

PLATING MOLS STAMPS

by B.P. HUDSON

Part 6: 40 centimes

Introduction

The 40 centimes is usually found on mail with other stamps; it did not have much usage on its own. Between 1896 and 1921 it was the rate for an internal registered letter under 15 grams, and between 1920 and 1921 it was also the rate for a registered letter to Belgium under 20 grams. It was also, between 1886 and 1909, the rate for registered internal postcards.

The 40c was not issued in 1894 with the first five Mols values, but two years later in 1896. Unlike those five values, therefore, its design was not based on one of the Mols and Van Engelen paintings exhibited in Anvers in 1894. Instead it was based on a watercolour which appeared in the magazines 'La Belgique Coloniale' and 'Le Congo Illustré' showing a large dug-out canoe on the river Kasai, containing one sitting and six standing natives.

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

23	Nov. 1896	40c green	Etat Indépendant	236,000
34B	Jan. 1909	40c green	Congo Belge Brussels	1,000
34L	Jan. 1909	40c green	Congo Belge local	34,100
44	Jan. 1909	40c green	Congo Belge typo	64,000
44P	Mar. 1909	40c green	Princes unoverprinted	100
44PB	Mar. 1909	40c green	Princes Brussels	250
44PT	Mar. 1909	40c green	Princes typo	4,650
58	Jan. 1910	40c green	Bilingual	180,000
68	Nov. 1915	40c lake	Bilingual	85,000
76	May 1918	40c+40c lake	Red Cross	150,000



PLATING MOLS STAMPS PART 6

85	July 1921	5c/40c green	Recuperation surcharge (on 58)	109,400
97	Jan. 1922	25c/40c lake	Malines surcharge (on 68)	108,000
102	Jan. 1922	25c/40c lake	Boma surcharge (on 68)	337,500
132-3	June 1925	25c+25c carmine	'Campagnes Coloniales'	300,000

Ruanda Urundi

13	July 1916	40c lake	Ruanda Tombeur (on 68)	2,750
20	July 1916	40c lake	Urundi Tombeur (on 68)	2,750
32	Nov. 1916	40c lake	Est Africain (on 68)	170,000
40	May 1918	40c+40c lake	A.O. on Red Cross	150,000
47	Jan. 1922	25c/40c lake	Malines on Est Africain (on 68)	44,000
77-8	June 1925	25c+25c carmine	'Campagnes Coloniales'	300,000

The commemorative 'Campagnes Coloniales' issue of 1925 does not, of course, have a face value of 40 centimes, but is included here because it used the 40c design.

Plate combinations

1896	II+A1	Original frame and centre plates
	I2+A1	Frame lay marks added
1910	II+A2	New frame plate; centre lay marks added
1915	II+A2	
	II+A3	Centres re-entered
1925	III+B	New frame and centre plates (sheets of 100)

There have been no changes from the nomenclature first introduced by Du Four.

Identifying the plate combinations

1896. Frame plate I2 was formed by the addition of a vertical line between 7,8,12 and 13 and a dot between 37,38,42 and 43. I2+A1 cannot be differentiated from II+A1 in other positions of the sheet.

1915. To form A3, the centre plate was re-entered with a retouched die. In A2 there is a white spot on the side of the boat under the second group of natives; in A3 this spot has disappeared. Another difference is that the horizontal lines making up the reflection of the prow of the boat are shorter in A2 than in A3.

Varieties

The following sections list the varieties of plate combination, shade, overprint



PLATING MOLS STAMPS PART 6

and perforation known for each issue of the 40 centimes. The list covers 'normal' stamps only; errors and curiosities such as inverted overprints and imperf-between pairs are excluded.

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.

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

bl=blue ca=carmine g=green p=pale r=red

The middle column indicates the overprint or surcharge type. For handstamped Congo Belge overprints, B = Brussels, L = Local. For the four Boma surcharges, A, B, C and D, Gudenkauf's nomenclature is used (see part 1, page 10). 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. Stamps cancelled by favour or with forged cancels are not taken into account in 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

1896

I1+A1 bl-g	p14(CC), p15(DD), p16(DD), p14½-15(CC)
I2+A1 pg	p14(DD), p15(CB), p12-14(EE), p14½-15(DB)
I2+A1 bl-g	p12½(DE), p14(AA), p15(AA), p16(CC), p12-14(CB), p14½-15(BB)
I2+A1 Princes	p14(EX)



PLATING MOLS STAMPS PART 6

Although the distinctive pale green shade is associated with early printings, I1+A1 has so far been found only in blue-green, and pale green stamps which can be differentiated between I1 and I2 are all the latter. It therefore seems that the first printing was blue-green with I1, followed by a printing in pale green with I2, followed by blue-green printings with I2 which made up the bulk of the 1896 issue (and probably accounted for all stamps subsequently overprinted with CONGO BELGE).

1909 Congo Belge handstamp

I2+A1	B2	p14(CE), p15(DE), p12-14(DE)
I2+A1	B3	p?(EE)
I2+A1	B4	p14(DE), p12-14(DE)
I2+A1	B5	p?(EE)
I2+A1	B6	p14(DE), p12-14(DE)
I2+A1	L1	p14(AA), p15(DD), p12-14(CC)
I2+A1	L2	p14(BB), p12-14(CC)
I2+A1	L3	p12½(DD), p14(CC), p15(DD)
I2+A1	L4	p14(BB), p15(DD), p12-14(CC)
I2+A1	L5	p14(AA), p15(DD), p12-14(CC), p14½-15(DD)
I2+A1	L6	p14(AA), p12-14(CC)
I2+A1	L7	p14(AA), p15(DD), p12-14(CC)
I2+A1 Princes	B2	p14(EX)
I2+A1 Princes	B5	p14(EX)

Forged overprints are common.

1909 Congo Belge typo

I2+A1	p12½(DD), p14(AA), p12-14(BB), p14½-15(AA)
I2+A1 Princes	p14(DD)

Some forgeries are found, one of which is dangerously accurate.

1910 bilingual

II+A2	p13½(CC), p14(AA), p14½-15(BC)
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1915 bilingual

II+A2	p13½(CC), p14(AA), p15(ED)
II+A3	p14(AA), p15(BB)



PLATING MOLS STAMPS PART 6

1918 Red Cross

II+A3 p14(AC), p15(CD)

1921 Recuperation

II+A1 Typo p14(DX), p12-14(DX), p14½-15(DX)
 II+A2 p13½(BB), p14(AA), p14½-15(CC)

1922 Malines

II+A2 r p13½(ED), p14(ED)
 II+A2 ca p14(ED), p15(ED)
 II+A3 r p14(AA), p15(CB)
 II+A3 ca p14(CA), p15(CB)

1922 Boma

II+A2 B p14(DD), p15(EE)
 II+A2 C p13½(DD), p14(CC), p15(EE)
 II+A2 D p14(CC)
 II+A3 A p14(AA), p15(EE)
 II+A3 B p14(BC), p15(CC)
 II+A3 C p14(AA), p15(BB)
 II+A3 D p14(CB), p15(CC)

Forged surcharges are found; I have an example on II+A3 p14.

1925 Campagnes Coloniales

III+B French p12½(AB)
 III+B Flemish p12½(AB)

1916 Tombeur (Ruanda and Urundi)

II+A2 K p14(EE)
 II+A2 G p14(EX)
 II+A2 H p14(CX)

There are many forgeries.



PLATING MOLS STAMPS PART 6

1916 Est Africain

II+A3		L1(i)	p14(DD)
II+A3		L1(.)	p14(DD),p15(DD)
II+A3		L1(o)	p14(BB),p15(CC)
II+A3		L2	p14(CB)

1918 Red Cross AO

II+A3			p14(AC),p15(CD)
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1922 EAA Malines

II+A3	r	L1(o)	p14(BB)
II+A3	ca	L1(o)	p14(CD)
II+A3	r	L2	p14(CC)
II+A3	ca	L2	p14(AB),p15(DC)

1925 Campagnes Coloniales (RU)

III+B	French	p12½(AB)
III+B	Flemish	p12½(AB)

This gives a total of 112 varieties of the 40c.

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' 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.

II+A1 and I2+A1

While there are many frame and centre plate varieties in these combinations, many of them are rather inconspicuous and this is not always an easy stamp to position.



PLATING MOLS STAMPS PART 6

In looking for frame plate varieties, it is better to start at the top left corner. The corner shows a short extension either upwards or to the left in 6, 10, 20, 31, 40 and 45. It shows a similar feature, but in the form of a dot close to the corner, in 15, 25, 28, 30 and 32. There is a burin escape above the top frameline close to the corner in 10, 17, 21, 26 and 38; in 1 the burin escape is below the top frameline. There is doubling or thickening of the lower of the top two framelines, at the point where it touches the 'shield' surrounding the 40, in 5, 7, 30, 36, 40-3, 48 and 49. Other positions (eg 2 and 3) shows signs of thickening, due to retouching, at various places on the upper frameline. 8 has two dots resting on the two top framelines 5mm from the corner. 33 has the left vertical frame faintly doubled near the top. 35 has this frame markedly doubled (Balasse V3). 36 has green marks in the white oval line round the left 40, and in the 0 of the 40.

Having looked at the top left corner, the next place to look is the top right corner. If the top horizontal framelines are thickened where they meet the corner, the position is 25, 37, 39 or 44. In 44 the upper sections of the vertical framelines at the corner are also thickened.

The most helpful centre plate varieties are, in many cases, rather small ones. In most positions there are tiny scratch marks in the sky lines close to the head of the second last native on the right, or above the head of the last native. These marks vary from position to position and are a good way of confirming a stamp's location. In 5 there is a black dot just behind the backside of the fourth native from the right; in 27 there is a small dot just SW of his left fist; in 47 there is a dot close to the middle of the reflection of the last oar; and in 48 there is a dot $\frac{1}{2}$ mm NE of the third last native's head (the head being all that shows of this native). In the fourth and fifth rows, ie nos 16 to 25, there are signs of doubling in the upper right sky lines. There is a pronounced curved dotted scratch crossing the upper left part of 31, but only in later printings of I2+A1.

The more difficult positions are the following. In 4 there are two faint green dots close together between the bottom framelines under the right 0 of 40. In 13 there is a green dot in the A of ANT. There is also a faint black scratch crossing the NE corner; 22 shows the same feature. 14 has a diagonal black scratch through the N of IND. 16 shows short traces of black vertical guideline in the water under the bundle behind the first group of natives, and under the boat's stern. 24 has a green near-horizontal line crossing the right frames by the GO of CONGO; in early printings, however, this line is not present, making this a very difficult position to identify - the only guidance comes from the doubling of upper right skylines, and thickening of the top frameline over the left 40. In 29 there is a small green dash in the top margin over DU, and slight doubling of the lines just to the left of the second last native's head. 39 has the thickening of the right end of the top framelines, but can be distinguished from 37 only by the fact



PLATING MOLS STAMPS PART 6

that 37 has a dot to the left of the second last native's head while 39 has not.

II+A2 and II+A3

These plate combinations have no frame plate lay marks, but they have centre plate lay marks in the form of a vertical line between 7 and 8 and a dot between 37 and 38.

1915 stamps from II+A2 are relatively easy to position, because of the number of frame plate varieties, but 1910 stamps from the same combination can be more difficult: the same varieties are there, but the paler colour of the stamps makes some of them less easy to detect.

As with the 1896 issue, the best place to start is the upper left corner. If there are signs of re-entry in the white oval frame around the NW 40, the position is 6 (Balasse V4), 10, 12, 18, 19 or 24. If there is a short arc between the NW frames close to the corner, it is 2, 6, 15, 27, 31 or 46. If the NW corner is extended up by a short line or dot, it is 2, 3, 6, 14, 17, 22, 35, 41, 45 or 46. In 1 and 20 there is a dot just to the left of the corner. 7 has sections of guideline between the upper left vertical frames. 21 has a horizontal guideline above the corner. 25 has various dots and short vertical lines on it. 30 has a short line just over it, and a dot just to the right of the line. 33 has a short vertical line in the corner, 37, 44 and 50 a similar line above it, and 46 a short horizontal line just above it. 49 has long vertical line inside the left frameline.

Turning to the upper right corner, there is a horizontal guideline here, extending into the right margin, between the top framelines in 4, 9, 15, 21, 26, 36 and 48, and level with the top frame in 8, 17, 21, 31, 38, 40, 42 and 44. Another centre plate variety worth mentioning is a transfer roller flaw in the form of a coloured spot 1½mm above the head of the second last native in 36, 37 and 38. Many positions have sections of guideline in the top margin above the frameline.

The most prominent variety on centre plate A2 is the near-vertical line 2mm long above the head of the second last native in 34 (Balasse V1). Otherwise the earliest printings of this centre plate are rather free of flaws and can be difficult to position. With later printings of the 1910 issue, and all printings of the 1915 issue with II+A2, the centre plate is affected by small black corrosion dots, particular in the sky and the water, which make the confirmation of a stamp's position straightforward, since the pattern of dots is different in each position.

Centre plate A3 still shows Balasse V1, and in addition its later printings show a prominent diagonal scratch which crosses from under the stern of the boat in 33 to the upper right sky in 35. In 35, this variety is Balasse V2.

The most useful centre plate variety in A3 is found in the reflection of the prow of the boat. If the outline of this reflection is uneven, with the fourth line down shorter than the third and the fifth, the stamp comes from the first three rows, ie nos 1 to 15. If the outline is even, it comes from rows 7 to 10. It seems that after the first three rows were entered, this imperfection was noticed and corrected on the transfer roller. Whatever the explanation, it is a feature which allows all stamps from II+A3 to be narrowed down to 15 or 35 possibilities respectively. In addition, most positions from A3 show scattered corrosion in the water below the boat which is a sure guide to position in the absence of more prominent varieties.

PLATING MOLS STAMPS PART 6

Apart from the earliest printings of the 1910 stamps, few positions from these plate combinations present any real difficulty. The most difficult are probably 29, 39 and 44. 29 has a faint coloured dot in the top margin above the tip of the fifth frond from the left. 39 has a coloured dot level with the top frame and 0.8mm to the right of the right corner. If this dot is cut off by the edge of the stamp, as it often is, the best guide is a tiny dot in the border of the upper left 'shield' close to where it touches the left framelines. 44 has a faint vertical line above the NW corner, and a horizontal guideline faintly visible between the top framelines above the left shield.

III+B

The Campagnes Coloniales issues, which used the centre plate design of the 40c with a heavily modified frame plate design, were printed in sheets of 100, with stamps with the French inscription alternating with those with the Flemish inscription. The stamps are not easy to position, and it is inadvisable to try to do so if a reference sheet is not available. The problem is not a lack of varieties, but the fact that the frames tend to show numerous transient varieties in the form of scattered red dots, caused no doubt by ink splashed during the printing, which are hard to distinguish from the constant plate varieties which indicate sheet position.

The frame plate has lay marks in the form of horizontal lines between 32 and 42 and between 38 and 48, and dots at the right and left ends respectively of those lines.

A few positions have prominent varieties, one of which is mentioned by Balasse: a long thin vertical crack on the frame plate, crossing the middle of 64 (Flemish inscription). Other noticeable frame plate varieties are doubling of left top frameline (5 - French), vertical doubling of the lower right corner (17 - Flemish), and doubling of the right bottom frameline (82 - Flemish). Centre plate varieties include a near-vertical black line above the second group of natives from the left (1 - French), blotches in the sky over the second last native from the right (23 - French), a wavy horizontal line on the B of BELGE (25 - French), and a long irregular scratch above the centre and right part of the sky (88 - Flemish).

I have been unable, unfortunately, to find many 'generic' varieties on the plate, ie varieties found in more than one position. There is a red guideline cross visible in the middle of the right frond in 16, 17, 36, 46, 49 and (faintly) 79. The lines of the water SW of the boat's prow are doubled in 26 to 30.

There are quite a few difficult positions. The most difficult are 33 and 53, both Flemish, where the only distinguishing marks seem to be the tiny centre plate dots at about mid-height in the left and right margins of the stamps.
