



# The 10 Centimes Semeuse (Sower) – Part I

From the Jan Kindler Collection

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## Search for a New Design

### Unpopular “Rights of man” stamp

- Issued December 1900
- Withdrawn June 1902
- Two types
  - Value printed separately, position varies relative to main stamp design
  - Entire stamp printed in one pass
  - Other small design variances



#### Type I

- Base of “1” is straight
- Bottom serif of “P” extends into tablet

## Revised Rights of Man: “Retouched Mouchon”

### Still Unpopular

- Issued June 1902
- Withdrawn May 1903
- Revised value tablet
- “POSTES” in top frame
- Printed in one pass through press





## The Republic on the March Sowing Its Ideas

### **Tried a new design, five values**

- Issued May 1903
- Withdrawn April 1906
- Designed by Roty
- Die created by Mouchon
- Sunrise across center
- Barely visible ground below feet
- Three types



## Sower Design Ideas 1899 to 1906

### 1899 pen and ink drawing

- Drawn by Roty (and dated)
- Similar to adopted design – design elements are there but reversed
- Rights of Man issue prepared instead

Image from Orzano, John, *France 1980 Specialized Catalog of Artist Proofs, De Luxe Sheets, etc.*, 1980, p. 45





## Sower Design Ideas 1899 to 1906

### 1899 pen and ink drawing

- Also by Oscar Roty (and dated 1899)
- May have been used for French coin issued about this time
- Sower facing right direction but sun in front of her rather than behind

Image from Orzano, John, *France 1980 Specialized Catalog of Artist Proofs, De Luxe Sheets, etc.*, 1980, p. 46



## Sower Design Ideas from 1903 to 1906

### The “Landscape Sower”

- Prepared by Roty and Mouchon once again
- Sun moved to left as result of design criticism of issued 1903 lined Sower
- Printed in sheets in April 1906 to replace the Lined Sower
- Not issued





## Sower Design Ideas from 1903 to 1906

### The “Landscape Sower”

- Upper left corner, serious foxing (rousseurs)
- Lighter inking creates more contrast with value against ground



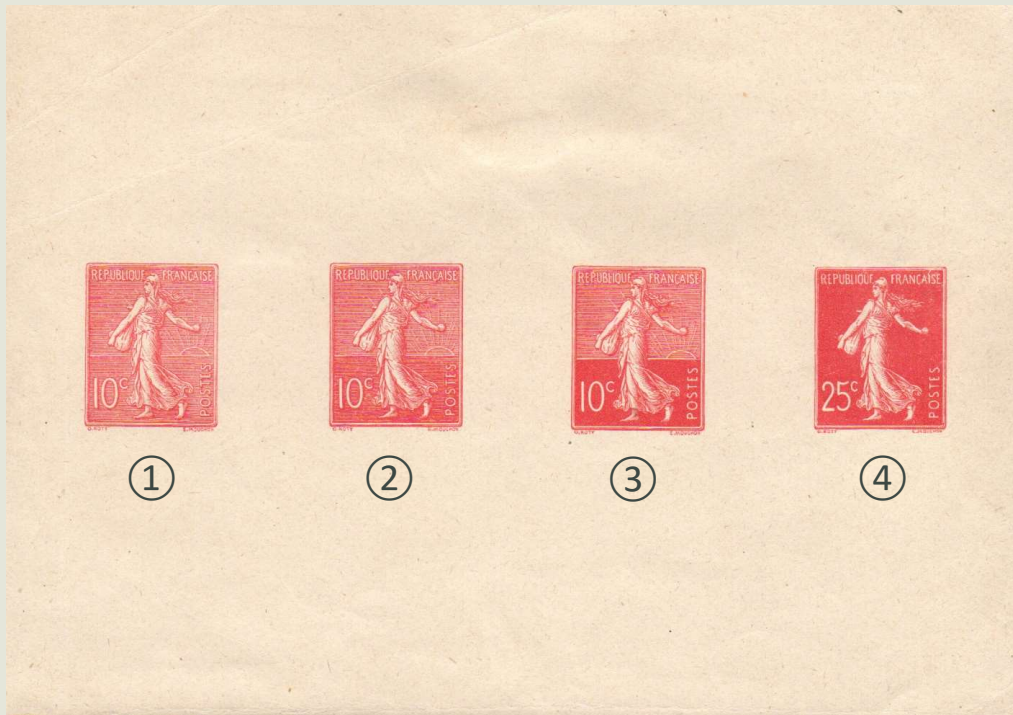
## Printing Scheme – Essays



### Limited printing

- 120 sheets printed
- Bottom portion of sheet left blank
  - Ordinarily there would be six panes of 25 stamps each
- Grounded Sower in top position
- Inter-sheet bar below Landscape Sower has notch at top right

## Sower Essays (cont'd)



### Proof sheet (essays)

- Design modified across sheet
- 1: Unshaded background with sun
- 2: Lightly shaded ground with sun
- 3: Dark shaded ground with sun
- 4: Solid background without sun



## Plate Proofs – Grounded Sower, Solid Background



Printed on stamp paper  
120 sheets printed  
All imperforates are plate proofs



Plate proof on Bristol (card)  
Only 75 copies – three panes of 25

## Grounded Sower



- Notched pressure bar between panes appears on both Landscape Sower essay and plate proof / issued Grounded Sower stamps (Plate Two)



## First Day of Rate

- Old letter rate 15 centimes per 15g effective since 1 May 1878
- By Law of 6 Mar 1906, new 10 centimes rate effective 16 Apr 1906





## Emergency Issue

- Provisional printing from essay plate to meet new rate demand
- Complete sheet of fifty stamps, no millésime
- Printed 10 April 1906, two million stamps
- Same plate formerly had “Landscape Sower” in next 50 positions





## Plate I (Essay Plate) v. Plate II (Full Sheet)



- Plate 1 – sower is more shadowed

- Plate 2 – sower is whiter, more contrast



## Grounded Sower Plate 2

### Millésime added



- Emergency printing on whiter paper

### Definitive printing



- Regular printing (26 Apr 1906) on darker paper, lighter ink
- Lines in left arm nearly disappear



## Grounded Sower Plate Wear

Normal – Plates 1 and 2



- Plates 1 (left) and 2 (right) early states
- 28 million stamps printed from plate 2

Worn Plate 2



- Increasing wear evident on Plate 2 stamps

## Paper Varieties



- White, high quality paper



- Off-white, thinner paper



- Thinnest wove paper



## Ink Color Varieties

■ Dull red



■ Dark red



■ Light red



■ Ink colors hard to distinguish, especially scanned stamps



## Ink Color Varieties

- Bluish shade of red
- Lie-de-vin? Chemical changeling?

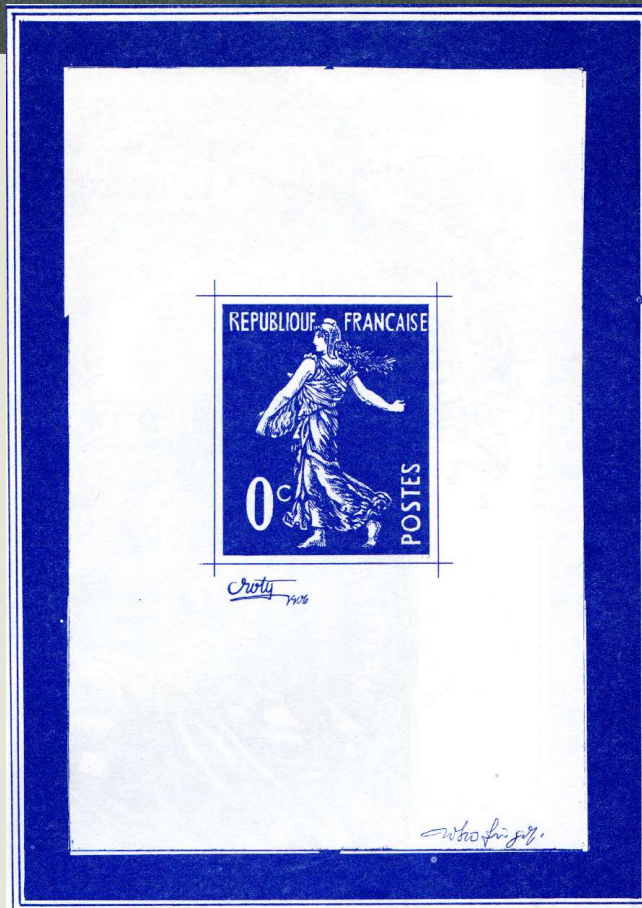


- 1912 printing – did the lie-de-vin recur?



- Ink varieties resulted from attempts to match ink to dried color years apart

## New Essay



### 1906 pen and ink drawing

- Final accepted design when grounded sower replaced
- Ground is gone
- Lettering is thicker lines but not in final die
- Mouchon used lined sower die and filed off former lines, sun from background

Image from Orzano, John, *France 1980 Specialized Catalog of Artist Proofs, De Luxe Sheets, etc.*, 1980, p. 47



## New Essay



### Proof sheet (essay)

- Color is really light violet – scanner wouldn't pick it up
- Ground is gone
- Top of sack in front of left arm removed in final design
- Violet is lighter than issued 35 centimes sower



## Thin Line Sower – 1906

### Deluxe proof on Bristol card



- On cardboard, imperforate
- Sent to rural post offices as proof stamps were official and valid

### Exhibition block

- Three panes of 25 printed
- Card stock
- Simulated perforations





## Thin Line Sower – 1906

### 13 July 1906 printing

- Thin line inscriptions resulted in primitive looking stamps
- Placed on sale 28 July, withdrawn by 2 PM
- PTT ordered the die to be retouched
- In addition to poor appearance, there are also color varieties that don't scan well, all red



## Thin Line Sower – 1906

### 15 Sept 1906 printing restarts

- Thin line die retouched by Mouchon
- Strengthened some lettering, also lines in sower
- Printed from this die until 21 Jan 1907
- Note “leaning 6” variety of millésime





## Thin Line Sower Printings Compared

13 July 1906 printing



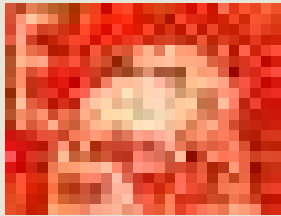
- Dull, speckled red in July, deeper, solid red in September
- White outline around sower's bag and right arm (Sept)
- Shading line in liberty cap, not always strong (Sept)

15 Sept 1906 printing



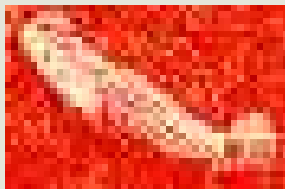
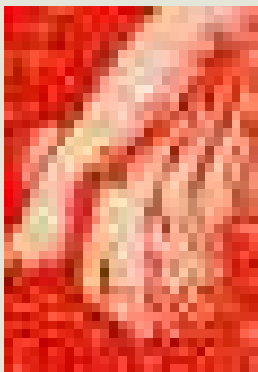
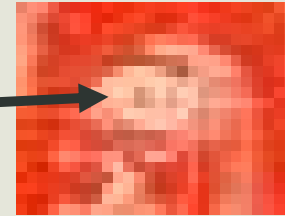
## Thin Line Sower Printings Compared (cont'd)

13 July 1906 printing

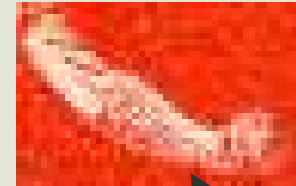


- Shading line in liberty cap, not always strong

15 Sept 1906 printing



- White outline around sower's bag and right arm





## Thin Line Sower – Varieties

Offset on reverse



Plate flaw



- Frame line missing at upper right
- Relatively common

Laid paper



- Very scarce

## New Master Die – 1907

### Artist proof (essay)

- Die copied from previous die
- Lettering is strengthened
- Used for all Sower values, hence no value inserted

- Again, violet (at left) is closer to issued 35 centimes sower but scanner doesn't show correctly



Color trial proofs (unlisted)



# Heavy Inscription Sower

## Paper colors



- 1907 and 1908 printings only
- Yellowish paper (above)
- White paper (below)



- Printing started 22 Jan 1907
- Issued to public September 1907
- Demand required printing for many years

## Millésimes 1908 – 1911



# Heavy Inscription Sower

- Printing continued through December 1916
- Rate changes reduced demand for the stamp

## Millésimes 1912 – 1915





## 1916 Wartime Paper Shortages

- Four paper types



- Paper C: Very smooth, fine quality, pure white to yellowish to grayish



- Paper G: Wove paper (diamond shapes), slightly yellower than Paper C



- Paper J: Thinner than Paper C, yellowish



- Paper GC: “Grande Consommation,” or mass consumption paper, lower quality, darker color

# Heavy Inscription Sower

## Millésimes 1920 – 1921

- Printing resumed 21 April 1920
- Final printing in 1921



- Millésime tilted





## Heavy Line Sower Shades

**Brightest**



**Darkest**



- Colors not quite true because of scanner, but the variation is representative

**Scarlet overlaid  
on red**



- Used only in November 1907

## Disappearing Millésime – 1907

**Earliest  
stage**



**Partial  
impression**



**Albino  
impression**





## Experimental Plate Number

- 1914 – tried experiment with plate number
- Idea was abandoned





## G. C. Paper

- Late 1916 – poor quality paper
- Wartime conservation measure
- Used only for Sower 10c value in November and December (eventually other stamps)





## Production Problems – Perforations

### Missing



- Perforated across bottom of stamps, missing vertical and top perforations

- Missing perforations across top of stamps



# Production Problems – Perforations

## Perforation errors



- Paper folds causing mis-perforation



- Sheet not aligned in perforator (either direction)



- Doubled horizontal perforations



## Production Problems – Bad Ink

### Wrong color



- Closer to cerise than red
- Hexagonal cancel identifies stamps to be destroyed



## Production Problems – Offsets

### Partial, full and double offsets on reverse side



▪ Full offset



▪ Partial offset



▪ Stamps are often damaged, too



▪ Nearly perfect offset



▪ Double offsets



## Production Problems – Paper Fold

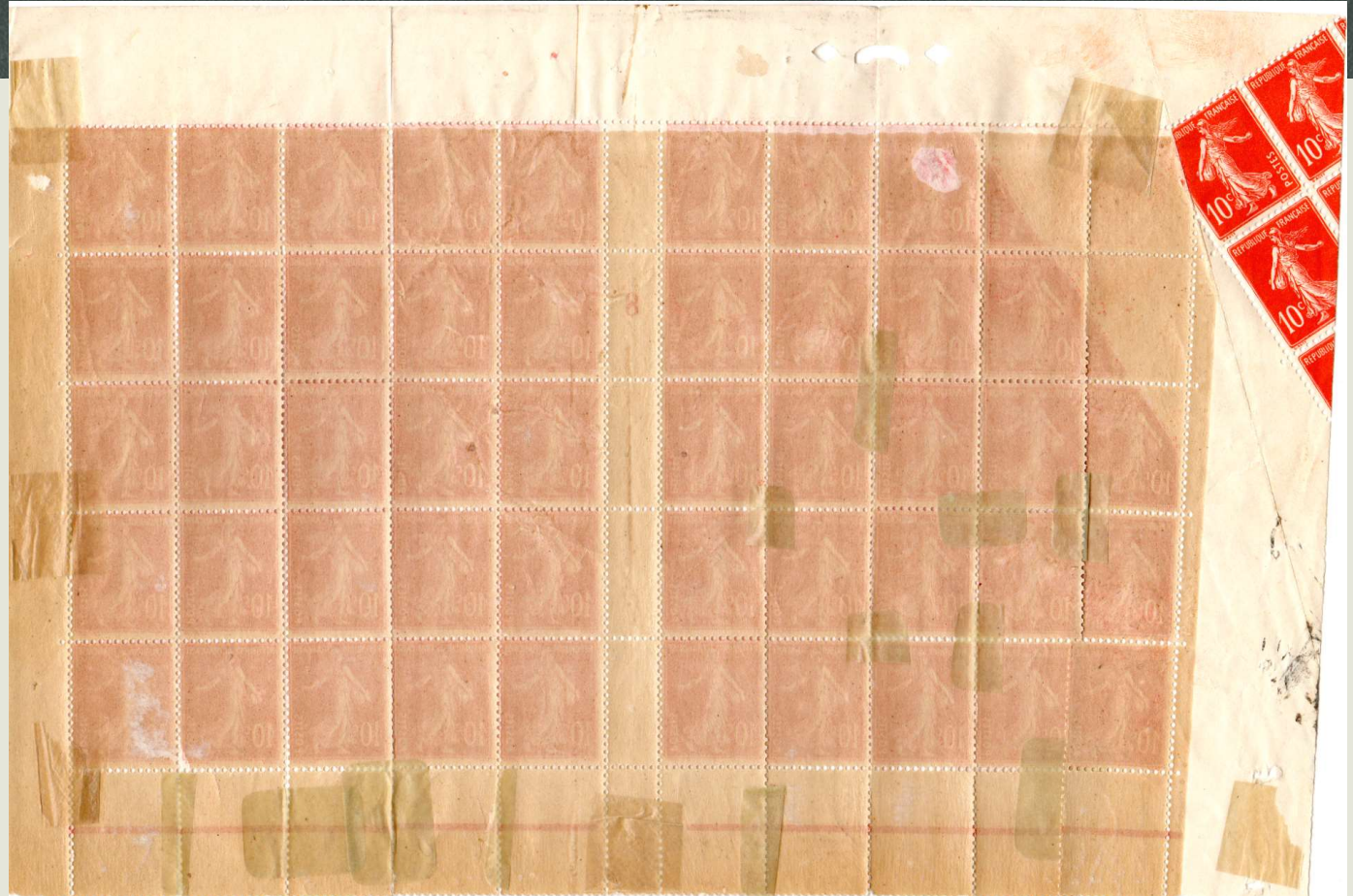
- 1908 Pre-printing paper fold
- Note: high gauge perf. 14 causes stamps to separate easily – sheets are quite fragile





## Production Problems – Paper Fold

- 1908 Pre-printing paper fold – reverse of prior page
- Note: high gauge perf. 14 causes stamps to separate easily – sheets are quite fragile





## Production Problems – Paper Fold

### Perforation problem

- Paper fold occurred after printing, before perforating



# Printing Flaws

## Worn plate problems

- 1907
- One of several well-known flaws



- Fading "S"



# Printing Flaws

## Worn plate problems

- 1907
- Kindler said this was largest block showing all these flaws
- Next page shows details



# Printing Flaws

## Worn plate problems

- Row 1, column 1, face has ink



- Row 2, column 1, foot is inked, no "C" for centimes



- Row 1, column 4, missing hand, no "C," no "S," etc.



- Row 3, column 4, no "C," row 4, missing letters



# Printing Flaws

## Sower with candle

- Position 36, 1907 printing
- Gradually worsened
- Early stage
- Middle stage



- Candle is complete

## End of Part I

End of stamp production

Next will be booklets, coils,  
other uses of the Sower design

Main resource:

Spink/Maury 2019 Catalogue de  
Timbres de France

- Any questions or comments at this point?
- Remember that a scan of Kindler's album is available on our website  
[Sower Album.pdf](#)  
[\(franceandcolonies.org\)](#)





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