

# Philatelists to the magnifying glass!

## Plate Flaws of the 15 cts. Cross & Numeral

by Roberto Lopez

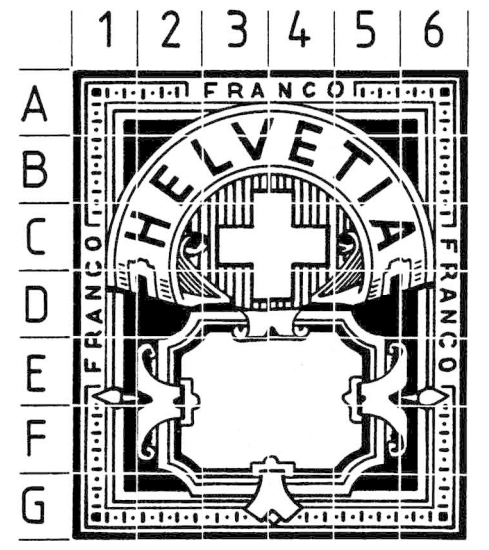
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The 15 cts. Cross and Numeral issues are interesting not only because of their color nuances, but also because of the quasi "non-existence" of plate flaws, despite a printing period of about seven years (from April 1882 to December 1889).

It must be admitted that because of the color of this issue, and especially the light shade – and thus the lack of contrast with the white paper - the search is not necessarily easy.

If we study the work of Mr. Raymond Roux and the Zumstein special catalog, we will confirm that so far only one plate flaw is described. There is a strong colorless line from bottom left to the right edge (G1-2 and F5-6) (Figs. 1 and 2). This cliché defect is only known on canceled stamps, and during a period from 1885 to 1888.

This article uses a coordinate system to identify the locations of the plate flaws. This diagram shows the grid. Also, be aware that the contrast in stamp illustrations has been enhanced so you can see the features on the stamps. As noted in the article, the yellow color makes it very difficult to see the design.



◀ Fig. 1. Cliché error: colorless line near the bottom

Fig. 2. Enlarged lower part of the stamp ▼



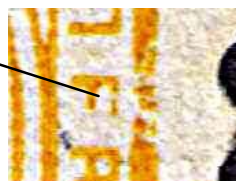
This cliché error is no longer to be found on the 64A. The defective cliché was certainly replaced when the color changed from yellow to purple. Are there other cliché or plate flaws? When examining these yellow stamps we can discover several cliché errors. Most of these "varieties" can be found mainly on white paper.

another 57b, with practically the same defect (but at an earlier stage). The break is not as clear as on the first stamp. Many of these errors are evolutionary, that is, they develop gradually over time with use. The reason is the relatively soft material of the brass clichés, which wear out or break during the printing (Figs. 3 to 6).



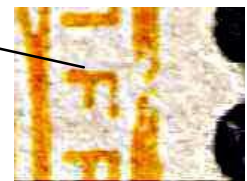
◀ Fig. 3. Cliché error right.

Fig. 4. Enlarged ▼



◀ Fig. 5. Cliché error right.

Fig. 6. Enlarged ▼



On a 63Aa there is another cliché error. There is a break in the upper line of the small ornament to the right of the digit 5 (E5). In addition, we were able to find a second stamp with the same flaw. We can conclude from the data that (theoretically) the error should occur from February 1888 until March 15, 1890 (Figs. 7 to 10). Such a small cliché error is easily overlooked, especially when it occurs in the light shade, as in 63Ab.



◀ Fig. 7. Cliché error to the right of the digit 5



Fig. 8. Enlarged ▼



◀ Fig. 9. As above, second copy

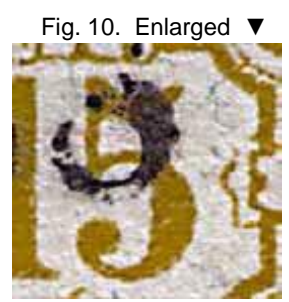


Fig. 10. Enlarged ▼

In the other four cliché errors we have not yet found a second stamp of the same variety. The third cliché error is a white spot in the "1" (F3) and another spot in the "5" (E4) on a 63Aa (Figs. 11 and 12). These colorless spots are like those on the 5 Rp., 65B, 7th issue and 6th reprinting, variety number 52, that were discovered by Raymond Roux (JPhS / SBZ 06.07.1987, page 161).



◀ Fig. 11. Cliché errors contained in paragraphs above

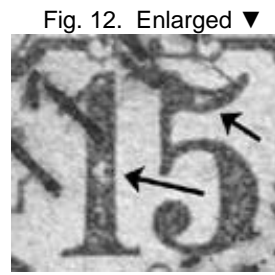


Fig. 12. Enlarged ▼



◀ Fig. 13. Cliché error in the lower corner

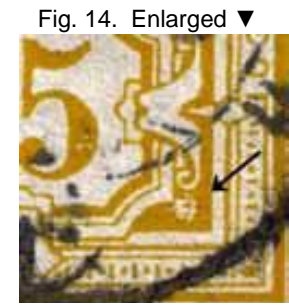


Fig. 14. Enlarged ▼

The fourth cliché error, again on a 57a, shows a colorless spot in the lower right triangle (FG5-6). This variety is the same as that on the 65B, 6th issue, 5. reprinting, variety number 24 (Figs. 13 and 14).

On a 57b we find the fifth cliché error, with a colorless spot in the upper right triangle (B5-6) (Figs. 15 and 16).

Again on a 57b, we find a sixth cliché error, an indented border (lower right border) (G5) (Figs. 17 and 18).



◀ Fig. 15. Cliché error in the upper corner



Fig. 16. Enlarged ▼



◀ Fig. 17. Cliché error: broken edge

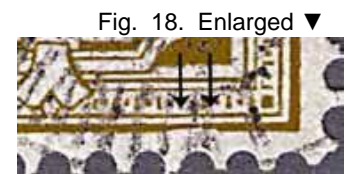


Fig. 18. Enlarged ▼



In Fig. 19, you will find a compilation of all the cliché errors described here.

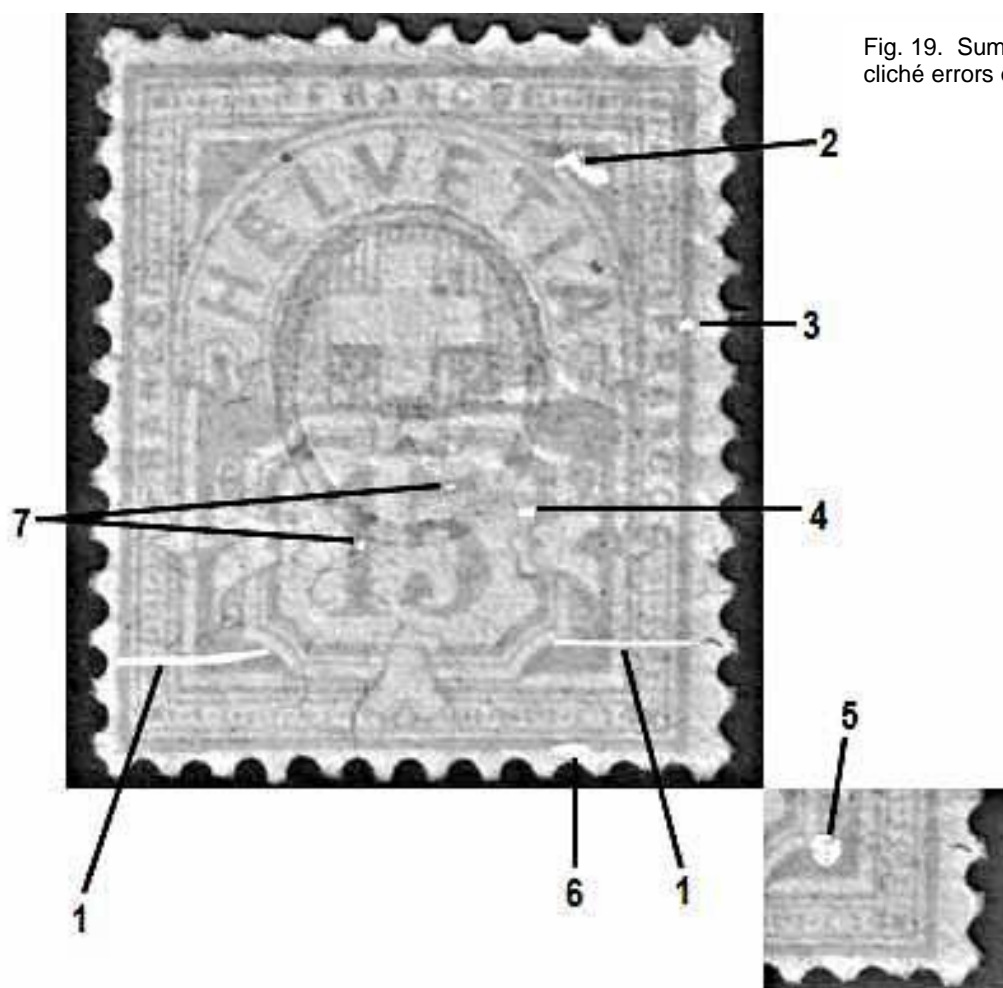


Fig. 19. Summary of known cliché errors on the 15 cts.

Description of the compilation (Fig. 19):

1. Strong colorless line from bottom left to the right edge (G1-2 and F5-6); found from 1885 to 1888
2. Colorless spot in the upper right triangle (B5-6)
3. Break in the right outer edge beside the "F" in FRANCO (C6); two stages known
4. Break in the upper part of the right ornament (E5)
5. Colorless spot in lower right triangle (FG5-6)
6. Indented lower right border (G5)
7. Colorless spot in the "1" (F3) and colorless spot on the "5" (E4)

Many thanks to the philatelists, who have taken the trouble to report their findings to me. Should you find a new error, please send a scan or a good color copy to the address of the author or send an email to: roberto\_lopez@bluewin.ch

## Sources:

- *Die Buchdruckausgabe 1882 im Ziffermuster*, M. Schio, 1968, Verlag Zumstein & Cie.
- *Zumstein Spécialized Catalogue*, 25th edition, 2000.
- "Étude de défauts de cliché de l'émission 'Chiffre et Croix' ", de 1882 à 1907, Raymond Roux, *JPhS/SBZ* 9/1985, 11/1985, 4/1986, 1/1987, 3/1987, 6-7/1987, 8/1987, 10/1987, 1/1988 et 4/1988.
- "Philatélistes, à vos compte-fils! Les défauts de cli- ché du 15cts jaune de l'émission 'Chiffre et Croix' ", R. Lopez et A. Roueche, *JPhS/SBZ* 9/2009, p. 326-327.
- "Philatélistes, à vos compte-fils! Les défauts de cli- ché du 15cts jaune de l'émission 'Chiffre et Croix' (2ème partie)", R. Lopez et A. Roueche, *JPhS/SBZ* 11/2009, p. 452-453.