual with 'dix'	210,000
73	May 1918	10c+15c carmine	Red Cross	250,000
89	July 1921	30c/10c carmine	Recuperation surcharge (on 55)	364,000
98	Jan. 1922	30c/10c carmine	Malines surcharge (on 65)	493,250
104	Jan. 1923	25c/30c/10c	Elisabethville surcharge (on 89)	10,000
105	Jan. 1923	25c/30c/10c	Elisabethville surcharge (on 98)	10,000

Ruanda Urundi

10	July 1916	10c carmine	Ruanda Tombeur (on 65)	2,750
17	July 1916	10c carmine	Urundi Tombeur (on 65)	2,750
29	Nov. 1916	10c carmine	Est Africain (on 65)	295,000
37	May 1918	10c+15c carmine	A.O. on Red Cross	250,000
48	Jan. 1922	30c/10c carmine	Malines on Est Africain (on 65)	176,250

Plate combinations

1894	I1+A1	Original frame and centre plates
1894-5	I1+A2	Centres partly re-entered
1895	I2+A2	Lay marks added to frame plate
	I2+A3	Centres partly re-entered
1900	I2+A4	Centres re-entered
	I3+A5	Extra frame lay marks; frames and centres re-entered
	I4+A5	Extra frame lay marks removed
1909	II+A5	New frame plate
1910	III1+A6a	New frame plate; centres re-entered and fine and clear
	III1+A6b	Centres worn and blurred
	III2+A6b	Frame lay marks added
	III2+A7	Centres re-entered
	III3+A7	Frames retouched
	IV1+B1	New frame and centre plates
	IV2+B1	Frame lay marks added
1915	V1+B2	New frame plate; centres re-entered
	V2+B2	Frame lay marks added



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V2+B3	Centres re-entered
V2+C	New centre 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) Du Four overlooked the partial re-entry, visible only in position 28, which converted centre plate A2 to A3 in the 1895 issue. He therefore described both I2+A2 and I2+A3 as I2+A2.

(2) Until recently, A4 was considered to be a new centre plate B and A6 a new centre plate C, so that A4 and A5 were described as B1 and B2, A6 and A7 as C1 and C2, B1 to 3 as D1 to 3 and C as E. The discoveries which showed that B and C were re-entered states of A rather than new plates were described in Bulletin 83.

(3) Du Four considered the centre plate which went with frame plates I4 and II as being a new state which he called B3, because in these combinations a spot in the top selvedge of B2 appeared to have been burnished out. Whether or not this burnishing took place, the disappearance of the spot is not now considered as creating a new state of the plate (see part 1 page 12).

(4) Du Four did not allow for the addition of lay marks to frame plate III1 to create III2. Thus he described III2 and III3 as III1 and III2 respectively.

(5) Similarly he did not allow for the addition of lay marks to IV1 to create IV2 (a change discovered only recently - see Bulletin 76), or for the addition of lay marks to V1 to form V2. He therefore described IV1 and IV2 as IV, and V1 and V2 as V.

Identifying the plate combinations

1894. For reasons unknown, shortly after printing of the 10c brown started, at least two positions of the centre plate - nos 24 and 46 - were re-entered, forming conspicuous doubling of the sky lines where previously there was none. This re-entry turned centre plate A1 into A2. Differences between the two centre plates are not clearly detectable in other positions of the sheet, except that the upper sky lines tend to be fainter in A1 than A2. While complete sheets of A1 are known, it appears that the great majority of 10c browns are from A2 rather than A1.



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1895. Frame plate I2 was created by the engraving of lay marks in the form of a dot between positions 8,9,13 and 14, and a vertical line between 38,39,43 and 44. In all positions of the sheet, however, frame plates I1 and I2 can be distinguished by the shade of the stamp. Stamps from I1+A2 are blue (described in the catalogues as 'sky blue') in the earliest printings, and in later printings are greenish blue ranging from dark to pale. Stamps from I2+A3 are pale blue-green, and in some cases pale green with virtually no blue in them.

The only difference between centre plate A2 and A3 is that in the latter, position no. 28 was re-entered to form doubling of the sky lines. It appears that the re-entry was performed to remove the long scratch which had recently appeared in this position (Balasse variety V4) - see Bulletin 46, page 16. A file copy sheet of I2+A2 as well as individual examples of position 28 are known; their shade is pale greenish-blue.

1900. Lay marks in the form of a dot between positions 8,9,13 and 14 and a vertical line between 38,39,43 and 44 are present in all three plate combinations of the 10c carmine of 1900. In I3 a vertical line was added between 13 and 14 and a dot between 38 and 39, and in I4 these additional lay marks were removed.

It is not hard to distinguish the plate combinations of the 1900 issue. In I2+A4 frames and centres are generally clear and undoubled (except for doubling in the top left of the frames - Balasse V7), and there is always a space visible, albeit a narrow one, between the leftmost boat and the line of shading immediately underneath it. In A5 this space is visible only on positions 1-5,10,11 and 16; in all other positions thickening or doubling of the boat closes the space up. In I3 the outer lines of the frames, particularly at the corners, are thickened or doubled in many positions, including those positions where I3+A5 cannot be distinguished from I2+A4 by the thickening of the leftmost boat.

I3+A5 and I4+A5 can be distinguished by looking at the upper central part of the sky. In I3+A5 it is worn and patchy while in I4+A5 the sky lines are heavier and more continuous. It has been suggested that the centre plate was re-entered at the same time as I3 changed to I4, but no firm evidence has been found for this. There is also a difference in the shade of the frames: I3+A5 tend to be rose-carmine while I4+A5 are reddish carmine.

Princes printings, which are I4+A5, can be recognised by the brighter 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 close to those of the unilingual issue printed three months later, and they are always p14. Princes



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typo stamps can also be recognised by constant varieties in the typo overprint - see page 10 of part 1.

1910. In III1+A6a both frames and centres are clear, and the centre plate sky lines in particular are fine and sharp. In A6b these lines look worn and in many positions faint corrosion shows.

III2+A6b was created by the addition of lay marks to the frame plate: a dot between 8,9,13 and 14 and a vertical line between 38,39,43 and 44. (Centre plate A6 had lay marks from the beginning, in these same positions, reflecting an experiment by Waterlows in 1910 - soon afterwards abandoned - whereby the centres were printed before the frames rather than the other way round.) III2+A6b can be distinguished from III1+A6b only in the positions where the frame plate lay marks, or the absence of them, show on the stamp.

For III2+A7 the centre plate was re-entered and all positions show doubling or blotchiness of the sky lines. The top frame line, which was always weak, has become more so and in several places, particularly in the second 'valley' between the bumps, is worn away. In addition there is extensive corrosion in the form of small red dots round the outer frame lines in the first two columns of the plate. Stamps from centre plate A7 have a characteristic carmine shade which is darker than those from A6.

In III3+A7 the top frame line has been retouched by hand to form a line that is continuous and in places thick and uneven; the sections of this line which were worn away in III2 have been filled in.

New plates were made to form IV1+B1. These stamps look much better than the earlier combinations: the top frame line is continuous and the whole of the centre plate design is strong and clear without flaws or corrosion. Whereas stamps from the earlier combinations were dull to bright carmine, those from IV1+B are either a strong carmine or a distinctive carmine-lake. IV1+B is common with the 1921 surcharge but rare without it.

IV2+B1 was formed by the addition of frame plate lay marks: dots between 18 and 19 and between 33 and 34, and vertical lines between 13,14,18 and 19 and between 33,34,38 and 39. IV1 and IV2 can be distinguished only in these positions. IV2 appears to be relatively scarce, and has not been found at all on stamps without the 1921 surcharge.

1915. V1+B2 became V2+B2 with the addition of lay marks in the form of dots and vertical lines between positions 8,9,13 and 14 and 38,39,43 and 44. V1 and V2 can be distinguished from each other only in positions where these marks are



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visibly either absent or present.

V2+B3 was created by re-entry of the centre plate, giving a 'dirtier' impression of the sky with thickening or doubling of the sky lines in many (but not all) positions. A small black cross appears on the left in positions 7-9, 14, 18, 20, 38-40, 42-3, 45 and 47-50 of B3; in B2 it appears only in 37, 42, 47 and 50. In a few positions, particularly in the first column, B2 and B3 are difficult to tell apart - the distinction can be made with confidence only if reference sheets of both combinations are available. Differences tend to be most visible in the lower sky lines on the far left or far right of the centre plate vignettes. In addition, stamps from V+B2 are a more reddish and less pink shade than V2+B3.

V2+C and booklet stamps can be distinguished easily from V+B by the use of a retouched die to make the centre plate, giving continuous shading in the top part of the sky whereas centre plate B shows a large white gap. Booklet stamps can in turn be distinguished from V2+C by the fact that the red circle around the bottom left 10 is continuous whereas in V2+C it shows a short break at around 7 o'clock. (The only exception to this is position 33 of V2+C, where the break was retouched and does not show.)

The three printings of the booklet stamps can be distinguished by shade (though the distinctions are easier to make with mint than with used stamps). Stamps from the first printing are dull to fairly deep carmine with clear, brownish-black centres. Those from the second printing are deep carmine with deep black centres showing a little corrosion. Those from the third printing are dull carmine to carmine with grey, worn centres on grey rather than white paper.

In the course of the second printing the centre plate was re-entered to give doubling of the boats on several positions and some doubling of the sky on all positions in panes β and δ and in most positions in pane γ . Second printing stamps without re-entered centres are scarce.

Varieties

The following sections list the varieties of plate combination, shade, overprint and perforation known for each issue of the 10 centimes. The list covers 'normal' stamps only; errors and curiosities such as inverted overprints and imperf-between pairs are excluded. Mention is however made of some of the better known curiosities.

The list is based on my own collection and that of Ray Keach. 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.



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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 ca=carmine gr=green la=lake

The middle column indicates the overprint or surcharge type. For handstamped Congo Belge overprints, B = Brussels, L = Local. The two Elisabethville surcharges are denominated A and B, A with the 2 below the O and the 5 and with the comma relatively low, and B with the three figures in alignment and the comma relatively high (see Bulletin 34, page 27). 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 is 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 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 10c brown

I1+A1	p14½-15(EX)
I1+A2	p15(BD), p14½-15(BD)

Most used copies of the 10c brown have forged cancels; genuine cancels are scarce.

1895 10c blue

I1+A2 gr-bl	p14(AA), p15(AA), p12-14(CC), p14½-15(AB)
I2+A2 bl-gr	p14½-15(DD)
I2+A3 bl-gr	p13½(EE), p14(AC), p15(AA), p16(CB), p12-14(DD), p14½-15(DC)

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I1+A2 p14, p15 and p12-14 are found with inverted centres. By positioning known copies it has been calculated that three sheets were printed with inverted centres: two sheets p12-14 in the first column and p14 in the other four columns, most copies from which are unused, and one sheet p15, most of which were postally used.

1900 10c carmine

I2+A4	p13½(DD), p14(BA), p15(AA), p16(EE), p12-14(DD), p14½-15(BB)
I3+A5	p13½(DB), p14(CA), p14½-15(CB)
I4+A5	p13½(ED), p14(CB), p14½-15(DD)
I4+A5 Princes	p14(EX)

1909 Congo Belge handstamp

I2+A4	B2	p15(DE)
I2+A4	B6	p13½(DE)
I2+A4	L2	p15(EE)
I2+A4	L4	p13½(EE), p14(EE), p14½-15(EE), p15(EE)
I2+A4	L5	p14(EE)
I3+A5	B5	p14½-15(EE)
I3+A5	B6	p14½-15(DE)
I3+A5	L1	p14(EE)
I3+A5	L2	p14(EE)
I3+A5	L3	p14½-15(EE)
I3+A5	L4	p13½(EE), p14(EE)
I3+A5	L5	p14(EE), p14½-15(DE)
I3+A5	L7	p14(EE)
I4+A5	B1	p14½-15(DE)
I4+A5	B2	p14½-15(CE)
I4+A5	B4	p14½-15(DE)
I4+A5	B5	p14½-15(DE)
I4+A5	B6	p14½-15(DE)
I4+A5	B7	p14½-15(EE)
I4+A5	B8	p14½-15(EE)
I4+A5	L1	p14(AA)
I4+A5	L2	p14(AA)
I4+A5	L3	p14(BB)
I4+A5	L4	p14(AA)
I4+A5	L5	p13½(DE), p14(AA)
I4+A5	L6	p14(BB)
I4+A5	L7	p14(BB)
I4+A5	L8	p14(EE)
I4+A5 Princes	B2	p14(EX)
I4+A5 Princes	B5	p14(EX)

Other combinations may well exist. Forged overprints are common: I have forgeries on I2+A4 p15 and I4+A5 p14 and p14½-15.

1909 Congo Belge typo

I4+A5	p14½-15(AD)
I4+A5 Princes	p14(DC)

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Some forgeries are found, one of which is dangerously accurate. I have forgeries on I2+A4 p15 and p12-14 and I3+A5 p14.

1909 unilingual

II+A5 p14(AA)

1910 bilingual

III1+A6a p13½(EC), p14(AA), p15(DD), p14½-15(DB)
III1+A6b p14(DD)
III2+A6b p13½(DB), p14(AA), p15(DC)
III2+A7 p14(AA), p15(AA)
III3+A7 p13½(DC), p14(CA)
IV1+B1 ca p13½(EE), p14(DD)
IV1+B1 ca-la p14(EE)

1915 bilingual

V1+B2 p13½(DC), p14(AA), p15(BB)
V2+B2 p14(AA), p15(BB)
V2+B3 p14(AA), p15(DB)
V2+C p13½(DD), p14(CB), p15(DD)
1st booklet p14(AA)
2nd(1) booklet p14(DD)
2nd(2) booklet p14(AA)
3rd booklet p13½(DD), p14(AA), p15(CC), p14x15(DD)

3rd booklet stamps are known with inverted centres. Only ten such stamps are known, namely the ten positions of pane β. The three other panes from the same sheet presumably also had inverted centres, but have not been found (or their existence has not been disclosed).

1918 Red Cross

V2+B3 p14(AC), p15(BD)

1921 Recuperation

III1+A6a p14(EE)
III2+A6b p14(DD)
III2+A7 p14(CB), p15(DD)
III3+A7 p13½(CC), p14(AA)
IV1+B1 ca p13½(BC), p14(AA), p15(BB)
IV1+B1 ca-la p13½(DD), p14(AB), p15(EE)
IV2+B1 ca p14(DD)
IV2+B1 ca-la p14(DD)

The surcharge is found, erroneously, on the 1915 10c V2+B3 p14.

1922 Malines

V2+B2 p13½(EE), p14(BA), p15(DD)
V2+B3 p14(AA), p15(DC)

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all the constant plate varieties, but describe the more important ones, particularly the 'generic' varieties which appear in more than one position in the sheet, and also describe the more difficult positions in each sheet where the plater is most likely to experience problems.

I1+A1 to I2+A3

The 10c brown of 1894 and 10c blue of 1895 are generally not hard to position. There are relatively few centre plate varieties, except in the later printings of the 10c blue when a number of scratches appeared, but there are many varieties of the frame plate which are visible through all the printings.

Two conspicuous groups of varieties were illustrated by Balasse. Balasse V7 is a horizontal re-entry of the top left vertical frame line. The re-entry appears outside the framelines in position 50, between them in 25,31 and 45, and inside them in 5,22,38,39 and 40. There are several other positions where a re-entry inside the inner frameline can be detected, albeit more faintly.

Balasse V8 is the well-known parasitic entry where a small part of the die of the 50c value was impressed on the 10c design. It takes the form of a short vertical line and several dots on the É of ÉTAT, together with one or more short slanting lines crossing the frame immediately above. It is visible on positions 4,9,12,14,19,24,37,44 and 49, taking a slightly different form in each location which makes it easy to identify the position of each stamp which shows this variety.

There are other generic varieties which are less conspicuous but equally useful. There is a small line touching the top frameline, either above the NT of ANT or to the right of the T, on 7-10 and 12-15. There is a tiny dot on the frameline in the same place on 11 and 16-20. There is a dot in the right margin, ½mm SE of the lower 'acorn', on 1-3,6-10 and 15. There is a blob-like spot between the outer framelines right of the lower right 10 on 21,26 and 28-30. Faint vertical lines cross the top left frame on 8,28,33 and 36. A longer vertical guideline is visible in the upper left margin, close to the frame, in 4,12,17 and 40.

Centre plate varieties worth mentioning are vertical doubling in the sky (A2 and A3 only) on 46 (Balasse V1) and 24, and slight vertical doubling of the hulls of the boats on 35; and a pair of short black horizontal marks, just to the left of the X of the left DIX, on 2,3 and 5, with a trace of the marks showing on 4. On later printing of I2+A3, with the blue-green frames, a number of scratches appeared on the centre plate in various positions, typically 2 to 3 mms in length, the most conspicuous being the diagonal line crossing the right part of the river in 18 (Balasse V2), the curly 'paraphe' in the left part of the bottom margin (Balasse V3), and the long, near-vertical scratch through the boats on the beach (Balasse V4). This last variety is rare, being found only briefly on the final printings of A2.

The more difficult positions are as follows (frame plate varieties unless otherwise stated). 6 has a faint short vertical line in the A of ÉTAT. 17 has a small horizontal dash between the framelines above the T of ÉTAT, and a faint vertical line above the A of ANT. 18 has a black spot under the AN of ANT. 20 has a tiny dot just outside the left frameline at its widest point. 26 has a near-horizontal line in the X of the left DIX. 27 has a faint horizontal line crossing the left framelines ½mm above the centre, and a faint dot just in the right margin

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2mms below the centre. 34 has a near-horizontal line crossing the framelines under the left 10. This line is hardly visible in the 1895 stamps, which instead show three black spots in the left part of the sky. 38 has two short vertical lines crossing the white line under the right of the É and A of ÉTAT. 48 has two dots, one above the other, 1mm NW of the NW frameline.

I2+A4

Stamps from the first combination of the 1900 issue can mostly be positioned from the frame plate varieties described for the 10c brown and 10 blue, which show up well because of the strong carmine colour of the frames. The centre plate is clean and shows few flaws. The main ones which survive from A3 are the black spot on 24 with a short horizontal line extending to the left, on the lower frameline about 8mm right of centre, and the doubling of the hulls of the boats on 35.

I3+A5 and I4+A5

The more conspicuous frame plate varieties of I2, including V7 and V8, are still visible to a greater or lesser extent on I3 and I4. But most of the other frame plate flaws have disappeared, and for both I3+A5 and I4+A5 the main clues to position come from the centre plate rather than the frame plate.

It is best to start by looking at the leftmost boat. As already mentioned, the narrow space between this boat and the line of shading immediately below it, present in all positions of A4, is closed up in A5 by a thickening or doubling of the boat in every position except 1-5, 10, 11 and 16. In 26, 34, 36-38, 42, 46, 47, 49 and 50 the boat is partly doubled; in 27, 39-41 and 43-45 it is wholly doubled; and in other positions it is thickened without evidence of doubling. The next step is to examine the lines of shading in the river beneath the boats. These are thickened in 6 and 24, slightly doubled in 7, 12, 13, 17, 25, 30, 32, 33, 39, 45, 46 and 48, and noticeably doubled in 22, 26, 31, 36, 38, 41-3, 49 and 50. The doubling varies in each location, which helps to identify the position. Other centre plate varieties are: in 49 and 50, a short black near-vertical line at the right end of the rightmost boat (Balasse V5); in 41 and 44-6, a short curved mark in the upper right part of the sky (though much less visible in I3+A5 than I4+A5); and in 7, 8, 9, 11-20, 24 and 25 a small black dot in the river shading 0.6mm NE of the prow of the rightmost boat (this dot is rather more visible in I3+A5 than I4+A5).

Turning to the frame plate, a number of positions, particularly in the first column, showing thickening or doubling of the outer frameline. In I3+A5 there are several positions which show conspicuous red dots or spots in the outer margin which are not found in I4+A5.

The more difficult positions are the following. 18 has a short vertical black scratch crossing the IM of the right CENTIMES, and (in I3+A5 only) one or two tiny faint red dots in the left margin. In I3+A5, 30 has a red dot in the white line under the D of DANT, but this dot is not present in I4+A5, which can be identified only by two tiny black dots just to the right of the figure sitting in the bow of the rightmost boat. In 35 the doubling of the boats has disappeared, and the faint vertical line through the T of ANT is visible in I3+A5 but not I4+A5. In I4+A5 this is a hard position to identify, the best clue being the slight doubling of the SE frameline.

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II+A5

The unilingual issue has the same centre plate as the combinations, so positioning is largely by reference to the thickening of the leftmost boat and the doubling of the lines of shading underneath it. In addition there are the following generic frame plate varieties: quite conspicuous doubling of the outer left frameline in 13, 18, 23 and 25, and a faint vertical guideline in the left margin in 13, 18, 33, 34 and 42.

III1+A6a to III2+A6b

Some positions in these plate combinations are quite hard, but others are easy because of marked doublings or fresh entries of parts of the left frameline which appear either close to the frameline or some distance from it, in the border between the stamp and its left-hand neighbour. In a few cases there is trebling or even quadrupling of the left frameline. It is not known why this doubling took place or why the displacements involved, up to several millimetres in the most pronounced cases, are so large.

There is doubling between the upper left framelines in positions 13, 34 and 50. In 29 a doubling mark shows well to the right, on the C of Congo. The doubling is just outside the left frameline on 10 (Balasse V10) and 29. It is well outside the left frameline on 11, 12, 14, 19, 26, 29, 32 and 45. It shows in the right margin on 4, 13, 18, 28, 31 and 44. Two short parallel red lines, strongly marked and sloping from NE to SW, appear in the left margin, level with the lower left 10, in 11 (between the framelines), 14 and 19 (well outside them), 26 (just outside them), 32 (shorter lines a little outside) and 45 (crossing the frameline). The right frameline is noticeably thickened in all positions in the fifth column.

The positions which do not show these unusual doubling marks are generally more difficult. Good guidance is provided by faint vertical guidelines running up from the top left corner or down from the bottom right corner. The exact length and placing of these guidelines vary from position to position. Only in positions 1, 20, 21, 28, 30, 36-9 and 43 are no such guidelines visible. In addition there are faint red horizontal or near-horizontal scratches in the top margin in many positions, eg over the second last 'bump' from the right on 13, 14, 23, 27, 28, 40, 45 and 48-50.

The centre plate also shows a number of varieties and, from A6b onwards, corrosion dots in the sky in many positions. There is a vertical guideline through the stern of the steamer in 7 and 8 (Balasse V6) and, less noticeably, in 1, 45-8 and 50. The sky lines on the far right are doubled in 9, 33, 39-41 and 46. The leftmost boat is doubled in 39-41, 44 and 45.

The most difficult positions are the following. 39 has a faint red dash off the SE corner and one doubled line in the sky left of top centre. 43 has a faint red dot just off the SE corner and, in early printings, three short black dashes, one above the other, on the centre right frameline. 48 has sections of a faint red vertical guideline just showing in the NW corner and a small red dot in the E of BELGISCH.

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III2+A7 and III3+A7

Centre plate A7 is characterised by doubling or blotching of the sky lines in all positions. The identifying marks for positioning purposes are the same as for III+A6, with the further aid of the doubling marks and other imperfections in the sky. In addition, all positions in the first two columns have frame plate corrosion in the form of clouds of small red dots round the outer frames of the stamps. Examining the patterns of these dots makes positioning in these columns a straightforward matter.

For III3+A7, the top frameline was heavily retouched. Burin escapes on the frameline are visible in 6,18,21,31 and 46.

IV1+B1 and IV2+B1

These are less easy combinations to position, because the centre plate is clean and relatively free of flaws. Most of the constant plate varieties are found in the frame plate, particularly along and above the top frameline where sections of horizontal guideline appear and where some positions show evidence of retouching.

Doubling of the vertical top left frameline shows just outside the inner frameline in 26 and 49, and inside it in 2,7,9,15,18 and 28. There is retouching, showing usually as a burin escape close to the top frameline, in the top left corner in 5-8, 16,21,28,42 and 48, and in the top right corner in 2,6,11,12,15,18,24 and 47. There is a red smudge between the lower right vertical framelines in 3,4,8,13,19,22-4,27,32,39,47 and 48. In 11 and 12 there is a short vertical red dash between the left framelines just above the centre. In 39 and 40 there is a red mark under and touching the bottom frameline, just to the left of the right 'acorn'. In 50 there is a pronounced red mark like an '=' sign crossing the right frames a little above the centre - Balasse V9.

Of the relatively few centre plate varieties, it is worth mentioning the horizontal guideline crossing the middle of the waterfall in 42 and 43.

No positions are classified as particularly difficult, since in the absence of other flaws virtually all positions can be identified by the short sections of horizontal red guideline close to or crossing the top frameline.

V1+B2 to V2+B3

Frame plate varieties, particularly around the edges of the stamps, make the many issues which used these plate combinations relatively easy to position. The best technique is to find the sheet position first, and then by comparison with the reference sheets determine whether the centre plate is B2 or B3.

The procedure I use is as follows. I start in the top left corner and go anticlockwise round the edge of the stamp. If there is a dot between the top left horizontal framelines the position is no.1. If the outer frameline in the SW corner is doubled it is 2,5 or 31. If there is a dot against the outer frameline, in the middle of the near-vertical section under the I of BELGISCH, it is 48. If there is a short vertical guideline, leading down from the outer frameline under the C of BELGISCH, it is 33,37-40 or 42-5; on earlier printings the line also shows

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faintly on 32, 34 and 35. If there is a dot between the bottom framelines under the ON of CONGO, it is 10. If the outer frameline is doubled, but with a break in the doubling, to the right of the right O of CONGO, it is 41. If there is a dot off the SE corner, it is 6 or 9. If there is a dot off the right frameline a little below centre, it is 11 or 15, or 14 if a little above centre and against the frameline. If there is a dot and dash off the NE corner it is 7, 12 or 26. If the top frameline is thickened or doubled it is 28, 29 or 30. In addition, many positions show characteristic sections of horizontal red guideline crossing parts of the top frameline.

I then look for the more conspicuous centre plate varieties, namely doubling or thickening of the boats (4 and 47 respectively), an angled 'S' in the top right sky (25), a black sloping dash under the leftmost boat (22), a black spot between the third and fifth boat from the left (23), and a black dot just over the horizon on the far right (27).

This brief tour of the stamp deals with many of the positions in the sheet. Other positions have constant varieties which I will leave the reader to discover for himself. The following positions are relatively difficult. In 16 there is a small extra dot at the far right of the sky 1mm above the horizon. In 17 there is a characteristic pattern of faint black dots in the upper part of the left margin. In 19 a vertical red guideline is faintly visible between the framelines to the right of the lower right 10. In 24 there is a red mark, not always very visible, in the middle of the stamp half way between the G of the upper CONGO and the G of BELGISCH, and a small black dot just behind the head of the figure in the stern of the rightmost boat. In 34, a difficult position without any red guidelines, there are two tiny red dots close together in the sky 1mm under the B of BELGE. In 49 there are two small red dots, the right higher than the left, above the third 'bump' from the left on the top frameline.

Having established the position in the sheet, B3 can be distinguished from B2 by the shade of the stamp, by thickening or doubling of the sky lines and by the presence or absence of a black cross in the middle of the left margin (see page 4 above). B3 centres tend to be coarser and more worn than B2, though the differences in this respect are only slight in the first column.

V2+C

This combination is more difficult to position because the centre plate vignettes are completely free of flaws. The frame plate varieties described above for V1+B2 to V2+B3 are still visible, but where positioning depended not on these but on a centre plate variety, V2+C seems to present a real problem.

Fortunately the problem is helped by the presence of faint vertical black guidelines in the spaces between each stamp. These lines appear in most positions and vary considerably: some are long and pronounced, others short and barely visible. However by careful examination and comparison with a reference sheet they are usually enough to identify all those positions without visible frame plate varieties.

Booklet stamps

In the booklet stamps, the more helpful plate varieties are in the frame plate rather than the centre plate. There is a red guide dot 1½mm off the SW corner in

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$\alpha 3, \alpha 5, \alpha 7, \gamma 3, 5$ and 7 , and a similar dot off the SE corner in $\beta 4, \beta 6, \delta 4, \delta 6$ and $\delta 8$, and rather faintly in $\beta 8$. There are signs of doubling or re-entry on the 0 of the lower left 10 in $\alpha 2, \alpha 4, \alpha 10, \beta 3, \gamma 2$ and 9 , and in the centre left 10 in $\alpha 8$ and $\beta 1$. Many positions show sections of horizontal red guideline in the bottom margin, and these guidelines are often the most reliable guide to identification. Some positions also show sections of vertical guideline in the left or right margin.

Useful centre plate varieties include black vertical guidelines in the left margin or short horizontal guidelines crossing the centre left or right 10.

Early in the second printing the centres were re-entered. This produced doubling of the boats in $\beta 10, \delta 5, \delta 6$ and $\delta 8$, and doubling or thickening of the sky lines on all positions except those of pane α and $\gamma 1, 3, 4$ and 5 . The doubling of the sky is particularly marked in $\beta 1-4, \beta 8-10$ and $\delta 1-8$.

While the booklet stamps are generally less easy to position than those of frame plate V, the presence of guidelines in most positions means that none are classified as particularly difficult.
