

BELGIAN CONGO SPECIALISTS STUDY CIRCLE

Bulletin No. 6

April, 1952

REPORT OF MEETING

The fifth meeting of the Study Circle was held on Saturday, March 15th, at 12, Avenue Mansions, Finchley Road, London, N.W.2. and there were present Mr. J. Wright (in the chair), Mrs. D.M. Green and Messrs. H. Compton, P.G. Cresswell and R.H. Keach. Apologies for absence were received from Messrs. A.M. Castiaux, L.G. Green, O.C. Loader, W.J. Thrasher and A.G. Wood.

The Secretary-Treasurer presented the accounts over the period February, 1951, to 15th March, 1952, showing a balance in hand of £1. 9. 3, with tangible assets consisting of four unused section book covers and two and a half reams of duplicating paper valued at £4.14. 8. It was thought inadvisable for the Study Circle to get into debt and that a Call for 10s. 6d be made.

Messages of goodwill had been received from Messrs. A.M. Castiaux and A.I. Heim and from Major Corbisier de Meaultsart who had very kindly sent a further batch of covers for distribution amongst members.

A number of lots for the auction sale had been received but there was still room for further lots if members had them available. It was agreed that the various lots should be circulated amongst members, as are the Section Books, with the reserve prices indicated quite clearly. Members would thereby have the opportunity of seeing the lots before sending their bids direct to the secretary. The next meeting was considered and owing to the impossibility of arranging a mutually convenient date in May it was advanced to September with Saturday, 20th, as the provisional date. It was agreed that the 40 centimes value of the Mols series should be discussed with the possibility of adding to it the 50 centimes value. Mr. Compton volunteered to open the discussion and it was left to him to decide whether he should confine his remarks to the one value or should deal with both.

Members of the Study Circle had been invited to the Belgian Specialists' Annual Party on Saturday, 29th March. A number of members were attending although these, with two exceptions, were already members of the Belgian Study Circle. The Belgian Congo Specialists' had been invited to fill two frames and a composite display was to be arranged.

There being no other formal business Mr. Wright gave his address on the 25 centimes value of the Mols series. He showed copies of all issues of Belgian Congo, many of them in complete sheets and all essays and plate proofs listed in the catalogues. Special mention should be made of the mint copy of the 1900 issue with the retouched frame line, the die proof of the 1910 issue modified to convert it to the prototype of the 1915 issue and a number of stamps showing "imperf. between" varieties.

Mr. Wright has made a special study of the 25 centimes value of the 1910 issue with particular reference to the frame plate and he showed much interesting and instructive material appertaining to this research.

On this value there is plenty of scope for several future meetings of the Study Circle.

At the conclusion of the meeting there was a very cordial vote of thanks to Mrs. Green for once again allowing the Circle to meet at her flat.

5 CENTIMES SECTION BOOK

This has completed the round of "home" members and the comments made by members indicate that it has been perused with interest and care. The additions and amendments are noted and appreciated and will, in due course, be incorporated in a revised article.

It is clear that the issue still offering scope for analysis is that of 1910 where the continued use of the original centre of 1900 entailed re-impression to overcome the weakening of the printing, due to wear of the plate. It may be argued that the re-use of a plate should not be classed as a "new" plate and that the latter should only apply when a previous plate is discarded. On the other hand, when a plate becomes so worn that re-impression of all the digits is carried out, it may well be distinguished from its original state, as in the case with the tables in Balasse and in General du Four's valuable articles on these issues.

It might, however, be suggested that the designations "State I, State II" would best describe such conditions, as in fact have been the case in later articles on the 1915 issues. In these the frame plate of the 1 franc stamp in particular undoubtedly received much "facelifting" during its career - resulting in triple and even quadruple re-entries in some places.

There is still also the queer double print effect found upon the 1915, 5 centimes centres, which is not easily explained. These are not clear cut as is found with roller die re-entries and at one time I thought the use of electro type plates might have been the cause. Enquiries of the printers failed to produce any useful answer to this question but it was quite clear that the re-use of plates was an economy that is not favoured in the house of Waterlow of today! My friend almost disclaimed his firm's connection with some of the specimens with which he was confronted.

I feel sure that the changes in the plates used in 1910 (and up to the 1914 war) and of course the new plates used in 1915, were due to the momentous historic events of that time. It is known that stocks of the 1910 stamps were captured by the Germans when they entered Brussels and I have seen it said that the plates were also captured with them. This would account for the need to produce entirely new plates in England for both centres and frames. War time economies in paper quality and ink would affect the standard of printing and, possibly, hurried production of the new stamps contributed to the somewhat inferior quality of the 1915 issue. Any further light on this aspect would be of interest.

W.J.T.

CLUB PACKET

The organisation of the Club Packet referred to in the last Bulletin has proceeded very slowly but it has now been sent on circuit.

POSTAL AUCTION

The lots for the Postal Auction are now circulating amongst the members. Copies of the catalogues have been sent to overseas members.

PRELIMINARY COMPOSITE CATALOGUE OF BOOKS OWNED BY MEMBERS

Will members please add to the above list, enclosed with an earlier Bulletin, the following:-

- 12 Le Timbre a 5 francs de 1894 - J. Crustin - 1944 - French - 6.
- 13 Les "Dix Francs Verts" du Congo - Charles Joncker - 1947 - French - 6.
- 14 Catalogue de la Poste Aerienne Belgique et Congo Belge - Charles Van Der Haeghen - 1934 - French - 1.

THE COUNTESS OF FLANDERS

It is regretted that it was stated incorrectly on Page 2 of Bulletin No. 5 that the Countess of Flanders was the mother of the three children Leopold, Charles and Marie Jose. She was, of course, their grandmother.

Leopold II's only son died before his father and, owing to the decease of Phillip, the Count of Flanders and second son of Leopold I, and of his eldest son Baudouin, the crown passed to his second son Albert. Leopold, Charles and Marie Jose were Albert's children and therefore the Countess's grandchildren.

This explanation does not, of course, change the fact that the children were eight, six and three years old respectively.

1928 STANLEY ISSUE

Following the paragraph in the last issue of the Bulletin, Mr. Wright has provided some interesting notes on the perforation of this issue, of all values of which he has complete sheets of one hundred (20 x 5).

The stamps are comb perforated  $13\frac{3}{4}$  - 14 and the vertical spacing of the horizontal rows of perforation varies. In the case of all values except the 1 franc the vertical distances in millimetres between successive lines of perforations are, starting from the top,  $35\frac{1}{2}$ , 37,  $35\frac{1}{2}$ , 37 and  $35\frac{1}{2}$ , totalling  $180\frac{1}{2}$  mms. In the case of the 1 franc value, however, the vertical distances are  $35\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $35\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $35\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $35\frac{1}{2}$  and 37, totalling 179 mms.

If other members have complete sheets or blocks of the 1 franc value it will be interesting to learn if their observations are the same as Mr. Wright's.

ETUDE SUR LES FAUX TIMBRES D'EUROPE

Mrs. Green has supplied a translation of the section of the above book dealing with the Congo and a copy is attached to this Bulletin.

THE GREY STAMPS OF THE SECOND ISSUE

In a letter to Mr. Wright, General du Four states that it is easily possible to tell originals from reprints of the 50 centimes, 5, 25 and 50 franc values, of the 1892 - 1894 issues. Under the ultra-violet lamp the originals appear bright yellow-green, whereas the reprints appear dull grey-black.

The Secretary has tested his own copies and has found that two of the 50 centime are reprints, one unused and one cancelled. The other copies of all values

are of two types (1) those which under the lamp appear very bright yellow-green on very white paper and (2) those which appear bright yellow-green on blue or bluish paper. He has found both (1) and (2) on the 50 centimes with damaged "A" variety so that both must be originals.

RE-ENTRY IN 3 FR 50 VALUE OF 1898

Mr. Heim has sent photographs of the above stamp in which there is a strong re-entry in the bottom lefthand corner. The scroll around "Trois" is clearly doubled in parts, the doubling being vertically downwards and the vertical lines of shading in the bottom panel are extended below the bottom frame line. The position in the sheet of the stamp is not, as yet, determined.

1915 ISSUE WITH COMPOUND PERFORATION 14 x 15

Balasse lists 10 and 25 centimes values of the 1915 Issue as existing with this compound perforation.

The 10 centimes value certainly exists with this perforation in the form of booklet sheets of 10. Does it exist with that perforation in the form of sheets of 50?

Is the 25 centimes with the compound perforation from sheets of 10 or 50? The stamp with compound perforation appears to be very uncommon and at least one member of the Study Circle has examined probably several thousand copies of the stamp without finding one with the compound perforation. Have other members of the Circle been more fortunate? It may be possible from a single copy to decide whether it is from full sheets or booklets.

THE CENTRE PLATES OF THE 25 CENTIMES MOLS

Below is a summary of information given in a letter from General du Four on the above subject which will be of general interest to members. The positions of the various varieties are shown on the attached sketch on which the various waterfalls are indicated by letters "C" and the rocks by letters "P".

General du Four states that if a variety, however insignificant, of the previous printing exists in the new printing then both printings are from the same plate. If in the new printing of the plate there is proof of an intentional alteration, then that is a new state of the plate, such alterations consisting of retouching, re-entering, additional guide lines or dots etc. If, however, in the new printing all varieties of the earlier printing have disappeared, then the new printing is considered to be from a new plate.

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Principal Plate Varieties</u>	<u>Plate</u>
1894	No. 39 has two horizontal short strokes at the right of waterfall C2 (position 2 on sketch). There are many horizontal and vertical guide lines on the stamp.	A1
1900	The variety 2 above, persists on No. 39 but the guide lines have disappeared. There is a re-entry on No. 40 there being traces of doubling of the natives. Thus, Plate A1 has been cleaned and at least partially re-entered.	A2
1910 Greenish Blue	Variety 2 partially exists on No. 39. There is a new re-entry on No. 23. There is a small oblique hair line in the left margin of No. 6 (see B on attached sketch). Thus Plate A2 has been re-entered.	A3
1910 Chalky Blue	The variety B above persists on No. 6. There are many very important re-entries. Thus Plate A3 has been re-entered.	A4
1910 Indigo Blue	None of the above varieties are present but No. 25 shows a new re-entry with the forest trees doubled. Thus there is a new plate.	B
1915	1. The same plate B as in the last 1910 printings. 2. Die II with additional shading around the rocks. Nos. 18, 19, 28 and 30 have horizontal guide lines through the centre. Thus a new plate has been used. 3. None of the previous varieties persists but Nos. 1, 2, 9 and 10 have a small dot (see 2 1 on attached sketch) and Nos. 6, 7, 8 and 9 have a small dot (see 2 2 on attached sketch), these being roller varieties. Thus a new plate has been used.	C
1918	The same plate D as in the 1915 Issue.	D

ADDITIONS TO BALASSE CATALOGUE

Although a book of immense value, the Balasse Catalogue does not pretend to be complete nor, as we know, is it entirely free from error and it is suggested that members record their uncatalogued findings in this Bulletin.

Uncatalogued plate varieties should not be included in this part of the Bulletin as they are of almost infinite variety but when Balasse plate varieties are found on stamps not chronicled they should be included.

Here are a few to begin, all seen by the Secretary:-

10 francs Ochre Balasse No. 13 overprinted "Specimen".

40 centimes Mols variety V.2 seen on No. R.32.

1 fr. 25 Albert Memorial Balasse No. 219 with imperforate margin on righthand side.

SCARCE STAMPS

The Secretary has recently had offers from Belgium of complete sheets of 1909 1 franc typographed "Congo Belge" (thought to be unique), 15 centimes Recovery surcharge on 50 centimes with typographed "Congo Belge", 15 centimes Recovery surcharge on 50 centimes Unilingual Issue and 1921 Recovery overprint on 5 francs with handstamped "Congo Belge", Balasse Nos. 46, 87A, 87B and 93A respectively. It is interesting to note that complete sheets of these stamps still exist.

EXTRACTS FROM PERIODICALS

\*Balasse Magazine Nos. 76 and 77

Emission dite "du General Tombeur" - Jules var Bleyenberghé.

Various documents dealing with the history of this issue are first presented.

The mass of authentically used locally overprinted stamps of this issue owned by members of the Cercle d'Etudes has been studied and it has been concluded that only one hand-stamp of each type was used.

It is thought very probable that the Havre printings were made with the same rubber stamps but this is apparently not definite. The Havre overprinting is in a characteristic ink.

\*Balasse Magazine No. 77.

Contribution a l'Etude de Quelques Valeurs de la Deuxieme Emission des Timbres de l'Etat Independant du Congo - Jules van Bleyenberghé.

This is a continuation of the article in Balasse Magazine No. 75.

The relative rarities of the 5 franc violet and 5 franc grey are discussed. The 10 franc grey is considered and it is thought that if originals do exist they are probably essays. Reprints almost certainly exist and there are forgeries.

\*Balasse Magazine No. 79

A Propos des Cachets "Ruanda" et "Urundi" - Alphonse Maes.

The local and Havre overprints are described. M. Maes has had the good fortune to examine twelve of the original rubber handstamps, six Ruanda and six Urundi, but they do not appear to have been used. It is clear that all six rubber stamps of each type were originally identical and it would have been impossible to differentiate between them. The article concludes by stating that although there were a number of rubber stamps there is one and one only authentic overprint of each type.

Le 10C. Centre Reverse (Le Coin des Chercheurs).

Information on the 1895 10 centimes with inverted centre is summarised including the existence of the three sheets of 50 and the story of H.A. Kennedy & Co. of London.

\*Balasse Magazine Nos. 79 and 80

Timbres Surcharges "Colis Postaux Fr. 3.50" - Jules van Bleyenbergh.

After examination of many of these stamps it is concluded there was only one rubber stamp used for the original overprint and only one metal stamp for the framed overprint. It is unknown whether the surcharging took place in Brussels or in the Congo or both.

Forged surcharges exist on both genuine and forged stamps and some of the former have genuine cancellations. The genuine framed overprint is found on the reprints as when the reprints were made the metal overprinting stamp was available to the forgers.

\*Le Philatelite Belge. No. 58. March - April, 1952

Trois Marques Postales du Congo Belge - E. C. M.

This short article describes three postal markings:-

1. "Consommez les Cafe du Congo" in an ellipse.
2. "Utiliser l'Avion" in a rectangle.
3. "Surtaxe Aerienne Insuffisante" in a rectangle.

RECENT AUCTION REALISATIONS

Robson Lowe, 12th March, 1952, Balasse 5 mint, two thin spots, £9; 13 mint, heavily mounted, £5. 5; 18C2, vertical pair Imperf. between, used, thin, £5; 23 and 25 used with Lado cancellation £8.10; 214/224C1 mint pairs, £8. 10.

Harmer Rooke, New York, Recent Auction (£1 = approx. 2.8 dollars).

18C1, fine mint, £39. 10; 18C1, tiny thinning, £36; 18C1, small thinning and off centre, £25; 29C1, two tiny thinnings, £205; 85A, £12.10; 93A, £24; 100ER1, fine mint, £35; 100ER1 used, tiny thinning, £27; 100ER1, block of four,

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fine mint, £89; 173E3, fullpane, £37. 10; 233-262E1, £7. 3; R15a, fine mint, £23; R23, fine mint, £18. 15.

RUANDA 65C1, fine mint, £7. 17; 117 and 122-125 fine mint, £3.11. 6; 114C1 mint pair, £4. 5; 130, 134, 135 and 141E1 £2. 3.

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ETUDE SUR LES FAUX TIMBRES D'EUROPE

By A. de Haene

CONGO BELGE

Translation of the above chapter

1886 Issue

For some months past stamps of this issue have been met with on paper differing from that of the old copies, printed in a different shade but showing all the characteristics of the original design. These stamps are unused.

On this subject a philatelic paper has spoken "of dangerous forgeries of Nos. 1 to 13 (Yvert and Tellier) perhaps due to the fact that the original plates have been in the hands of the Germans since the occupation (1914 - 18)".

This question has not been cleared up; anyhow if the Germans or... the Belgians have used the original plates which have fallen into their hands, it is not a question of forgeries but of private or unauthorized reprints. Let us hope that light will soon be thrown on this subject.

5 Francs Lilac, 1886

Besides the badly executed forgeries we will speak first of a dangerous forgery noted by M. Widdershoven in the "Revue Postale" for August 1924: The colour is either lilac, deep lilac or violet instead of pale lilac. The initials of the engraver are clearly designed. In the hair there is a short fork instead of a long one as in the forgeries of the 5 Franc value of Belgium.

These forgeries are found unused and used, the unused have a yellowish gum with an uneven surface, or white smooth and crackly like the originals. This last gum is found on the forgeries which more nearly approach the originals in shade. The unused are offered in singles, blocks and in entire sheets. They are also found imperf. or partly perforated.

Used copies have false cancellations, Boma, Leopoldville or Matadi of date 1886, the large cancellation being in deep blue. Other copies, those of the more successful shade, have a lighter cancellation of one of above places in blue or blue-black, the cancellation nearly always covering the whole of the stamp.

The genuine issue can only be cancelled Boma or Banana and rarely Vivi.

On another dangerous forgery there are the following deviations from the genuine.

Forgery.	Genuine.
Overall height too small	Overall dimensions $24\frac{1}{2} \times 20\frac{1}{2}$ mm. the height of the design being 21.1/5 mm.
Greyish paper	White paper.
Uneven perfs.	Regular perf. 15.
Lilac shade.	Bold clear violet.
Between the F and R of Francs there is a large dot topped by a line.	Two dots placed obliquely.
The figures 5 are thinner	Thicker.

Forgery

Genuine

All lines thinner  
The details of the beard sharper especially towards the neck.

Thicker.  
Details less sharp.

In a third type of good forgery the design is a trifle too large.

17 x 21½mm. instead of 17 x 21.1/5mm. The initials of the engraver are not in the bottom right hand corner. This forgery originated in Constantinople.

5 Francs violet, 1887

a) This is a very good imitation but it is printed in greyish violet, the paper is too white, the gum is also too white instead of being slightly yellowish. The upper part of the nose is too shaded and has a hump instead of being straight.

b) There is another imitation, in too pale violet, paper and gum too white, the general appearance blurred. The letters of the word Congo are too thick and appear smudgy, the letters and figures are too thin, the left eye and ear badly designed, the upright palms have a very blurred appearance.

5 Francs grey, 1892

This stamp may have been imitated from the dies which served for the above forgeries but we have received no confirmation of this.

10 Francs Bistre, 1891

a) This is a very good imitation but it is printed in a brownish orange, the paper and gum being too white. The shape of the nose shows the same characteristic as in the 5 francs but in a lesser degree.

b) There is an imitation in yellowish ochre with the same characteristics as the 2nd type of the 5 Francs described above.

c) There is a forgery in ochre, the portrait and design being very blurred and the letters of the inscriptions very badly made.

PART FORGERIES

50 Cent Brown, 1887

Sometimes a shade variety is offered in brown-black. This is easy to make, the reddish brown stamp is exposed to the sun which takes out the red from the original colour, a colour variety is thus obtained at a very small cost .... rare and genuine.

10 Franc Bistre, 1891

An unused stamp obtained by removing the pen cancellation.

10 Francs Green, 1894

An apparently unused stamp is obtained by removing the fiscal cancellation, this cancellation having been used for hunting permits. As this faking can be done on the 10 Francs of the subsequent issues we shall not return to the subject

5 Cent Blue, 1894

Obtained by chemical action on the 5 Cent. green of 1900, but this latter is perforated 15 x 15 whereas the genuine 5 cent. blue is perforated 12½ x 15 or 12½ x 14. The faked stamp is a pale azure blue which does not exist in the original issue.

3 Francs 50, 1909 Hand-stamp

A recent fake has appeared using the stamp with typographed overprint.

It should be noted that recent fakes of all the hand-printed overprints have been made and many turn up. They have the following characteristics. The ink is too greyish, the letters are badly formed and appear wobbly, the ring of the B is too round, the letter G is too narrow. The general appearance of this overprint immediately arouses suspicion.

1923, Elisabethville Issue

Faked overprints were made soon after the issue of these values, they were applied with a wooden stamp and are clearer than the originals made with a rubber stamp; the size is 10 x 5 mm. instead of 7 x 4½ mm.

There have been several false overprints of this type, for the figures 5 are not the same in all.

Cancellation found on the forgeries. Boma 4.V1.23.

Postage Dues

Nos. 1 to 40. Yvert & Tellier. There have been forgeries of the over-prints on the high values; collectors of these stamps should have them expertised. We will say no more on this subject as in common with other writers, we consider that all the stamps overprinted TAXES before 1916 must be classed as obliterations only. The true postage dues start with No. 41. which should become No. 1. of the catalogue.

Parcel Post Stamps

All stamps of this class should be expertised. Before the war a philatelic journal gave an easy method for separating the true overprints from the false. The first overprints were made with a rubber stamp but after April 1889, a copper stamp was used in which the U of POSTAUX looked like a C so that the true overprints read POSTACK.

After this date the fresh forgeries which have been done render the help of the expert indispensable.

FORGED CANCELLATIONS

1886 Issue

Forged cancellations Banana and Boma; the diameter is 2 to 3 mm. too small; the letters are too small and irregular, the A generally appearing as a triangle; black ink.

1887-94

There are many false cancellations of Matadi on the 50 Cent. grey. The circle is badly designed, the place name too close and the date too small and too far

away from the circle. The cancellation is "MATADI 4 MAI 1895" in greyish blue which does not show up clearly owing to the colour of the stamp. A cancellation of this kind was generally applied to a block of four stamps. A short time ago Monsieur Kuck in "Le Timbrophile Belge", gave a description of these forgeries.

Lastly, there is a false cancellation for Matadi dated 1887, although this post office was not opened until 1st March, 1891. In 1897 the 7th Correctional Court of Brussels condemned the author of these false cancellations to three months in prison and 2,800 francs fine towards the cost of the trial.

### THE BELGIAN OCCUPATION OF GERMAN EAST AFRICA

#### Ruanda and Urundi

Overprints should be expertised. False overprints have recently been discovered by the Philatelic Union of Brussels. They are the same size as the originals but the letters of which they are composed, especially the N and the D are narrower and consequently wider spaced.

#### 1916 Issue

An amusing forgery of the bilingual overprint has been noted by "La Revue Postale" and named "false overprint for reasons of national pride".

During the war, says this journal, a Brussels printer wanted to lower the pride of some boasting German officer philatelists. Our joker, having learned from "La Libre Belgique", a clandestine paper, of the issue of these overprinted stamps, had the idea of overprinting in the same manner six Belgian Congo Stamps which he had on entire and to show this modified cover to the officers.

The desired result was obtained and the German noses grew longer in a delightful manner.

This overprint, of which only six copies exist, is absolutely without danger from the philatelic point of view, the composition differing from that of the issued stamps and the letters of different form and smaller.

#### Fantasy

#### Kigoma Overprints

We have been trying since 1919 to have the Kigoma series omitted from the catalogues and we had the satisfaction, some months ago, of noting that Messrs. Gelle and Tani in their new catalogue had ceased to consider the Kigoma as an overprint and had placed it simply as a cancellation.

#### Kigali and Karema Overprints

These are to be classed as simple fantasy, the only official overprints being Ruanda and Urundi. Stamps bearing the overprints Kigali and Karema have not been officially issued. However anxious we may be to include these stamps in order to commemorate a war glorious for our feats of arms, we must, from the philatelic point of view carefully set aside everything which is irregular.

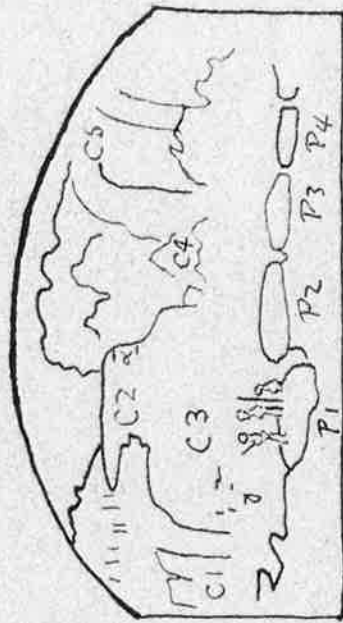
#### Reprints

The Urundi and Ruanda overprints were reprinted after the war by the Belgian government. The reprints are not found commercially used. The original cachets

made at Nairobi (British East Africa) were returned by order to the Belgian Government on the arrival of the Belgian Congo stamps bearing the bilingual overprint. These cachets were used to make an official reprint of a small number of copies, these being for presentation to government officials and others. The overprint is in violet-black.

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