

Example pages from "The Transvaal One Penny Arms Stamps 1870-1885" volumes I + II

The stamps were printed on thin, crisp, semi-transparent paper with no trace of webbing. This was the gummed paper supplied by Otto. The gum is transparent and smooth, although as for Otto's printings, this is often crinkled and yellowing.


Vijoen's first delivery included at least one sheet printed on an abnormal paper: an extremely thin, transparent paper ('cigarette paper'). I have only ever seen one stamp on this paper. Based on the colour and appearance there is no doubt that the stamp was printed by Vijoen and most closely resembles the stamps from Vijoen's first delivery. The only difference is the paper which really is incredibly thin. To give an idea of how thin I illustrate the stamp twice: once on a white background to give a truthful reproduction of the stamp and once where the right half of the background is black to show how thin and transparent the paper is. I refer to this paper as Vijoen paper Ax.

The stamp is plateable based on the bent top frame line at the right corner as L40. But it is the existence of two additional features that makes the stamp extra interesting: spot between the first and second flag at right and long line below the ribbon extending from the bend of the ribbon around the right flagpole.

These features are not seen on any other stamp from position L40 that I have studied. They may be coincidental splashes of ink and must at any rate have been very short lived. Their size makes them very collectable and interestingly a stamp with the same features must have been used as the original for the fabrication of photographic forgeries (see chapter 2.5 page 22).

The majority of the stamps were left imperforate. But a small number of stamps are found rouletted 15%. This is hard to explain as Vijoen had not yet been furnished with the rouletting wheel that Otto had supplied. The Curle collection includes two copies described as 'wide rouletted'. I am not convinced.

The colour is carmine red and the printing is blotchy. Underinked copies can best be described as rose red. All one penny stamps from Vijoen's first delivery were printed from the left plate.



Vijoen paper A, carmine red Vijoen paper A, rose red (underinked)

Vijoen paper Ax - Extremely thin transparent paper (Shown on white/black background to illustrate how thin the paper is) Shortlived features found on Vijoen paper Ax position L40

26 April 1870. Medium to thick hard paper, yellow-brown streaky gum (Paper B)

On 24 May Vijoen delivered 107 sheets (4,280 stamps) of one penny stamps.

The stamps of this delivery were printed on a medium to thick hard paper obtained locally. The paper varies somewhat in thickness but very clearly thicker than the German paper used for the first delivery and hard whereas the paper Vijoen used for his last delivery (paper D) is soft.

The main distinguishing feature for this issue is the gum. The paper was ungummed and gum was applied after printing. The gum was yellow and streaky. Over time the colour has become brownish-yellow and distinct brush marks left in the gum are visible even on some stamps without gum. The gum is very different to any other gum used by Vijoen or later printers.

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Vijoen paper B brownish-yellow streaky gum Vijoen paper C thin yellowish gum Vijoen paper D colourless smooth gum

The colour and appearance of the stamps is very similar to that of the first delivery, i.e. blotchy printing in carmine red and rose red for the underinked copies.

All the stamps of the delivery were left imperforate and were printed exclusively from the right plate.



Vijoen paper B, carmine red Vijoen paper B, rose red (underinked) Vijoen paper B 'bicoloured'

24 May 1870. Medium to thick hard paper, thin yellowish gum (Paper C)

Vijoen printed another 107 sheets (4,520 stamps) of one penny stamps on the same medium to thick hard paper as he used for his 26 April delivery. However, in my experience this batch of paper is slightly thinner and perhaps even slightly softer than most of the paper he used for the April delivery.

The gum that Vijoen used for this delivery was completely different and a much better mixture. The colour is only slightly yellowish and the gum was applied thinly but does show a degree of 'orientation'. Mint copies can be separated from those with brownish streaky gum (paper B) with ease and from the stamps of the last delivery (paper D) with some more difficulty. For copies without gum it is very hard to determine correctly from which delivery they come.

The printing is not sharp but not exactly blotchy as seen on copies printed on the other papers. Most if not all copies are to some degree underinked and thus a rose red colour. The stamps are certainly not as dark and 'full' in the printing as the carmine red stamps on paper B and D.

All copies were rouletted and were printed only from the left plate.




Vijoen paper C, carmine red Vijoen paper D, carmine Vijoen paper D deep carmine

4 July 1870. Medium soft paper, smooth colourless gum (Paper D)

The last delivery Vijoen made included 194 sheets (7,760 stamps) of one penny stamps. These were printed on a soft paper of 'medium' thickness. The thickness varies somewhat and can occasionally be

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3. Framed Numerals Plate (Luff plate G)



Otto made a small plate consisting of four electros which all had an additional uncoloured frame line cut around the 1 in the two numeral panels. Stamps from this plate also have a large break in the oval at 7 o'clock and are very easy to identify even if they are in many respects very similar to the issued stamps.

The additional frame line in the numeral panels are slightly different and must have been cut directly on the electros and not the die used to make the plate.

The other features common to all stamps of this issue originate from the die, which was extensively retouched thus improving the diagonal hatching and removing the two thin scratches left of the wagon etc. The damage to the oval at 7 o'clock must have happened when carrying out the retouches.


The framed numeral stamps have the same colouring in the serif of 1 in the right numeral panel as the 'black jacket' and 'adopted design' stamps, but do NOT have the break in the right outer frame line in the bottom right corner.

It is possible to identify each of the four electros of the plate based on additional features. No units of the stamps are known and it is not known how the electros were arranged. The numbering (a-d) of the four positions is therefore random.

The stamps are found in equal numbers printed in red or black and are always rouletted. On the basis of 37 copies viewed it appears that stamps from positions a and b are up to four times more common than stamps from positions c and d. Perhaps Otto used two plates with each two electros rather than one plate of four. No unused copies have been seen.

The 'framed numeral' stamps were first described in Le Tambre-Poste for April 1872. Yardley referred to these stamps as type A3 and Luff named the plate 'G'. Luff dismisses the stamps printed from this plate as surreptitious while Yardley believed that they were "experimental". I have for a while been thinking that Yardley may be right and that the framed numerals plate was indeed a trial design which Otto rejected in the same way as he rejected the 'black jacket'.

The 'framed numeral' stamps are scarce (although not as rare as the 'black jacket' and 'adopted design' stamps) and I would think that, if Otto used the plate to satisfy a philatelic demand, he would have printed more stamps. The scarcity of the stamps could suggest that they were trial printings and that they were only sold later when Otto realised that there was a philatelic market (when Otto was instructed by Jeppe to supply legitimately printed 3d stamps to dealers to pay the bill for the production of this stamp).


Framed Numerals Plate	
Main features common to all framed numeral stamps	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra uncoloured frame line round the 1 in the two numeral panels. • Faint colouring in the serif of 1 in the right numeral panel. • The upper beak is a bit longer than the lower and is slightly hooked. • The crossbar of the anchor is broken at right. • The base of the anchor is not pointed and does not touch the bottom frame line. • Recut (thicker) diagonal hatching lines and no signs of two thin scratches. • Large break in the oval at 7 o'clock. • The uncoloured middle of the flagstaff at the ribbon has been widened. • The frame line is rounded in all four corners. • No break in the outer frame line in the bottom right corner.
Colour	Red or black.
Paper	Medium paper definitely thicker than the paper used by Otto for the issued stamps.
Separation	Only found rouletted (fine rouletting).

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Used / unused	Only used copies seen. Most copies are cancelled in either black or blue with dumb four-ring canceller across the corner in the 'typical Otto manner'.
Plate	Plate of four electros in an unknown arrangement.
Status	Possibly an essay.

Framed Numerals Plate - electro a


electro a features



- Uneven outer frame in particular the top line which is narrow over TZ.
- Thin and sometimes broken frame line in the upper left corner (see also electro d).
- Thin and sometimes broken frame line in the lower right corner.

Framed Numerals Plate - electro b


electro b features



- The uncoloured frame line in the left numeral panel show unbroken lines.
- Break in the frame line in the top right corner (some copies only).
- Break (or weakness) in left leg of M of MAAKT.
- Narrow break in the outline of the ribbon above AA of MAAKT.
- The flagstaff at bottom right does not touch the outline of the ribbon at GT of MAGT.
- Indent in the outer frame line below the stop after AFR (some copies only).

Framed Numerals Plate - electro c


electro c features



- Break in the folds of the right flags at 'N P' of EEN PENNNY (see also electro d).

Framed Numerals Plate - electro d

electro d features



- Break in the frame line in the upper left corner (as seen on some electro a copies).
- Uncoloured spot in the edge of the left flags level with EN of PENNNY.
- Break in the folds of the right flags at 'N P' of EEN PENNNY (see also electro c).
- Indent in the right panel above P of PENNY.
- EEN in the left panel have thick limbs, in particular the two Es.


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L8 1d - Left Pane position 8

Position L8 is probably the most easily recognisable of all positions. A copy printed by Otto in camme found in the Curle collection shows some damage to the head of the eagle. This is what soon develops into the 'cleaved skull' variety and it remains one of the most striking varieties found on the one penny stamps.

More striking features are added by Davis (or possibly by Borrius in his later printings): scratch across Z of POSTZEGEL, damage to the first N in PENNY in the right panel and a break in the outer frame line at the same letter.

Main features



L8

- Scratch running through the outer frame line from above T to the middle of Z of POSTZEGEL • Davis paper A - 1883 re-issue.
- 'Cleaved skull', deep cut in the head of the eagle • Otto camme - 1883 re-issue.
- Damage to the first N of PENNY in the right panel (growth at right and thickening of the diagonal limb) • Davis paper A - 1883 re-issue.
- Wide break in the right outer frame line at the first N of PENNY • Davis paper A - 1883 re-issue.
- Colouring at P of POSTZEGEL and spot in the lower upstroke of the letter • On blue paper - Small VR overprint orange paper.
- Spot in upright of L of POSTZEGEL • On blue paper - On orange paper setting VIII.
- Spot in the left uncoloured frame line at the bottom corner of the left numeral panel • On blue paper - Small VR overprint orange paper.
- Spot between the 1st and 2nd vertical hatching lines just above the anchor shield • On blue paper - Small VR overprint orange paper.
- Spot in the upright of the E of PENNY in the right panel • Celliers paper C - Small VR overprint orange paper.
- Small indent on the inside of the right panel between EN of EEN • Celliers paper A - On orange paper setting VIII.
- Spot in upper horizontal limb of the first E of EEN in the right panel • Borrius black paper A - 1883 re-issue.
- Spot at bottom right of Z in Z.AFR. • On blue paper - On orange paper setting Vb.
- Small spot at top right of B of REPUBLIEK • On orange paper settings Ivb - Vb.

Semi-permanent colouring on stamps printed by Celliers / overprinted "V. R. / TRANSVAAL":

- Colouring obscuring the divide between the left numeral panel and in the top panel P and part of D of POSTZEGEL • Celliers paper C - D
- Colouring in EL of POSTZEGEL • Celliers paper C - D
- Colouring obscuring Z of Z.AFR. (and sometimes the first E of EEN in the left panel) • Celliers paper C - D



Viljoen paper C (full sheet) Viljoen paper D Borrius Black paper A

Davis paper B (ex Drysdall) Celliers paper A Celliers paper C

Celliers C - V.R. TRANSVAAL (BL collection) Celliers D - V.R. TRANSVAAL (setting II) (TB col. full sheet) On orange paper setting Ivb (BL collection)


On orange paper setting Vb On orange paper setting VIII Small VR overprint orange paper (ex Drysdall)

L2 1d - Left Pane position 2

Position L2 is known for the most prominent of all varieties found on the 1d value: Large uncoloured damage leaving a large break in the outer frame line and completely obscuring the P of POSTZEGEL. I refer to this variety as "the dropped screwdriver variety". It is less well known that the stamps printed on surfaced paper perforated 11.9 are found without this variety. There are other lesser varieties occurring for different periods that give rise to a division into four stages.

I have seen two stage 3 copies showing a coloured spot inside the left panel below the second N of PENNY. My other reference copies of stage 2 do not feature this spot. This erratic variety is very similar to one of the main features of position L3.

Main features



L2

3 stages

- "Dropped screwdriver". Large damage obscuring the P of POSTZEGEL completely and makes a large break in the outer frame line. [■■■■]
- Drop shaped coloured spot in the uncoloured right frame line at the top right corner of the right panel. [■■■■]
- Break in the third horizontal hatching line right of the man's gun. [■■■■]
- Small spot in the uncoloured frame line below Z of Z.AFR. [■■■■]
- Uncoloured spot left of the head of "1" in the left numeral panel. [■■■■]
- Small indent on the inside of the left frame line level with the spear of the 2nd flag. [■■■■]
- Coloured spot in the uncoloured frame line left at the left numeral panel. [■■■■]
- Flake colouring at the top of the left panel (beyond Y of PENNY). [■■■■]
- Thin scratch extending from the top left of the first E of POSTZEGEL. [■■■■]
- Small colour spot at upper left of G of POSTZEGEL. [■■■■]
- Two thin scratches below the second E of POSTZEGEL. [■■■■]
- Scratch across the top of the three vertical hatching lines closest to the vertical dividing line of the oval. [■■■■]
- Lion's tail broken below rump. [■■■■]
- Small break in the top line of the anchor shield. [■■■■]
- Small coloured speck left of the ring of the anchor. [■■■■]
- Break in the right fluke of the anchor (see also L5, L22, L32, R1, R3, R5, R6, R18, R19, R21). [■■■■]
- Three spots in the tent of the wagon two in the upper part and one in the lower. [■■■■]

Stage 1 perf 11.9 surfaced paper

- Normal P in POSTZEGEL and the outer frame line above unbroken.
- Coloured spot in the uncoloured frame line at top left of the right panel.

Stage 2 perf 11.9 surfaced paper, perf 11.9 ordinary paper.

As stage 1 +

- Dropped screwdriver variety.
- Thin scratch at top left of first E and two below second E of POSTZEGEL.



Stage 3 perf 12.2 as stage 2 +

- Break on the third horizontal hatching line right of the man's gun.

Stage 4 perf 12.2 as stage 3 +

- Spot below Z of Z.AFR.

Stage 1 - p11.9 surfaced paper Stage 2 - p11.9 ordinary paper Stage 3 - p12.2

Stage 4 - p12.2