

Unadopted Essay

Edmond Becker's original 50 cent design depicted the Roman arena in Nîmes, France. However, the subject matter was considered inappropriate for the Games in Paris since it contained nothing uniquely French. Becker was asked to design a replacement, and he created the 30 cent Milo of Croton. The essay's 50c value indicates that it was intended to pay the foreign letter rate. The Nîmes stamp was never printed for distribution, but a number of trial color proofs are known.



Trial Color Proof of frame essay
on ungummed thin paper.



Trial Color Proof of essay
frame on gummed glossy
paper.

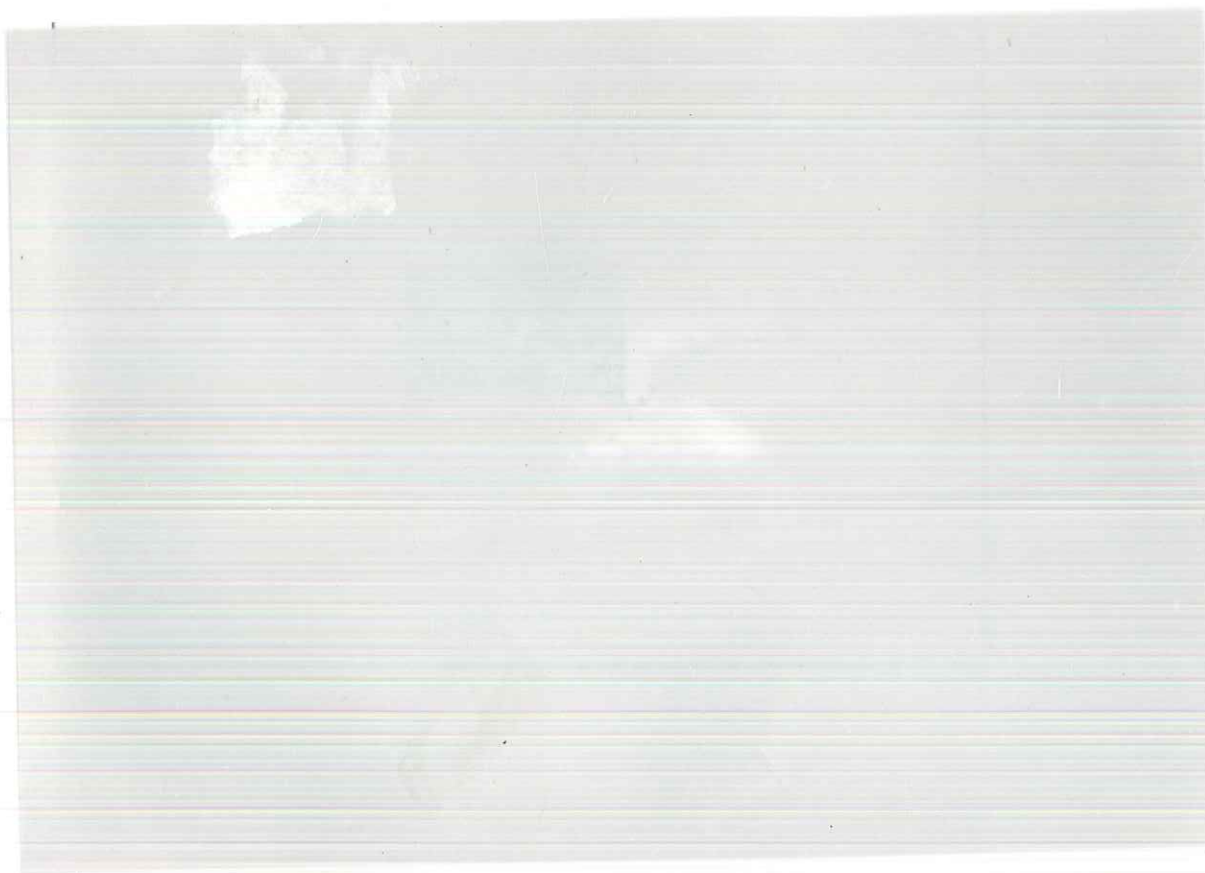


Trial Color Proof of Essay on ungummed glossy paper.

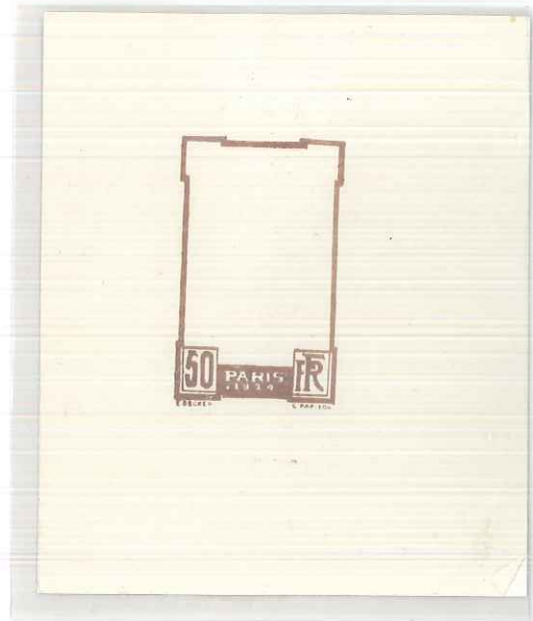
Trial Color Proof of the essay on gummed woven paper.



Trial Color Proof of essay on ungummed thick paper,
signed by stamp designer, Edmond Becker.



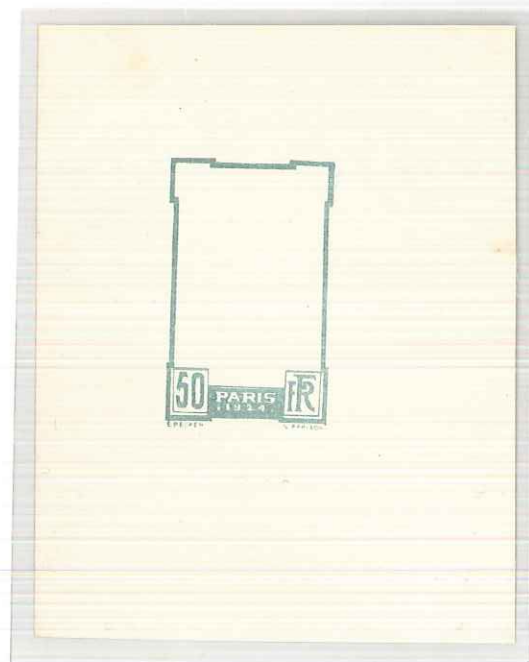
50 cent Trial Color Proof on ungummed carton



50 cent Trial Color Proof on ungummed thick paper.



50 cent Trial Color Proof on ungummed thin paper.





Dale Lilljedahl
4044 Williamsburg Road
Dallas, Texas 75220-6327
USA
dalij@scglobal.net

Frame 1

Sheet 16

Archive21

Trial Color Proofs

The next phase of stamp production was the Trial Color Proof, where the design was printed on different paper types and in different ink color. This was also the opportunity to check the dies for faults

10c Athlete Salute

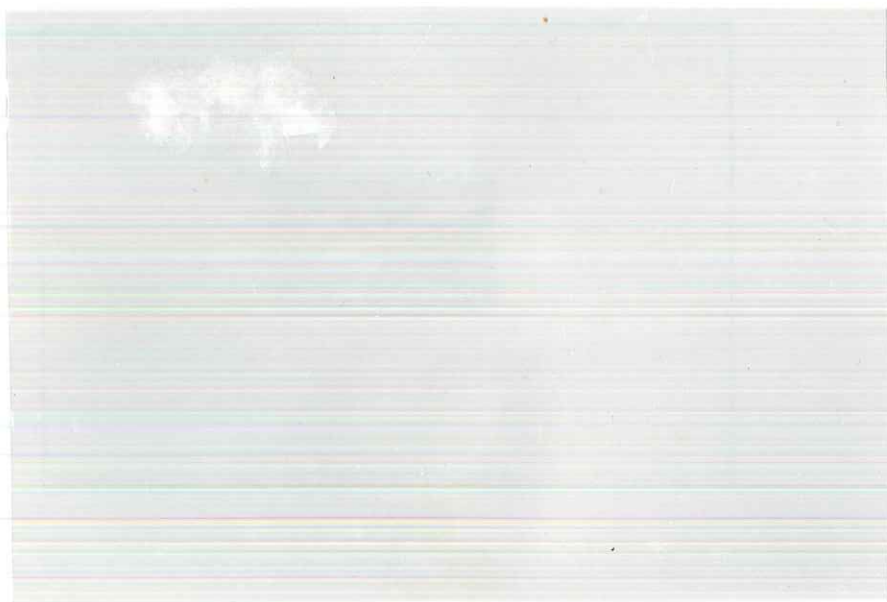
The 10c stamp design did not originally include the word "France" at the top, and is missing from many of the the Trial Color Proofs. Technically these should be considered essays, as the design differs from the final. The 10c has the fewest number of proofs, and most are in the issued colors. The UPU policy of 1924 prescribed green as the color for international printed matter, so the colors were probably quickly established .



Trial Color Proof on ungummed carton paper.

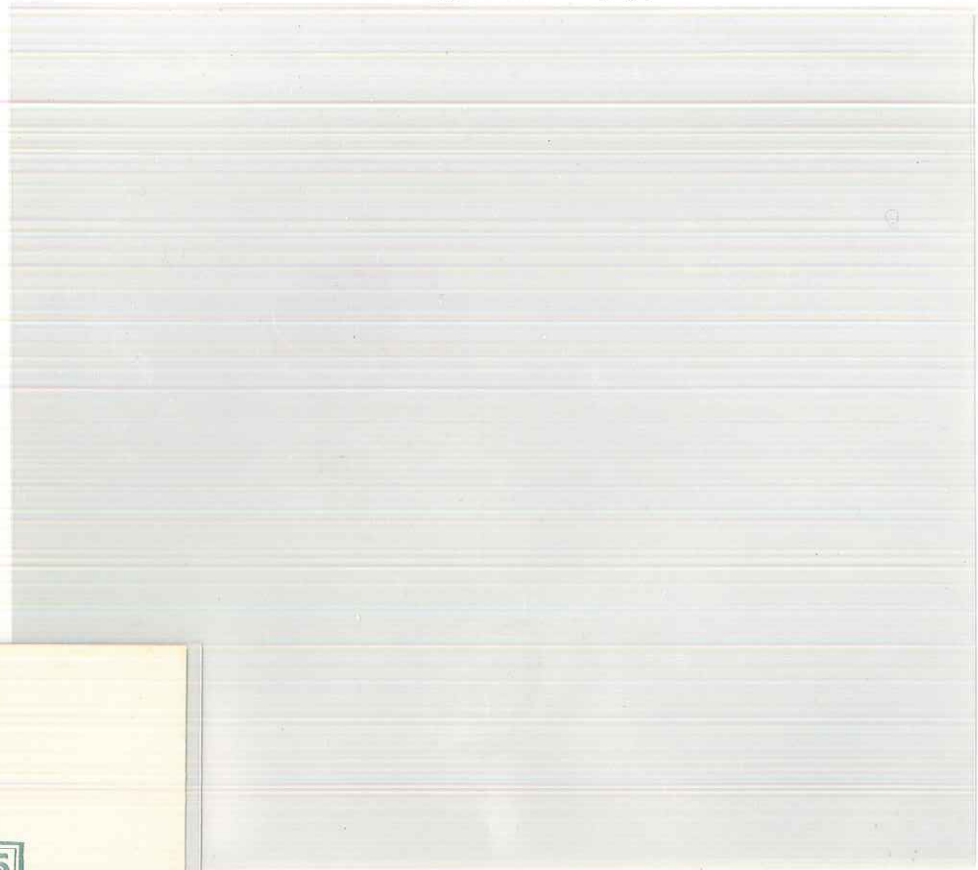


Trial Color Proof of the frame on ungummed chalk paper.



Trial Color Proof on ungummed chalk paper.

Trial Color Proof on ungummed thick paper.



Trial Color Proof on ungummed glossy paper.



Trial Color Proof on ungummed thick glossy paper.

30c Milo of Croton

When designed the 30c denomination paid the foreign postcard rate, which the UPU rules required to be red. So, the Trial Color Proofs of this stamp are most commonly found in various shades of red in the center. Another common color is blue, which paid the foreign letter rate.

Trial Color Proof on gummed thin paper with a brighter shade of red in the center.

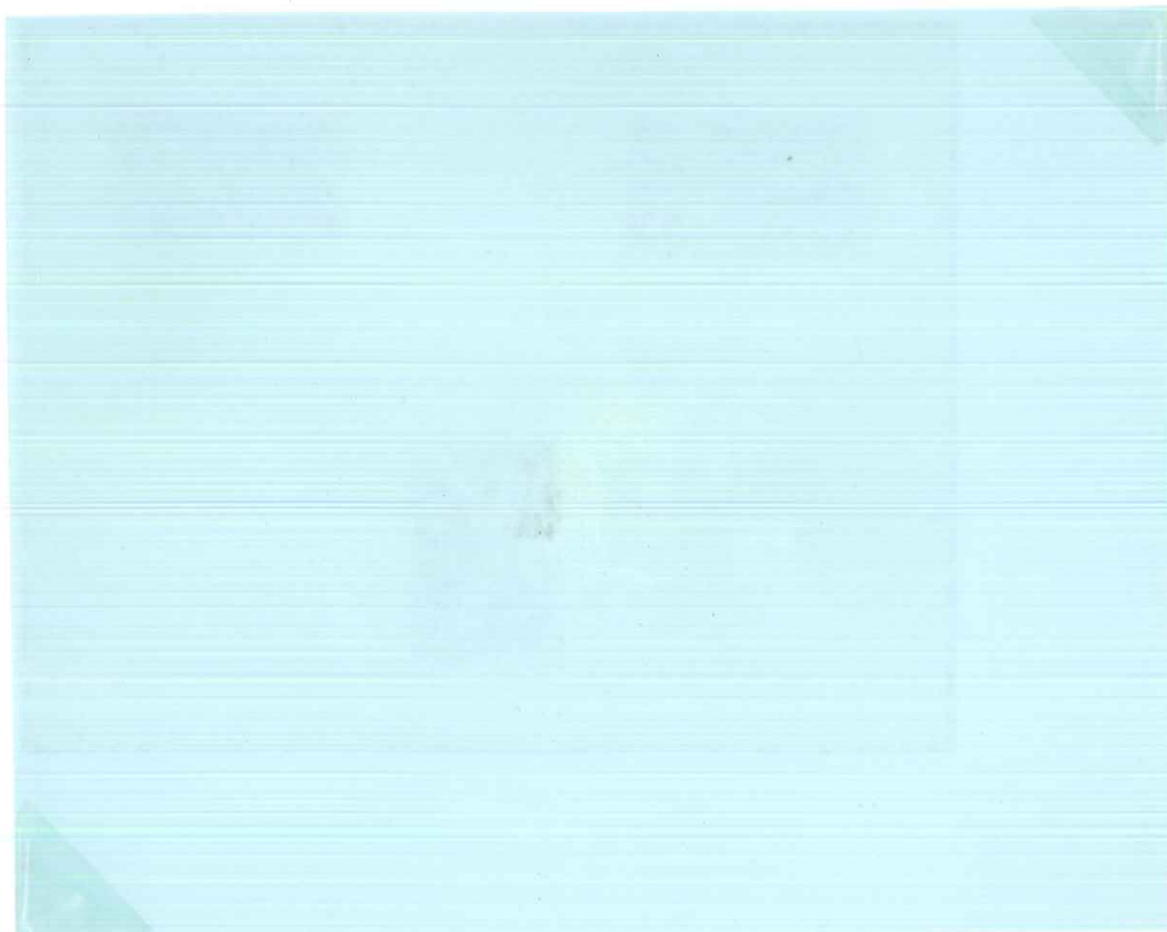


Trial Color Proof on gummed silk paper in blue and purple.

STAMP DEVELOPMENT

The French postal laws in 1924 had no provision for stamps that commemorate a special event like the Olympics. It was assumed that the public would lose interest after the event, and such stamps with limited postal validity required legislation by the French Parliament. At the request of the Paris Organizing Committee a special proclamation was issued on December 28, 1923 by the French Chamber of Deputies authorizing the four special stamps, and postal card. French Postal Administration did not want to accept the responsibility for the costs of the stamps until they were validated by the Chamber, so the Olympic Organizing Committee provided the funds to hire the artist and engravers to design the stamps. Five designs were created, of which four were accepted.

Artist's Drawings



Once they are accepted, the artist's hand drawings are photographically reduced for use by the engravers. Above are reduced essays of the original drafts affixed to an envelope signed by the designer, Edmond Becker. There are two known photographically reduced essays on cover, one in blue and this one in brown.

Paper Provision

The Director of the Central Depot furnished six reams of paper to encourage the issue of the Olympic stamps, as well as, those shown below. They publicize the 1925 Decorative Arts Exhibition of Paris that introduced the Art Deco style to the world.



Proof Sheet Imperforates

Some of the rarest philatelic items of the 1924 Olympics are the imperforate stamps. These stamps were cut from the "Timbres terminés" proof sheet, which is the final test of the hardened plates prior to starting production. Such sheets are not perforated, since they are used to test the plates, and are not destined for public distribution. A few examples were cut from the test sheets, and made their way to the collecting public. They are printed on gumless, slightly glazed paper.

In 2005 I made a survey of the imperforates that have been sold at auction or appeared in publications. It revealed that there are only three 10 cent, five 25 cent, two 30 cent and four 50 cent imperforate stamps. These three examples have been authenticated by French experts (10c—Brun, 25c—Brun, 50c—Maury).



Only reported top margin 50 cent imperforate stamp.



One of three reported 10 cent imperforate stamps.



Only reported bottom right corner 25 cent imperforate

Forged Imperforates

Because of their rarity and subsequent value, a number of forgeries have surfaced. A few have been cut from the trial color proofs, but a more common method is to cut regular stamps that have large margins. The 25c is often found with wide side margins, as noted on the examples below. The extremely thin top and bottom margins expose the forgery along with the gum on the back. This example was offered on an internet auction site.



C63



C45



G. Dausry



G. Dausry





G. Denny

