

PLATING MOLS STAMPS

by B.P. HUDSON

Part 1: General Introduction

In Bulletin 84 our Vice-President expressed the hope that more members may be interested to start reconstructions of the Mols: "many of us find it the most fascinating aspect of Congo collecting".

How true this is. I have been plating and reconstructing Mols stamps for 17 years, and the activity has never palled. Each stamp to be positioned is a fresh challenge, and each identification gives a fresh surge of satisfaction. Each sheet reconstruction is a jigsaw puzzle which slowly progresses towards completion. Some can be completed relatively easily; others take many years of searching. In either case, the search provides absorbing pleasure and recreation.

The paradox of collecting is that the objective is to achieve completion, yet once the objective is reached all interest is lost. The collector who has no more spaces to fill can only put his stamps in a drawer and forget about them. With sheet reconstructing, there is no danger of this happening. Full reconstruction of all the main varieties would be an impossible task however many years were devoted to it. As a hobby, therefore, it can never be exhausted: the collector is always getting closer to his final objective, but will never reach it.

For this rarefied branch of philately the Mols of the Belgian Congo, issued between 1894 and 1925, provide an ideal subject. The stamps are pictorially attractive and are mostly inexpensive to buy. Complete sheets are compact and are not hard to obtain. Taking account of plate combinations, shades, perforations, surcharges and overprints, there are numerous different varieties of the ten basic values, and most of the varieties are easy to identify. Because of the recess printing process, with the plates made manually from steel dies, constant flaws and varieties can be detected on individual stamps, so that it becomes possible to deduce which position in the sheet the stamp came from. This process is possible not just for certain of the Mols issues, but for all sheet positions of every issue; and moreover with sufficient practice, almost every individual stamp can be positioned, even if badly obscured by a postmark or overprint.

The collecting possibilities which this opens up can be illustrated by a typical example. Take the 15c of 1915, a common stamp available for a few pence. By purchasing collections and dealers' stocks one can easily accumulate hundreds of them. To the 'one-of-a-kind' collector this would be a pointless activity, simply creating duplicates. To the plater, a substantial collection can be built up. Ignoring certain sub-states of the plates, there are six main plate combinations of the 1915 15c in sheets of 50 and three printings in booklet panes of 40. There are up to three perforation varieties of each plate combination, giving twelve main varieties of the stamps from sheets and four of the stamps from booklet panes. If reconstructions are attempted of each variety, with unused and used stamps reconstructed separately, a total of 1520 stamps would be needed for a complete collection just of this one stamp. Of course, few platers would aim to go to such extremes as this - most would be content with used reconstructions of the more common varieties plus representative examples of the others, a target which, given sufficient time, should be neither difficult nor expensive to achieve.

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This article is the first of what will be a series of eleven. Its purpose is to encourage members to take a more detailed interest in these attractive stamps, to persuade more of them to take up plating, and generally to communicate my accumulated knowledge of the subject. The first article is an introduction which sets the background and gives advice on general aspects of plating. Later articles will take each of the ten values in turn, 5 centimes to 10 francs, and (a) tabulate the issues of each value, (b) tabulate the varieties of each issue and describe how to identify them, and (c) give a guide to the determination of sheet positions for each plate combination. These guides will not be an exhaustive catalogue of varieties in every position, but will describe the main ones and give advice on how collectors can acquire for themselves the ability to plate and position individual stamps.

Equipment needed for plating

Apart from reasonably acute eyesight, there are three prerequisites for the sheet reconstructor: a plentiful supply of stamps, complete sheets for reference, and a strong illuminated magnifying glass.

The supply of stamps is the least of his problems. Every Congo collector soon acquires duplicates of the more common Mols stamps, and it is these duplicates that can form the basis for his sheet reconstructions. As his reconstructions become more complete, he will find himself relying more and more on the excellent wants list service which Ray Keach has provided for Study Circle members for many years. The Study Circle holds its own small stock of Mols duplicates, and a large volume of material for sale is continuously being supplied to it by members in Belgium, the UK and the USA. All the Mols stamps that come in are positioned and are sent on approval to platers against their wants lists, usually at 33% of catalogue (50% for Princes), and sometimes as low as 20% for common material (eg the offer on page 20 of Bulletin 84).

If good reference literature is available it is possible to position stamps without a complete sheet of the relevant plate combination at hand, but generally this is not advisable. Many flaws can be confidently identified only by comparing stamp with stamp. Fortunately, complete sheets of many issues are quite common, especially of the lower values of the definitive issues of 1900, 1910 and 1915. These sheets can be used to position not only the stamps of those issues but subsequent issues with overprints or surcharges. The sheets are compact: a typical sheet of 50, five horizontal by ten vertical, measures 200 by 260 cms including margins. They can be mounted on album leaves or enclosed in transparent cover protectors.

Of course, good reference literature is an invaluable aid to positioning whether or not sheets are available. In this respect Congo collectors have been well served over the years. From relatively early times books like the Balasse catalogues and writers like Du Four illustrated the main plate varieties with great clarity. Others like Crustin in 1944 (the 1fr and 5fr of 1894) and Joncker in 1947 (the 10fr of 1898) published photographic guides showing varieties in each position of the sheet. Better guides have been published more recently through the auspices of the Study Circle. I would commend particularly the illustrated articles on the 1fr, 3½fr, 5fr and 10fr in Bulletins 38, 33, 35 and 39 respectively, and the excellent series of studies which is being produced by J M Frenay and which has so far covered all values between 15c and 10fr of the issues from 1894 to the Princes stamps of 1909.

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The plater's final requirement is a good magnifying glass. Most plate varieties are invisible to the naked eye or through an ordinary hand-held glass. A strongly illuminated glass like the 'Magniray', with at least 10x magnification, is required. A philatelic microscope, on the other hand, which typically gives 30x magnification, is probably unsuitable since these instruments illuminate only a small portion of the stamp and do not give the wider view which is needed when surveying for varieties. In addition they often confuse matters by inverting the image.

I should add a word about eye-strain. This is the bugbear of the positioner and I would offer newcomers the following hints on how to minimise it. First, learn to use the magnifier in a relaxed fashion without screwing up or closing either eye. Second, alternate between the eyes and take a short break whenever they start to tire. Third, always use fresh batteries (or a mains adaptor) and replace the batteries as soon as they start to fade; rechargeable batteries are a useful economy. Fourth, use torch bulbs designed for a lower voltage than the batteries provide: for example, I use a 2.2 volt bulb with two 1½ volt batteries. The bulbs are more quickly burnt out but in return one gets a brighter light which facilitates positioning and reduces strain on the eyes.

Different types of variety

So our new plater has his single stamps, his sheet and his magnifier. He examines the former through the latter and sees the beautiful Mols and van Engelen design in vivid close-up. Among the design he can detect a few small dots, lines, signs of doubling and other marks, some significant and some not. How does he interpret these marks and embark on the detective work which will lead him to ascertain with confidence both the combination of plates used to print the stamp and its position in the sheet?

Before describing the main categories of plate variety, I should say a brief word about the way these stamps were printed, although this will already be familiar to most readers. The stamps were printed in London by Waterlow and Sons, except for the 3½/3fr and 10fr values which were printed by the separate firm of Waterlow Bros & Layton, possibly as a result of a printing order from Brussels being misdirected in the post.

They were recess-printed in two colours, which means that two printing plates were prepared for each stamp, one for the frames (printed in colour) and one for the centres (printed in black). First, the design was engraved by hand on a steel die which was then hardened. (This work was of the highest quality and of a fineness which allowed up to twelve lines to be engraved to the millimetre.) Second, the impression on the die was transferred onto a cylindrical transfer roller which in turn was hardened. Since the design was recessed on the die it was raised on the transfer roller. Finally, the transfer roller was rocked by hand onto the flat steel plate, creating a matrix of 50 closely packed impressions of the stamp, 10 high by 5 wide (or four panes of 2x5 in the case of the booklet stamps of 1915). As on the original die the design on the final plate was recessed and printing was achieved by passing an ink roller over it so that the ink was caught in the recesses and impressed on the paper as raised lines of the design.

As time passed the plates became worn and, in some cases, corroded by moisture. They were regularly cleaned with a cloth. If parts of the design were

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faint they were often retouched by hand, position by position, using a tool called a burin. When the plates became too worn, rather than incur the expense of making a new plate they were usually re-entered using the original transfer roller, or a new transfer roller made from the original or a retouched die.

Since the plates were not very hard-wearing, but were used for many years, the quality of the printed stamps ranges from very good to very bad. The resulting flaws could offend a professional printer but are what makes these stamps interesting to the philatelist. The worse the flaws, the easier it is to position the stamps. On the other hand, as later articles will show, even with cleanly printed issues where there are few obvious flaws, it is still possible to differentiate all sheet positions if they are studied closely enough.

The imperfections visible under the magnifier divide first into the following broad categories:

(i) Die varieties. These are quite numerous and are small dots etc which do not seem to be an obvious part of the design. They served, for example, as centres of inscribed circles on the die. However they are of no use for positioning purposes since they are identical in each position of the sheet. On the other hand, they can sometimes be of use in determining the plate combination of the stamp, eg in the later issues of 1915 when new plates of the several lower values were made using retouched dies.

(ii) Transfer roller varieties. These occurred typically when a small foreign body attached itself to the transfer roller as it was being rocked onto to the plate. As a result, a distinctively shaped mark was indented onto the plate and was therefore printed on one or more successive positions of the stamp. If all 50 positions were thus affected, as (eg) with the spot on the hill in frame plate F of the 5c, the flaw is no aid to positioning. But in other cases transfer roller varieties are very helpful indeed since while not identifying the individual position, they narrow the possibilities to a defined group of positions from which the individual position can be determined readily from other flaws. There are many examples of transfer roller varieties, most of which will be described in the plating guides in subsequent articles.

(iii) Permanent constant plate varieties. These are flaws on the plate which are present and visible in all the printings made from it. They are the main basis for identifying the sheet positions of single stamps. The flaws are of many different types and characteristics which are listed below.

(iv) Temporary constant plate varieties. These are the same as (iii), except that they appeared or disappeared during the course of the plate's usage. They are therefore of use in identifying sheet positions, but not as useful as the permanent varieties since they appear on some but not all of the stamps printed from the position in question. For example, a scratch may appear on the plate in the middle of printing, or a faint mark visible in the early printings may later disappear through wear. The different types of these varieties are included in the list in the next section.

(v) Transient varieties. These are typically small dots of ink, smudge marks etc deposited on the paper as each sheet was printed. They are not constant from sheet to sheet and are therefore of no use in determining either plate combinations or positions. They can be a distraction since they can look much

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like the varieties in (iii) and (iv), but with practice the experienced plater develops a feel for which of the flaws visible under the magnifier are transient and should therefore be ignored.

Constant plate varieties

There are many different types of these. The following paragraphs describe most of the types that the plater will encounter.

Lay marks. Known in French as 'traits de repère', these are lines and dots inscribed between certain positions after the application of the transfer roller. Their purpose was to create marks on the printed sheet to aid the registration of frames and centres. There is usually one dot on the mid-point between two adjoining pairs of stamps and one vertical line similarly positioned in another part of the sheet. (In the stamps of vertical format, the 15c and 5fr, the line is horizontal.) Lay marks are normally found on the frame plate, since the frames were usually printed first, but some 1910 issues are found with centre plate lay marks as well when Waterlows experimented with printing the centres first. Sometimes lay marks did not appear until after the first printings of a stamp, in which case their addition, being a deliberate act, created a new state of the plate (see the section below on the nomenclature of plate combinations). In other cases there is more than one dot or line.

The lay marks are conspicuous features, and if part of one is visible on a stamp it can be positioned immediately. However most sheet positions are not adjacent to one of these marks, and those that are do not necessarily show them if the perforation is close to the frame of the design on the side where the mark is printed. Lay marks are therefore mostly of limited use in positioning.

Guidelines. Guidelines are like lay marks in that they are vertical or horizontal lines deliberately engraved on the plate. The similarity ends there, however. Guidelines are much finer and fainter and are usually visible only over short sections of their length. They were put down in a grid pattern before the transfer roller was applied, their purpose being to guide the application of the roller and to get the 50 impressions lined up as accurately as possible. On frame plates, the guidelines coincide more or less closely with one of the outer edges of the frame. On centre plates, where they are found, they usually coincide with a feature of the design - eg the line is horizontal and matches the horizon of the picture - but on some stamps (notably the 10c) they are found in vertical positions midway between impressions.

Although they are usually faint, the guidelines are useful aids to positioning. They are found on most stamps, and on a few - for instance the 10fr Red Cross - are almost the only way of distinguishing one position from another. Their usefulness as distinguishing marks stems from two features. First, their location relative to the stamp design varies slightly from position to position, since they were laid down separately from the transfer roller. Second, after the lines were engraved sections of them (particularly those away from the stamp designs) were burnished out so as to make them less conspicuous on the finished sheet. The lengths and exact locations of the sections that remained vary noticeably according to the sheet position.

Finally, despite their faintness the guidelines were resistant to wear. In one or two cases (eg the 25c frame plate III) they eventually disappeared through

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long usage, but on most of the stamps where they are found they are visible from the earliest to the latest printings.

Guide dots. These are less common than guidelines, but like them were deliberately applied to the plate separately from the transfer roller. They were caused by a pointer attached to the shaft of the transfer roller to guide its application. They were normally burnished out, but on some values the printers omitted to do so, notably on 5c frame plate V where they are present on all stamps in the second to fifth columns and in the right hand selvedge, and 3fr frame plate II where they are in the top selvedge and just under the bottom left corner of all stamps in the top to ninth rows. They are another useful guide to positioning because of the small variations in the location of each dot relative to the stamp design.

Retouches. This is a common constant plate variety and also a most useful one. 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 retouched by hand to strengthen it. Since each impression had to be retouched separately, variations in the retouching give a guide to position. A good example is the dark triangle in the top left corner of the frames of the 1898 10fr, which was judged before printing began to be too weak and was therefore scored in by hand in most positions, in some cases with horizontal lines and in others with lines sloping to the left, to the right, or criss-cross. Almost all positions of this stamp can be quickly identified from this one feature alone, provided of course that a complete sheet is available for reference.

Sometimes the retouching was done carefully and is hard to notice. In other cases it was surprisingly crude. The best example of the latter is the 5c of 1910, frame plate III2, where the horizontal lines at the top throughout the plate were filled in by an engraver who did not use a ruler and had a remarkably unsteady hand, for reasons at which one can only guess.

Burin escapes. These are retouches gone wrong: places where a line of the design was being retouched, but the engraving tool slipped and created a short scratch branching out from the design. Burin escapes are found in a number of places where it is not otherwise obvious, because of the neatness of the work, that retouching took place.

Re-entries. Re-entries are doubling marks caused by a slight displacement of the transfer roller while it was being rocked back and forth to create the impression on the plate. This could happen when the plate was first laid down (in which case they are strictly 'fresh entries' rather than 're-entries') or when it was later re-entered to strengthen the design after it had become worn with use. In the former case the doubling is usually quite slight but in the latter it can be marked, eg in 5c centre plate B5 and 25c centre plate A4 where one or two positions, well known as so-called Balasse plate varieties, show displacement of a full millimetre or more. In other examples not only doubling but clear trebling can be seen.

Doubling marks are of variable usefulness in positioning. In some stamps such as the 1fr of 1915, frame plates II3 to II6, so many positions are similarly doubled that the doubling is not a great help to identification. In others it can be a useful and prominent identifying mark.

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Parasitic entries. This is a curious form of plate variety which while not unique to stamps of the Congo, is only rarely found elsewhere. It is present on certain positions of the 10c, 25c, 50c and 5fr of 1894 to 1900, and consists of partially visible curved lines superimposed on the frame plate design. For many years no-one could work out what caused these marks. Then it came to someone in a flash of inspiration: the marks on the 10c were from the 50c design and vice versa, while the marks on the 25c were from the 5fr design and vice versa.

What happened was that no doubt to save money, two of the cylindrical transfer rollers made by Waterlows in 1894 were used to carry not one but two die impressions each. As the roller was rocked onto the plate, it was occasionally rocked too far so that the edge of the adjoining die was partly impressed on the adjoining stamp. For good pictorial illustrations of this process I refer the reader to pages 117, 158 and 173 of General Du Four's 'Congo - Cinquante Ans D'Histoire Postale'.

Parasitic entries are visible in up to nine positions for each of the stamps in question. They provide a good guide to positioning and are classified as Balasse plate varieties.

Scratches. This is a broad category of accidental flaw which is found extensively. Scratch marks range from deep scores which are highly visible to faint marks which quickly disappeared with wear. The former are obviously better for identification but the latter can also be useful if other flaws are not visible. Scratch marks are unique to the position where they are found, and vary greatly in size and shape. Some were caused by engraving tools, others (eg 'curlicue' scratches, and faint but long scratches in parallel lines) by cleaning; others no doubt by the general rough and tumble of the printing shop floor. Some of the worst scratches were noticed by the printers and burnished out, so that they no longer appear in later printings. Earliest printings are usually relatively free of scratches, but this is not always true.

Blotches. These are large irregularly shaped marks, often roughly oval in shape, found between adjacent stamps. There are good examples on the frame plates of the 1900 25c (I2) and 1915 50c (III3). Sometimes they have a deep colour, sometimes rather faint. They are caused by shallow indentations in the flat surface of the plate which caught ink from the roller and therefore caused a mark on the printed sheet. They do not appear in many positions, but are useful when they do.

Missing design. Occasionally a small part of the design, typically part of the frame line, is missing, no doubt because it was inadequately impressed by the transfer roller. This is a relatively uncommon variety because such defects were usually made good by retouching. Moreover it should not be confused with missing design caused by inadequate inking, a transient variety which is of no help to positioning.

Corrosion dots. Corrosion dots resulted normally from moisture on the plate causing pits in its surface which in turn caused small dots to appear on the printed stamp. They are found frequently on both frame and centre plates, but are more visible on the latter because of the darker colour of the ink. On some issues they are more or less absent in the earliest printings but appear in great numbers later on, no doubt because the plate was allowed to get wet or was not properly wiped down between printings. Although the dots are often very tiny,

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and can only just be seen even under a strong magnifier, they are a good aid to positioning because they seldom disappeared with wear and their random locations are always unique to the sheet positions where they are found. Where a plate combination has corrosion dots, confirmation of a stamp's position is always unambiguous.

Where plates became thickly corroded, the printers often tried to minimise the damage by burnishing the dots out. However they could do so only in areas away from the stamp design, since otherwise the design itself would be affected. Thus on some plates there is a sharp dividing line between thick corrosion close to the design and clear space beyond. Good examples of this are found in 1fr centre plate A5 and later printings of the 25c booklet centres, panes β and δ .

Cracks. I end with this because there are only a few examples of it, but one of them is a famous one. During the late printings of the 1910 15c, frame plate III3, a long jagged crack known as the 'lézard' appeared in the plate between positions 41 and 42. It was still there in plate III4 which was used for the first printings of the 1915 issue. The crack was then noticed, and to prevent it spreading to the edge of the plate a large hole was drilled in it, creating frame plate III5. Both the crack and the hole make a prominent feature which is classified as one of the Balasse plate varieties. Similar cracks are also found in the 40c frame plate I, position 6, and frame plate III (the 'Campagnes Coloniales' issue), position 64.

Writing plating notes

As the new plater surveys single stamps against his complete sheet, and identifies their positions, he will usually notice not one but several identifying flaws in each position. It is essential that he makes his own written notes of them. It may be tempting to rely on reference material written by others, but this is a false economy. He will frequently find flaws which others have not noticed, and when he meets the same position again, as he surely will, he can confirm it much more quickly by referring to his own notes.

As a rule of thumb, I aim to record at least three or four different flaws for each position. There are two reasons for this. First, some flaws are rather similar from position to position so that relying on only one can lead to mistaken identification. Second, many stamps are partly obscured by cancels or overprints (or both) so that if only one plate variety on the position is known, the chances are that it will be covered up. If three or four are recorded, it is most unlikely that the position cannot be identified.

In case this is of interest to new platers, I will describe how I set out my own plating notes. With small handwriting which is illegible to anyone but myself, I can get all the notes for a plate combination on one side of a sheet of paper, using one line per position. At the bottom I list what I call 'generic' plate varieties, ie those found, identical or at least similar to one another, in more than one position. I label them A, B, C etc, and writes these letters in the left-hand column against the relevant lines of the plating notes. When confronted with a stamp I check first which of the generic varieties it shows, and I can then at a glance narrow down the possibilities for its position. For instance if it shows B and C but not A, I know that it must be from one of the positions labelled BC in the left column.

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In the plating guides in subsequent articles, I will describe these so-called generic varieties in relatively great detail, since they are usually the key to the rapid identification of positions in the sheet of 50. To have to go through all 50 positions every time a possible flaw is identified would otherwise be very time-consuming.

Occasionally one meets positions which are really hard to identify. The plate is clean and it takes a long time to find a flaw or other identifying mark. In my notes I mark these positions with a special symbol. When I meet that position again, the relative absence of flaws itself becomes a guide to its location, since I can concentrate my search on the positions I have marked with that symbol.

Sometimes positioning is easy while at others it seems hard and frustrating. As time passes, and the locations of more and more plate varieties are retained in the memory, positioning generally becomes much easier, but there are still always a few difficult ones. The more difficult the identification, the greater the sense of satisfaction when it is achieved. The plater requires great patience but his patience is usually well rewarded.

Overprints and surcharges

Intelligent use should be made of extraneous guides to position. The presence of selvedge or sheet margin is an obvious example. A more subtle example can be found with stamps with irregular perforations, where the 'pattern' of the irregularity is different on two opposite sides. Because of the way in which the line perforator was moved down the sheet of paper, but the sheet had to be reversed before the last line of holes was punched, this non-matching of facing lines of irregular perforation is an indication that the stamp comes from the edge of the sheet. (These perforations are described further below.)

However the most important extraneous guide to position is found in certain of the surcharges and overprints. Handstamped marks such as the Congo Belge and Tombeur overprints and the Elisabethville surcharges are obviously no help when positioning. The Red Cross, AO and Malines surcharges I have also found to be of little use. However the typo Congo Belge and Est Africain overprints and the 1921 and Boma surcharges are very useful indeed, and while they are strictly outside the scope of these articles - and have been well covered in earlier Bulletins - it is worth adding a brief résumé of them here.

Typo. The best article on the typographed Congo Belge overprints appeared in Bulletin 8 as long ago as 1952. It described how Brussels handstamp 5 was used to make five papier maché moulds from each of which probably twelve type-metal clichés of the overprint were cast. 50 of these clichés were assembled into the overprinting plate for the horizontal stamps. This plate was then dismantled and reassembled for the vertical stamps, ie the 15c and 5fr.

Because of shrinkage of the papier maché after the first five clichés were cast, and minor defects in several of the moulds, the following 'generic' constant varieties are found in the overprinting plates:

Long overprint: positions 4,10,11,12,31 (stamps of horizontal format);
11,13,17,24,43 (stamps of vertical format).
Broken C of CONGO: 8,34,36,37,38 (horizontal); 12,13,14,17,22,30,38,43,44
(vertical).

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Nick in first E of BELGE: 6, 11, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 26, 28, 35, 40 (horizontal); 15, 16, 21, 23, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 40, 41 (vertical).
Short bottom bar of first E of BELGE: 2, 16, 22, 25, 29, 30, 31, 44, 45, 47, 48 (horizontal); 2, 3, 6, 7, 20, 24, 25, 26, 29, 31, 49 (vertical).
Uneven bottom bar of second E of BELGE: 8, 10, 27, 32, 37, 38, 39 (horizontal); 12, 13, 14, 19, 22, 43, 45 (vertical).
None of these features: 1, 3, 5, 7, 15, 23, 24, 33, 41, 42, 43, 46, 49, 50 (horizontal); 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 18, 27, 28, 36, 42, 46, 48, 50 (vertical).

These varieties together with others applying to single clichés are illustrated in the 1952 article. They facilitate the positioning of all stamps with typo overprint, since a quick look at the overprint narrows the possibilities to at most about a dozen positions.

When the time came to overprint the Princes stamps, the plate had again been dismantled and had to be reassembled, using a different selection of the original 60 clichés once more in random order, first for the horizontal and then for the vertical stamps. With Princes typo too, therefore, the overprint helps positioning. The positions of Princes typo varieties were described in Abbé Gudenkauf's comprehensive article in Bulletin 25.

1921 surcharges. See my article in Bulletin 41. The '1921' overprint on the high values shows few variations and is therefore of little help to positioning. The surcharges on the lower values are much more helpful. The overprinting plates were made up of bloc-reports of five elements reproduced ten times to make a plate of 50. Each surcharge shows five different 'types', distinguishable by the shape and alignment of the bars. On the horizontal sheets type A appears in rows 1 and 6, B in rows 2 and 7 and so on. On the vertical sheets type A is in columns 1 and 6, B in columns 2 and 7 and so on. For the 5/40c, 10/5c and 15/50c the same varieties in the overprinting bars appear. In this plate types C, D and E are easily distinguishable, though not A from B. On the vertical 25/15c all five are distinguishable. On the 30/10c and 50/25c different variations are found and only type E (30/10c) and type A (50/25c) can be distinguished from the others.

The well-known 'missing dots' on these surcharging plates also help to indicate positions. The relevant positions and the order in which the dots went missing are as follows:

15/50c: 41 left, 48 left, 47 left.

25/15c: 12 left.

30/10c: 36 right, 39 right, 19 right, 37 right.

50/25c: 27 and 28 left, 30 left, 35 left, 10 right, 40 right.

Boma surcharges. Four values were surcharged, the 5c, 40c, 1fr and 5fr. Four different plates were used for each of the 5c and 40c and one for each of the 1fr and 5fr (though the plate overprinting the 5fr was adjusted during the course of overprinting).

The standard work on the Boma surcharges is the booklet published by the Abbé Gudenkauf in 1974. The ten overprinting plates are full of constant varieties, illustrated by the Abbé, which help with the positioning of the stamps. Typically these consist of damage to the 1, 0 and c of the surcharge in the 10c/5c and 10c/1fr, and to the 2, 5 and c of the 25c/40c and 25c/5fr. In addition the vertical spacing between the bars in the 10c/1fr and 25c/5fr varies a little from

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column to column, and in most case the column number of an individual stamp can be determined by measuring this space. With all values except the 5fr, the presence of a stamp on the edge of the sheet is indicated by the fact that the bars stop short of the edge of the stamp.

The four overprinting plates A, B, C and D of the 10c/5c can be distinguished by the horizontal distance between the bars, or (for plate A) by the carmine shade of the surcharge. In the 25c/40c the plates can be distinguished by the vertical distance between the 25 and the bars, except for A and B where this distance is the same. In the first two columns, the horizontal distance between the 5 and the c is 2½mm in plate A and 4mm in plate B. In the other three columns A and B can usually be differentiated only by positioning the underlying stamp -an example of a situation where the ability to position is a necessary aid to classifying the basic variety of a stamp.

East African overprints. This complex and fascinating overprint has been exhaustively studied in Bulletin articles, of which I would refer the reader particularly to those in Bulletins 41 and 46. I use here the nomenclature for the plates established in the latter article. I will not repeat all the details of these studies but will just summarise the ways in which the overprint can help the plater to position single copies of the stamps.

The EAA overprints fall into two categories. The first consists of the short overprints (type S) and the first group of long overprints (L1). These overprints were applied not sheet by sheet but row by row using a block of five adjoining clichés. Accordingly, any flaws in S or L1 overprints give no clues to the row number of the stamp, only its column number (or row number in the case of vertical stamps).

The flaws are of two kinds. The first are irregularities in the metal letters of the overprint which therefore show in all stamps printed from that block in the column in question. There are only a few of these as follows:

Long T in OCCUPATION: block L1(t), column 2 (or row 4 in vertical stamps).

Elongated stop after BELGE: block L1(t), column 4 (or row 2).

Dash in 2nd L of ALLEMAND: block L1(g), column 3 (or row 3).

Nick in top of G of BEZETTING: block L1(g), column 4 (or row 2).

Dot between A and L of ALLEMAND: block L1(g), column 5 (or row 1).

Nick in top of I of BEZETTING: block L1(i), column 3 (or row 3).

The blocks which do not show these flaws are grouped together as L1(o).

The second kind of flaw was caused by a foreign body getting trapped in the block as it was being used and therefore causing a spot to be printed on or between particular letters of the overprint. These flaws, which are quite numerous particularly on the 1fr value, therefore always appear in the same column, but not necessarily throughout the usage of the block. They include the well-known 'OCOUPATION' varieties on the 5c with short overprint and 1fr with long overprint. In the latter case the flaw appears twice, on one occasion in column 1 and on another in column 2. The dot flaws, whose blocks are denominated as L1(.), are illustrated in the article in Bulletin 46.

The second category of EAA overprint is known as L2. These were made quite differently, in fact in much the same way as the typographed CONGO BELGE

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overprints. A plate of 50 overprints was assembled from individual clichés cast from perhaps five or six moulds. The assembled plate therefore shows both generic and individual varieties which aid positioning. Bulletin 46 illustrates these in full, but here is a list of the generic varieties and their positions:

Nick in right end of L of BELGE: 1,11,12,14,15,34.
Dot between U and I of DUTSCH: 3,4,6,8,16,19,24,36,39.
Uneven tops of T's of BEZETTING: 5,18,32,33,35,41,42,48.
Thickened bar of L of BELGE: 7,10,29.

These positions apply to the horizontal stamps. For the vertical stamps plate L2 was not reassembled but was simply turned on its side. However the plate was dismantled and put together again for late applications of the overprint to the 5c value only (including the 5c with Malines surcharge). This reassembled plate is known as L2'. It shows the same generic varieties as L2, though fewer of them and in different positions. The generic and individual varieties of L2' are also illustrated in Bulletin 46.

Fortunately, the L1 and L2 groups are easily differentiated on single stamps. L1 overprints are (like S overprints) somewhat blotchy in appearance while L2 are clean with clear outlines. The difference is always particularly noticeable in the S of EST in the top left corner.

The overprints and surcharges which show constant varieties add greatly to the interest of plating, and the articles referred to above on the typo, 1921, Boma and EAA overprints are indispensable reference material for the Mols plater.

Other background information

In parts 2 to 11 which will follow in this and later issues of the Bulletin, covering the values 5c to 10fr, the varieties of each issue will be described and tabulated. For the benefit of those who are relatively new to the Mols I should therefore summarise here certain basic information on the plate combinations, perforations and other features which make up these varieties.

Plate combinations. As described above, the frames and centres were printed from separate plates, and for new printings sometimes new plates were made but more often the old plates were repaired or re-entered. The nomenclature of the plates used for each value is as follows. The successive frame plates are labelled I, II, III etc and the centre plates A, B, C etc. When any deliberate change was made to a plate - re-entry, retouching, lay marks etc - this is regarded as creating a new state of the plate, and successive states of the same plate are labelled I1, I2, I3 etc. Sometimes the plate changed noticeably for accidental reasons - eg, typically, the appearance of numerous corrosion dots - and where the distinction is considered worth making, these are called substates of the plate and are labelled I1a, I1b etc. The full designation of the plate combination is shown by adding frame and centre label thus: I+A1a, I+A1b and so on. The position numbers on the sheet are counted from left to right and from top to bottom, so that the top left position is no.1 and the bottom right position is no. 50.

All Mols stamps were printed in sheets of 50 except for the 25c+25c Campagnes Coloniales issues of 1925, which used the 40c centre die and were printed in sheets of 100, and the 5c, 10c, 15c and 25c booklet panes of 1915. The booklet

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stamps were printed in sheets of four panes of ten stamps per pane. Each value went through three printings designated 1st, 2nd and 3rd booklets, and the panes are designated by the Greek letters α , β , γ , and δ . Where there was re-entry or retouching during a printing this is designated by a number in brackets, so that the full description of a pane might be, for instance, 25c 2nd(2) booklet pane α . Within the pane positions are numbered again from left to right and from top to bottom.

Perforations. This is another fascinating and complicated aspect of Mols philately, described in Bulletins 39, 47 and 78 in much more detail than I can give here.

I leave on one side the Campagnes Coloniales issues of 1925 (p12½) and the 3½/3fr and 10fr stamps printed by Waterlow Bros and Layton (p14 except for some 10fr which are p12). For the remaining Mols issues many different perforating heads were used, some with regular and some with irregular spacing between the pins, some easily identifiable on single stamps and others indistinguishable from one another. Three irregular perforators were described in Bulletin 47 but one of them, the so-called p14-14½, has subsequently been dropped from the list since it cannot really be separated from the regular p14 heads. Our latest knowledge on the eight regular perforators (or groups of perforators) was tabulated by Ray Keach, with dates of usage, on page 15 of Bulletin 78.

For practical purposes in the remaining parts of this article I classify the perforations on single stamps in the following groups, recognising that (3) and (4) at least, and possibly (2), represent more than one perforating head:

- (1) Regular p12½ (actual gauge 12.5). Very scarce and found only on the 15c and 40c of 1896 and 25c of 1900.
- (2) Regular p13½ (actual gauge 13.7). Not uncommon and found in the later printings of the 1900 issues and most subsequent issues.
- (3) Regular p14 (actual gauges 13.9, 14.0 or 14.2). Covering several different perforating heads and plentiful throughout all issues.
- (4) Regular p15 (actual gauge 15.0 to 15.1). At least two heads: common from 1894 to 1900; also found, but less common than p14, from 1910 onwards.
- (5) Regular p16 (actual gauge 15.8). A distinctive head which is fairly common in some of the issues of 1895 to 1900, but is not found otherwise.
- (6) Irregular p12-14 (actual gauge: long stretches of 13.9 alternating with short stretches of 12.0, 12.8 and 13.5). A most distinctive perforator found not uncommonly on issues from 1894 to 1900, but never later. Of course, single stamps displaying only stretches of 13.9 on each side would be classified under (3).
- (7) Irregular p14½-15 (actual gauge: alternating stretches of 14.4 and 14.9). A single perforator found quite plentifully on issues from 1894 to 1900, and occasionally on early printings of the 1910 issues, but not subsequently. Where only stretches of 14.9 appear on each side of a stamp it is difficult but certainly not impossible to distinguish this perforator from (4).

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Rarely, stamps are found with compound perforations, ie with a different perforating head being used for adjacent sides. The best known examples are the 10c and 25c 3rd booklet stamps p14x15.

Shades. In the earlier issues there is found a great variety of shades, often associated with separate batches of printing. Some values of the later issues also show shade varieties, but to a lesser extent. In the case of the 1fr of 1894 the shade changes are so marked - from violet to lilac to carmine - that even in the simplest of catalogues they are listed as separate stamps. Shade variations are also found in some of the Malines surcharges.

In the listings that follow, the choices of shade changes which are shown as significant varieties are largely a matter of personal taste. Often particular shades are associated with particular plate combinations or perforations; at other times the same combination can show several different shades. Other collectors may disagree with the way I have grouped or described these shades, since we all see colours differently. All agree however that the shade variations are important and make an interesting subject for study.

Errors and curiosities

I do not deal in these articles with the errors and curiosities found in the Mols stamps, eg so-called proofs, overprints and surcharges on the wrong stamps, inverted and doubled overprints and so on. Some of them are most interesting, others of more dubious provenance. All have been amply described in the literature.

The popularity of these expensive items stems from the desire of collectors to fill their pages with greater interest and to have further material to collect once the fairly simple task of completing a one-of-a-kind collection has been completed. As I commented in the introduction, the urge to extend one's collection in this way becomes less compelling if one has embarked on sheet reconstruction, when the risk of running out of material to collect will never arise. Having said that, there is at least one collector - André Vindevoghel, who displayed some of this at the 1991 anniversary meeting - who not only collects the rarest curiosities but reconstructs sheets of them, perhaps the ultimate in philatelic ambition!

Conclusion

The contents of these articles will already be familiar to the old hands of Congo collecting, but they may find it useful to see them updated and gathered together in one place; they may also find some plate varieties described which they had not previously noticed. For newcomers to the Mols, I hope the articles will provide a comprehensive introduction to one of the most interesting of all areas of specialist philately. For those who have collected the Mols for some time, but have not embarked on plating studies, I hope that what I have written will encourage them to do so, by showing that sheet positioning is not so hard as is sometimes imagined, and is always rewarding.

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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 β 5-8, γ 1,2, 4-6 or δ 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 (χ 9,10, δ 7) and of the bottom frameline (δ 10), a short green line between the bottom frames under the lower 5 (α 1,5, χ 1), doubling of the right frame near the top (α 3,7) and a dot or burin escape by the bottom right corner (β 6,8,10, δ 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 - III1+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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V2+C

p13½(CC), p14(AA), p15(CC)

Forgeries of the surcharge are known; I have an example on V2+C p14.

1923 Elisabethville

III1+A6a	B	p14(DD)
III2+A7	A	p14(DD)
III2+A7	B	p14(DD), p15(DD)
III3+A7	A	p13½(DD), p14(DD)
III3+A7	B	p14(DD)
IV1+B1 ca	A	p14(CC)
IV1+B1 ca	B	p14(CC)
IV1+B1 ca-la	A	p13½(DD), p14(DD)
IV1+B1 ca-la	B	p13½(DD), p14(DD)
V2+C	A	p13½(DD), p14(DD)
V2+C	B	p13½(DD), p14(DD)

Forgeries abound, and given the crudeness of the handstamp with which the '0,25' surcharge was applied, it can be difficult to distinguish the forged from the genuine. The above list should therefore be treated with caution. It is based on the items in my and Ray Keach's collections where the surcharge appears identical to authenticated examples.

1916 Tombeur

V1+B2	K	p14(EE)
V1+B2	G	p14(EX)
V1+B2	H	p14(CX), p15(EX - Ruanda only)

1916 Est Africain

V2+B2	S	p14(EE)
V2+B2	L1(o)	p14(AB), p15(BC)
V2+B2	L2	p14(BA), p15(CB)

1918 Red Cross AO

V2+B3		p14(AC), p15(DE)
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1922 EAA Malines

V2+B2	L1(o)	p14(DE)
V2+B2	L2	p14(AB), p15(CE)

In total, 156 varieties of the 10c are listed above, and no doubt there are more to be discovered.

GUIDES TO POSITIONING

As with the positioning guides in part 2, 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. The guides do not list

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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, $\frac{1}{2}$ mm 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 $\frac{1}{2}$ mm 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.

PLATING MOLS STAMPS

by B.P. HUDSON

Part 4: 15 centimes

Introduction

The 15 centimes is the third lowest of the ten Mols values, and is frequently found on mail, particularly postcards. It was the rate for an internal postcard between 1886 and 1889 and between 1921 and 1924; for an overseas postcard between 1886 and 1910; for an internal letter under 15 grams between 1896 and 1921; and for a letter to Belgium under 20 grams between 1920 and 1921.

The 15c 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 photograph which appeared in the magazine 'La Belgique Coloniale' in May 1896, showing a native climbing a palm tree to harvest its fruits, with a white settler standing at the foot of the tree.

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

20	Nov. 1896	15c ochre	État Indépendant	944,000
32B	Jan. 1909	15c ochre	Congo Belge Brussels	2,000
32L	Jan. 1909	15c ochre	Congo Belge local	114,100
42	Jan. 1909	15c ochre	Congo Belge typo	74,900
42P	Mar. 1909	15c ochre	Princes unoverprinted	100
42PB	Mar. 1909	15c ochre	Princes Brussels	250



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42PT	Mar. 1909	15c ochre	Princes typo	4,650
52	June 1909	15c ochre	Unilingual	100,000
56	Jan. 1910	15c ochre	Bilingual	305,000
66	Nov. 1915	15c green	Bilingual	190,000
74	May 1918	15c+20c green	Red Cross	200,000
88	July 1921	25c/15c ochre	Recuperation surcharge (on 56)	318,650

Ruanda Urundi

11	July 1916	15c green	Ruanda Tombeur (on 66)	2,750
18	July 1916	15c green	Urundi Tombeur (on 66)	2,750
30	Nov. 1916	15c green	Est Africain (on 66)	304,500
38	May 1918	15c+20c green	A.O. on Red Cross	200,000

Plate combinations

1896	I+A1a	Original frame and centre plates
	I+A1b	Centre plate corroded
	I+A2	Centres re-entered
	I+A3	Centres partly re-entered
1909	II+A3	New frame plate
1910	III1+A4	New frame plate; centres re-entered
	III1+A5	Centres re-entered
	III1+A6	Centres re-entered
	III1+A7	Centres re-entered
	III1+A8	Centres re-entered
	III1+A9	Centres re-entered
	III2+B1	Frames retouched; new centre plate
	III2+B2	Centres re-entered
	III3+B2	Frames re-entered
	III3+B3	Centres re-entered
1915	III4+B3	Frames re-entered
	III4+B4	Centres partly re-entered
	III5+B4	Hole drilled between 41 and 42
	III6+C1	Frames retouched; new centre plate
	IV1+C1	New frame plate
	IV2+C1	Frame lay marks added
	IV3+C1	Frames partly re-entered
	V+C1	New frame plate



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V+C2	Centres re-entered
Booklets (1)	Frame and centre plates for booklet panes
Booklets (2)	Frames retouched

Of all the Mols values, the 15c shows the most numerous plate combinations, some discovered only recently, and there have been many changes from the nomenclature first introduced by Du Four:

(1) Du Four did not recognise the re-entry which created centre plate A3 (see Bulletin 67), nor those which created A5, A8 and A9 (Bulletins 32, 37, 42 and 68). The combinations now known as III1+A5 to III1+A9 were described by him as III1+A4 and III1+A5.

(2) He was not aware of the relatively scarce combinations III2+B2 (see Bulletin 42), III3+B3 (Bulletin 37) and III4+B3 (Bulletins 72 and 73).

(3) The drilling of the hole in frame plate III4, which turned it into III5, was not recognised by him as creating a new state of the plate. It is now recognised as such because it was a deliberate modification of the plate (see Bulletin 73). III6+C1 was therefore described by Du Four as III5+C.

(4) Bulletin 67 reported the discovery of EAA stamps from frame plate IV without any lay marks. The plate from which these stamps came was therefore labelled IV1, and what previously were known as IV1 and IV2 became IV2 and IV3 respectively.

(5) Du Four described centre plate C2 as a new centre plate D; Bulletin 29 reported the discovery that it was a re-entered form of centre plate C.

Identifying the plate combinations

1896. In I+A1a the centres of the stamps are clear, especially in the earlier printings, and the frames vary from yellow-ochre to ochre to brown-ochre. Most mint stamps from the 1896 issue without overprint come from this combination.

In I+A1b the centres are corroded with scattered clouds of black spots. In most positions the corrosion is heavy but there is relatively little on nos 1, 4-6, 11, 12, 21, 31, 39 and 50. I+A1b can also be recognised by the colour of the frames



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which are a distinctive orange shade of ochre which is not found in the other combinations of the 1896 stamp.

I+A2 is less common than I+A1 without the Congo Belge overprint. The centre plate re-entry which made it removed most of the corrosion dots of I+A1b and produced doubling of the roof of the hut in about half of the fifty positions in the sheet. I+A2 can be identified by this doubling where it occurs, and in all positions by the pale yellow shade of the frames, which is more yellow than the most yellow-ochre of the shades of I+A1a.

I+A3, which is found both with and without the Congo Belge overprint, is hard to distinguish from I+A2. It has the same yellow shade of the frames, and in most positions of the centre plate there are no visible differences in terms of doubling marks etc. My article in Bulletin 67 described sixteen positions where centre plate differences can be detected. Most of these are rather inconspicuous; the most visible, which led to the discovery of this plate combination, is an oblong black rolling mark made by the transfer roller which appears above the left end of the hut in positions 2 and 12 of I+A3. Clearly, A3 cannot be distinguished from A2 without positioning the stamp.

Princes printings, which are always I+A3, can be recognised by the brighter shade of the frames and by the centres which are brownish-black. Princes typo stamps can also be recognised by constant varieties in the typo overprint - see page 10 of part 1.

1910. A book could be written about this difficult (and therefore interesting) stamp which went through no less than ten different plate combinations, several of them uncommon and only discovered in recent years. Unfortunately many of them can be identified in single copies only by positioning the stamp, and even then identification can sometimes be difficult. Where a complete sheet is available, it can be allocated to the correct combination by means of Ray Keach's guide in Bulletin 68.

Stamps from III1+A4 show little doubling but in most positions have some black corrosion dots round the edges of the vignette. The early printings can be distinguished easily enough by the characteristic deep yellow frames and deep black centres, quite unlike any subsequent plate combinations. The later printings of III1+A4 are ochre-yellow with more or less yellow in them, and the centres are brownish or grey-black.

Similar shades are found in III1+A4 to III1+A9, which were produced by successive re-entries of the centre plate. All show doubling of the hut, the standing figure or the sitting natives in some or many positions. The differences between A4 and A5 are generally rather slight. In many positions of A6, which have characteristic pale yellow frames, there are fine corrosion dots at the left and right ends of the horizontal sky lines; in several positions there are little clusters of short near-vertical black lines under the climbing native. This latter feature is also found, though less clearly, in A7, where the frames tend to be a 'biscuit' shade. In A8 and A9, which in many positions are similar to one another, there is generally more doubling and the centre plate presents a more worn and corroded impression, with the heaviest corrosion along the bottom of the vignette. Stamps from A9 are a characteristic brownish shade of ochre, which is often the easiest way of distinguishing them from A8.

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With III2+B1 a new centre plate was introduced and can be recognised easily by its lack of blemishes - it is far clearer than any of the re-entered states of plate A. In addition the frame plate had been getting worn, particularly in the shading in the top right corner, and for III2 was retouched here in a few positions. The frames are still ochre or brownish yellow and the centres are brownish black.

B1 was re-entered to make B2, but whether this was a complete or partial re-entry is hard to say, because in many positions, particularly in the right half of the sheet, differences are difficult to detect. In the left half differences can usually be seen in the doubling of the roof lines of the hut, or in the curly shading lines at the bottom right of the vignette which are sometimes doubled in B2 but not in B1. Stamps from III2+B2 are the same shade as III2+B1.

III3+B2 can be identified quite easily. The centres are still clearer and less doubled than the various versions of centre plate A, though coarser than III2+B1 and III2+B2. The wear in the top right corner of the frames has disappeared, though some traces of the retouching are still visible, and the shading here is now strong and continuous. III3+B2 can also be recognised by the yellow-orange shade of the frames, quite different from the shades associated with previous combinations.

Finally a few stamps have been found with III3+B3, ie with the re-entered centres previously associated only with the first printing of the 1915 issue. They have the same shade and frame plate features as III3+B2, but the centres show additional doubling, particularly of the horizontal sky lines.

1915. The 1915 stamp went through nearly as many different plate combinations as the 1910 stamp, but fortunately they are much easier to tell apart.

The first thing to look for is the third palm frond from the left in the big tree. If it has no central spine ('palmier coupé' in the Officiel catalogue), the centre plate was made with the unretouched die and the plate combination is therefore III4+B3, III4+B4 or III5+B4. In all probability, it is one of the latter two combinations; very few examples of III4+B3 have been found, so far only from positions 10 and 45, so it is not known how many positions of the sheet were re-entered when B3 became B4. The two centre plates are differentiated by comparing doubling marks in the settler, ground lines and sky lines with a reference sheet.

The only difference between III4 and III5 is the hole drilled near the bottom margin between positions 41 and 42 to stop the spreading of the crack known as Balasse V10. Obviously, III4 and III5 can be differentiated only in these two positions.

If the third palm frond has a central spine, the next step is to look at the curved line in the 'stool' of the G in BELGE. If it is a strong, unbroken line the plate combination is III6+C1; if it is faint and broken - the result of a damaged transfer roller - the stamp comes from a later frame plate, ie IV, V or a booklet.

If the stool of the G is broken, one then looks for tiny green circles engraved in the left and right margins of the stamp, just outside the frames and about 1mm

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from the top on each side. If these circles are present the frame plate is V; otherwise it is IV or a booklet stamp.

If the frame plate is V, V+C1 and V+C2 can be distinguished by shade. V+C1 are blue-green, much the same shade as IV+C1 and first printing booklet stamps, while V+C2 are a distinctive dark yellow-green shade which is not found with any other plate combination.

IV+C1 and booklet stamps from the first printing are hard to tell apart. The former tend to have a more bluish shade of the frames and fuzzier centres - the first booklet centres tend to be hard and clear - but this is not always a reliable guide. Another indication is that if there is a faint vertical guideline by the outer right frame, the stamp is likely to be IV+C1; if there is a horizontal guideline close to the outer bottom frame, it is likely to be from the booklets. However the only certain method of identification is by positioning the stamp.

IV1+C1 was turned into IV2+C1 by the addition of frame plate lay marks in the form of short horizontal lines between 12,13,22 and 23 and between 18,19,28 and 29, and large dots between 14 and 24 and between 17 and 27. The two combinations can therefore be distinguished only in these positions where the lay marks are visibly either absent or present. IV1+C1 has so far been found mainly with the EAA overprint; only one unoverprinted example has been recognised.

IV3+C1, a scarce combination, was formed by the re-entry of the five positions in the fifth column, ie 5,15,25,35 and 45, and shows as pronounced doubling of the top right corners of the frames. Stamps from IV3+C1 appear to be a brighter blue-green shade than those from IV2+C1, but otherwise IV2 and IV3 cannot be told apart in the positions that were not re-entered.

As with the other low values, there were three printings of the booklet stamps, and they are not hard to differentiate. Stamps from the first printing are dull blue-green (much like IV+C1, as has already been noted); those from the second printing are bright blue-green (sometimes called 'peacock blue') with deep black centres; while those from the third printing are dull green with grey centres, on grey as opposed to white paper.

Between the first and the second printings the frames were retouched, which shows in all positions in the form of burin escapes in various places in the cross-hatching of the upper panel. As well as assisting the positioning of the stamps, these irregularities help to distinguish second and third printing stamps from those of the first printing.

Varieties

The following sections list the varieties of plate combination, shade, overprint and perforation known for each issue of the 15 centimes. The list covers 'normal' stamps only; errors and curiosities such as inverted overprints and imperfections 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.

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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:

br=brown dp=deep oc=ochre 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. 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

I+A1a	p12½(DD), p14(AA), p15(AA), p16(BB), p12-14(CC), p14½-15(BB)
I+A1b	p13½(CA), p14(BA), p15(CB), p12-14(EE), p14½-15(CB)
I+A2	p14(DB)
I+A3	p13½(DC), p14(DB), p14½-15(DD)
I+A3 Princes	p14(EX)

1909 Congo Belge handstamp

I+A1b	B1	p14(EE)
I+A1b	B2	p13½(DE), p14(DE), p12-14(DE)
I+A1b	B3	p14(DE)
I+A1b	B4	p14(DE)
I+A1b	B5	p14(DE)
I+A1b	B6	p13½(DE), p14½-15(DE)
I+A1b	L2	p14(DD), p14½-15(DD)
I+A1b	L3	p14(DD)
I+A1b	L4	p14(DD), p14½-15(DD)
I+A1b	L5	p13½(DD), p14(DD), p15(DD), p14½-15(DD)
I+A1b	L7	p14(DC)
I+A2/A3	L1	p13½(DD), p14(AA)
I+A2/A3	L2	p14(BB)
I+A2/A3	L3	p14(DD)
I+A2/A3	L4	p13½(DD), p14(BB)
I+A2/A3	L5	p13½(DD), p14(CC), p14½-15(DD)
I+A2/A3	L6	p14(CC)

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I+A2/A3	L7	p13½(DD), p14(CC), p14½-15(DD)
I+A2/A3	L8	p?(EE)
I+A3 Princes	B2	p14(EX)
I+A3 Princes	B5	p14(EX)

Because of the difficulty of differentiating A2 from A3, the above list does not distinguish between them. However the following have been confirmed: I+A2 p14 L1, L2, L4, L5, L6 and p13½ L5; I+A3 p14 L1, L2, L3, L4, L5, L7 and p14½-15 L7.

Forged overprints are common; I have forgeries on I+A1a p14, p15 and p12-14 and I+A1b p14.

1909 Congo Belge type

I+A1b	p14½-15(EE)
I+A2	p14(CC), p14½-15(BB)
I+A3	p14(BB), p14½-15(CC)
I+A3 Princes	p14(DD)

Some forgeries are found, one of which is dangerously accurate. I have forgeries on I+A1a p15, I+A1b p13½ and 15 and I+A2 p13½.

1909 unilingual

II+A3 oc	p14(AA)
II+A3 oc-br	p14(CC)

1910 bilingual

III1+A4 dp y	p13½(DC), p14(AA), p15(BC), p14½-15(CB)
III1+A4 oc-y	p13½(DC), p14(AA), p14½-15(DD)
III1+A5	p14(DD)
III1+A6	p14(DB), p15(EE)
III1+A7	p13½(ED), p14(CB), p15(DC)
III1+A8	p14(BA), p15(BB)
III1+A9	p14(CB)
III2+B1	p13½(DC), p14(AA), p15(CB)
III2+B2	p13½(DD), p14(DC)
III3+B2	p14(AA)
III3+B3	p14(ED)

1915 bilingual

III4+B3	p14(DD)
III4+B4	p14(BA), p15(DC)
III5+B4	p13½(DB), p14(BA), p15(DC)
III6+C1	p14(AA), p15(CB)
IV1+C1	p15(EE)
IV2+C1	p14(AA), p15(CB)
IV3+C1	p14(DD)
V+C1	p14(DB), p15(EE)
V+C2	p13½(CB), p14(AA), p15(BB)
1st booklet	p14(AA)
2nd booklet	p14(AA)

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3rd booklet p14(AA), p15(CC)

1918 Red Cross

V+C1 p14(AC), p15(BD)

1921 Recuperation

III1+A4 dp y		p14(CC), p14½-15(EE)
III1+A4 oc-y		p13½(DD), p14(DD)
III1+A5		p14(EE)
III1+A6		p14(DD)
III1+A7		p14(EE)
III1+A8		p14(AA), p15(DD)
III1+A9		p14(CC)
III2+B1		p13½(ED), p14(CB), p15(DD)
III2+B2		p13½(EE), p14(DD)
III3+B2		p14(AA), p15(EE)
III3+B3		p14(ED)

I have found the stamp with forged surcharge, on III1+A7, III1+A8 and III2+B1 (all p14).

1916 Tombeur (Ruanda and Urundi)

III4+B4	K	p14(EE)
III4+B4	G	p14(EX)
III4+B4	H	p13½(DX), p14(CX)
III5+B4	H	p13½(DX), p14(CX)

There are many forgeries.

1916 Est Africain

III6+C1	S	p14(BB)
III6+C1	L1(g)	p14(AC), p15(CD)
III6+C1	L1(t)	p14(BD)
IV1+C1	L2	p14(CD), p15(DE)
IV2+C1	L1(i)	p14(CD)
IV2+C1	L2	p14(AA), p15(CC)

1918 Red Cross AO

V+C1 p14(AC), p15(BD)

This gives a total of 150 varieties of the 15c.

GUIDES TO POSITIONING

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

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

I+A1

Distinctive plate varieties are found on both the frame and centre plates of I+A1, making many positions easy to identify, but there are also some difficult positions, especially on I+A1a before the centre plate was corroded and became I+A1b.

There are frame plate lay marks in the form of a dot between 12,13,22 and 23 and a horizontal line between 18,19,28 and 29. The top frame is clearly doubled up into the top margin over part of its length in 22,27 and 40; there is similar but less pronounced doubling in 42,44,46 and 48. One or more of the letters of INDEPENDANT show internal doubling in 8,15,22,23,27,28,43-6,48 and 50. The lower part of the right vertical frame is conspicuously doubled in 47 and 50 (Balasse V8) and slightly doubled in 5,12,18,20,25,28,35,40 and 46. The bottom horizontal frame is thickly doubled in 5 and 42-9, and the middle part of this frame is lightly doubled internally in 1,11 and 21 (in 21 this feature is hardly noticeable).

Turning to the centre plate, there is a black spot by the settler on 33 (Balasse V1). A number of positions show, to varying degrees, near-horizontal black scratches on the middle letters of CENTIMES, eg 26,34 and 36. In 4,17,19 and 38 there are traces of a vertical black line to the left of the small tree to the right of the big one. In 21 and 31 the shading lines in the bottom left corner of the vignette are slightly doubled.

I find that the most difficult positions in I+A1a are the following. In 2 there is a faint horizontal black scratch crossing the lower part of ANT. In 3 there is a black vertical line through the right 5. In 14 there is a horizontal black scratch crossing the left frame 3mm from the bottom. In 17 there is a tiny dot just to the right of the middle of the trunk of the tree to the right of the main one. In 19 the bottom frameline is thin from the left corner to the Q, then thicker. In 29 there is a near-horizontal black line under CE. In 37 there is a small black dot between the skylines two lines under the lower left frond of the leftmost tree. In 39 there is a short black vertical line crossing the shading 1mm to the left of the heads of the sitting natives.

The frame plate varieties in I+A1a are still clear in I+A1b, but many of the minor centre plate varieties are no longer detectable. However positioning of stamps from I+A1b is made easy by the black corrosion dots in most positions, which vary from position to position. There are few such dots on 1,4-6,11,12,21,31,39,42 and 50, but one or two small ones can be found on each of these positions, which anyway can be identified as A1b from the orange shade of the frames.

I+A2 and I+A3

The frame plate varieties of I+A1 are present in I+A2 and I+A3 and give a good guide to many of the positions. In addition, numerous conspicuous centre plate varieties appeared with A2. In 4,5 and 27 the climbing native has a 'hairy back' (Balasse V3). 15 shows a long vertical scratch down the right hand side (Balasse

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V2). Many other positions show scratches in various positions. The hatching of the hut roof is doubled in 9, 10, 15, 16, 18-20, 22, 25, 26, 28, 29, 31-3, 36, 38, 41-3, 45, 46 and 48, a feature not found on centre plate A1. None of the positions of A2 are difficult to identify.

Distinguishing A2 from A3 is another matter. On the majority of positions I have not been able to find any differences. Minor differences in positions 1, 2, 4, 5, 11-3, 15, 21, 31, 34, 35, 39-41 and 49 were described in my article in Bulletin 67.

II+A3

The unilingual issue is again easy to position, because of the centre plate varieties which appeared in A2 and again without change in A3. Of the frame plate varieties, it is worth mentioning the doubling of the GO of CONGO in position 13 (Balasse V9), and the doubling of the bottom left corner in 21, 31, 46 and 48. The lay marks are in the same positions as in frame plate I: a dot between 12, 13, 22 and 23 and a horizontal line between 18, 19, 28 and 29. No positions of II+A3 are classified as difficult.

III1+A4 to III1+A9

As noted above, early printings of III1+A4 can be identified by their shades, and the same is true (though with less certainty) of III1+A9. Stamps from later printings of III1+A4 can be identified by the relative lack of doubling in the settler, sitting natives and hut roof, and with practice, stamps from III1+A8 (and A9) by their worn, corroded appearance with much doubling. For the other plate combinations, identifying the combination almost always means positioning the stamp first, and a complete identification of both combination and position is hard without a good range of reference sheets or at least comprehensive notes based on a study of such sheets.

It is beyond the scope of the present work to give plating notes in such detail, but the reader might be helped by the following guidelines which concentrate on features which are common to all or most of this series of combinations, and which therefore help to identify the position if not the plate combination.

As with frame plates I and II, plate III has lay marks in the form of a dot between 12, 13, 22 and 23 and a horizontal line between 18, 19, 28 and 29. Centre plates A4 to A9 also have lay marks in these same positions, the result of Waterlow's experiment (soon abandoned) in 1910 to print the centres before the frames.

The following frame plate varieties are visible in all combinations from A4 to A9, though sometimes only barely so because of the pale colour of the frames. They divide into two groups, the first on or just above the top frameline, the second elsewhere in the stamp. In 1, 39 and 50 there is a small dot just NE of the top right corner. In 9 there is a dot resting on the top frame just in from that corner. In 11 the lower top frame is extended horizontally to the right. In 19 there is a dot between the top framelines over the left curl of the 'curlicue' above ON. In 24 the top right corner is doubled. In 28 there are two dots, one above the other, in the top margin over the G of GO, and a third dot close to the top frameline over the right curlicue. In 35 there are two dots close together, the second above and to the right of the first, in the top margin 2mm from the right

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corner. In 36 there are two dots just above the top frame, and 1½mm apart, above the C. In 37 there is a dot just to the left of the top left corner.

Frame plate varieties elsewhere in the stamp, and common to III1+A4 to III1+A9, are as follows. 1: dot just to left of left frame 1mm below upper left 'T-junction'. 4: dot to left of climbing native. 10: spot above curved frame just over G of LGI. 18: bottom frame thickened under BEL. 27: small dot above 'bubble' under first E of BELGE. 32: faint diagonal line in upper left T-junction. 33: dot in top of S of GIS. 38: lower left vertical frameline weak in places. 40: short vertical line between framelines in bottom left corner. 41: diagonal line resting against left vertical frameline, 4½mm from bottom. 43: dot in left 1. 47: ring between two trees on right, and dots in bottom margin under C, O and NG.

I have listed a number of frame plate varieties, but in fact clearer guides to positioning are provided by the centre plate, because of its darker colour and the extensive corrosion, doubling or scratches which are present in most locations of all plate combinations. Firm identification of a stamp from this issue is usually achieved by matching up the pattern of corrosion dots with a position on the reference sheet. Most of the centre plate varieties vary from A4 to A9, but this is not true of all of them.

The following Balasse centre plate varieties are present in III1+A4. V2: long near-vertical black scratch to right of palm (15). V3: 'hairy back' on climbing native (4,5,27). V4: parallel black diagonal lines over rightmost tree (10,18). V2 is visible in A5 and A6 but not in later combinations. V3 disappeared after A4. V4 is visible throughout the series, but only just so in A8 and A9.

Because of the amount of centre plate doubling and corrosion, I do not classify any of the positions of III1+A4 to A9 as difficult, since once the position is found it is usually not hard to confirm it, though finding the position can be far from easy with so many combinations to consider.

III2+B1 and III2+B2

Easily recognisable by the clear centres, it is not difficult to identify stamps from these combinations or to find the sheet position. To differentiate B1 from B2 it is however necessary to position the stamps and compare the centres carefully with a reference sheet, looking for small differences in doubling particularly in the hut roof and in the wavy lines at the bottom of the vignette.

Frame lay marks are the same as before: a dot between 12,13,22 and 23, and a horizontal line between 18,19, 28 and 29. The cross-hatching in the top right corner is visibly worn throughout the sheet and is retouched in positions 21,27-9 and 50 (Balasse V11). Slight retouching is also detectable in 1,2 and 7, and (in the top left corner) in 3. The hatching is doubled, sometimes only slightly, in 11,12,21 and 32. The top right vertical frames are doubled in 11 and 21. A number of frame plate varieties survive from III1, such as the small dot off the top right corner in 1,39 and 50.

It is the centre plate however which provides the best guide to position. There is little doubling, but scratch marks and a few corrosion dots appear in a number of positions, particularly at the top or bottom of the vignettes. A useful recurrent mark is a horizontal guideline, typically 2mm long, which appears a little above the left or right 15, or both. It appears on the left in 16,22,24,27,41

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and 45; on the right in 1, 3, 8, 11, 18, 23, 31, 39; and on both left and right in 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12-5, 17, 19, 26 and 28.

Apart from the difficulty of distinguishing B1 from B2, no positions in these combinations are classified as difficult.

III3+B2 and III3+B3

These combinations with their distinctive yellow-orange frames are again easy to position. The frame lay marks are in the same location as before. The weakness of the cross-hatching in the upper right corner has been corrected by re-entry throughout the sheet, but the retouching (V11) is still visible in 29. Another Balasse variety, the famous 'lézarde' or crack crossing the lower right vertical frame (V10), makes its appearance in position 41 of III3+B2.

Other frame plate varieties to note are the doubling of the upper left vertical frames in 11, 15, 19 and 35, and the doubling to the left of the upper left corner in 4, 12, 14 and 21. The small dot off the upper right corner is still visible in 1, 39 and 50.

The best guide to position comes once again from the centre plate. In most positions there is a cluster of small black dots above the tip of the central frond of the big tree - sometimes only two or three, sometimes many more. These could have been made by the engraving tool, or by the transfer roller being dropped onto the plate during re-entry; whatever the explanation, the pattern of dots varies from location to location and provides an easy means of positioning.

Once the position of a stamp is found, it is not hard to determine whether the centre is B2 or B3, provided a reference sheet of B2 is available. B2 centres, although coarser than B1, are generally clear and free of doubling. B3 are thickened and often doubled, particularly in the shading of the sky. Almost all 1910 and 1921 stamps with III3 are B2 and the plater who finds III3+B3 has discovered a significant rarity.

III4+B3 to III5+B4

The 'palmier coupé' issue of 1915 (which incidentally is much commoner than its enhanced catalogue price suggests) presents no great difficulty to the plater. Whereas in previous plate combinations more assistance is given by the centre plate than by the frame plate, with III4 onwards the reverse is true, due partly to the change of colour to green, but also to the presence of retouching and other varieties and (from IV onwards) to the vertical and horizontal guidelines which do not seem to have been used for frame plates I to III.

In III4 and III5 frame lay marks are in the same positions as before: a dot between 12, 13, 22 and 23, and a horizontal line between 18, 19, 28 and 29. Most positions can be identified from the frame plate by looking at the upper left corner, the mid-point of the left frame by the 15, the lower left corner and the upper right corner. The upper left corner is partly doubled by re-entry or retouching in 4, 7, 11, 12, 14, 15, 19, 21, 29, 30, 33, 34, 35, 40, 43, 45, 47, 48 and 50, with the characteristics of the doubling different in each location. The mid-point of the left vertical frame shows thickening in many positions, but with a gap between the thickened portion and the outer edge of the cartouche round CENTIMES in 6, 22, 23, 33 and 45. The outer bottom left vertical frame is doubled or thickened in

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1, 4, 16, 24-7, 29, 30, 41, 44 and 45; in 11, 21 and 31 the doubling is found here on the inner frame. The top right corner is thickened or doubled in 1, 11, 20, 21, 26, 29, 31, 32, 39, 40, 46, 49 and 50. Once again a small dot appears off the upper right corner in 1, 39 and 50. A number of positions show green dots in one or more of the letters of BELGISCH CONGO.

With one important exception, there are few centre plate varieties. The exception is Balasse V5, the horizontal doubling of the settler and the sitting natives, which is found on centre plate B4 in 20 and 44. Slight doubling of the settler alone is found in 3, 10, 15, 22, 30, 34, 35, 45, 49 and 50.

Little is known about the differences between B3 and B4, since as noted above no complete sheets are known of either III3+B3 (the 1910 stamp) or III4+B3 (the 1915 stamp), and only few single copies. So far only two positions of III4+B3 - 10 and 45 - have been confirmed; both lack the doubling of the settler which is found on III4+B4.

As already noted, the only difference between III4 and III5 is the drilling of the hole between 41 and 42 to stop the spreading of the crack known as Balasse V10.

The difficult positions in these plate combinations are the following. In 36 there is a green dot in the upper right margin 1mm outside the frame and 2mm below the top corner, and black dots on the first E of BELGE; in addition, the inner frameline above the C of the left CENTIMES slightly overlaps the cartouche surrounding CENTIMES. In 37 there is a slight trace of doubling in the upper left vertical frameline, and some black dots on the right ME. 38 also shows slight doubling in the upper left frameline, and a faint black vertical line in the upper left margin.

III6+C1

Although III5 was re-entered to make III6, in practice there are few differences between the two, and the frame plate varieties noted above for III4 and III5 survive and are the main guide for positioning stamps from III6. Obviously the centre plate varieties of III4+B4 are no longer present, and C1 presents a clean plate with few flaws. The main centre plate variety worth mentioning is the short vertical guideline which appears in many positions above the top of the big tree, usually on top of the first E of BELGE.

The difficult positions in III6+C1 are again 36 to 38. As well as the frame plate varieties noted above, 36 shows a short near-vertical black scratch in the upper right margin. 37 shows slight doubling of the right frame just below the central cartouche - one of the signs of the re-entry that produced III6. 38 shows a faint horizontal black line in the upper left margin, level with the T-junction.

IV1+C1 to IV3+C1

Generally these are more difficult plate combinations to position, with few centre plate flaws and fewer frame varieties than III4 and III5. Fortunately, however, there are horizontal and vertical guidelines on the frame plate which appear not to have been used in earlier combinations of the 15c, and which are of great assistance to the plater.

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There are no lay marks on IV1. On IV2 and IV3 they take the form of horizontal lines between 12,13,22 and 23 and between 18,19,28 and 29, and dots between 14 and 24 and between 17 and 27. The only difference between IV2 and IV3 is that in the latter, there is conspicuous doubling of the right frames near the top in 5,15,25,35 and 45.

The first step in positioning stamps from IV+C1 is to look at the right framelines. If there are stretches of vertical guideline between these framelines, especially in the lower half or on either side of the middle, the position is 2,5,11,12,15,16,21,23,25,29,31,32,39 or 49. If the lower of the top two framelines is extended to the right in the top right corner, it is 3,4,6,13,22,33 or 44-6. In 27 and 50 there is downward doubling of this frameline into the cross-hatching, for a length of about 7mm from the right end. In 9,23-7,42-4,46,48 and 49 a faint horizontal guideline is visible just over the top left corner. In 27,37 and 47 there is a green dot in the bottom margin under the left leg of the N of CONGO.

Several positions are difficult to identify. In 10 there is green dot in the top margin 3mm from the right corner, but this dot is often off the edge of the stamp, in which case the only indicators are two tiny green dots at 1 o'clock and 3 o'clock in the white circle round the left 15. 14 has a green dot in the left margin a little above the level of the head of the climbing native. 20 has a black dot just under the lower right corner. 38 has a small faint green dash in the left margin level with the base of the tree, and a cluster of black dots usually a little to the right of the left 5.

V+C1

V+C1 is another difficult combination where, but for the presence of guidelines, the plater's task would be virtually impossible.

Frame plate lay marks are in the same positions as in IV: horizontal lines between 12,13,22 and 23 and between 18,19,28 and 29, and dots between 14 and 24 and between 17 and 27. The lower top frame is extended to the right in the top right corner, in the same way as in a number of positions of IV+C1: here the positions are 6,22 and 49, and (with a only a slight extension) 38 and 41. Apart from the guidelines, there are few other important frame plate varieties; minor varieties consist mainly of small dots in the left or right margins.

There is a vertical guideline in the lower part of the right margin, just outside the frameline, in 1-4,13,18,19,23-5,28,29,31,33-5,39,45 and 49. In the ninth column the space between the guideline and the right margin is rather wider than in the other positions. In 1,4,11,13,14,18,25,35 and 39 the guideline also appears in the upper part of the right margin, running up to the dot off the upper right frame. The guideline stops dead at the bottom frameline in 13,23,31 and 33; in the other positions it extends beyond it.

There is a guideline in line with the right frame, and appearing above it, in 2,3,5,7,12,15,21,26,36,48 and 50; a short guideline appears in the same position above the top right corner, but right of the line of the frame, in 4,13,14,18,25,34,35 and 39. Short sections of both horizontal and vertical guideline appear off the upper right corner, forming an 'L' shape, in 7,15,21,25 and 26. There is a horizontal guideline between the framelines in the top left corner in 1(faintly),8,22,23,32 and 42. A similar line appears just above the top left corner in 10 and

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46 and above the top right corner in 3, 18 and 26. No guidelines are visible at all in 6, 9, 11, 17, 20, 27, 30, 37-8, 40-1, 43-4 and 47.

The exact position of a stamp can be determined by comparing the guidelines, which vary slightly in their length and distance from the frameline, with a reference sheet. In many positions, a short stretch of guideline is visible crossing the end of the cartouche containing CENTIEMEN; its lateral displacement is also a guide to position.

There are no major centre plate varieties on V+C1 worth mentioning. I find that the most difficult positions in this combination are 20, 27 and 37. 20 has a small green mark in the left of the H of BELGISCH, close to the bar. 27 has a dot in the left upright of the H. 37 has a faint dot in the right margin level with the centre of the 'star', and a slight overhang of the upper right corner.

V+C2

After V+C1, V+C2 comes as something of a relief for two reasons. Almost all positions have a few green corrosion dots on the design, mostly in the top or bottom tablets, and the re-entered centre place shows doubling in nearly half the positions. At the same time the guidelines mentioned above are still visible. These features make positioning straightforward.

I will not list all the frame plate corrosion dots, but the places to look for them are in the letters of CONGO BELGE and (to a lesser extent) of BELGISCH CONGO. On the centre plate, the trunks of the right trees are doubled in 6, 16, 25 and 47 (Balasse V6), while the settlers and sitting natives, and the tree trunks behind them, are doubled in 1-3, 5, 12, 13, 22-4, 26, 32, 33 and 42-4 (Balasse V7). The spine of the third frond from the left in the big tree is doubled in 47 and 48.

No position is classified as difficult.

Booklet stamps

Although sometimes difficult to distinguish from IV+C1, stamps from the first printing of the booklets are not hard to position. Most positions show noticeable varieties. There is a green guide dot just above the top left corner in γ 2, 3 and 4 and δ 2, 3 and 4. There are similar but smaller dots under the bottom left corner in α 8 and 9 and β 8. There is a horizontal guideline between the bottom framelines on the left in α 1, 2, β 6, 9, γ 1, 5 and δ 1, 2 and 5, and a guideline just under the bottom frameline in γ 7 and δ 6. Many positions show guideline extensions, both horizontal and vertical, in line with the framelines in this corner. Many positions also show horizontal and vertical guidelines at the top left corner. There are few significant centre plate varieties in the booklet stamps.

Second and third booklet stamps are easy to position because as well as the varieties described for the first booklets, there are numerous burin retouches which are visible in the cross-hatching of the upper panel, and which vary from location to location. Every position has them. In α 2, 4, β 6, 8, γ 4, 5, 9, and 10 the retouches include a line crossing the left end of the curlicue above LG. In α 5 and δ 4 a line crosses the top right corner of the L, in α 10 and γ 10 the upper left curve of the C, in β 4 the top of the C, in β 5 the lower left of the C, in γ 4 the right end of the right curlicue, and in δ 6 the upper part of the C. There are small green

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corrosion dots around the top framelines in all positions of pane β , particularly noticeable in $\beta 1$ to 3.

None of the booklet stamp positions are classified as difficult.

PLATING MOLS STAMPS

by B.P. HUDSON

Part 5: 25 centimes

Introduction

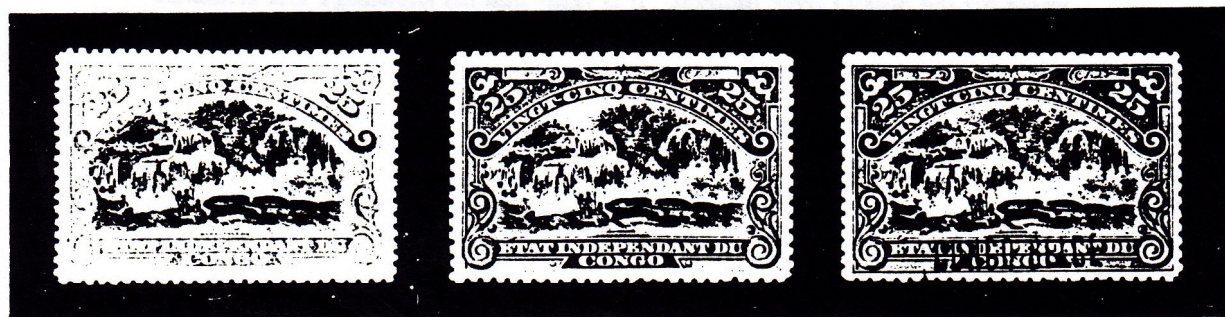
Parts 1 to 4 of this series were issued with Bulletin 85 and 87, part 1 providing a general introduction and parts 2 to 4 covering the 5, 10 and 15 centimes. Part 5 and future parts should be read in conjunction with part 1.

The 25 centimes, the fourth lowest of the ten Mols values, is seldom found on postcards but is common on letters. From 1886 to 1896 and from 1921 to 1924 25 centimes was the postal rate for letters under 15 or 20 grams sent internally in the Congo; from 1910 to March 1920 and from March 1921 to 1924 it was the lowest rate for letters sent to Belgium; and from 1910 to 1921 it was the lowest rate for letters sent to other overseas countries.

As with the other Mols values issued in 1894, the design of the 25 centimes was based on one of the paintings in the diorama exhibited by the artists Robert Mols and Piet Van Engelen at the 1894 Anvers Exhibition, which in turn was based on a photograph taken by Lieutenant Wyns. It shows the waterfalls at Inkissi which are on the route between Matadi and Stanley-Pool and are of imposing appearance, falling 30 metres into a narrow gorge. The word 'Inkissi' means evil spirit, and derived from the number of natives who perished by falling into the torrent. As a result, few local natives would dare to approach the falls; the three natives on the rocks in the foreground did not appear in the original photograph and were added by the artists.

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.



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Belgian Congo

21	Nov. 1894	25c orange	État Indépendant	150,000
22	May 1900	25c blue	État Indépendant	382,000
33B	Jan. 1909	25c blue	Congo Belge Brussels	1,700
33L	Jan. 1909	25c blue	Congo Belge local	65,400
43	Jan. 1909	25c blue	Congo Belge typo	100,900
43P	Mar. 1909	25c blue	Princes unoverprinted	100
43PB	Mar. 1909	25c blue	Princes Brussels	250
43PT	Mar. 1909	25c blue	Princes typo	4,650
57	Jan. 1910	25c blue	Bilingual	290,000
67	Nov. 1915	25c blue	Bilingual with 'vingt cinq'	160,000
75	May 1918	25c+25c blue	Red Cross	150,000
90	July 1921	50c/25c blue	Recuperation surcharge (on 57)	392,950
99	Jan. 1922	50c/25c blue	Malines surcharge (on 67)	145,350

Ruanda Urundi

12	July 1916	25c blue	Ruanda Tombeur (on 67)	2,750
19	July 1916	25c blue	Urundi Tombeur (on 67)	2,750
31	Nov. 1916	25c blue	Est Africain (on 67)	295,000
39	May 1918	25c+25c blue	A.O. on Red Cross	150,000
49	Jan. 1922	50c/25c blue	Malines on Est Africain (on 67)	94,150

Plate combinations

1894	II+A1	Original frame and centre plates
1900	I2+A2	Frame lay marks added; centres re-entered
	I3+A2	Frames retouched
1910	III+A3	New frame plate; centres re-entered
	III+A4	Centres re-entered
	II2+A4	Frames retouched
	II3+B	Frames re-entered; new centre plate
	II4+B	Frame lay marks added
1915	III1+B	New frame plate
	III1+Ca	New centre plate; sky lines clear
	III2+Ca	Frame lay marks added
	III2+Cb	Sky lines corroded
	III2+D	New centre plate
	III3+D	Extra frame lay marks added
	Booklets (1)	Frame and centre plates for booklet panes
	Booklets (2)	Frames retouched

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



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(1) He was unaware of the addition of lay marks which created frame plate II4 (see Bulletin 68).

(2) He was unaware of the existence of III1+C, the 1915 frame plate without lay marks (see Bulletin 23).

Identifying the plate combinations

1900. I3+A2 is easy to distinguish from I2+A2 by the heavy retouching of the top frameline. In I2+A2 this line is thin and weak; in I3+A2 it is strong and thick. Stamps from I3+A2 without the CONGO BELGE overprint are very rare.

Princes printings, which are I3+A2, 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. Princes typo stamps can also be recognised by constant varieties in the typo overprint - see page 10 of part 1.

1910. The first four plate combinations of the 1910 issue are easy to tell apart. In III1+A3 there is little doubling in the centres and the frames are a distinctive pale green-blue. In III1+A4 the centres show extensive doubling, particularly of the trees, the natives and the rocks in the waterfall; the frames are blue, sometimes slightly greenish blue; and the horizontal shading in the bottom panel is weak. In II2+A4 this shading is retouched by hand, showing many irregularities, and the frames are dark blue, usually (but not always) darker than the shade of III1+A4. In II3+B the frames are deep blue, with the bottom panel lines stronger though still showing some signs of retouching; the new centre plate is strong, clear and unblemished.

II4+B can be differentiated from II3+B only in the positions where the new frame plate lay marks - a vertical line between 8,9,13 and 14, and a dot between 38,39,43 and 44 - are visibly either absent or present.

1915. The first plate combination, III1+B, can be recognised by the use of the unretouched die for the centre plate. It shows a white space between the large rock in the foreground third from the right and the dotted shading in the lower part of the waterfall. In centre plates C and D and in the booklet stamps this space is filled with further dots.

III1+Ca became III2+Ca through the addition of lay marks in the form of vertical lines between 17 and 18 and between 32 and 33, and dots between 17 and 18 and between 27 and 28. III1 and III2 cannot be told apart in other positions of the sheet. III2+Cb is differentiated from III2+Ca by the corrosion of the horizontal lines in the sky, which become a series of dots and dashes instead of



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straight lines. A new centre plate was introduced with III2+D, which in turn became III3+D with the addition of further lay marks in the form of a vertical line between 14, 15, 19 and 20, and a dot between 39, 40, 44 and 45. III3+D appears to be found only with the Malines surcharge.

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 blue, sometimes with a greenish tinge, with brownish-black centres. Those from the second printing are deep blue with deep black centres. Those from the third printing are dull blue with grey centres and are on grey rather than white paper. During the second printing the frames were retouched and show little retouch marks in various places. From the start of the second printing onwards there is dense, fine corrosion in all centre plate positions of panes β and δ but not in panes α and γ .

Unless the stamp is positioned, distinguishing III+Ca, III+D and first booklet stamps can be difficult. In III+D the frames give a blurred impression, have a greenish tinge, often show faint blue corrosion dots round their edges, and show wear in the top right horizontal panel; while the centres are light in shade and are relatively unblemished. If there is a vertical guideline just outside the lower vertical frameline, the combination is III+C or III+D. If the bottom frameline is partly thickened or doubled, the stamp is a booklet stamp.

Varieties

The following sections list the varieties of plate combination, shade, overprint and perforation known for each issue of the 25 centimes. The list covers 'normal' stamps only; errors and curiosities such as inverted overprints and imperforations 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:

bi=bistre ca=carmine or=orange 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



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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

1894 25c orange

I1+A1 or	p14(DD), p15(BB), p12-14(DD), p14½-15(CC)
I1+A1 y-or	p14(CB), p15(AA), p12-14(DD), p14½-15(CC)
I1+A1 or-bi	p14(DD), p15(BB), p12-14(DD), p14½-15(CC)

The classification of shades is, of course, highly subjective.

1900 25c blue

I2+A2	p12½(DD), p13½(BA), p14(CB), p15(AA), p14½-15(AA)
I3+A2	p14(EE)
I3+A2 Princes	p14(EX)

1909 Congo Belge handstamp

I2+A2	B1	p14½-15(EE)
I2+A2	B2	p15(DE), p14½-15(DE)
I2+A2	B3	p14½-15(EE)
I2+A2	B4	p15(DE), p14½-15(DE)
I2+A2	B5	p14½-15(DE)
I2+A2	B6	p13½(EE), p14½-15(EE)
I2+A2	L1	p13½(CC), p14(DD), p14½-15(BB)
I2+A2	L2	p13½(CC), p14½-15(CC)
I2+A2	L3	p13½(DD), p14½-15(DD)
I2+A2	L4	p13½(DD), p14(DD), p15(DD), p14½-15(DD)
I2+A2	L5	p13½(DD), p14(DD), p15(CC), p14½-15(CC)



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I2+A2	L6	p13½(DD), p14(DD), p14½-15(DD)
I2+A2	L7	p14(DD), p15(DD), p14½-15(DD)
I3+A2	L1	p14(BB)
I3+A2	L2	p14(CC)
I3+A2	L3	p14(DD)
I3+A2	L4	p14(CC)
I3+A2	L5	p14(CC)
I3+A2	L6	p14(CC)
I3+A2	L8	p14(EE)
I3+A2 Princes	B2	p14(EX)
I3+A2 Princes	B5	p14(EX)

Other combinations may well exist. Forged overprints are found; I have one on I2+A2 p14½-15.

1909 Congo Belge typo

I2+A2	p13½(BB), p14½-15(CD)
I3+A2	p14(BA), p14½-15(CA)
I3+A2 Princes	p14(DD)

Some forgeries are found, one of which is dangerously accurate. I have a forgery on I2+A2 p14½-15.

1910 bilingual

II1+A3	p13½(CB), p14(AA), p15(DD), p14½-15(BA)
II1+A4	p13½(DB), p14(AA), p15(CB)
II2+A4	p13½(DC), p14(BA)
II3+B	p14(BB)
II4+B	p14(DD)

1915 bilingual

III1+B	p13½(DD), p14(AA), p15(DC)
III1+Ca	p14(CB)
III2+Ca	p13½(DD), p14(BA), p15(DC)
III2+Cb	p14(BA), p15(DB)
III2+D	p13½(DD), p14(CB), p15(DD)
1st booklet	p14(AA)
2nd(1) booklet	p14(BA)
2nd(2) booklet	p14(DC), p15(EE)
3rd booklet	p14(AA), p15(DD), p14x15(DD)

1918 Red Cross

III2+D	p14(AC), p15(CD)
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1921 Recuperation

III1+A3	p14(DX)
III1+A4	p13½(DD), p14(AA), p15(DB)
II2+A4	p13½(CC), p14(BB)
II3+B	p14(AA)

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II4+B p14(DD)

1922 Malines

III1+B	r	p14(ED)
III1+B	ca	p14(ED)
III2+Ca	r	p14(DC)
III2+Ca	ca	p14(CB), p15(DD)
III2+Cb	r	p14(DD), p15(EE)
III2+Cb	ca	p14(CC)
III2+D	r	p14(DD)
III2+D	ca	p13½(CC), p14(AA), p15(DD)
III3+D	ca	p13½(DD), p14(BB)

Forgeries of the surcharge are known; I have examples on 1st and 3rd booklet stamps, p14.

1916 Tombeur (Ruanda, Urundi)

III1+B	K	p14(EE)
III1+B	G	p14(EX)
III1+B	H	p14(CX), p15(DX-Ruanda only)

1916 Est Africain

III1+B	S	p14(DD)
III1+B	L1(g)	p14(BC)
III1+B	L1(t)	p14(BD), p15(DE)
III1+B	L1(o)	p14(AB), p15(CD)
III1+Ca	L2	p14(CA), p15(DD)

1918 Red Cross AO

III2+D p14(AC), p15(CD)

1922 EAA Malines

III1+B	L1(g)	r	p14(EE)
III1+B	L1(t)	r	p14(DD)
III1+B	L1(t)	ca	p14(AB)
III1+B	L1(o)	r	p14(EE)
III1+B	L1(o)	ca	p14(ED)
III1+Ca	L1(o)	ca	p14(DD)
III1+Ca	L1(.)	ca	p14(DD)
III1+Ca	L2	r	p14(AC), p15(EE)
III1+Ca	L2	ca	p14(BB), p15(DD)

In total, 145 varieties of the 25c are listed above.

GUIDES TO POSITIONING

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

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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, and also describe the more difficult positions in each sheet where the plater is most likely to experience problems.

I1+A1 to I3+A2

I1+A1 has no lay marks; I2+A2 and I3+A2 have frame plate lay marks in the form of a dot between 8,9,13 and 14 and a vertical line between 38,39,43 and 44.

Stamps from the blue 1900 issue are generally quite easy to position because of the number of frame plate varieties, particularly the doubling round the left scroll in many positions, and the sections of horizontal guideline close to the top frameline. These varieties are also present on the 1894 issue, but the pale orange colour of the frames makes it much less easy to see them. They should be looked for in the 1894 stamps as carefully as possible, since even the slightest view of them is a great help to positioning, but in many cases the identification of the orange stamps depends on centre plate flaws.

These fall into two categories: horizontal and vertical guidelines crossing the edge of the vignette, and slanting scratches, typically 1 to 2mm long, which appear in various places in most positions and were presumably caused by cleaning. The guidelines are not of much assistance since they often appear in much the same place, eg the vertical guideline which in many positions passes through the trunk of one of the trees on the left. The scratches, however, vary from position to position and are a good guide. I will not list them all here, but one group is worth mentioning, namely the near-horizontal scratches which appear on CINQ CENT in the top centre of the stamps. On stamps which show doubling of the left scroll (see below), these scratches appear on 10,27,29,30 and 34; on stamps where the left scroll is not doubled, they appear on 11,20,26,28,32,33,35,37,39,40,42 and 49.

In some of the later printings of I1+A1 the centre plate scratches are faint and these stamps can be truly difficult to position, especially if the frames are pale.

The most prominent frame plate varieties are however visible on both orange and blue stamps. There is a parasitic entry in the form of a curved line crossing the left scroll in 18,23 and 43; 23, the most marked, is Balasse V10. The left scroll and frameline are prominently doubled in 14,24,27,29,34,44 and 47. All these are Balasse V7 except for 29, Balasse V8, where the right edge of the upper left rectangle is also doubled, and 34, Balasse V9, where the left edge of this rectangle is doubled. There is doubling (sometimes slight) of the left scroll only in 2,5,8,10,15,18,19,22,30,43,46 and 50. The guideline over the top frame is dotted over its whole length in 33 (Balasse V6); there are coloured scratches in the VI and left 25 in 45 (Balasse V11); and there is a big spot between the centre left frames in 46 (Balasse V12).

No.2 is described by Balasse as having the top frameline doubled and is denominated as V5. Several other positions, however, show the same feature. Indeed most positions have sections of guidelines at various heights above the top frameline, and if a reference sheet is available these guidelines are a great help to positioning. The blue stamps (and to a lesser extent the orange ones) also often show short horizontal coloured scratches in the top or bottom margins.

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In the latest printings of I2+A2 the top and bottom framelines became worn and many of the varieties in these parts of the stamps disappeared, including the guidelines. In some cases this can make them hard to position, and it is necessary to look for flaws in the body of the design. Two groups of flaws are helpful here. On the frame plate, there is dot in the T of VINGT (in different positions) in 1, 3, 8, 9, 14, 21-4, 27, 31, 32, 34, 42-4 and 48. On the centre plate, the short sky dashes under the G of VINGT are doubled in 1, 6, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 19, 22, 24, 29, 41, 43 and 48. Centre plate A2 has few other varieties.

In I3+A2 the main frame plate varieties of I2 are still visible, but not many of the minor varieties, particularly those around the top and bottom framelines. However the heavy retouching of the top and bottom framelines led to many irregularities - short burin escapes etc - which make positioning straightforward if a reference sheet is available.

II1+A3 to II2+A4

These plate combinations have both frame and centre plate lay marks. On the frame plate there is a vertical line between 7, 8, 12 and 13 and a dot between 37, 38, 42 and 43; on the centre plate there is a dot between 8, 9, 13 and 14 and a vertical line between 43 and 44.

Numerous varieties make stamps from these issues easy to position. The most helpful groups of varieties are the following. The NW corner is doubled up in 23, 25 and 37 and doubled to the left in 42. Doubling is visible between the left framelines or in the left CENTIMES in 1, 7, 15, 19, 21 and 46. There is vertical doubling of the bottom hatching on the right in 22-5, 27 and (to a lesser extent) 28. There is a horizontal guideline between the top framelines in 11-3, 17, 27, 28, 31-5, 38-40 and 46. There is a vertical guideline outside the left frameline at the bottom in 4, 8-10, 15, 25, 29, 30 and 35.

Centre plate A3 is relatively free of doubling but shows corrosion dots and sections of horizontal line at the bottom of the vignette in most positions. Centre plate A4, by contrast, is heavily doubled. The heads of the natives are doubled upwards in 2, 5, 24 and 46 (Balasse V1); to the left in 18 (V2); diagonally upwards to the left in 17, 30 and 45 (V3); diagonally upwards to the right in 49 (also V3); and a long distance to the right and a little up in 48 (V4). The small rock on the left bank at the top of the waterfall is thickened or doubled to different degrees in all positions and this one feature provides a good confirmation of a stamp's location in the sheet.

II2+A4 includes the centre plate varieties of II1+A4, and in addition shows irregular retouching of the horizontal bottom hatching in all positions. The horizontal hatching to the left of the upper right rectangle, and the hatching in the rectangle itself, are retouched in most positions; the most conspicuous examples of the former are 1 and 20 (Balasse V13) and of the latter are 24 and 44 (Balasse V14).

None of the sheet positions in II1+A3, II1+A4 or II2+A4 present any real difficulty for the plater.

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II3+B and II4+B

II3+B is also an easy combination. The centre plate lay marks have disappeared but there are frame plate marks in the same places as before: a vertical line between 7,8,12 and 13 and a dot between 37,38,42 and 43.

The new centre plate is clean and shows few flaws. In the re-entered frame plate the lines of hatching are stronger and clearer but still show numerous signs of the retouching found in II2. V13 and 14 are still visible, and in addition Balasse classifies 39 as V15 (retouching of bottom hatching - also present in many other positions) and 26 as V16 (heavy doubling of the left side of the upper right rectangle, also present to a lesser extent in 21).

The best way to position stamps from this combination is to look for irregularities in the bottom hatching and match them up with a reference sheet. But there are also many varieties in other parts of the frames. For instance, the NW corner is doubled up in 23,25,26 and 37 and doubled to the left in 42. There is one or more dots in various places close to this corner in 4,10,17,20,35,36,40,41 and 45. The bottom frameline is partly doubled in 2,22-4,26,27 and 45. No position in II3+B is classified as difficult.

II4+B was formed by the addition of a vertical line between 8,9,13 and 14 and a dot between 38,39,43 and 44, but is otherwise indistinguishable from II3+B.

III1+B to III3+D

These plate combinations cover a large number of issues from 1915 to the Malines surcharge of 1922. Stamps from these issues are mostly positioned by reference to frame plate rather than centre plate varieties. The frame plate varieties are numerous, though not all of them survived the long period during which the plate was in use.

III1 has no lay marks. III2 has vertical lines between 17 and 18 and between 32 and 33, and dots between 17 and 18 and between 27 and 28. III3, known only with the Malines surcharge, has in addition a vertical line between 14,15,19 and 20 and a dot between 39,40,44 and 45.

In examining a stamp from frame plate III the first place to look is the top right corner. This is doubled upwards in 1-3 and 6-9. 1 has two dots over the top left corner; 2 a slanting scratch over that corner; 3 a faint scratch in the top margin over INGT; 6 a dot in the bottom right M; 7 a dot in the top right 'T-junction'; 8 several dots off the top left corner; and 9 (where the doubling of the top right corner is very slight) a short diagonal dash just in the left margin level with the T of CENTIMES.

The next place to look is the bottom left vertical frameline. If there is a vertical guideline just outside it, the position is 13,14,17-9,20,24,27,29,35-7,41,42,44-6 or 49. In 13,27,41 and 44-6 the space between the guideline and the frameline is relatively wide. These guidelines show clearly in III+B; a few are rather faint in III+C; in III+D, unfortunately, most have disappeared.

Other prominent frame varieties are as follows. The top left corner is doubled in 16,30 and 32. 10 has a " mark between the framelines in the bottom left corner. 11 has a short vertical line outside the top left corner. 15 has a horizontal line

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on the M of the left CENTIMES (except in III1+B). 17 has a heavy mark on the left foot of the M of the left CENTIMES. 22 has a cluster of dots on the central knob of the left scroll (except in III1+B). 26 has two horizontal marks in the bottom margin under the E of BELGISCH. 27 and 28 have a spot in the right foot of the N of CINQ (not visible, or barely visible, in III+D). 29 has a short dash under the left foot of the N of the lower CONGO. 34 has a smudge in the top of the S of BELGISCH. 35 has a long vertical scratch in the left margin. 40 has a dot on the left frameline by the ES of CENTIMES. 50 has a near-horizontal scratch in the top margin near the right end.

There are many other less conspicuous frame plate varieties. I find the most difficult positions to be the following. 4 has a long blue diagonal scratch passing through the upper left 5, but in later printings this disappears and one is guided by a small scratch in the top margin over the NG and a dot to the left of the bar of the H of BELGISCH. 12 has a faint line to the left of the upper left corner, and several faint marks in the bottom margin. 20 has a tiny dash in the white line above the I of BELGISCH. 23 has a horizontal mark crossing the right framelines level with the T of CENTIMES. 33 has a small dash $\frac{1}{2}$ mm over the top right corner. 37 has a short faint horizontal dash over the top left corner (early printings) or two dots in the top margin over the N of CINQ (later printings). 43 has a faint dot diagonally off the top right corner, and a horizontal guideline at this corner, a little under 1mm long, which turns down at its right end. 47 has four dots forming a diamond shape over the top right corner. 48 has smudging over the G of BELGISCH, and a trace of a guideline between the top frames over the G of VINGT.

Because of the disappearance of some of the earlier frame plate varieties, stamps from III+D can be hard to position. Where there are no obvious flaws, it is necessary to look at the faint blue corrosion dots which appear on these stamps around the framelines and on some of the letters. With a strong enough magnifying glass the patterns of these dots can be seen and matched against a reference sheet.

There are several centre plate varieties from these combinations which are worth noting. On centre plate B, made with the unretouched die which left a white space over the third rock from the right, the tree trunks are doubled in 25 and there is a heavy horizontal mark in the sky in 49. On centre plate C there is a long horizontal guideline crossing the middle of the stamp in 28, and in 30 there is a similar line together with two diagonal lines meeting at the centre to form a large star. In centre plate D there are transfer roller marks in the form of little dashes in the spray to the left of the natives: in one position in 6-8, in another in 1, 2 and 10, and in both positions in 9.

Booklet stamps

In many of the booklet stamps the bottom frameline is thickened or doubled, a feature not found in any stamp from frame plate III. There is doubling in α 4, 8, β 4, 6, 8, γ 3, 4, 8 and δ 6 and 10, and there is thickening or near-doubling in α 2, β 2, 7, γ 6, 10 and δ 2, 4 and 8. Doubling is found particularly at the right end of the bottom frameline which shows many variations in shape from position to position.

Numerous other varieties in the frame plate are found, particularly around the four corners of the stamp, and there are no positions which present serious difficulties for the plater. There are fewer centre plate varieties, but it is worth

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mentioning a slanting line to the left of the natives ($\alpha 4$); a spot in the same place ($\alpha 6$); horizontal marks on the right of the main waterfall ($\gamma 2$); and a large spot over the S of BELGISCH ($\delta 5$).

From the second printing onwards, all stamps in panes β and δ are marked by heavy centre plate corrosion around the edges of the vignette. This corrosion helps to identify the printing, the pane and the position of the stamp. It should be noted that it is found in all second and third printing stamps, including those from the second printing before the frames were retouched.

The retouching is evidenced by small burin marks in virtually every position. Many of these are on the top frameline close to the left or right corner; others are around the letters of CONGO BELGE or the left or right scrolls. They are easy to find and provide a good means of distinguishing 2nd(1) from 2nd(2) booklet stamps, and of positioning the latter together with 3rd booklet stamps.

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



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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



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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)



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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)



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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.



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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.



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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



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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.

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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.

PLATING MOLS STAMPS

by B.P. HUDSON

Part 7: 50 centimes

Introduction

Parts 1 to 6 of this series were issued with Bulletins 85, 87 and 88, part 1 providing a general introduction and parts 2 to 6 covering the 5 centimes to 40 centimes. Part 7 and future parts should be read in conjunction with part 1.

The 50 centimes is the fifth highest of the ten Mols values, and is the value found most frequently on letters. From 1886 to 1910 50 centimes was the postal rate for letters up to 15 grams sent to Belgium and other overseas countries; from 1924 to 1926 it was the rate for such letters up to 20 grams.

As with the other Mols values first issued in 1894, the design of the 50 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 that year. The painting was in turn based on a photograph by Lieutenant Wyns showing the railway bridge crossing the river M'Poza in lower Congo. In both the photograph and the painting the bridge is empty; on the stamp, however, the designer placed a locomotive on the bridge sporting a fine plume of smoke.

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

24	Nov. 1894	50c green	État Indépendant	250,000
25	May 1900	50c olive	État Indépendant	594,000
35B	Jan. 1909	50c olive	Congo Belge Brussels	1,000
35L	Jan. 1909	50c olive	Congo Belge local	83,000
45	Jan. 1909	50c olive	Congo Belge typo	97,000



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45P	Mar. 1909	50c olive	Princes unoverprinted	100
45PB	Mar. 1909	50c olive	Princes Brussels	250
45PT	Mar. 1909	50c olive	Princes typo	4,650
53	June 1909	50c olive	Unilingual	175,000
59	Jan. 1910	50c olive	Bilingual	245,000
69	Nov. 1915	50c brown	Bilingual	95,000
77	May 1918	50c+50c brown	Red Cross	100,000
87	July 1921	15c/50c olive	Recuperation surcharge (on 59)	278,500
95	Jan. 1922	5c/50c brown	Malines surcharge (on 69)	52,000

Ruanda Urundi

14	July 1916	50c brown	Ruanda Tombeur (on 69)	2,750
21	July 1916	50c brown	Urundi Tombeur (on 69)	2,750
33	Nov. 1916	50c brown	Est Africain (on 69)	120,000
41	May 1918	50c+50c brown	A.O. on Red Cross	100,000
45	Jan. 1922	5c/50c brown	Malines on Est Africain (on 69)	77,500

Plate combinations

1894	II+A1	Original frame and centre plates
1900	II+A2	Centres re-entered
	I2+A2	Frame lay marks added
1909	II+A2	New frame plate
1910	III1+A3	New frame plate; centre lay marks added
	III2+A4	Frames re-entered and retouched; centres re-entered
1915	III3+A4	Frames retouched
	III4+A5	Frames partly retouched; centres re-entered
	III4+B	New centre plate
1918	III5+B	Frame lay marks added

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

- (1) Du Four designated centre plate A1 as A, A2 as B1 and so on. The discovery that B1 was a re-entered state of A rather than a new plate was reported in Bulletin 28.
- (2) He did not differentiate between A2 and A3, both of which he described as B1. The addition of lay marks to create A3 was reported in Bulletin 42.
- (3) He described III3, III4 and III5 all as III2, being unaware of the retouching which created III3 (Bulletin 42) and III4 (Bulletin 72) and the lay marks on the Red Cross and AO sheets which created III5 (Bulletin 42).



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(4) Bulletin 72 also reported the discovery of a few specimens from two positions of the sheet - nos 40 and 50 - without the doubling in the sky which characterises A5, as well as being without some of the additional retouching of the frames which created III4. Accordingly the plate combination which Du Four described as III2+B3, and which subsequently was renamed III3+A5, had to be split into two: III3+A4 followed by III4+A5.

Identifying the plate combinations

1900. I1+A2 became I2+A2 through the addition of vertical lay marks between 11 and 12 and between 36 and 37. The 1900 stamps are found in two distinct shades, olive and yellow-olive; early and late printings were olive, and printings in between were yellow-olive. Yellow-olive stamps are always I2+A2; olive stamps may be either I1 or I2, unless the lay marks described above are visibly absent or present on them.

Princes printings, which are I2+A2, can be recognised by the shade of the centres which are brownish-black rather than grey-black as in the 1900 issue. Princes typo stamps can also be recognised by constant varieties in the overprinting plate - see page 10 of part 1.

1910. III1+A3 and III2+A4 are most easily distinguished by their shades. Stamps from III1+A3 range from grey-olive to olive to yellow-olive; those from III2+A4 range from greenish yellow-olive to a distinctive olive-green. Without the 1921 surcharge III2+A4 is uncommon unused and apparently unknown used.

When the shade is ambiguous, III2+A3 can often be distinguished by slight signs of doubling in the frames, particularly in the lower right corner, and by doubling or thickening of the centre plate, particularly in the lines of the sky.

1915. III3+A4 and III4+A5 cannot be told apart except by positioning the stamp. The former combination is very much less common than the latter, and appears to be found only in the lilac-brown shade. No sheets or multiples are known of III3+A4, and only a handful of single copies. In about one-third of the positions of the sheet A5 shows conspicuous doubling or thickening of the sky lines, a feature which is not present on A4. In most other positions the sky lines are slightly thickened in A5 but not in A4; in a few positions of A4 there is doubling between unthickened sky lines whereas in the corresponding A5 positions the lines are thickened but do not show doubling.

By contrast, centre plates A4/A5 and B can easily be told apart. The retouching of the die used to make B produced three noticeable changes: dots appear in the smoke emitting from the locomotive; the shading on the left bank of



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the river is continuous rather than dotted; and there is a 'sunrise' effect over the mountains.

Varieties

The following sections list the varieties of plate combination, shade, overprint and perforation known for each issue of the 50 centimes. The list covers 'normal' stamps only; errors and curiosities such as inverted overprints and imperfections 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 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. Of course, the impression of shades is highly subjective: other collectors may see them quite differently from the way I do. Shades are abbreviated thus:

bl=blue br=brown g=green li=lilac ol=olive r=red y=yellow

The middle column indicates the overprint or surcharge type. For handstamped Congo Belge overprints, B = Brussels, L = Local. For the Malines surcharge, m = matt and s = shiny. 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 (highly subjective) 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



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1894 green

I1+A1 bl-g	p14(BB), p15(CC), p12-14(CC), p14½-15(BC)
I1+A1 y-g	p13½(DD), p14(AA), p15(BA), p16(CC), p12-14(CC), p14½-15(AA)

1900 olive

I1+A2 ol	p14(CA), p15(AA), p12-14(EE), p14½-15(CA)
I2+A2 ol	p14(CA), p14½-15(CA)
I2+A2 y-ol	p13½(CB), p14(CA), p15(CB), p16(DB), p12-14(EC), p14½-15(CA)
I2+A2 Princes	p14(EX)

1909 Congo Belge handstamp

I1+A2 ol	B1	p14(DE), p14½-15(DE)
I1+A2 ol	B2	p14(DE), p15(DE)
I1+A2 ol	B5	p14(CE)
I1+A2 ol	B6	p15(DE), p14½-15(DE)
I1+A2 ol	B7	p14(EE)
I2+A2 y-ol	B6	p14(DE)
I2+A2 y-ol	L1	p13½(DD)
I2+A2 y-ol	L2	p14(DD)
I2+A2 y-ol	L3	p13½(DD)
I2+A2 y-ol	L4	p13½(DD), p14(DD), p14½-15(DD)
I2+A2 y-ol	L5	p13½(DD), p14(DC), p12-14(EE), p14½-15(DD)
I2+A2 y-ol	L6	p13½(DD), p14(DD)
I2+A2 ol	L1	p14(BA)
I2+A2 ol	L2	p14(CC), p14½-15(DD)
I2+A2 ol	L3	p14(CC), p15(DD)
I2+A2 ol	L4	p14(CB), p15(DD), p14½-15(DD)
I2+A2 ol	L5	p14(BB), p14½-15(CC)
I2+A2 ol	L6	p14(CB), p15(DD)
I2+A2 ol	L7	p14(BB)
I2+A2 Princes	B2	p14(EX)
I2+A2 Princes	B5	p14(EX)

Frame plates I1 and I2 can be distinguished on only 4 positions of the sheet; it is assumed that olive stamps with Brussels overprint are all from I1+A2, but this has not been confirmed.

The following combinations were reported by Du Four but have not been



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confirmed by Ray Keach or myself:

I1+A2 ol B3 I2+A2 ol L8

Other combinations may well exist. Forged overprints are common: I have forgeries on I+A2 ol p14 and p15 and I2+A2 y-ol p14 and p14½-15.

1909 Congo Belge typo

I2+A2 ol p14(AA), p14½-15(CB)
I2+A2 Princes p14(DC)

Some forgeries are found, one of which is dangerously accurate. I have forgeries on I+A2 ol p15 and I2+A2 y-ol p13½, p14 and p14½-15.

1909 unilingual

II+A2 ol p14(AA)
II+A2 br-ol p13½(CB), p14(BA)

1910 bilingual

III1+A3 p14(AA), p15(ED), p14½-15(DE)
III2+A4 p14(CX)

1915 bilingual

III3+A4 li-br p14(ED), p15(ED)
III4+A5 li-br p14(BA), p15(DD)
III4+A5 r-br p14(DC), p15(DC)
III4+B li-br p14(BB), p15(EC)
III4+B r-br p14(AA), p15(DC)

1918 Red Cross

III5+B p14(AC), p15(CD)

1921 Recuperation

I2+A2 ol Typo p14(DX)
II+A2 ol p14(DX)
III1+A3 p13½(CD), p14(AA), p14½-15(BC)
III2+A4 p14(AA)

1922 Malines

III4+A5 li-br s p14(EE)
III4+B r-br m p14(AA)
III4+B r-br s p14(AA), p15(EE)

1916 Tombeur (Ruanda and Urundi)

III4+A5 li-br K p14(EE)
III4+B r-br G p14(EX)

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III4+A5 li-br	H	p14(CX),p15(DX - Ruanda only)
III4+A5 r-br	H	p14(CX),p15(DX)

Forgeries abound.

1916 Est Africain

III4+B li-br	S	p14(CC)
III4+B li-br	L1(o)	p14(BE)
III4+B li-br	L1(t)	p14(CE)
III4+B r-br	L1(o)	p14(CE)
III4+B r-br	L1(i)	p14(DE)
III4+B r-br	L1(.)	p14(DD)
III4+B r-br	L2	p14(CA)

1918 Red Cross AO

III5+B		p14(AC),p15(CD)
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1922 EAA Malines

III4+B r-br	m	p14(AC)
III4+B r-br	s	p14(AC)

In total, 113 varieties of the 50c are listed above.

GUIDES TO POSITIONING

As with the positioning guides in the earlier parts, 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. 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, and also describe the more difficult positions in each sheet where the plater is most likely to experience problems.

II+A1

Because of the strong green colour of the frames, and the numerous re-entries (or strictly fresh entries) in the top left corner, many sheet positions of the 1894 issue are relatively easy to identify.

The first place to look is the 'CINQ' in the top left corner. Parasitic entries, consisting of one or more curved lines crossing the Q, are found in 6,12,14,16, 19,31,33,34 and 47. In 47 there are also two curved lines crossing the lower left 50 (Balasse V4). In many positions there is doubling on or around the C of CINQ, with slight variations in each position. In 5,9,13,33,34 and 50 the doubling is inside and above the C. In 1 it is below the C, in 7 inside and below it, and in 25 inside it. Doubling is also visible on or around the C, but to a lesser extent, in 6,32,35,38 and 39. In 1,11,18,22,28,36,40 and 45 the upper left vertical inner frameline is doubled to varying degrees. In 1 - Balasse V3 - the doubling is prominent.

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The marks described above identify over half the positions in the sheet. The remaining positions can be rather more difficult. Among them, 10,20,21,23,26,30,42,44 and 49 show a slight overlap between the outer frame and the sharp tip of the curved ornament on the outer edge of the frames just below left centre. Many positions show traces of a vertical guideline in the left margin; the guideline is most marked in the first column.

There are fewer centre plate varieties in I1+A1. In the course of the printing a strong diagonal black scratch appeared in the sky of 42 - Balasse V1. A short section of vertical black guideline is visible in the sky in the majority of positions. In several positions a similar guideline is also visible below the left of the rock in the river.

I classify the most difficult positions as the following. In 10 there is a short green dash in the top of the left margin, and (in later printings only) a long faint scratch crossing QUAN. In 15 there is a faint dot in the white line above the C of CINQ. 20 shows virtually no distinguishing marks apart from the pattern of the traces of green vertical guideline in the middle of the left margin. 23 has a small black dot between the river lines under the left end of the rightmost of the two larger rocks. In 24 the vertical black guideline in the sky crosses five of the continuous sky lines. In 27 there is a small slanting black scratch off the bottom left corner. In 30 the upper right vertical frameline is slightly doubled. In 37 the corner circle in the top right corner is faint. In 42 (difficult to identify before Balasse V1 appeared) there is a faint green horizontal scratch just under the bottom right corner. In 49 the corner circle in the top right corner is just doubled.

I1+A2 and I2+A2

In the olive stamps of 1900 the frame plate varieties of I1 are still present, though the paler shade of the stamps means that some of them are less prominent and others are nearly invisible. The parasitic entries and fresh entries around CINQ remain, however, the principal means of identifying about half the positions in the sheet.

In addition there are centre plate varieties - many more than in the 1894 issue - which aid the identification of these stamps. In 5,18,23,24,35,42 and 46 there is a faint vertical black guideline to the right of the lower right part of the vignette, usually crossing or close to the lower right 5. In 43,44 and 45 there is a transfer roller variety in the form of a small black arc of a circle at the top centre of the centre plate design. There is also a transfer roller flaw in 49 and 50, in the form of an irregular mark like a hook crossing the top of the trees to the right of centre. In 6 there is a diagonal scratch through the river (Balasse V2). A number of positions show extra black dots in the smoke of the locomotive - 16,17,22,23,25,26,37 and 48. Generally speaking the centre plate is quite flawed with many positions showing scratches of various shapes and sizes in the margins of the stamp. Stamps in the first row show slight doubling of the horizontal hill lines on the left.

I classify the following positions as difficult. In 2 there is a horizontal frame plate scratch in the left part of the top margin, quite clear in the 1894 issue but almost invisible in the olive stamps. In 3 there is a black spot in the upper left part of the stamp, but it is found in later printings only and before its appearance the best identifying mark for this position is a faint horizontal black

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scratch to right of centre in the top margin. In 8 almost the only marks are two black dots close together, and diagonal to one another, in the middle of the right margin. In early printings of 10 a near-horizontal black scratch is just visible above the top left corner of the sky; in later printings there is a curved vertical scratch in the centre of the right margin. In 32 there is slight doubling in the C of CINQ, and two or three black dots in the left margin. In 44 the small arc referred to above is sometimes barely visible; the best distinguishing mark otherwise is a faint vertical black scratch in the top left corner.

Frame plate I1 was converted to I2 by the addition of vertical lay marks between 11 and 12 and between 36 and 37.

II+A2

The unilingual stamps have the same centre plate as the 1900 issue, and the flaws on it are the main guide to positioning them. In addition to those described above some prominent scratches appear for the first time with this issue, notably on 28 and 48 (top centre) and 49 (bottom centre).

There is less assistance from the frames of the unilingual stamps. The most helpful varieties are retouches of the horizontal sections of the outer framelines: on 13,14,16,17,27 and 38 (upper left); 2,7,18,19,23,24,34 and 37 (upper right); 1,2,9,21,28,29,38,39,43,44 and 45 (lower left); and 38,43,44,47 and 50 (lower right). In 45 and 50 there is clear doubling of the inner frame in the lower right corner.

The frame plate has vertical lay marks between 11 and 12 and between 36 and 37.

III1+A2

The first centre plate for the 1910 issue, A3, is the same as A2 except for the addition of lay marks: a somewhat uneven vertical line between 7 and 8, and a dot between 37 and 38. The centre plate flaws which identify sheet positions in the 1900 and 1909 issues remain therefore the main source of identification for the first plate combination of the 1910 issue.

There are also helpful frame plate varieties. Several positions show doubling around the upper left 50: above the 50 in 3,5,15 and 32; on it in 16,18,25 and 50; and below it in 4,21,30 and 45. There is a vertical guideline touching or close to the centre part of the left frame in 4,5,7,11,43,44,46 and 48, and a section of guideline in the bottom left corner only in 2,12,21 and 38. The bottom frame is doubled under the GI of BELGISCH in 33,34 and 35. There are no frame plate lay marks

I classify only two positions in this combination as difficult. 8 has few marks apart from the two dots in the right margin (described above for the 1900 issue), and 44 has a short horizontal guideline touching the top frame over the E of BEL, which helps identification if the black arc at the top of the sky is obscured.

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III2+A3

The second plate combination of the 1910, found only rarely without the 1921 surcharge, had both frame and centre plates re-entered. There are no lay marks: the centre plate marks present on III1+A2 appear to have been erased.

In the frames, the doubling in III1 above, on and below the top left 5 is still visible in III2 in the positions in question (see above). The lower right vertical outer frameline is doubled in 14,19,21,22,23,24,26,29,33 and 34. There is a vertical coloured guideline in the left margin in 11,43,46 and 48. In the centre plate the horizontal sky lines show doubling towards their left end in 1,2,6,7,9,13 and 14.

III2+A3 is generally a more difficult combination to position than III1+A2, because of the smaller number of flaws in the centre plate. The fact that most of these stamps have the 1921 surcharge, from the shape of which the row number can be narrowed to 2 or at most 4 rows (see page 10 of part 1), is a great help. The most difficult position in my view is 39, identifiable only by a few corrosion dots along the top of the sky and by a black dot on the L of BELGE.

III3+A4 and III4+A5

For many years it was thought that the 'die 1' (ie centre plate A) printings of the 1915 issue represented one plate combination only. It is now known (see above) that two were involved, the first (III3+A4) rather scarce and so far found only in the lilac-brown shade, and the second (III4+A5) much commoner and found with p14 and p15 and in both lilac-brown and red-brown shades. The first combination was formed by extensive retouching of the frames, the second by re-entry of the centres and further retouching of the frames in at least one position of the sheet. Neither combination shows lay marks.

In III3 and III4 the doubling around the upper left 5 is still visible: above the 5 in 3,5,15 and 32, on it in 16,18,25 and 50, and below it in 4,21,30 and 45. The doubling of the outer vertical frameline on the lower right is visible but less clear than in the earlier combinations: it now shows as clear doubling only in 19,24,26,29 and 34.

The main aid to identifying positions on III3 and III4 comes from the retouching, which in most positions of the sheet caused burin escapes in the form of straight or slightly curved scratches to appear in and around the curled ornaments at centre height on the left and right sides of the stamp. Most positions show these lines, which vary widely from position to position: it is beyond the scope of this work to enumerate them separately, but they make positioning easy if a reference sheet is available.

On centre sheet A4, as already noted, the sky lines are fairly clean (though thicker than in A3), with the exception of the doubling visible in the left of the sky in 1,2,6,7,9,13 and 14. In A5 the doubling in these positions disappears; in 10,11,13,16,33,35,36,38-42 and 47-50 new doubling or heavy thickening appears, in some cases quite markedly; while in the remaining positions the lines are noticeably coarser or thicker than in A4. None of the positions on these two plate combinations presents serious difficulty for the plater.

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III4+B

The new centre plate with the dots in the smoke shows few varieties. The frame plate varieties mentioned above for III4+A5 persist in III4+B. In addition, the frames of III4+B present a phenomenon which make positioning very easy indeed. Throughout the plate extensive corrosion has taken place, no doubt through it having been left in a damp condition, which shows in the form of numerous coloured dots. They show particularly in the top and bottom margins, on the two larger 50s, and on the lettering of CONGO BELGE and BELGISCH CONGO. The location and pattern of the dots varies from position to position and it is a simple matter to scan the sheet for the pattern of dots which matches the pattern on an individual stamp. For the beginner in sheet positioning, the 1915 50c III3+B - a common stamp despite its elevated catalogue price - is an ideal stamp to start with.

III5+B

III5+B, found only with the Red Cross and AO issues, is the same as III4+B except for the addition of lay marks in the form of vertical lines between 17 and 18 and between 32 and 33, and dots between 17 and 18 and between 27 and 28.

PLATING MOLS STAMPS

by B.P. HUDSON

Part 8: 1 franc

Introduction

The 1 franc is the fourth highest of the ten Mols values. It is found quite often on covers, particularly registered covers, between the Congo and Belgium or other overseas countries. The following are the weight ranges (in grams) in the period 1896 to 1924 for which the postal rate was exactly 1 franc:

	Belgium registered	Belgium unregistered	Other overseas registered	Other overseas unregistered
1894-1910	up to 15	15 to 30	up to 15	15 to 30
1910-1920	30 to 45	45 to 60	30 to 45	45 to 60
1920-1921	80 to 100	-	40 to 60	60 to 80
1921-1924	20 to 40	60 to 80	up to 20	20 to 40

Like the other values issued in 1894, the 1fr was based on one of the Mols and Van Engelen paintings exhibited in Anvers in that year. The painting showed an elephant waving its trunk in the air with, in the distance, further elephants and the tiny figures of natives. When this was converted into the stamp design a native was placed just in front of the elephant bravely brandishing his spear. The 1fr is a handsome stamp and many consider it to be the best of the Mols designs.

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

26A	Nov. 1894	1fr violet	État Indépendant	120,000)
26Aa		1fr lilac	État Indépendant	inc. lilac)



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26	(1900)	1fr carmine	Etat Indépendant	292,000
36B	Jan. 1909	1fr carmine	Congo Belge Brussels	1,000
36L	Jan. 1909	1fr carmine	Congo Belge local	39,100
46	Jan. 1909	1fr carmine	Congo Belge typo	72,900
46P	Mar. 1909	1fr carmine	Princes unoverprinted	100
46PB	Mar. 1909	1fr carmine	Princes Brussels	250
46PT	Mar. 1909	1fr carmine	Princes typo	4,650
60	Jan. 1910	1fr carmine	Bilingual	190,000
70	Nov. 1915	1fr olive	Bilingual	90,000
78	May 1918	1fr+1fr olive	Red Cross	50,000
91	July 1921	1fr carmine	Recuperation overprint (on 60)	162,000
101	Jan. 1922	10c/1fr olive	Boma surcharge (on 70)	112,500

Ruanda Urundi

15	July 1916	1fr olive	Ruanda Tombeur (on 70)	1,150
22	July 1916	1fr olive	Urundi Tombeur (on 70)	1,150
34	Nov. 1916	1fr olive	Est Africain (on 70)	170,000
42	May 1918	1fr+1fr olive	A.O. on Red Cross	50,000

Note: The 1fr violet, lilac and carmine of 1894 to 1900 were not separate issues in the sense of being the subject of separate decrees by the Postal Ministry, but rather were shade changes of the same issue. The changes were so marked that they have always been regarded as separate stamps.

Plate combinations

1894	I1+A1	Original frame and centre plates
1900	I2+A2	Frame lay marks added; centres re-entered
1910	II1+A3	New frame plate; centre lay marks added
	II1+A4	Centres re-entered
1915	II1+A4	
	II2+A5	Frames retouched; centres re-entered
	II3+A5	Frames re-entered (EAA overprint only)
	II4+A5	Frames re-entered
	II5+A5	Frames re-entered
	II6+A5	Frames re-entered
	II6+A6	Centres re-entered
	III+A7	New frame plate; centres re-entered

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

- (1) For the 1894 violet, Du Four listed two states of frame plate I, the second



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(I2) caused when a scratch crossing nos 43 and 44 was partly burnished. It is now known that no burnishing took place (see Bulletin 35); even if it had, it would not now be regarded as creating a new state of the plate. Du Four's I1 and I2 have therefore been renamed I1, and his I3 (the frame plate of the 1900 carmine stamps) has been renamed I2.

(2) Du Four was not aware of the separate combinations II4+A5 and II6+A5 (see Bulletins 21 and 32), and described II5 as II4 and II6 as II5.

(3) He originally believed A7 to be a new plate rather than a re-entry of A6, and therefore described III+A7 as III+B, though this was corrected in the page of Errata which accompanied the published book.

Identifying the plate combinations

1900. Princes printings 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. Princes typo stamps can also be recognised by constant varieties in the overprinting plate - see page 10 of part 1.

1910. Since there are only slight differences between the two centre plates, the best way to differentiate III1+A3 and III1+A4 is by shade. Stamps from III1+A3 are pale to deep carmine or carmine-red, while those from III1+A4 are lake-carmine or carmine-lake. III1+A4 is uncommon without the 1921 overprint.

1915. The 1fr olive of 1915 is a complicated stamp which went through 8 plate combinations. Identifying them is not, however, as difficult as might be supposed.

The first place to look is the small circle and surrounding scrollwork at the centre of the top frameline. If the top lines of the circle and scrolls are weak or worn away, the plate combination is III1+A4. If they are continuous and thickened a little unevenly by retouching, it is II2+A5. If they or other parts of the top frameline show signs of doubling, the frame plate is II3, II4, II5 or II6. If the circle and scrolls are clear and neat the combination is III+A7, which is indicated also by fine, clear centres unlike the increasingly corroded centres of A4 to A6. If a stamp could be either III1+A4 or III+A7, but shows sections of vertical guideline in the left margin, then it is definitely III1+A4.

The shades of the frames can sometimes give a little help. III1+A4 are greenish olive, the later combinations range from pale to yellow olive, and III+A7 are a constant olive. II5+A5 tends to be a slightly yellower shade than II6+A5, while II4+A5 is more olive, ie closer to III1+A4.



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Centre plates A5 and A6 can be differentiated by looking at the small triangular area on the hillside immediately above the elephant's back to the right of his left ear (the right ear as we look at it). In later printings of A5 this area is worn and almost white; in A6 it is crossed by four faint but clear diagonal lines of shading.

It therefore remains to distinguish II3+A5 to II6+A5. II3+A5 is easy, because it is found only with the EAA overprint and shows some doubling of the horizontal framelines on all positions, unlike the other combination found with this overprint, namely II2+A5. To distinguish II4, II5 and II6, shade can be a guide, but to be certain of identification the stamp has to be positioned (which is quite easy given the amount of centre plate corrosion) and then compared with the corresponding position on reference sheets. Each of the three frame plate states shows different degrees of doubling or thickening, particularly in the vertical framelines, with the later states tending to show more doubling. The differences on some positions - particularly between II5 and II6 - can however be very slight.

Those with complete sheets which show doubling can identify them as follows. If the bottom right column base on 32 is not doubled, the frame plate is II3. If the right column base is doubled on 32 but not on 31, the plate is II4. If the left vertical framelines on 16 and 41 are doubled, the plate is II5 or II6. If the right frameline of 41 is doubled and the left column base of 48 is trebled, the plate is II6.

Varieties

The following sections list the varieties of plate combination, shade, overprint and perforation known for each issue of the 1 franc. 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:

ca=carmine li=lilac vi=violet

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



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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

1894 violet

I1+A1 p14(BB), p15(BB), p12-14(DD), p14½-15(BC)

1894 lilac

I1+A1 li p15(DB)
I1+A1 ca-li p14(DB), p15(ED), p12-14(ED)

1900 carmine

I2+A2 p13½(DA), p14(DB), p15(DB), p16(DB), p12-14(EC)
I2+A2 Princes p14(EX)

1909 Congo Belge handstamp

I1+A1 vi	B2	p14½-15(DX)
I1+A1 vi	B6	p14½-15(EX)
I1+A1 vi	L1	p14½-15(DX)
I1+A1 vi	L2	p14½-15(DX)
I1+A1 ca-li	B1	p14(EX)
I2+A2	B1	p15(DE)
I2+A2	B2	p14(DE), p15(DE), p16(CE)
I2+A2	B5	p13½(DE), p15(DE), p16(CE)
I2+A2	B6	p13½(DE), p16(DE)
I2+A2	B7	p13½(DE)



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I2+A2	L1	p13½(CA), p16(CC)
I2+A2	L2	p13½(DC), p16(DD)
I2+A2	L3	p13½(DD), p15(DD)
I2+A2	L4	p13½(CB), p16(DD)
I2+A2	L5	p13½(CB), p15(ED), p16(DD)
I2+A2	L6	p13½(DD), p16(DD)
I2+A2	L7	p13½(CB), p16(DD)
I2+A2 Princes	B2	p14(EX)
I2+A2 Princes	B5	p14(EX)

Forged overprints are common. The following combinations were reported by Du Four but have not been confirmed by Ray Keach or myself:

I1+A1 vi	B4, L4	I1+A1 li	B6, L1, L5, L7
I2+A2	L8		

1909 Congo Belge typo

I2+A2	p13½(BA), p15(DD), p16(CE)
I2+A2 Princes	p14(DC)

1910 bilingual

III+A3	p14(AA), p15(CB)
III+A4	p14(CX)

1915 bilingual

III+A4	p13½(DD), p14(BA), p15(CB)
II2+A5	p14(BA)
II4+A5	p14(EC)
II5+A5	p13½(DD), p14(BA), p15(EE)
II6+A5	p14(CC)
II6+A6	p14(CC)
III+A7	p14(CB), p15(DD)

1918 Red Cross

III+A7	p14(AC)
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1921 Recuperation

I2+A2	Typo	p13½(DX)
I2+A2 Princes	Typo	p14(EX)
III+A3		p14(AA), p15(BB)
III+A4		p14(BA), p15(CB)

1922 Boma

II4+A5	p14(DE)
II5+A5	p14(AC)
II6+A5	p14(CC)

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Forged surcharges are common: I have examples on III1+A4, II2+A5, II5+A5, II6+A5 and II6+A6 (all p14).

1916 Tombeur (Ruanda and Urundi)

III1+A4	K	p15(EE)
II2+A5	G	p14(EX)
III1+A4	H	p14(CX)

There are many forgeries.

1916 Est Africain

II2+A5	S	p14(DE)
II2+A5	L1(.)	p14(BE)
II2+A5	L1(o)	p14(AB)
II3+A5	L1(o)	p14(DE)
II3+A5	L2	p14(BB)

1918 Red Cross AO

III+A7	p14(AC)
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This gives a total of 87 varieties of the lfr.

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.

I1+A1 and I2+A2

I will take these two combinations together, since the great majority of plate varieties are in the frames rather than the centres, and frame plates I1 and I2 are the same apart from the addition of lay marks in I2 in the form of a vertical line between 38,39,43 and 44, and a dot between 8,9,13 and 14.

A number of 'generic' varieties (ie varieties found in more than one position) make these stamps quite easy to position. There is prominent vertical doubling of both left and right column bases in 6 and 41 (6 is Balasse V6), and of the right base only in 7,11 and 42. There is slight doubling of the right base in 3,5,9,10,12,13,16,17,21,23,27 and 36. The leftmost vertical line in the left base is doubled in 6,7,11,12 and 29. The right vertical frame is doubled in 3,9,14,37,47 and 49 (49 is Balasse V8). The centre top framelines are markedly doubled in 35 (Balasse V7); the inner of them is partly doubled in 5. The horizontal lines to the left or right of ETAT are doubled in 4,23 and 36. The ANT of INDEPENDANT is doubled horizontally in the bottom row, positions 46 to 50. In numerous positions

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there are signs of doubling in the circle round the upper right 1. Doubling is visible inside the upper left 1 in 4, 20 and 34.

Of the centre plate varieties, the best known is the doubling of the native's spear in position 1 (Balasse V1), present in both A1 and A2. In 30, 31 and 32 of A2 there is a transfer roller flaw in the form of a black spot near the top of the mountain above the middle of the elephant's back. In A1 several positions show one or two black dots under the tip of the elephant's trunk, and others show faint vertical guidelines usually towards the left of the centre plate vignette.

The following positions are relatively difficult. In 15 there is doubling of the whorl under NGO and of the upper right circle, both of these features being found also in other positions; in addition, in A2, there are faint near-vertical black scratches in the right margin close to the frame. In 24 there is slight doubling of the vertical line to the right of the right FRANC, and (in A1 only) a vertical black guideline rising from the middle of the elephant's tail. In 25 there is a faint coloured horizontal line above the upper left corner, in A1 dots under the trunk and a short vertical black guideline through the left UN, and in A2 a black near-vertical scratch towards the bottom of the right margin. In 26 there is doubling of the upper right circle and the whorl under NGO, and doubling (most visible at the right end) under the upper but not the lower flange of the right column base. In 40 there is a horizontal coloured guideline in the right margin, joined to the frameline just above the top of the 'shell'; this line is hardly visible in I1+A1, which can be distinguished instead by the triangle of black dots above the left of the two trees under the trunk.

I1+A3 and I1+A4

The frame plate has lay marks in the form of a vertical line between 38, 39, 43 and 44 and a dot between 8, 9, 13 and 14. Centre plate A3 has a vertical line in the same position and a dot between 13 and 14; in A4 the dot is still present but the line appears to have been erased.

Stamps in the first row, positions 1 to 5, can be identified by a transfer roller flaw on the outer right frameline. It takes the form of two flat 'bubbles' on the frame, one level with the FR and the other with the AN of FRANK. Interestingly, there are similar flaws in the bottom row, positions 46 to 50, but here the lower bubble has broken open and (in 46 to 49) forms a short line leaving the frame at an angle opposite the L of FRANK. It seems that part of the right frameline, in relief on the transfer roller, came adrift at these points, and that row 10 was impressed immediately after or immediately before row 1 - probably the latter, because slight traces of the flaw can still be seen on positions 6 to 9.

Row 10 of the frame plate also contains three notable varieties in the form of horizontal lines 2 to 3mm long scored in the bottom margin under the BEL of BELGISCH. There is one line under 48 (Balasse V9), two under 46 (Balasse V10) and three under 50 (Balasse V11). The lines seem to have been engraved deliberately, but it is not known why. There is a similar line, but vertical rather than horizontal, in the left margin of position 1.

For the other positions of the sheet, there are numerous frame plate varieties to assist positioning. In 6, 16, 25, 38, 39, 40 and 49 there is doubling of the upper left corner which takes the form of dots or short dashes just outside the corner. There is doubling in the left of the circle round the upper left 1 in 6, 24, 25, 38, 39,

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40 and 49. There is doubling in the left 'shell' in 6, 16, 26, 29, 35, 38 and 39. There are dots or other marks around the little circle to the left of the upper left 1 in 9, 14 (A4 only), 21 and 35. In addition, numerous positions show sections of frame plate guideline, sometimes doubled, in the top or left margins. The most useful of the latter are the short sections of vertical lines at varying distances from the left column base.

41 shows doubling of the left column base. This is the only position on III (and II2) which shows such doubling, and it is important for the plater to be aware of it since otherwise it could lead him to believe that the stamp comes from II3 to II6 where doubling like this is present on almost all positions.

Centre plate varieties are less numerous than those of the frame plate. Balasse V1, the doubled spear, is till partly visible in position 1. In 46 there are three horizontal lines above the head of the elephant (Balasse V2), prominent in A3 but barely visible in A4. In 6 there is a curved black line 2½mm above the head (Balasse V3), but only in late printings of A3. In 43, 44 and 45 of A4 there is a roller flaw in the form of a black spot against the left of the trunk a little above the tusks (Balasse V4); a similar spot, but fainter, is visible in 41. In 30, 31 and 32 the spot on the mountain described above for A2 is still visible, though only faintly in position 30 of A4.

I classify two positions in these combinations as difficult. In 12 there is a coloured dot in the E of LGE. In 17 there is a black dot, quite faint in A4, in the triangular space between the elephant's trunk and his ear, a little to the left of the centre of this space.

II2+A5

Frame plate II2 was formed by retouching of the outer lines of the top central ornament. There was no re-entry of the plate, so that all the frame plate varieties described above for III1 are still present (though the guidelines are somewhat fainter), and are the main aid to positioning single stamps.

In the re-entered centre plate A5, Balasse V4 (the spot against the trunk) is still visible, and Balasse V1 can just be detected in the form of a dot adjacent to the bottom end of the spear. A new transfer roller variety, an elongated vertical spot towards to bottom of the left margin, appears in positions 5 to 9. The centre plate does not show signs of doubling but shows numerous flaws in the form of dots and scratches which were not present on A4. The centre plate lay mark in the form of a dot between 13 and 14 is still present on A5.

The more difficult positions of II2+A5 are the following. In 17 there are four or five black dots above the trees under the trunk. In 19 there is one such dot. In 22 there is one such dot, a faint vertical guideline against the left 'shell', and slight doubling of the curved line to the left of the top central circle. In 28 there are two dots placed diagonally under the trunk, and black corrosion in the bottom margin under BELGISCH.

II3+A5

This combination, found only with the EAA overprint, shows many of the frame and centre plate varieties found in II2+A5. In particular it shows Balasse V4 and V9 to 11, the numerous doubling marks around the upper left corner, and

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the centre plate roller flaw on positions 5 to 9. However it does not show the frame plate roller flaws on the right frameline in rows 1 and 10.

In addition II3 shows extensive doubling of the column bases (Balasse V12). The left base is doubled in 1, 2, 3, 20, 21, 26, 32, 36, 41, 43 and 48, and the right base in 8, 9, 10, 15, 17, 18, 20, 22, 25, 28, 29, 30, 34, 36, 37, 38, 39, 42, 43, 44, 47 and 48. Both bases are trebled in 46 - Balasse V13.

Apart from the Balasse varieties already mentioned, there is not much to note about the centre plate: the extensive corrosion to the left of the trunk which is present in II4+A5 to II6+A6 has not yet made its appearance.

I classify only one position as difficult - 28, which as in II2+A5 is characterised by two dots under the trunk and scattered dots in the bottom margin under BELGISCH.

II4+A5 to II6+A6

These combinations still show Balasse V4 and V9 to 11, but much more faintly. The frame plate lay marks are present as is the centre plate dot between 13 and 14.

Apart from additional doubling of the framelines, the main change from II3+A5 is the development of black corrosion dots, dense on many positions, less so on others, in the area around the end of the trunk and the two palm trees on the left. Caused no doubt by the plate becoming wet, a clear boundary to the corrosion indicates that in many positions it was burnished out, but not in the immediate vicinity of the palms and trunk since that would have risked burnishing out part of the design itself.

This corrosion is the key to plating and positioning individual stamps, since it enables the position to be found quite quickly, and once the position is known the plate combination can be determined by comparing the doubling or thickening of the framelines with the corresponding position on reference sheets. As noted above in the section on identifying plate combinations, in some positions the differences between II5 and II6 are rather slight. The best places to look are the left vertical frameline, which tends to be thicker in A6, and the vertical lines in the left column base and bottom central ornament, which can be doubled in A6 but not in A5 (or sometimes vice versa). To distinguish II5 from II6 it is essential to have reference sheets of both available; if the stamp's position is known, but its frameline doubling does not match either II5 or II6, then by deduction it can be assumed to be II4+A5, a combination which is rather scarcer than the others.

Because frameline doubling is so extensive in these stamps, it does not usually help much in finding a stamp's sheet position, though it is useful for confirming the position and identifying the plate combination. But it is worth noting the positions where the frames show trebling (Balasse V13). The left base is trebled in 47 and the right base in 29, 30 and 46. In II6 but not II5 there is also trebling of the left base in 48.

Identifying stamps from II4+A5 to II6+A6 can be a long haul, but the extent of frame plate doubling and centre plate corrosion means that no positions is classified as difficult.

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III+A7

Although centre plate A7 was a re-entry of A6 rather than a new plate, most of the flaws in A6, including Balasse V4 and the corrosion round the palm trees, have completely disappeared, and the plate presents a clean appearance. The lay mark dot between 13 and 14 is still present. The new frame plate III has lay marks in the same places as before: a line between 38,39,43 and 44, and a dot between 8,9,13 and 14.

The cleanness of the plates means that these stamps - and particularly the 1915 issue as opposed to the Red Cross and AO issues - can be difficult to position. Of great assistance however is a frame plate roller flaw which affects nearly half the positions of the sheet. This is a thickening of a line of horizontal shading in the right vertical panel, level with the top of the N of FRANK. If this line is thickened, the stamp comes from rows 1,2,3,9 or 10, or from position 36. This is another indication that for some reason the transfer roller did not go down the sheet from top to bottom, but impressed the bottom rows first and then moved to the top rows starting with row 1.

There are not many frame plate varieties. The right ends of the flanges (particularly the upper flange) of the right column base are thickened in 2,3,4,6,7,10,36,37,41 and 47 and doubled in 1. The flanges of the left column base are thickened in 16,17,36 and 41. There is a horizontal line - possibly a doubling mark - crossing the right side of the middle of the right base in 8.

In the Red Cross and AO stamps, but not the 1915 stamps, there is faint but discernible corrosion in most positions, in various places in the margins outside the framelines. These dots make characteristic patterns and are the reason why Red Cross and AO stamps are easier to position.

On the centre plate there are fine horizontal lines above the elephant's head in 1,2,4 and 5 (1 and 5 being classified as Balasse V5). In many positions there are one or dots between the trunk and the two trees, sometimes a useful aid to positioning. Otherwise centre plate flaws are few and far between.

The most difficult position in III+A7 is 29, identifiable by two tiny dots just above the left of the two trees under the trunk.

PLATING MOLS STAMPS

by B.P. HUDSON

Part 9: 3½/3 francs

Introduction

Parts 1 to 8 of this series were issued with Bulletins 85 and 87 to 89. Part 1 provided a general introduction and parts 2 to 8 covered the 5 centimes to 1 franc. Part 9 and the remaining parts should be read in conjunction with part 1.

The 3½ francs, which was changed to 3fr in 1910, is the third highest of the ten Mols values. It is the scarcest of the ten values. Its principal use was for parcels; it was also used for registered packets and telegraph forms. When it is found on a normal-sized cover this probably suggests over-franking and therefore philatelic rather than bona fide postal usage.

The design was based on a drawing by Lieutenant Masui published in the book "D'Anvers à Banzyville" and showing part of a native village in the jungle on the caravan route.

Main issues

In the following table the number on the left is the Catalogue Official 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.

Belgian Congo

27	May	1898	3½fr vermilion	État Indépendant	23,200
37B	Jan.	1909	3½fr vermilion	Congo Belge Brussels	100
37L	Jan.	1909	3½fr vermilion	Congo Belge local	5,300
47	Jan.	1909	3½fr vermilion	Congo Belge typo	22,400
47P	Mar.	1909	3½fr vermilion	Princes unoverprinted	100
47PB	Mar.	1909	3½fr vermilion	Princes Brussels	250
47PT	Mar.	1909	3½fr vermilion	Princes typo	4,650
61	Jan.	1910	3fr vermilion	Bilingual	125,000
92	July	1921	3fr vermilion	Recuperation overprint (on 61)	69,500



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Plate combinations

1898	I+A	Original frame and centre plates
1910	III+A	New frame plate
	II2+A	Frames retouched

There has been only one change from the nomenclature first introduced by Du Four. Because of corrosion which appeared on the centre plate before the Princes printing, he divided this plate into two states A1 and A2. Corrosion is not now regarded as creating a new state of the plate.

Identifying the plate combinations

1898. Princes stamps can be recognised by the shade of the centres, which are brownish-black rather than grey-black as in the 1898 issue. Princes typo stamps can also be recognised by the constant varieties in the typo overprint - see page 10 of part 1.

1910. In III+A the horizontal shading in the top panel of the frame is rather weak, especially in the top line. In II2+A these lines were partly retouched. In some positions the retouching shows clearly with marked thickening of the lines or burin escapes. In other positions III1 and II2 are hard to tell apart. Where the horizontal lines seem the same, II2 is sometimes indicated by a thickening at the top of the left and right vertical framelines.

Varieties

The following sections list the varieties of plate combination, shade, overprint and perforation known for each issue of the 3½ and 3 francs. The list covers 'normal' stamps only; errors and curiosities such as imperf-between pairs are excluded.

The Princes and 1910 issues were printed on paper watermarked in large outline letters "JAS WRIGLEY & SON Ld - 219". Many collectors distinguish between stamps which show a portion of this watermark, which appears twice in each sheet, and those which do not. The listing below does not make this distinction.

Unlike all the other values, there are no significant shade variations in the 3½fr or 3fr issues.

The middle column of the listing indicates the overprint or surcharge type. For handstamped Congo Belge overprints, B = Brussels, L = Local.



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

1898

I+A p14(CB), p12x14(EE), p14x12(EE)
I+A Princes p14(EX)

1909 Congo Belge handstamp

I+A	B1	p14(EE)
I+A	B2	p14(DE)
I+A	B5	p14(EE)
I+A	B6	p14(EE)
I+A	L1	p14(DC)
I+A	L2	p14(DC)
I+A	L3	p14(DD)
I+A	L4	p14(DC)
I+A	L5	p14(DC)
I+A	L6	p14(DD)
I+A	L7	p14(DD)
I+A Princes	B2	p14(EX)

Forged overprints are found. Du Four also reports B3 and L8, but neither Ray Keach nor I can confirm these.

1909 Congo Belge typo

I+A p14(CB)
I+A Princes p14(DC)

1910 bilingual

II1+A p14(BA)
II2+A p14(CD)

1921 Recuperation

II1+A p14(CD)
II2+A p14(BA)

This gives a total of 22 varieties of the 3½fr and 3fr.

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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.

I+A

Compared with the other values, relatively few sheets of the 1898 3½fr were printed. This had two consequences: first, both frame and centre plates present a clean appearance; second, the flaws that are visible show little change throughout the printings. The only exception is that by the time of the Princes printing in 1909 a number of additional flaws had appeared, including one corrosion mark on the frame plate and two on the centre plate that are classified as Balasse varieties.

There are no lay marks on either plate. Until the Princes printing, constant varieties on the centre plate are negligible. The most noticeable are the faint vertical guidelines that appear in the middle of the upper part of the stamp, but they are not much help in positioning since they appear in much the same location on most positions of the sheet.

The frame plate, on the other hand, gives considerable help to platers despite its clean appearance. Although they are often very fine, the flaws show up well under the magnifying glass because of the strong vermilion colour of the stamps. They have been well documented in J.M.Frenay's study and on pages 1 to 7 of Bulletin 33; indeed the illustrations on page 7 of the latter, which bring all 50 positions together, are so good that this stamp is an exception to the rule that it is inadvisable to attempt plating without a complete sheet to hand. Since complete sheets of the 3½fr are hard and costly to obtain, this is just as well.

The most prominent frame plate varieties are the following. In 3 the bottom left corner is missing (Balasse V3). In 11 the top frameline is missing on the left (Balasse V5). In 32 there is a thick horizontal line crossing the bottom of EP in INDEPENDANT (Balasse V4). In 43 the bottom left and bottom right corners are doubled.

The most common variety takes the form of fine horizontal or near-horizontal scratches in the top or bottom margins or between the top framelines. These marks are found in the top margin in 2,5,7,17,28,31,37,38,44 and 45; between the top framelines in 4,6,7,10,17,25,28,33,37,38,40,44 and 48; and in the bottom margin in 2,8,14,15,16,18,22,23,26,31,34,38,39,41,43,45,46,47 and 50. In 16, 19,20 and 39 there is a dot just in the bottom margin under the N of CINQ. There are few guidelines visible in the margins of the stamps, the main exceptions being a horizontal line leaving the top right corner in 1 and 13 and a vertical line through the N of CINQ in 27 and 42.

I consider the most difficult positions to be 12 (short red dash just visible in the top of the C of FRANCS); 26 (two red dots close together in the middle of the

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stamp, plus faint short scratches in the bottom margin); and 36 (traces of vertical red line in the right side of the S of FRANCS).

The most prominent flaws which appeared with the Princes printing are frame plate blotches in the bottom left corner of 50 (Balasse V6) and 45; in 22, an elongated black mark just to the right of the tall palms (Balasse V1) and 45; and in 40, a large black spot under the base of the rightmost short palm. These last two flaws persist in the 1910 issue which used the same centre plate.

III+A and II2+A

III+A would be a difficult stamp to position but for one invaluable feature. In all positions of the sheet except 28 and the bottom row, a guide dot appears a little below the bottom left corner (similar dots are visible in the 1910 10fr, but only in about half a dozen positions of the sheet). These dots vary in size and location: in rows 4,5,6 and 9, for instance, they are close to the corner; in rows 1,2,3 and 8 they are relatively far away. In positions 1,3,4,5,38,39 and 40 a short horizontal line passes through or close to the dot.

Other varieties worth mentioning are the horizontal coloured scratches in many positions in the top or bottom margins (particularly the latter), and the vertical guideline between the left framelines in 2,6,7,10,20,22,23,26,32,37,42, 43,44,47 and 50.

The large centre plate flaws which first appeared with the Princes printing are also present in the 1910 stamps. In addition, numerous faint black scratches are found in the centre vignettes of the 1910 issue, no doubt as a result of cleaning. If the red dot under the bottom left corner is concealed by the perforations, these scratches are the main aid to positioning stamps from III+A.

II2 was formed by retouching around the top framelines. In some positions this is pronounced and shows, for instance, as a prominent burin escape. In others the retouching is almost imperceptible. Thickening or burin escapes are visible towards the left end in 5,14,24,31,33,36 and 37; left of centre in 9,10,14, 23,26,32 and 44; at the centre in 11,10,18,20 and 41; right of centre in 1,19,25,27,33,43 and 49; and towards the right end in 40. III1 and II2 are hard to tell apart in positions 2,3,6,7,12,13,21,22 and 37.

Although it may be difficult to distinguish III1 from II2, no sheet position as such is classified as difficult, provided the red guide dot is visible.

PLATING MOLS STAMPS

by B.P. HUDSON

Part 10: 5 francs

Introduction

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

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

Main issues

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

Belgian Congo

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



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

Ruanda Urundi

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

Plate combinations

1894	I+A1	Original frame and centre plates
Princes	I+A2	Centres re-entered
1910	III+A3	New frame plate; centre lay marks added
1915	III+A3	
	III+A4a	Centres re-entered and lay mark line removed
	II2+A4a	Frame lay marks added
	II2+A4b	Blurred centres

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

Identifying the plate combinations

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

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



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

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

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

Varieties

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

1894 carmine

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

1909 Congo Belge handstamp

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

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

1909 Congo Belge typo

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

1910 bilingual

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

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

1918 Red Cross

II2+A4a		p14(BD)
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1921 Recuperation

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

1922 Boma

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

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

1916 Tombeur (Ruanda and Urundi)

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

There are many forgeries.

1916 Est Africain

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

1918 Red Cross AO

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

GUIDES TO POSITIONING

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

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

I+A1 and I+A2

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

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

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

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

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

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

III+A3

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

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

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

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

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

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

III+A4a to II2+A4b

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

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

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

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

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

PLATING MOLS STAMPS

by B.P. HUDSON

Part 11: 10 francs

Introduction

The 10 francs is the highest of the ten Mols values. Although a large sum in present day terms - when it was introduced, it was one hundred times the rate for an internal postcard - it is not an uncommon stamp. As well as on mail it was used frequently on telegraph forms (where it would normally be cancelled by an octagonal telegraphic canceller) and on gun permits which cost 20 francs, and on which a pair of 10 francs would be cancelled by a manuscript signature. Although complete permits are now a valuable rarity, pen cancelled stamps are far from scarce.

As with the 5 francs, large multiples of the 10fr are known which were genuinely postally used, typically for sending high value registered packets from the Congo to Belgium.

The design of the 10 francs was based on a photograph published in 1897 in a book entitled "L'État Indépendant du Congo à L'Exposition Bruxelles-Tervueren". The photograph showed the steamboat "Baron Dhanis" at anchor on the river Lualaba in Upper Congo, a paddleboat of the type which in those days provided river transport. In the design of the stamp, issued the following year with the 3½fr, the boat has raised its anchor and is seen steaming proudly down the river.

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.

Belgian Congo

29	May. 1898	10fr green	État Indépendant	58,000
39B	Jan. 1909	10fr green	Congo Belge Brussels	175
39L	Jan. 1909	10fr green	Congo Belge local	13,525



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49	Jan. 1909	10fr green	Congo Belge typo	19,300
49P	Mar. 1909	10fr green	Princes unoverprinted	100
49PB	Mar. 1909	10fr green	Princes Brussels	250
49PT	Mar. 1909	10fr green	Princes typo	4,650
63	Jan. 1910	10fr green	Bilingual	85,000
80	May 1918	10fr+10fr green	Red Cross	10,000
94	July 1921	10fr green	Recuperation overprint (on 63)	56,000

Ruanda Urundi

44	May 1918	10fr+10fr green	A.O. on Red Cross	7,500
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Plate combinations

1898	I1+A1	Original frame and centre plates
	I2+A1	Printers' name added in selvedge
1910	II+A1	New frame plate
	II+A2	Centres retouched
1918	III+B	New frame and centre plates

There has been only one change from the nomenclature first introduced by Du Four. He described frame plates I1 and I2 as I, not taking account of the addition of the printers' name in the selvedge.

Identifying the plate combinations

1898. Princes printings can be recognised by the brownish-black rather than grey-black shade of the centres, and by the darker green shade of the frames. In addition, Princes stamps are always p14, whereas virtually all non-Princes 10fr's with typo overprint are p12. Examples of ordinary typo p14 are known, but they are very rare. Another distinguishing feature is that the 1898 stamps are strictly p14½ while Princes are exactly p14.

1910. Traditionally 1910 stamps have been distinguished between those on yellowish paper and those on bluish paper. In my view this is a misleading distinction: while a few stamps with bluish paper are found towards the end of the later printings, the great majority of the stamps are on plain paper which is neither bluish nor yellowish. A more useful distinction lies in the shade of the frames, which are yellow-green in early and blue-green in later printings.

Yellow-green stamps are always II+A1; blue-green stamps are usually, but not always, II+A2. The retouching which created A2 is apparent in only about half a dozen positions in the sheet; in other positions, the two states of centre plate A cannot be distinguished.



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Varieties

The following sections list the varieties of plate combination, shade, overprint and perforation known for each issue of the 10 francs. The list covers 'normal' stamps only; errors and curiosities such as inverted overprints and imperforations between pairs are excluded.

The p12 issues of the 1898 stamp, printed from 1905 onwards, together with the Princes and 1910 issues, were printed on paper watermarked in large outline letters "JAS WRIGLEY & SON Ld - 219". Many collectors distinguish between stamps which show a portion of this watermark, which appears twice in each sheet, and those which do not. The listing below does not make this distinction.

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

bl=blue g=green y=yellow

The middle column indicates the overprint type. For handstamped Congo Belge overprints, B = Brussels, L = Local.

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

1898

I1+A1	p14(CA), p11x14(EF), p12x14(EF), p14x12(EF)
I2+A1	p12(DB)
I2+A1 Princes	p14(EX)

The statement that the stamps with compound perforation are I1+A1 rather than I2+A1 is plausible but cannot be confirmed. None of the examples in Ray Keach's



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or in my possession show portions of a watermark.

1909 Congo Belge handstamp

I1+A1	B1	p14(EE)
I1+A1	B2	p14(DE)
I1+A1	B5	p14(DE)
I1+A1	B6	p14(DE)
I1+A1	L1	p14(EE)
I1+A1	L3	p14(EE)
I1+A1	L4	p14(DD)
I1+A1	L5	p14(DD)
I2+A1	L1	p12(CB)
I2+A1	L2	p12(DC)
I2+A1	L3	p12(ED)
I2+A1	L4	p12(DC)
I2+A1	L5	p12(DC)
I2+A1	L6	p12(ED)
I2+A1	L7	p12(ED)
I2+A1 Princes	B2	p14(EX)

Du Four also reports B3, L2 and L6 (p14) and L8 (p12), but these cannot be confirmed by Ray Keach or myself. Forged overprints are common.

1909 Congo Belge typo

I1+A1	p14(EX)
I2+A1	p12(CA)
I2+A1 Princes	p14(DC)

1910 bilingual

II+A1 y-gr	p14(BB)
II+A1 bl-gr	p14(DE)
II+A2 bl-gr	p14(CE)

1918 Red Cross

III+B	p14(CD)
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1921 Recuperation

I2+A1	L1	p12(EX)
I2+A1	Typo	p12(EX)
II+A1 y-gr		p14(BB)
II+A1 bl-gr		p14(CC)
II+A2 bl-gr		p14(BA)

1918 Red Cross AO

III+B	p14(CD)
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This gives a total of 35 varieties of the 10fr.

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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.

I1+A1 and I2+A1

There are few centre plate varieties on these plate combinations. On the other hand frame plate I is easy to position. When Waterlow Bros and Layton impressed the plate - with the 3½fr, their first assignment for the Belgian authorities - they cannot have been satisfied with the result, because almost all positions were retouched by hand to strengthen the shading in various parts of the design.

The plater should start by looking at the small dark triangle in the upper left corner of the stamps. Only in positions 1,2,4,5,10 and 25 was this triangle left unretouched. In these positions the upper part of the triangle shows irregular white blotches. Everywhere else it was crudely retouched with (usually) 6 or more short, heavy lines. In 13-24,28-30,39,40,44,45,47,48 and 50 these lines are horizontal. In 3,6-9,11,12,27,37,41-43,46 and 49 they are nearly horizontal, sloping upwards from left to right. In 26,31-34 and 36 they are more steeply diagonal, again sloping upwards from left to right. In 38 they slope the other way, while 35 has a criss-cross of near-horizontal and near-vertical lines. The number of lines and their placing relative to one another vary throughout the sheet. In position 15 (but only this position) the top right triangle is also retouched.

In many positions there is some strengthening of one or more of the upper horizontal framelines, especially at the left or right corners. In some positions the printers were also dissatisfied with the bottom shading. The double line below the left 10 was retouched into a single thick line in 39,44-47 and 49. The diagonal shading immediately above the bottom frameline was retouched, and extends in places into the bottom margin, under the right corner in 24,26,33 and 38, and under both corners in 20,28,29 and 36. Through lack of retouching there is a thick white line under the left 10 in 1 (Balasse V4), and a smaller white mark in the same place in 25.

Several positions were re-entered as well as retouched. In 2,18,41 and 43 there is doubling in the bottom right corner, in or around the 10. In 41 (Balasse V6) the bottom left corner is also retouched. In 34 the upper right lettering is doubled (Balasse V4).

The only centre plate variety of note is the 'white sea' variety in 10 and 35 (Balasse V1). In these positions the little vertical squiggle 2mm below the stern of the boat is almost invisible, and the horizontal lines under the middle of the boat are faint. During the 1910 issue these lines were retouched to form centre plate A2 - see below.