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BULLETIN 90

BELGIAN CONGO



STUDY CIRCLE

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VICE-PRESIDENTIAL COLUMN

Parcel Post 'Stamps'

In Bulletin No. 33 we reported the existence of priced labels inscribed 'COLIS POSTAUX' as in illustration A below. Their use was explained in Bulletin No. 38 and an additional value was reported in Bulletin No. 48.



A



B

A member has sent me a photocopy of more of these labels including an additional value of Type A above, the 2 francs, and also two values, 41 francs and 200 francs of similar type but with smaller numerals-Type B above.

We now know of the following values of Type A: 1F, 2F, 10F, 20F, 50F, and 100F. Of Type B only the 41F and 200F. 41F appears a curious value but it presumably served some special rate.

'Belgian Stamps Overprinted for use in the Congo'

An American member has sent me an extract from Linn's Stamp News illustrating a 25c Belgian stamp of the 1884 issue crudely overprinted 'ETAT DU CONGO' it even has a Belgian cancellation.

The overprint is undoubtedly completely bogus, as is the overprint "CONGO" sometimes seen alone on similar Belgian stamps. It is impossible to believe that they were even essays.



Early Postal Rates to Adjacent Territories

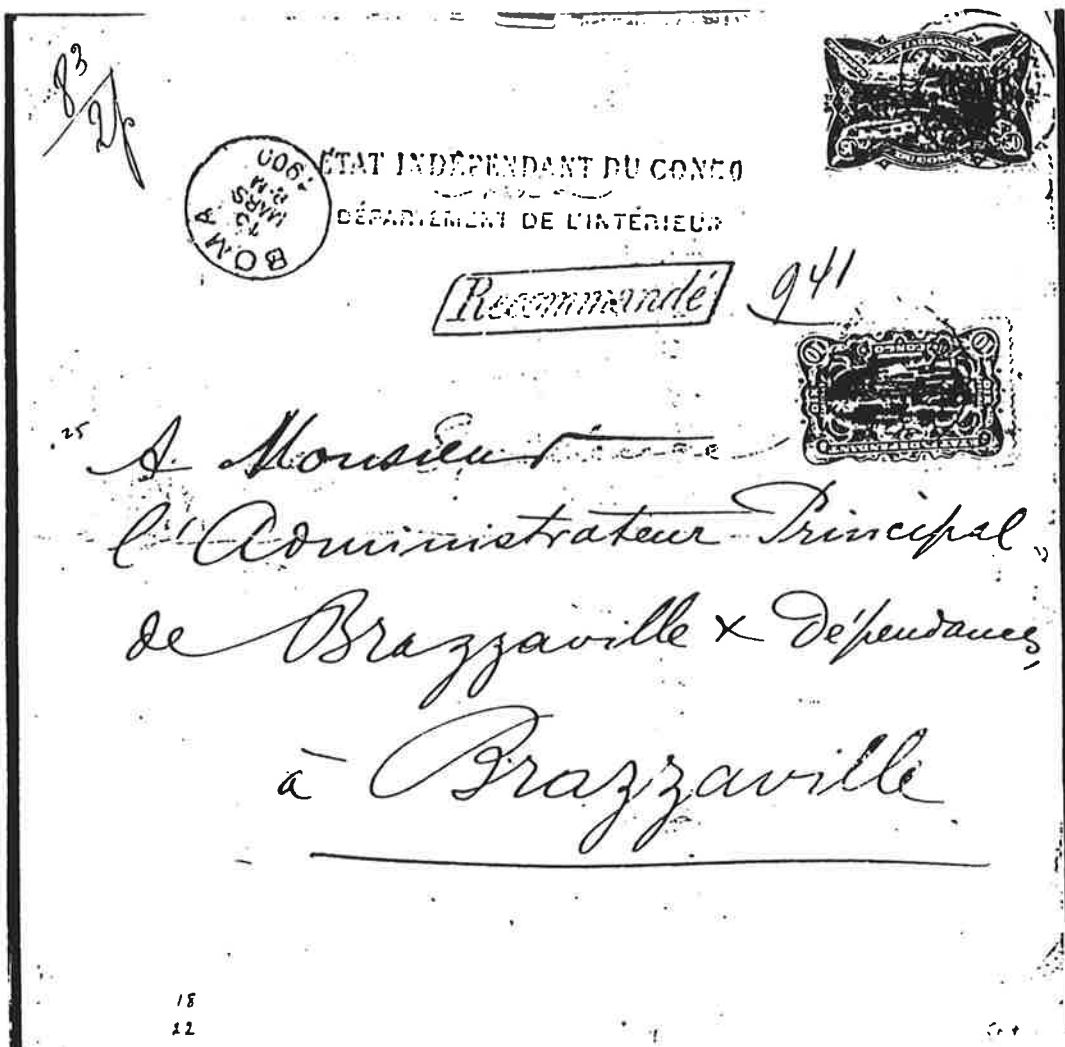
We know from the legend on the 1889 issue of internal postal stationery cards that, when the internal postal stationery card rate was reduced from 15c to 10c, the internal rate applied also to adjoining territories as far north as Libreville and as far south as Mossamedes in German South West Africa. With the issue of the February 1897 internal cards the range of usage of these cards was extended as far as Gold Coast to the north and the whole of German South West Africa to the south.

This raises a number of queries:

1. There must have been an official announcement of this concession in postal rate to the adjoining countries but does anyone know of it?
2. Was it a mutual reduction in postal rate between the Congo Free State and the adjacent countries or was it a unilateral action by the Free State?
3. The territories mentioned on the post cards are on the Atlantic seaboard through which all foreign mail passed in 1889 but later, while the reduced rate was still applicable, foreign mail was crossing the frontiers to the east of the Congo. Did the reduced rate also apply to Sudan, Uganda, German East Africa and Rhodesia? I remember having an internal postal stationery card travelling relatively few miles but addressed to Kansanshi in Northern Rhodesia and this without the additional 5c adhesive required for post cards to foreign destinations.
4. It is inconceivable that the concession of internal rate to adjacent countries covered only postal stationery cards. It must also have covered letters, printed matter and picture post cards. Do we know of any official statement that this was the case?

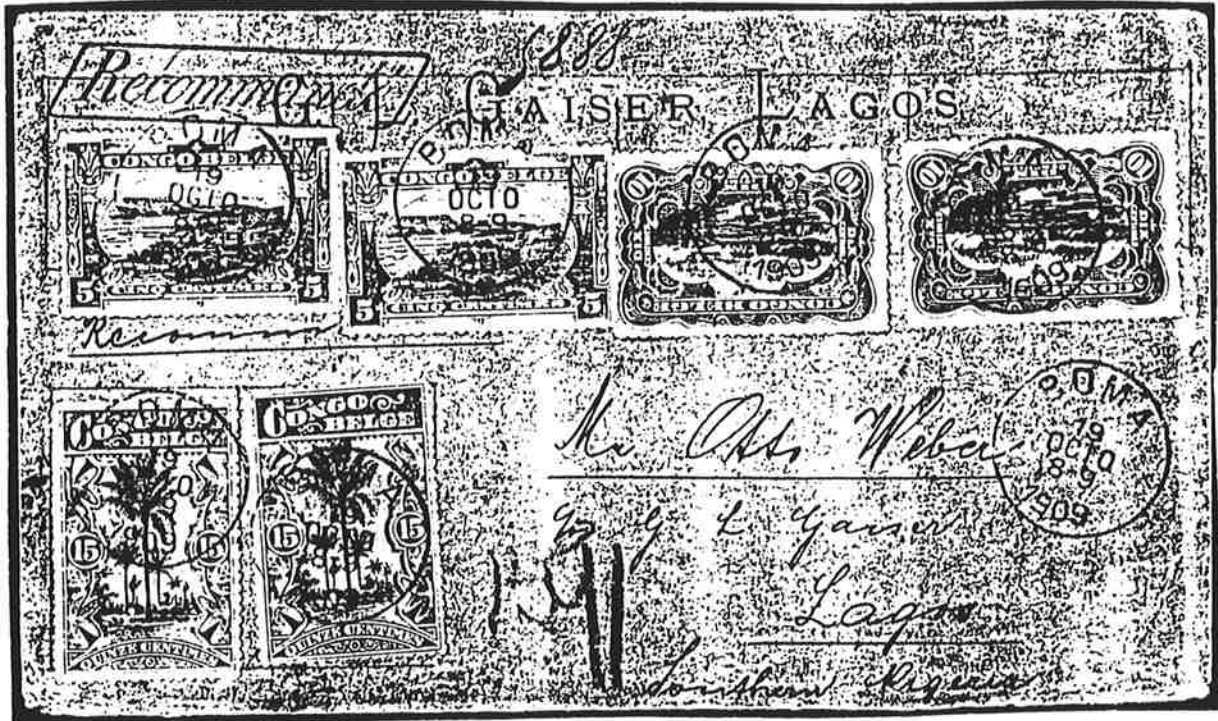
5. The last issue of internal postal stationery cards to bear the legend was the Unilingual of 15 June 1909. When the existing cards were overprinted in 1910 with either new values or wavy lines the legend on the internal cards was deleted and it is presumed that the special concessionary rate to adjacent countries had been withdrawn. Do we know of any official statement to that effect?

From 1886 to 1910 there must have been a considerable amount of mail sent to adjacent countries but little seems to have survived and it is hard to find. I would like to discuss three such covers.



This is a registered printed matter wrapper recently submitted for a certificate. It is addressed to Brazzaville in French Congo. The weight was 83 grams requiring, in 1900, postage of 10 centimes for internal mail and 20 centimes for foreign mail. The registration fee was 25c for internal packages and 50c for foreign. The total franking was 60c and there is no indication of a lost adhesive.

The Expert Committee gave its opinion that the franking of 60 centimes was correct comprising 10 centimes INTERNAL postage and 50 centimes FOREIGN registration fee. In other words although the postage to an adjacent country was at the internal rate the registration fee remained at the foreign rate.



This is a recently acquired registered 1909 cover to Lagos which travelled from Boma on S.S. Europe to Cotonou, Dahomey and thence to Lagos. The franking is 60 centimes and this is difficult to explain. The internal letter rate at the time was 15 centimes and the foreign rate 50 centimes. The envelope is sealed with the flap tied by transit cancellations so that it could not have been treated as 'printed matter'. I think that the letter was 5 centimes underfranked and there should have been 65 centimes of stamps viz: 15c internal postage plus 50 centimes of foreign registration.

It is, however, very unlikely that the postal clerk at the principal post office in Boma would have accepted an underfranked registered letter.

ON HIS BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S SERVICE.



His Excellency

The Governor of the Gold Coast Colony,

&c. &c. &c.

ACCRA.

CONSULATE OF
 F.O.M.A.)
 LOANDA.)

The last cover (shown on the previous page) is a 1904 letter from Boma to Gold Coast and is franked 25 centimes, no particular postal rate, and there is no indication of a lost adhesive. 15 centimes was the internal single letter rate, 30 centimes the internal double letter rate and 50 centimes the single foreign rate. It is considered that the letter was 10 centimes overfranked.

Answers to the queries listed above and criticism of the assumptions and deductions made will be greatly appreciated.

To help in this study members are most earnestly requested to send details and photocopies of any pre-1910 covers, post cards or printed matter wrappers they have addressed to any central African country not only those on the Atlantic seaboard.

Packet Sealing Labels

Mr. P. Lindekens, Avenue Josse Smets 4, 1160 Brussels, is studying the gummed printed labels used by the Congo post office to seal packets damaged or opened while in the post and would be very glad to receive from members photocopies, back and front, of covers and other packages bearing them.

He is also interested in mail from the Congo to which the similar labels of other postal administrations have been added.

R. H. KEACH

FUTURE STUDY CIRCLE MEETINGS

The Belgian Study Circle is holding its annual luncheon, with a meeting following, in London on 12 March 1994 and we have been invited to join them. We have provisionally accepted and will hold our own conventional meeting after lunch.

Will all BCSC members who have hopes of attending please inform our Secretary, Mr. L. G. Green, 29 New Road, Esher, Surrey KT10 9PG England IMMEDIATELY.

We shall be holding our annual week-end meeting next year at a coastal resort in Belgium--this to celebrate the centenary of the Mols stamps, at some, as not yet fixed date in the second two weeks of September 1994. It is hoped that there will be a large attendance of Belgian members, some on a daily basis. Will all those with hopes of attending inform Mr. Green as quickly as possible. They will then receive full details as soon as they are available. Otherwise details will not be circulated until the March Bulletin.

NEW LITERATURE

Mr. J-M Frenay has produced his long awaited volume on the ETAT INDEPENDANT Mols 10 centimes value. It is even better, and necessarily larger, than his earlier volumes on the higher values. Superbly illustrated, it makes possible, if not always easy, the allocation of isolated stamps to their proper plate position and proper determination of plate combinations without the aid of complete sheets. The book is an essential reference work for all who are interested in these stamps.

Copies are available from either Mr. J-M Frenay, Av. du Fond des Carpes 14, 1380 Lasnes, Belgium or through R. H. Keach, 25 Kingswood Rd, Tadworth, Surrey KT20 5EE England.

The price of the book is 750 FB + 60 FB postage in Belgium. To foreign destinations, via sea mail £16.50, via air mail £19.00

CERTIFICATES OF AUTHENTICITY

Subjects for certification to be received not later than 31 January 1994 by R. H. Keach.

Members are reminded that each year they are entitled, without charge, to two certificates for single stamps or to a discount of £3.00 if larger items are submitted.

Apart from the annual free pair - and the BCSC would quickly go bankrupt if members submitted subjects only for the free certification - prices are modest: £1.50 for a single stamp and £4.00 for a post card or small cover. Moreover if five or more subjects are submitted at one time (excluding those that are free) there is a discount of 20%.

"SALES DEPARTMENT"

A member has most generously donated a stock book of used 1915 stamps (probably 800-1000 each of the 25c and 1F (all II₁ + A₄ values) to be sold for the benefit of BCSC funds.

It will be some time before the stamps are all identified as to position and combination of plates but they will then be available to members. Those who already reconstruct sheets of the stamps will have first choice at the usual 1/3 catalogue price but the large remainder will then be available to other members who may care, in a very modest way, to embark on the reconstruction from single stamps of complete sheets, a most fascinating aspect of Congo collecting. For completely reconstructed or partly reconstructed sheets the price will be 1/5 catalogue, a real bargain. Enquiries are solicited.

Members are reminded that much of Peter Wright's collection of stamps still remains available and I shall be glad to receive want lists of 'ordinary' stamps.

I have been sent a small batch of unused pictorial postal stationery cards in mint condition. They are:

5c: Nos. 7, 8, 12, 14, 19, 21, 24, 30, 33, 42 & 45 at £1.20 each;

10c: Nos. 4, 20, 27, 42, 44, 47, 54, 56, 57, 60, 62, 63 and 66 at £1.00 each;

15/5c: Nos. 66, 67 and 68 at £5.00 each;

15/10c: Nos. 17, 31, 38, 47, 63, 66, 67 and 68 at £2.00 each;

30c: Nos. 96 and 111 at £2.00 each.

R. H. KEACH

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members are reminded that their subscriptions for 1994 are due on 1 January and it will avoid the cost of extra postage if they are paid promptly. Subscriptions are:

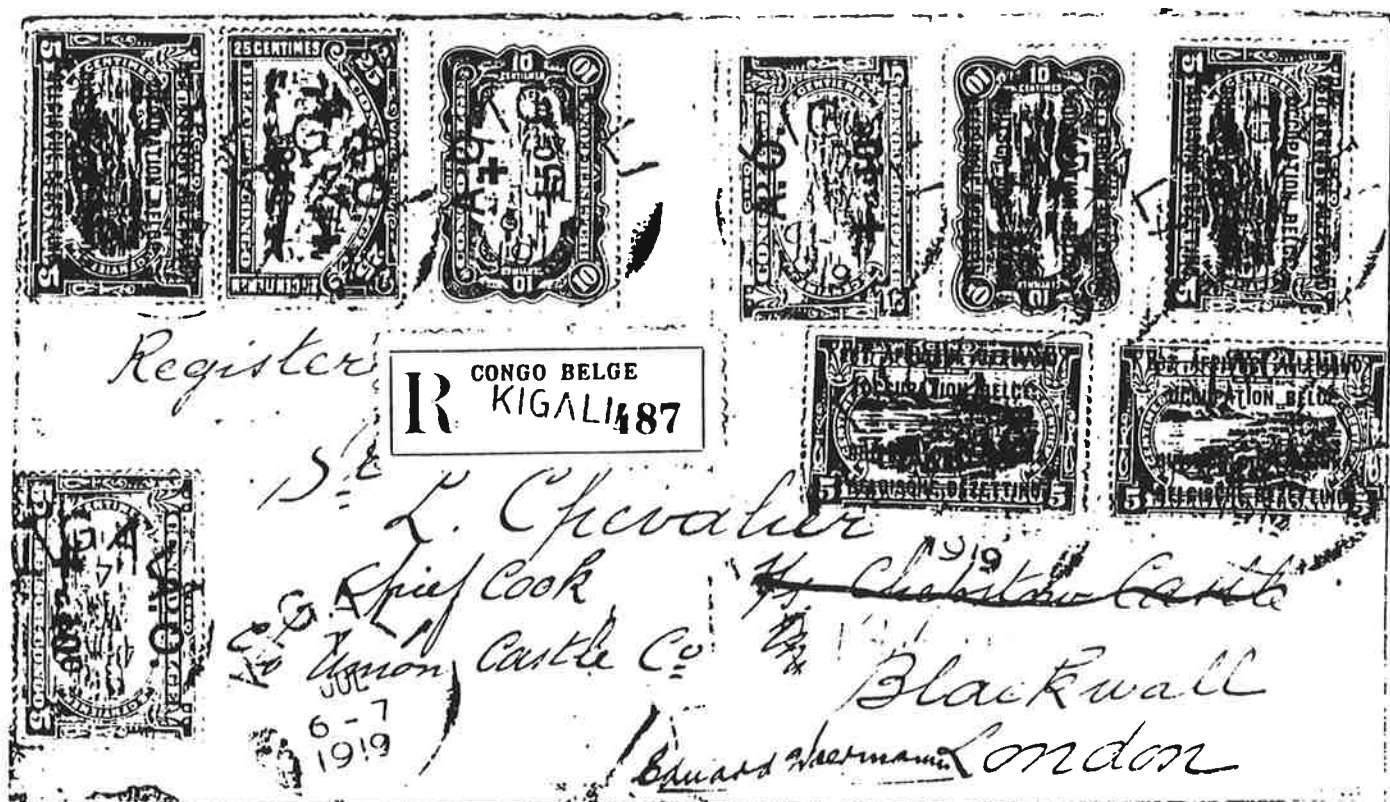
Belgium: 400FB payable to Abbé G. Gudenkauf, 130 rue de Savoie, 1060, Brussels, CCP 000-0809372-04;

USA and Canada: US \$13.00 to E. M. Lavitt, P O Box 900, Rockville CT 06066;

Great Britain and elsewhere in Europe £7.00 to L. G. Green, 29 New Road, Esher, Surrey KT10 9PG England;

Africa, Asia and Australia £8.00 to L. G. Green.

A 1919 REGISTERED COVER FROM KIGALI



The London dealer in whose box this cover was reposing knew that even the low values of the 1918 'A.O.' Red Cross issue are hard to find on mail which is not manifestly philatelic. He also knew that the writer has a particular interest in mail addressed to individuals aboard ships. Those two factors added up to an unacceptable price until, six months later, friend dealer lowered his sights somewhat. Even he, however, had not obeyed the second rule of cover handling, i.e. after looking on the back, look inside.

The cover bears the first type of Kigali cancellation, struck on four 'A.O.' low values and on five 'EAAOB' overprints. the 75c total postage is correct for a double weight registered letter to England; the cover has lost its original wax seal, leaving

a stain, but originally would have weighed between 15 and 30 grams, i.e. 2x25c plus 25c registration fee. The original addressee would have been a Belgian or a Frenchman serving as chief cook on the Union-Castle liner 'Chepstow Castle'. There is a transit mark with only the month 'SE' legible. At this point all is clearly in good order.

However, closer examination shows that the cover has been reused, having originally been a printed Banque du Congo Belge envelope addressed to 'Monsieur A. Degroodt, Kwidjwi', but the bank branch is not quoted nor is there any evidence of postal use. The latter is not surprising as Kwidjwi (also known as Idjwi) is an island in the middle of Lake Kivu and the only evidence of a post office there is to be found in 'La Philatelie de Transition' by

George Celis-from 1974 but bearing the name Bugarula. The nearest branch of Banque du Congo Belge in 1919 would have been at Stanleyville.

The envelope having been turned inside out for reuse, as wartime shortages no doubt still existed, Degroodt's name now appears as sender. The cover was put into the mails at Kigali, a main office which had been on the Usumbura-Bukoba postal messenger route during the German colonial period. Sixteen days Kigali to Bukoba is not at all surprising, given the terrain; from Bukoba the cover would have traveled on the fortnightly Lake Victoria steamer to Kisumu for the direct railway link to Mombasa. It is possible that the mail steamer from Mombasa to London still sailed only once monthly, which could account for the September London arrival mark.

At this point one may well wonder at the lack of comment on any postal redirection from London Docks (Blackwell), given the move of the addressee from the 'Chepstow Castle' to the 'Eduard Woermann', a vessel well known for pre-war West African voyages by the (German) Woermann Line. In fact the 'Eduard Woermann' was one of a number of vessels delivered by Germany to Great Britain in 1919 as reparations and was managed by Union-Castle on behalf of the Controller of Shipping.

The writer hopes that the long background to this item has not wearied the reader. The cover does indeed have a beginning, a middle and an end. It might possibly show a degree of philatelic interest by Degroodt, by the franking and by the crossed (blue) lines of the type used in Great Britain on registered mail: the lines were drawn before the stamps and label were affixed. However, it differs radically from most concoctions bearing 'A.O.' stamps.

By a remarkable coincidence after

these notes had been drafted there was noticed a quite similar item in a 1991 auction lot description (and partial illustration) of a registered cover from Kigali 19.4.1919 registration No. 240 and same handwriting to one Durand c/o the Suffolk Hotel, (H)untington, U.S.A.

It would be appreciated if anyone able to shed any more light on the Degroodt correspondence would write to the author.

Norman Clowes, 20 Ogwen Drive,
Lakeside, Cardiff CF2 6LL Great Britain

WORLD WAR I-THE TANGANYIKA FLOTILLA-THE SPICER SIMPSON EXPEDITION

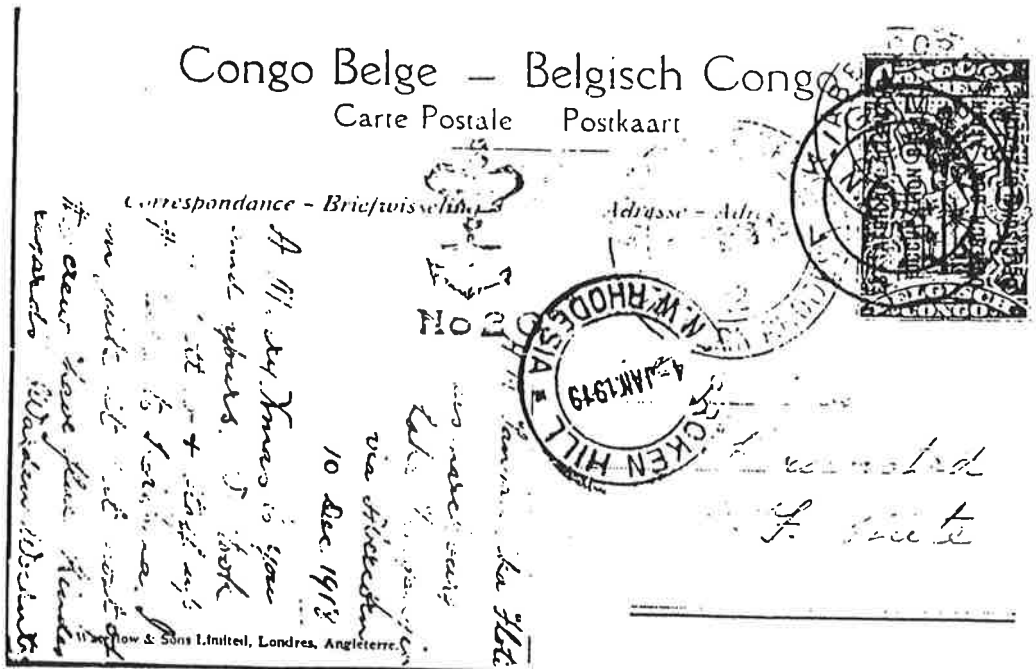
Mr. Hal Hoyt has sent details of a Belgian Congo postcard which appeared in the Rhodesian Study Circle Journal No. 166 (September 1993) It had been written by "J. Warden-Wolhutter at Bismarckburg in occupied German East Africa on 10 December 1918 bearing "A.P.O. No. 2/Northern Rhodesia "despatch C.D.S." 11 DEC 18".

The card had been purchased earlier, precanceled at Kigoma "1 OC 18".

The message reads " We took von Lettow and staff up the Lake to Kigoma (the defeated German General and staff). An interesting aspect is that due to the war, in fact, being over (11 November 1918) the Naval Censor handstamp stuck in purple with Crown and Anchor and which was still utilized at the Army Base P.O. had the wording "Passed by Censor" completely cut away as censorship was no longer necessary. Transit marks of Abercorn "12 DEC 18 and Broken Hill "4 JAN 19" appear.

Mr. Hoyt reports that he has a 5c OCCUPATION ps card cancelled KIGOMA 18 JAN 18 with a 5c adhesive on the view side cancelled BPCVPK N° 9 with date unclear. He had always assumed that the

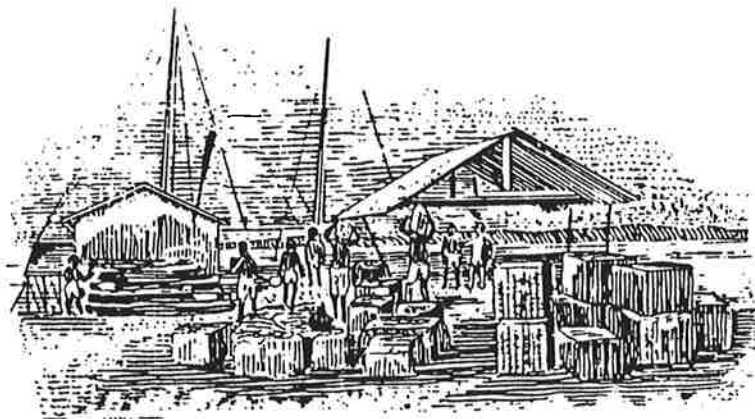
existence of the card reported (which is shown here) leads him to the conclusion that the card he has might well have been pre-cancelled at Kigoma and later posted at BPCVPK 9.



A SIGNIFICANT POSITIONAL VARIETY ON THE 50c 1920 AIR MAIL

Our member, Mr. R. R. Ingels has spotted a significant positional variety on the 50c value of the 1920 air mail series; this despite previous studies of complete sheets which managed to miss it. He sent Mr. Peter Foden a photocopy of the variety, which appears below, and Mr. Ingels reports that he has found two mint stamps and three cancelled and it appears on 2½ sheets owned by him.

Mr. Foden comments: "The variety appears on position No. 60 of the sheet and takes the form of an oblique black (i.e. centre plate) scratch, almost 3mm long and widening at the top to about 1mm thick, appearing almost like an additional very thick wireless mast issuing from the roof on the hut. So far the variety has been found on 2½ sheets, 3 mint and 4 used stamps, so there can be little doubt that the variety is constant"



EDITORS NOTES--FUTURE BULLETINS

With this issue we come to the end of the publication of Brian Hudson's monumental work on 'Plating the Mols'. The study not only manifests his vast knowledge and erudition but demonstrates the product of what is obviously a work of enormous research and study. Belgian Congo philately is in his debt for what will undoubtedly be recognized as the premier work on the subject. (A combination of the studies by Hudson and the Frenay will give the user many hours of pleasure). It is to be hoped that his efforts will lead many more of Belgian Congo Philatelists into this most fascinating area of collecting.

Future Bulletin issues will include 1. further listing of Protestant Missions in the Belgian Congo; 2. a discussion of the Philatelic consequences of the 1977 rebellion in Katanga (*Celis*); 3. a listing of locations of BPCVPK cancelers (*Abbè Gudenkauf and André Vindevoghel*); 4. the March auction; 5. Airgraphs (*Jeukens*); 6. books on Zaire (*Michael Round*); and much, much more.

PLEASE SEND IN YOUR 1994 SUBSCRIPTIONS PROMPTLY. IT WILL SAVE THE CIRCLE POSTAGE.

WE WISH ALL OUR MEMBERS A MOST SUCCESSFUL PHILATELIC YEAR.

E. M. LAVITT

PLATING MOLS STAMPS

With this issue are enclosed the last three articles in the series of eleven articles on the Mols stamps which began with Bulletin 85.

If any member has comments or amendments to suggest to any of the eleven sections, I would be most grateful to receive them. In particular, I would welcome any additions to the lists of plate combinations, shade, surcharge and perforation varieties arising from examination by members of their own collections. It would be helpful to have comments by 1 March 1994.

When the series was launched I said that I might produce a consolidated and updated version for sale to members after the last article appeared. At this year's AGM the Study Circle kindly agreed in principle that some of its surplus funds could be used to partly subsidise such a document. If a significant number of amendments are received, I will attempt to put together a consolidated version in the course of 1994. If few amendments are received, I will probably delay it for two or three years so as to be able to incorporate the changes that will undoubtedly result from my and other members' further researches.

Comments on the articles should be sent to me, please, at 92 Oakley Street, London SW3 5NR.

BRIAN HUDSON

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 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

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



PLATING MOLS STAMPS PART 9

Plate combinations

1898	I+A	Original frame and centre plates
1910	II1+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 II1+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 II1 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.



PLATING MOLS STAMPS PART 9

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.

PLATING MOLS STAMPS PART 9

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

PLATING MOLS STAMPS PART 9

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. III 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 III from II2, no sheet position as such is classified as difficult, provided the red guide dot is visible.

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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	État 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 imperfections between 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

III1+A3 y-br		p13½(DB), p14(BA), p15(DB)
III1+A3 oc		p14(CB), p15(CB)
III1+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)
III1+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 III1+A3 y-br (p14 and p15), III1+A3 oc, II+A4a and II2+A4b (all p14).

1916 Tombeur (Ruanda and Urundi)

III1+A3 y-br	K	p15(EE)
III1+A3 y-br	G	p15(EX)

There are many forgeries.

1916 Est Africain

III1+A3 oc	S	p14(DC), p15(DE)
III1+A3 oc	L1(o)	p14(BC), p15(CD)
III1+A3 oc	L1(t)	p14(CE), p15(CE)
III1+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.

II1+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 $2\frac{1}{2}$ mm 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	II+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.



PLATING MOLS STAMPS PART 11

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(E), p12x14(E), p14x12(E)
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



PLATING MOLS STAMPS PART 11

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.

PLATING MOLS STAMPS PART 11

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.

PLATING MOLS STAMPS PART 11

Difficult positions in frame plate I are 8,17,22,27 and 30. In 8 the top frameline is weak over EN. In 17 it shows some thickening on the left. In 27 retouching can just be detected at the far left of the bottom frameline. Otherwise, these five difficult positions can be identified only by careful scrutiny of the retouch marks in the top left triangle.

The only difference between I1 and I2 was the addition of the printers' name and address at centre height on the left and right selvages. There is no difference in the stamps themselves. I2 was introduced when the perforation was changed from p14 to p12; Princes stamps are also I2.

II+A1 and II+A2

In the 1910 issue of the 3fr, also printed by Waterlow Bros and Layton, all positions except in the last row have a guide dot under the bottom left corner of the frames. These were holes drilled in the plate into which a pointer attached to the shaft of the transfer roller was inserted to guide its application. There are similar dots in the 10fr frame plate, but only in a few positions. It seems that normal practice was to burnish out the dots, but this was partly overlooked with the 10fr and wholly overlooked with the 3fr. In the 10fr the dots are found to the left of the corner in 31, directly underneath it in 1,15 and 21, and to the right of it in 6,11,14,16,36 and 41.

As with frame plate I, plate II was retouched in many places before being put into use. In most positions the bottom frameline was retouched to strengthen it and shows unevenness as a result. In 12,13,15,24-26 and 41 the retouching caused the inner two horizontal lines at the far left end to be thickened into one. The top left corner is retouched in various ways in 10,12,15,22-26,29-31,36,41 and 45.

Other conspicuous frame plate varieties are the doubling of the lower left frameline, with a horizontal line across the D of DIX, in 1 (Balasse V7); a long curved green line over the flag in 6 (Balasse V8, in early printings only); and a curved green scratch through and to the right of the left 10 in 46. In many positions there are short green scratches, usually slightly slanting, in the top or bottom margins, but unfortunately they are visible only in the early printings in yellow-green and had disappeared by the time of the later blue-green printings.

Centre plate A1 is the same as in the 1898 issue and shows the same 'white sea' variety in 10 and 35. By the time of the 1910 issue, however, the plate had been cleaned in a way which left long, fine vertical scratch marks in the sky above the steamer. Although faint, these marks are helpful to positioning since they are different in each position and are visible through all printings from the earliest to the latest.

In the course of the later blue-green printings, the centre plate was retouched to make A2. The sea lines were retouched in 10 and 35 (Balasse V2) and in 18, and retouching of sky lines in different places is visible in 5,14 and 15. In 27 a vertical curved scratch appeared above the flag. I have not found differences between A1 and A2 in other positions of the sheet. It seems that most of the blue-green stamps are A2 rather than A1.

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The yellow-green stamps of 1910 are generally easy to position from the scratch marks in the top and bottom margins as well as from the other varieties described above. The blue-green stamps are often more difficult where the other varieties are not present. Attention has to be paid to irregularities in the bottom frameline and to the faint black scratches in the sky.

III+B

The Red Cross and AO stamps were printed not by Waterlow Bros and Layton but by Waterlow and Sons, the printers of the other values. It was therefore necessary to prepare new dies and new plates. These appear to copy the 1910 design, but close examination shows many small differences, particularly in the shrubbery under the bow of the steamer.

Unlike the earlier 10fr issues, frame plate III has lay marks: 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. Otherwise the plates are clean and free from flaws. Apart from a few small frame plate marks in the top margin or under the bottom right corner, the only real guide to positioning lies in the faint vertical green guidelines at or to the right of the top right corner. These are present in most positions and vary in length and in displacement from the right frameline. They make positioning considerably easier than it might have been otherwise, provided that the plater has a reference sheet at hand. Of course the high cost of these stamps means that relatively few collectors reconstruct sheets of them.
