

Tunisia Coat of Arms Issues

Norval Rasmussen 2021

Sources



TUNISIA - the perforated T stamps of 1888-1901
Michael Round

Members who collect by the Yvert catalogue will already know something of the T-perfins on the first two issues of Tunisia, authorised by a decree of 1st July 1888 and used as makeshift Postage Dues pending the issue of specifically printed 'A Percevoir' stamps in 1901 - for unlike the Gibbons and Scott catalogues, which merely footnote them, Yvert lists these issues in detail, adding a few background notes for good measure. It is possible, however, to find items not apparently recorded, and further information may be in order. Much of the following has been gleaned from my own experience and from the Yvert 'Specialised' catalogue of 1932 (hereinafter referred to simply as the Specialised) [ref. 1]. This volume is no longer readily available, and its contents are therefore worth passing on.

The Basic Stamps

The T-perfin was applied to all stamps issued before 1st April 1901 - effectively all values of the first two sets ("thin figures", 1888, and "thick figures", 1888-1901) except the 35c and 2f, which were not issued until December 1901. (This distinction between "thin" and "thick" figures of value is very helpful to new collectors and it is odd that the Gibbons catalogue makes no mention of it.) Perversely, the application of the T-perfin to stamps with a single figure of value (1c, 2c, 5c, and more importantly, the franc values) effectively removes most of the figure itself, leaving very little visible for the collector to distinguish between thin and thick.

Despite the introduction of the new "thick figures" design later in 1888, the original "thin figures" issue was reprinted in 1893 in slightly different shades : they are fully listed in the Specialised and mentioned in Gibbons, but ignored in the modern Yvert. All catalogues mention the second (1897) reprinting, which is characterised by a faint pattern of

- 166 -



France & Colonies Philatelist

UNPS #207700

ON THE USE OF THE "T"-IN-TRIANGLE MARK ON POSTAGE STAMPS

Robert G. Stone

Introduction of the T Cachets

The T-in-triangle mark of France and colonies to indicate postage is due was introduced in the early 1800s in France, but not extensively used until after GPU UPU came in, and in the colonies it appeared around 1876. Apparently, the UPU rules for marking covers at origin to show that additional postage is due at destination, on international mail, stimulated the French and colonial postal administrations to supply nearly all offices with the T-in-triangle. At the same time they decided to make it the practice to apply the T also on domestic mail; which was probably seen to be desirable because the colonies as a group had adhered to the UPU separately from France, and mail between colonies and France had something of the character of international mail.

The UPU had not yet recommended use of postage-due stamps as a means of collecting the due charges, and the early French postage-due stamps were limited to local domestic mail. In 1881 France finally issued dues stamps for general use on all types of insufficiently franked mail. Several colonies issued locally-printed dues stamps for domestic mail only, between 1876 and the 1880s. In 1884 the General Issues of dues for the colonies were first printed and made available to those colonies that requested them. From 1905 on some colonies were supplied definitive issues of dues but the General Issues were still used someplaces until the 1920s. For many years, however, the use of these dues was spotty, offices were often out of them or some offices never got them, and even when on hand they failed to use them consistently. In France the use was probably more general and consistent.

In addition to the T mark, international due-charged mail was supposed to be marked at the office of origin with a written or handstamped numeral indication of the amount due (after 1878 the amount deficient) in Swiss centimes (much later, 1922, in gold centimes) and this was generally done, although many small offices had difficulty understanding the complex UPU

DALLAY

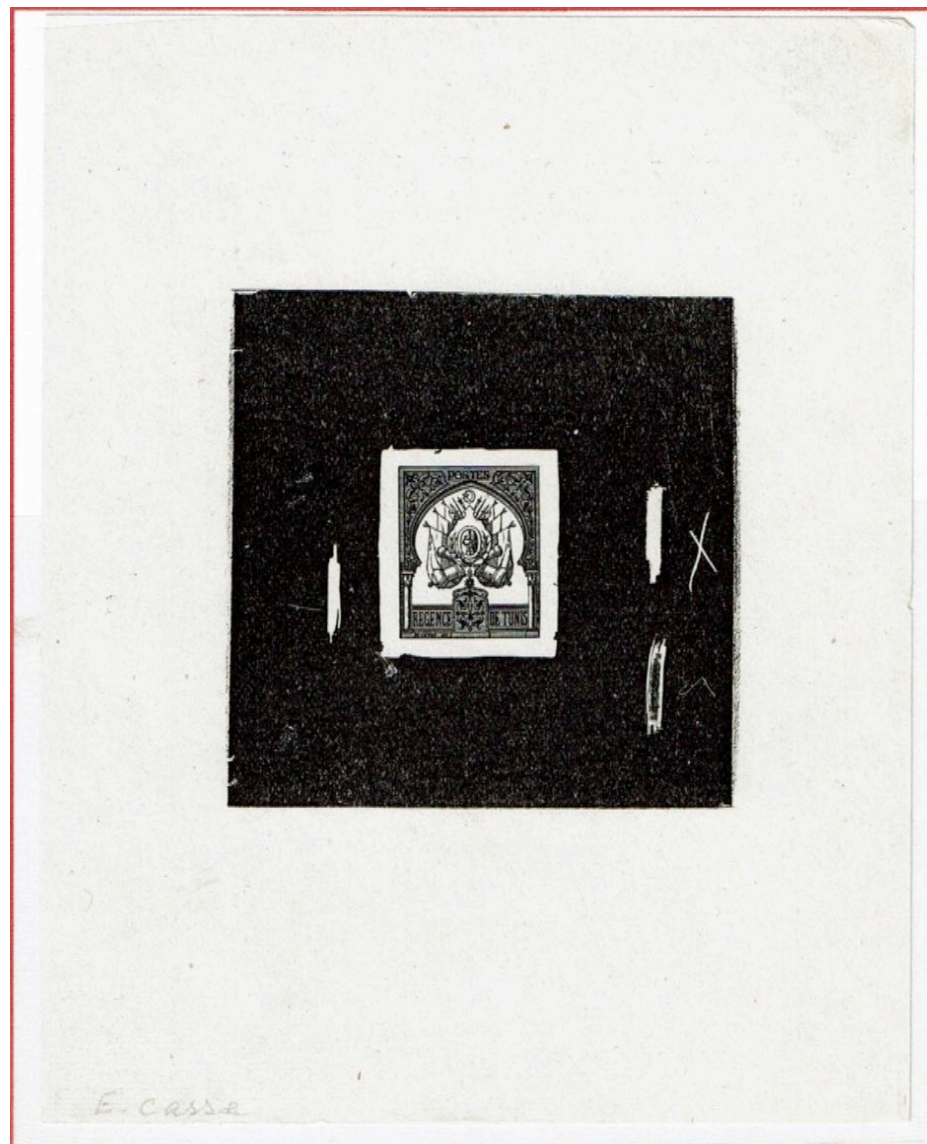


Catalogue de cotations de
Timbres de l'ex-empire
français d'Afrique

2007-2008

Bey of Tunis coat of arms
basis for the design

Designed by E. Cassi



First Issue

- First Issue Features
- Plain background (red)
- Thin figure in value tablet (blue)
- E. Cassi, designer, lower left margin (black)



Second Issue



- Second Issue Features
- Lined background (red)
- Thick figure in value tablet (blue)
- Mouchon (printer) lower right margin (green)
- E. Cassi, designer, lower left margin (black)

Die Proofs



First Issue

- Three printings
- July 1888
- August 1893
- November 1897



July 1888 printing: Tinted paper with blackish gum.

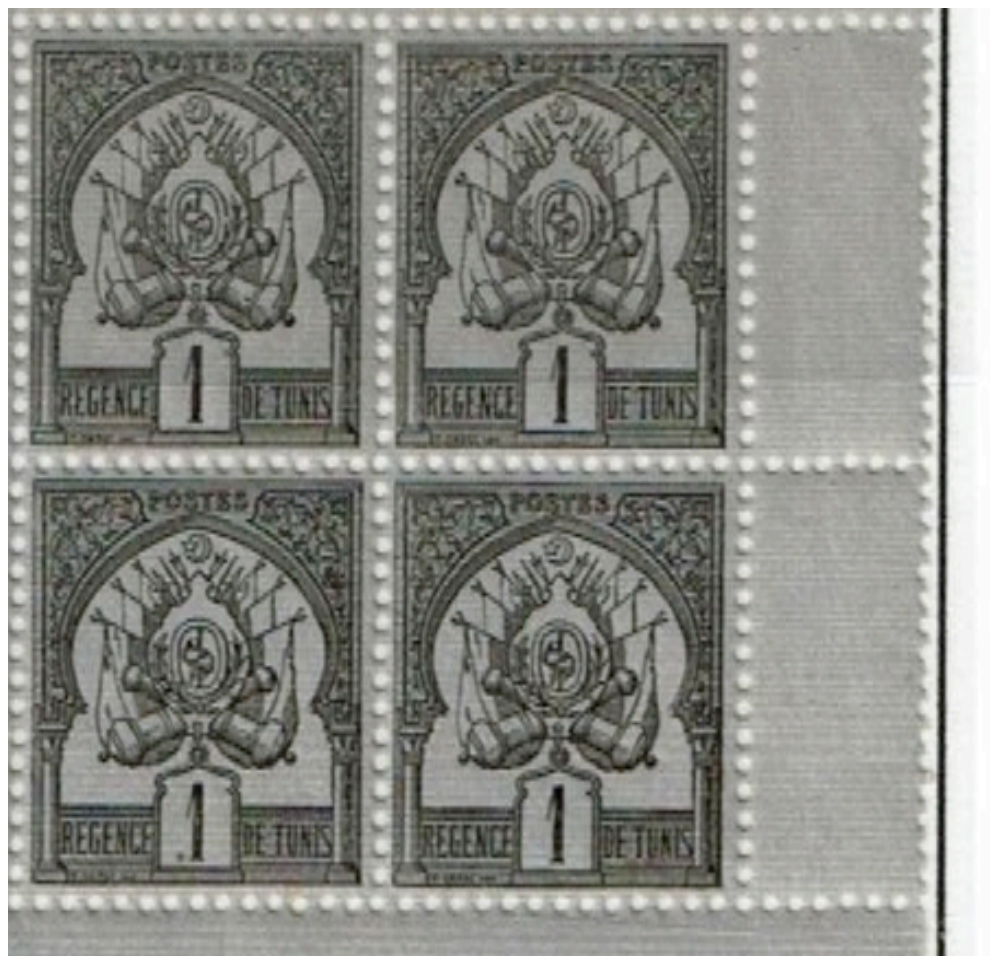


August 1893 printing: tinted paper and blackish gum. This printing differed from the July 1888
Printing in subtle color differences



November 1897 printing. The background is subtly lined, the paper is thicker than the 1888 and 1893 printings and the gum is yellowish white. The colors are slightly different. With time these subtle lines fade and were never visible on the 15c and 40c stamps leaving only the color differences which are minor and the gum color which is not.

The lined background is part of the background tinting.



Gum Varieties

Black



Yellowish White



Second Issue

First Printing October 1, 1888.

- Defining characteristic **BLACK GUM**
- Same colors as first issue
- 1F stamp added
- All 15c stamps not on quadrilled paper
- All 75c rose stamps



Later printings of the other 7 values

Subtle color variations

Gum was yellowish white



New Values and Color Changes



The 1888 domestic rate was 15c. A clandestine courier service offered a rate of 10c. March 1, 1893 the Bey decreed an internal rate would be 10c. The domestic rate of 15c remained for mail to France and other colonies.

The 1888 foreign rate was 25c. A large Italian community in Tunisia was unhappy and in May the rate to Italy dropped to 20c.

Two new stamps were added for these rates





To bring the stamps used on foreign mail into conformity with U.P.U. conventions, green for circulars, red for postcards, and blue for single letters, the Tunisian PTT changed the colors of the 5c, 10c and 25c stamps. To avoid mistakes caused by color, the 15c stamp color was changed to gray. These changes were implemented in 1899-1900.



In 1901 the PTT issued a 35c stamp for the internal single registered letter. Ten centimes postage plus 25c registry fee. They also issued a 2F stamp for heavy mail. Only 35,000, 35c stamps, were issued. Of the 75,000, 2F stamps issued, 51,000 were overprinted with a new value in 1908.



In July 1902 the remaining 60,000 blue 15c stamps were overprinted in red to revalue them at 25c for use on foreign single letters.

- 1907 rate to France dropped to 10c
- No need for 15c stamp-revalued to 10c
- Little use for 1F stamp-revalued to 35c
- Little use for 2F and 5F stamps-revalued
- 40c for a double foreign rate
- 75c for foreign single registered rate



Postage Due Stamps

Overview

All of the stamps in the first issue and all of the stamps in the second issue , except the 35c and 2F stamps, served a postage due role. They were perforated with a capital “T” for this purpose. Three varieties based on hole numbers and size of the “T” are noted by French catalogs. Type I has 6 vertical and 5 horizontal holes Type II has 5 vertical and 5 horizontal holes. Type III has 6 vertical ad 5 horizontal holes that are much smaller and were used very briefly and early at the post offices in Gafsa and La Goulette. These perforations were done at the main post office in Tunis as well as at most local post offices. Consequently there are variations in hole diameter and spacing but generally the type I and II stamps have hole diameters of 1.6 to 2 mm

First Issue, Type I Thin figure stamps



The 1888 thin figure stamps were perforated with a capital “T” and used as postage due stamps.



The 1893 and 1897 thin figure stamps were also perforated but this was done for collectors. The 1897 issue is easily identified and this printing is shown above.

Second Issue, Type I Thick figure stamps



First Issue, Type II Thin figure stamps



The type II perforation with 5 vertical holes is significantly scarcer than the type I six vertical hole perforation.

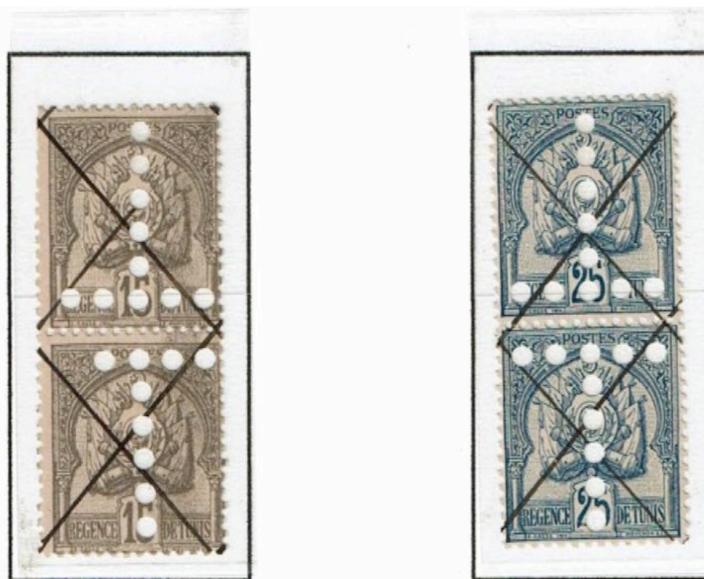
First Issue, Type III thin figure stamps-Gafsa



Type III perforated stamps are the scarcest. Because they were used briefly in the early life of these first Tunisian stamp issues, and the thick figure second series was released on October 1, 1888, any thick figure second issue stamp should be viewed with skepticism.

First Issue, Type III thin figure stamps-La Goulette





The perforating device allowed the postal worker to fold a sheet of stamps in an accordion fashion before inserting it into the tool. This resulted in the tête bêche pairs shown above. The quantity of upright and inverted “T”s is similar. The post office also frequently pre-cancelled the entire sheet with a ruler and ink as these pairs illustrate contrary to the instruction to heavily cancel with crayon on the envelope.

“Maury” variations.



Mint “T” perforated stamps were not available to the stamp collecting community. Most examples were the result of Parisian stamp dealers’ activities. In the February 1890 issue of *Le Collectionneur de timbres-poste*, stamp dealer Arthur Maury advertised that in response to his request to the Tunisian post office to supply him with mint perforated stamps, they gave him a source to get his own perforator. He offered to supply mint perforated stamps with the “T” custom oriented.

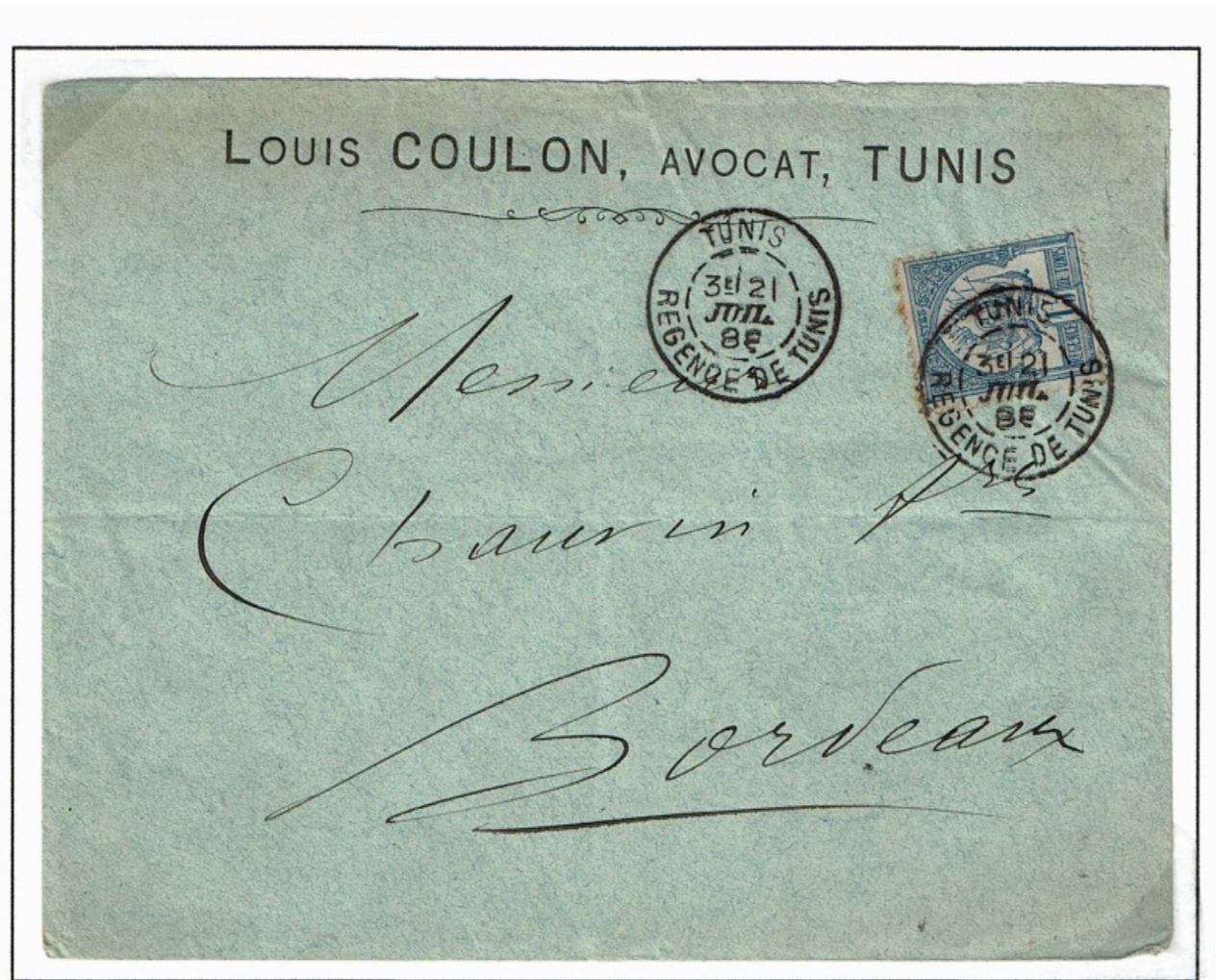
Postal Use of the Stamps

1888 rates

Journal	2c
Printed Matter	5c
Domestic Postcard	10c
Single Domestic Letter	15c
Single Foreign Letter	25c
Registry	25c



Single domestic rate of 15c. Early use (July 20, 1888) of First issue stamps



15c first issue paying domestic rate on July 21, 1888



First issue 40c stamp single domestic registered rate. First issue 40c stamps are tough.



Single registered and insured domestic rate. 15c postage + 30c insurance (10c per 100F) + 25c registration. 40c first issue and two 15c second issue from 1888 printing.

Printed Matter

Second issue, 1888 printing

1c and 2c stamps



Single foreign
registered rate

5F first issue
1888 printing



1893 Rates

Journal	2c
Printed Matter	5c
Domestic Postcard	5c
Foreign Postcard	10c
Single Internal Letter	10c
Single Letter to France	15c
Single Letter to Italy	20c
Single Foreign Letter	25c
Registry Fee	25c

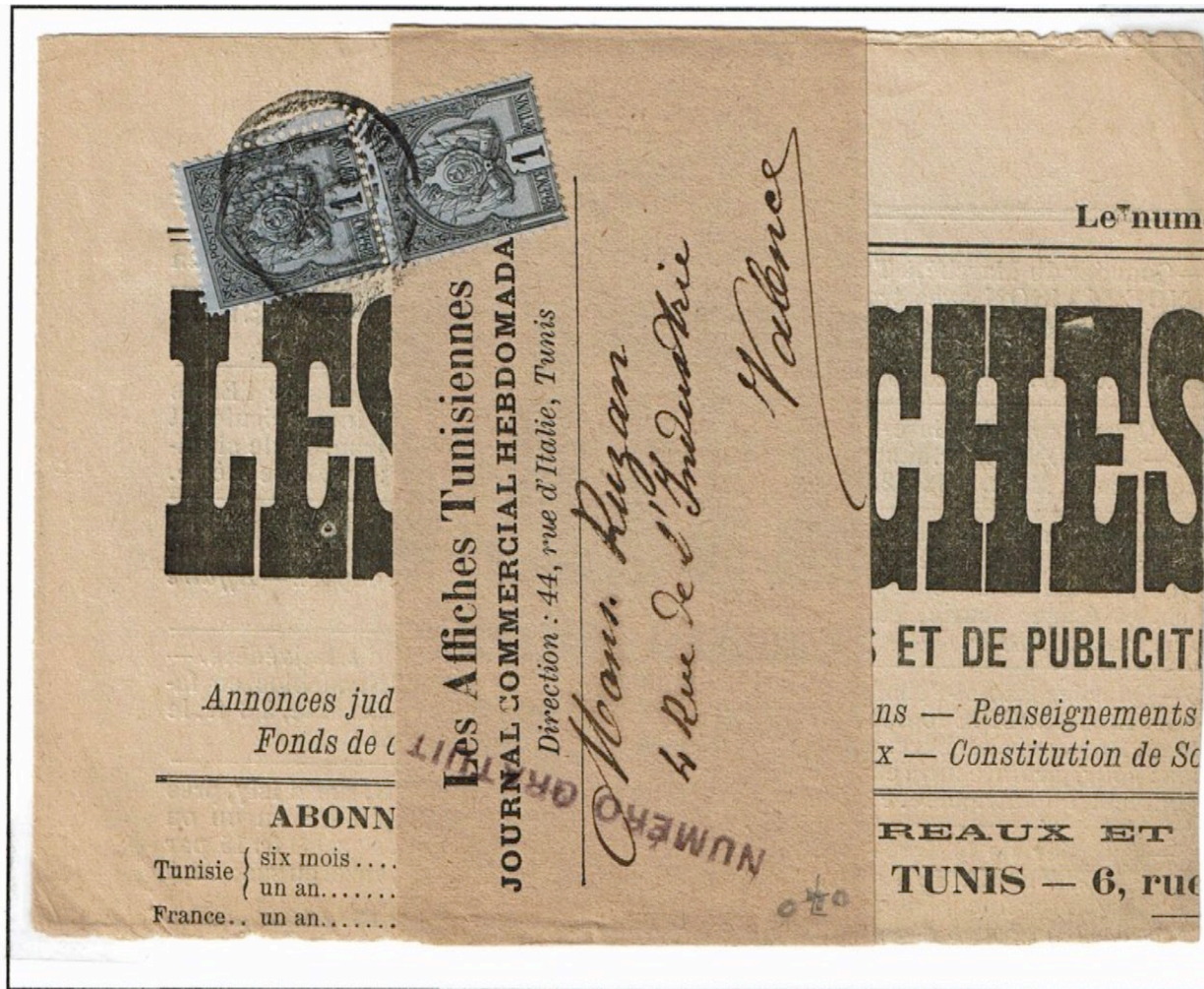
Single internal rate using 10c second issue stamp 1900 printing



Single internal registered rate with manuscript 10c paying the AR fee. Postage paid with 35c second issue, 1901 printing.



Journal rate paid with 1c pair from second issue 1888printing



entimes

TUNIS

GERALE PARAISSANT TOUS

s divers — Faillites et liquidatic
— Mines — Location de villas, ap

MINISTRATION :
lie, 6 — TUNIS

Les Affiches Tunisiennes

JOURNAL COMMERCIAL HEBDOMADAIRE

Direction: 6, rue d'Italie, TUNIS

02

S

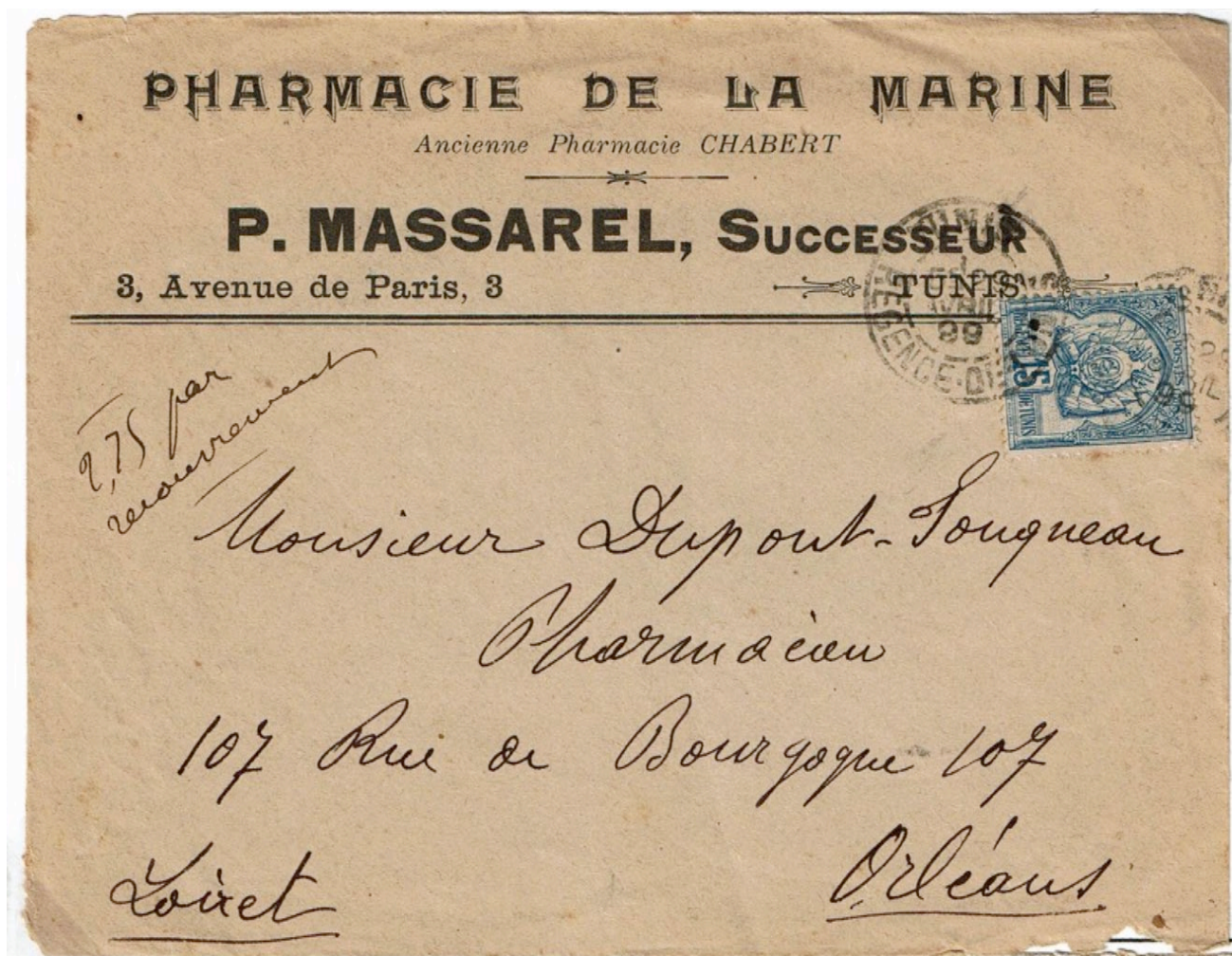
étés

ne 0'15

SPÉCIMEN GRATUIT

Monsieur Duran
4, rue de l'Industrie
à Valence Drôme

Single rate to France 15c second issue 1893 printing



Insured mail to France using 75c first issue 1888 printing



Single rate to Italy. The 5c stamp is first issue 1897 printing



Registered single letter foreign rate using 5F second issue stamp 1888 printing



1907 Rates

Journal	2c
Printed Matter	5c
Domestic Postcard	5c
Foreign Postcard	10c
Single Internal Letter	10c
Single Letter to France	10c
Single Letter to Italy	20c
Single Foreign Letter	25c
Registry Fee	25c

Single rate to France using overprinted 10c on 15c 1908 printing





Postage due



Tunis to La Goulette and La Goulette to Tunis unpaid. April 1, 1901 Tunisia adopted new postage due stamps based on the current French design. These letters were mailed unpaid in February 1901 and taxed 20c, twice the unpaid internal rate of 10c.

Beja to Tunis June 13, 1889. Postage was 30c for a double rate. $30 \times 2 = 60$ minus 15c paid. Postage due tax of 45c is correct

