

Interlude

Although numeral cancels were assigned to all recettes and distributions, these were almost always used to cancel stamps. The small CDS continued in use, as did a few straight-line marks for distribution offices.

Unpaid letters



El Arrouch to
Bordeaux, France,
April 3, 1854

Distribution office had
been open about 18
months.

One of two reported usages of the El-Arrouch straight line marking.

Bône to Marseille,
France, June 30, 1854

Recettes used their CDS to
indicate town of origin for
unpaid letters.



Last day of 25 centimes rate. On July 1, 1854, the first weight class (7-½ grams) prepaid letter rate was reduced to 20 centimes and the due letter rate was raised to 150% of that, or 30 centimes.

Small numerals

Now to the adventure that was the small numeral era. For eleven years the French post office assigned small numeral cancels. The presidency fell in an 1851 coup, and following a plebiscite in November 1852, the former president declared himself emperor Napoleon III. The presidency stamps were replaced with similar designs but "EMPIRE FRANC" at the top. The following sample from the first thirty post offices shows a variety of numerals, rates and markings.

Empire stamps



Dellys to
Bourdeaux,
France, March 8,
1854

Small numeral 3722
assigned to Dellys in
January 1852.

M/s "6" décimes(?) may not be postal marking. If it is, it would indicate the envelope weighed more than 15 grams. The envelope's condition does not support this conclusion, so the marking may be just a file notation.

Oran local use, April
8, 1855

Small numeral 3732
assigned in January
1852.

Ten centimes rate for
local letters effective
April 1, 1830 up to 7-½
grams.



Small numerals

Some postal rates were getting very old. First weight letters within the same district remained at ten centimes, a rate that had been in effect since 1830. The ten centimes Empire stamp appeared in December 1853.

Empire stamps



Alger to Dely-Ibrahim local use,
May 25, 1860

Small numeral 3710
assigned to Alger, the
most common numeral
cancel.

Fragment

Local rate effective April 1, 1830, for letters up to 7-½ grams.

Tlemcen to
Oran, April 1,
1862

Small numeral 3739
assigned to
Tlemcen, the
highest numeral
assigned to Algeria
on January 1, 1852.

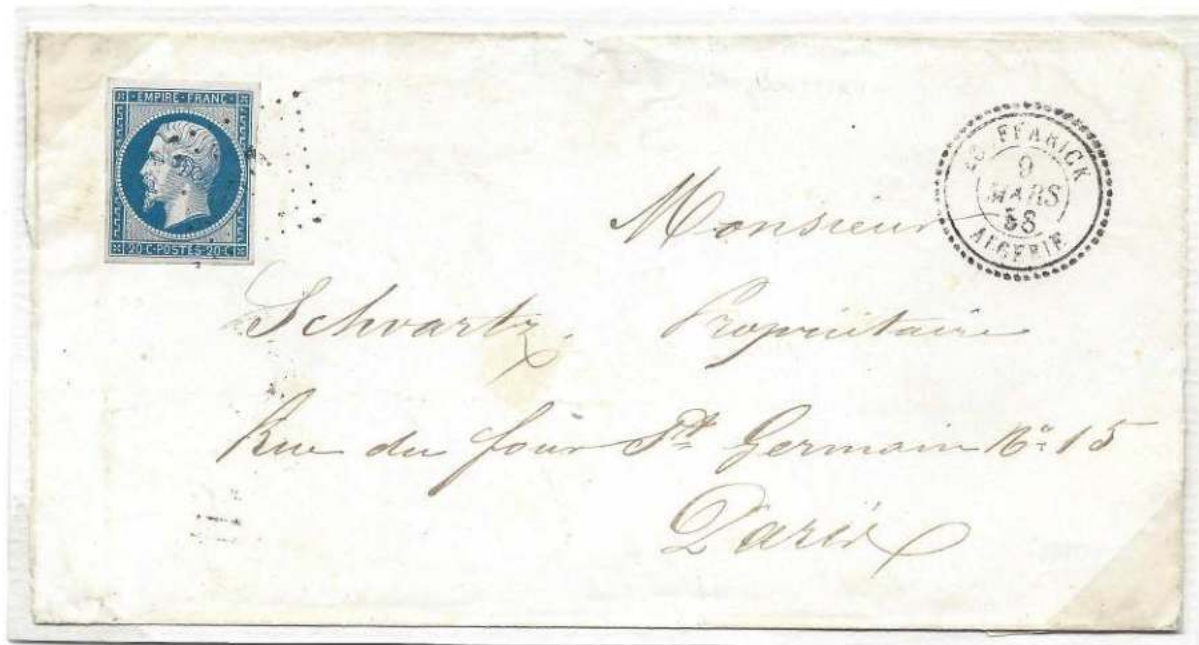


Thirty centimes rate effective April 1, 1830 for local letters weighing between 30 and 60 grams.

Small numerals

Post offices received a different CDS based on their class. Recettes, as shown up to now, used a plain double circle marking. Distribution offices used a similar mark with a circle of dots, or pearls, added around the circumference. When a post office changed its status, so did its CDS. Here are examples from Bouffarick, one of the towns that had trouble spelling its name.

Empire stamps



Bouffarick to
Paris, March 9,
1858

Small numeral
3717 assigned to
Bouffarick. The
CDS shows the
outer ring of
pearls

Bouffarick was a distribution office until 1860.



Bouffarick to
Marseille, March
20, 1862

Still using the same
small numeral, but
now a *recette* CDS
with the outer ring
of pearls removed.

Twenty centimes rate effective January 1, 1862 for letters weighing up to 10 grams (formerly 7-½).

Small numerals

The 20 centimes stamp was most common (as this exhibit bears out). France printed over a billion of them in two types and a variety of shades. Two shades are obvious on the letter below.

Empire stamps



Mostaganem
to Marseille,
January 16,
1856

Small numeral
3730 assigned to
Mostaganem.

80 centimes rate
effective July 1,
1854, for letters
weighing more
than 15 and less
than 100 grams.

Commercial letter accounting for several commercial notes totaling nearly 100,000 francs resulting from sales of flour and wheat.

Marengo to
Selles-sur-Cher,
France, May 18,
1858

Small numeral 3715
assigned to Blidah,
a *recette* between
Marengo and Alger.
Indicates free frank.



Letter to "Lemar" is phonetic misspelling of "le Maire," or mayor, of Selles. Writer requests information about a person born on December 3, 1810.

Small numerals

These small numerals were also assigned in January 1852.

Distribution offices

L'Arba to St.
Georire, France,
July 10, 1854

Small numeral 3711
assigned to L'Arbah.
Only reported use
of straight line
cancel.



Dely-Ibrahim to
Orange, France,
December 19, 1860

Small numeral 3723
assigned to Dely-Ibrahim.

Letter to a notary asking him to assist with the writer's family and monetary affairs. The 1861 census indicates 746 Frenchmen in the village, which was actually created by the French in 1835.

Saïda to La Mastre,
France, July 21, 1861

Small numeral 3726 assigned
to Mascara, a recette between
the desert outpost Saïda and
Alger.

Saïda also had a numeral
cancel, but mail from there
did not always receive the
mark.



Saïda had 122 Europeans living there in 1861. In 1841 Abd-el-Kader used the town as his base. The French established a fort there in 1844 and a distribution post office in 1852.

Small numerals

Assigned in June 1852

The next series of small numerals was assigned in June 1852, mostly to distribution offices. These are the first four in the series, 3751 through 3754. Each village had anywhere from 250 to 800 Europeans living there; usually about half were French. The fraction of mail sent by civilians was increasing as the French expanded their influence over a country now pacified.



El Arrouch to
Bourges,
France,
August 27,
1860



Biskra to Paris,
France,
December 20,
1855



Boghar to
Penne,
France,
December
26, 1857



La Calle to
Nyons,
France,
March 11,
1859

El Arrouch sits between Constantine and the coast, so it would have seen much more traffic than the rest of these outposts. Biskra was one of the southernmost desert outposts, on the site of an ancient Roman village. Boghar, about 175 km south of Alger and also in the desert, was a post that commanded the route to the south. La Calle was the easternmost village in Algeria, just a few kilometers from the Tunisian border.

Small numerals

Numeral 3774

Numeral 3774 was assigned to El Affroun in 1853 when the post office opened. The census indicates there were less than 300 Frenchmen there. In 1857 the small numeral was transferred to Mouzaïville, and the El Affroun post office closed.



Above – Mouzaïville to Lorquin, France, July 6, 1860.

40 centimes letter rate effective July 1, 1854 for letters between 7-½ and 15 grams.

Below - El Affroun to La Ferté sur Amance, France, May 22, 1856

Mouzaïville letter written by soldier at El Affroun, where the outpost remained after the post office closed in 1857. Note color differences in stamps from two separate printings. Fewer than five letters known from El-Affroun with small numeral cancel.

Small numerals

Numeral 3794

Another numeral that has caused confusion is 3794. Philippeville, a large town, received numeral 3734 in January 1852. St.-Cloud-d'Algérie received 3794 in August 1853. For some unexplained reason, some mail originating in Philippeville between 1855 and June 1861 was canceled with small numeral 3794. As a result, mail from Philippeville with numeral 3794 is much more common than mail from St.-Cloud.



Above – Philippeville to Marseille, France, February 22, 1861

Small numeral 3794 used towards the end of the known period of use.

Below – St.-Cloud-d'Algérie to Oran, June 22, 1857

Philippeville letter regards commercial matter – delivery of a shipment against a bill of lading.
St.-Cloud letter is without contents, but also addressed to a merchant.

Small numerals

In addition to St.-Cloud-d'Algérie, these two distribution offices also opened in 1853 or 1854 and received small numeral cancels.

Distribution offices



Miserghin to
Marseille,
France, April
2, 1862

Small numeral
3793 assigned to
Miserghin.

Letter is printed on stationery of a plant fiber processor regarding settlement of shipments of Bordelaise vermouth and absinthe, the opalescent wormwood beverage that eventually caused insanity.

Valmy d'Algérie
to Oran, October
21, 1861

Small numeral 3795
assigned to Valmy
d'Algérie.



Commercial letter regarding shipment of agricultural products. Valmy d'Algérie was only 13 kilometers from Oran. Written from one Spaniard to another, this letter shows the continuing presence of the Spanish near Oran, which they had occupied until the late 18th century.

Small numerals

In 1857 two more offices received small numerals. Numerals were not always consecutive, since post offices were opening in France as well. Soukaras opened as a *distribution*, and in 1860 was upgraded to *recette*.

Distribution offices



Soukaras to
Malta,
January 23,
1858

Small numeral
4005 assigned to
Soukaras.

40 centimes rate effective January 1, 1857, for letters to Malta up to 7-½ grams. Stamps are "milky blue" variety.

Soukaras to
Chuzay, France,
December 8, 1861

Pearl border removed
from *recette* CDS.



"Après le Départ" indicates letter was posted after final dispatch of the day. This prevented patrons from complaining about delivery times.



Laghouat to
Gy, France,
August 15,
1860

Small numeral
4007 assigned to
Laghouat.

Bottom of stamp shows plate wear.

Small numerals

The French settled more and more of Algeria, especially in the area north of the Atlas Mountains where agriculture flourished. Sometimes old villages gained enough French population to justify postal service, other villages were newly settled. Among the few small numerals assigned in 1858 and 1859 were these two.

Distribution offices

Jemmapes to
Arles, France,
May 30, 1859

Small numeral
4104 assigned in
1858.



Jemmapes was founded in 1848 by Lannoy de Bissy, who became the mayor. It was an important military outpost, with over 1,200 (mostly French) Europeans and 4,600 troops there in 1861.

Tizi-Ouzou to
Alger,
November 3,
1860

Small numeral
4190 assigned
in 1859.



Reverse

Government mail from the Arab Bureau at Tizi-Ouzou to the director of the central (tree) nursery.

Small numerals

The last small numerals were assigned in 1861 and generally disappeared from use in early 1862. These three are examples from these small post offices, many of which have no known surviving small numeral cancels.

Distribution offices



Le Tlélat to
Marseille,
France, July
20, 1862

Small numeral
4362 assigned in
1861. Late use
of small numeral
cancel.

Le Tlélat became an important train station as the railroads developed.

Aïn-Tédélès to
Oran, February 4,
1861

Small numeral 4367
assigned in 1861.

"OR" in circle
indicated letter was of
rural origin.



Relizane to
Bordeaux,
France,
December 1,
1861

Small numeral
4364 assigned in
1861.

Small numerals

Recommendation was assimilated into *chargement* service on July 1, 1854. The fee for *chargement* service within France and Algeria was set at 20 centimes. Prepayment was mandatory. Mail received a special red "CHARGÉ" handstamp.

Chargement service



Alger to
Narbonne,
France,
October 17,
1857

Small numeral 3710
used at Alger.

Reverse –
telegraph
department seal,
rail transit
markings and
Narbonne receipt
marking.

Télégraphie privée service allowed for messages to be sent within Algeria at a reduced rate, then mailed by normal post to final destination. Letter informs recipient of auction on October 27.

Constantine local
letter, January 12,
1859

Small numeral 3721
used at Constantine.

Reverse – bankruptcy
court seal.



Twenty centimes *chargement* rate for creditor notices sent by the "court of the first instance" effective June 1858. Letter requests creditor to appear in court with proof of claim. The judgment was entered December 24, 1858.

Small numerals

Thriving commerce and an active military attracted other Europeans to Algeria after 1847. These new immigrants sent more mail to foreign countries. The basic markings on foreign mail were the same – a CDS and small numeral cancel. However, rates varied, and there were several markings applied only to foreign mail.

Foreign destinations



Oran to Vaduz,
Liechtenstein,
December 11,
1860

Small numeral 3732
used at Oran.

Reverse – Lyon to
Paris and Paris to
Erquelines transit
markings (flap
missing).

One franc rate for second weight class (over 10 grams) effective January 1, 1858. Liechtenstein was part of the Austrian postal service until 1912.

Blidah to Lugano,
Switzerland,
December 17,
1857

Small numeral 3715
used at Blidah.

Reverse – Marseille to
Lyon and Lyon to
Paris ambulants
(railroad markings),
Basel transit and
Lugano receipt
markings, m/s"6 g."
weight notation.



Letter rate effective July 1, 1850 was 40 centimes up to 7-½ grams, *chargement* rate was double that, or 80 centimes.

Small numerals

Thriving commerce and an active military attracted other Europeans to Algeria after 1847. These new immigrants sent more mail to foreign countries. The basic markings on foreign mail were the same – a CDS and small numeral cancel. However, rates varied, and there were several markings applied only to foreign mail.



Alger to Wiesloch,
Baden, November 14,
1861

Boxed red "PD" indicates
postage was paid to
destination.

Reverse – Marseille to Lyon
and Paris to Strasbourg
ambulants, Kehl, Baden,
transit marking, Baden rail
date stamp and Wiesloch
receipt mark.

Thirty centimes prepaid letter rate effective January 1, 1857, for letters weighing up to 7½ grams mailed to Baden from within France. The ten centimes over the in-country rate was ceded to Baden. Prepayment was not mandatory.

Bône to
Oberburkheim,
Baden, June 2, 1858

Boxed red "PD" indicates
postage was paid to
destination.

Reverse – Marseille to
Lyon or Marseille to Paris
ambulant incorrectly
applied (only one or the
other, not both, can be
correct), Paris to
Strasbourg *ambulant*.

Baden rail markings
dated June 12 and June
13 and Burkheim receipt
mark.



Small numerals

Foreign destinations



Marengo to
Stockholm,
Sweden, April 8,
1862

Small numeral 3777
applied at Marengo.
"FRANCO" applied at
Bremen, indicating
postage paid.

Reverse – Hamburg
transit mark with
"K.S.P.A.," the "S"
indicating Sweden.

One franc prepaid letter rate effective February 1, 1855, for letters weighing up to 7-½ grams passing through the Swedish posts. The rate through Prussia was higher. Prepayment was not mandatory.



Alger to Naples,
Two Sicilies,
March 14, 1861

Red "2" indicated
second weight
class. Red "PD"
indicates
prepayment to
destination.

Reverse – Marseille
transit mark and
Naples receipt
mark.



Rate to Naples was 2f 60 centimes (double letter rate) effective January 1, 1854 via Marseille. Letter addressed to Italian Duchess. Kingdom of Italy declared March 17, while letter was in transit.

Small numerals

Foreign destinations



Médéah to
London, England,
November 9, 1859

Small numeral 3727
applied at Médéah.
Boxed "PF" indicates
postage was paid to
frontier. Seldom seen
on Algerian mail.

Reverse – Paris to
Calais rail marking.

Forty centimes prepaid letter rate effective January 1, 1855, for letters weighing up to 7½ grams. Prepayment was not mandatory.

Constantine to
Ghymes,
Austria-Hungary,
March 26, 1857

M/s "timbre
insuffisant"
probably applied in
Paris. Red "29"
grote postage due,
Bremen currency.
German name for
Ghymes is Neutra,
now in Slovenia.



Reverse – Marseille
to Paris *ambulant*
and Neutra receipt
mark.

Rate to Austria was 1f 20 centimes effective August 1, 1856. Prior to that the rate was lower through Germany (thus the routing through Allemagne).

Small numerals

One of the more common foreign destinations was England. Depending on the route, adequacy of postage and time period, letters received a variety of markings along the way.



Batna to Whitby,
England, March 13,
1858

Vigilant clerks in Paris noted "Timbre insuffisant / pèse 7.90" grams." "1" shilling due and "MORE TO PAY" added at London.

Alger to Eltham,
Kent, England,
January 10, 1857

Arc "FOREIGN PAID" added at Dover so letter would not be detained in London.



Alger to Blackburn,
England, March 18,
1858

Rate confirmed at
London.



All three show some combination of French *ambulants* on the reverse: Marseille to Lyon, Lyon to Paris, Paris to Calais; British transit and receipt markings.
Forty centimes prepaid letter rate effective January 1, 1857, for letters weighing up to 7-½ grams.

Interlude

During this time not all foreign mail was prepaid. Mail to many countries could be sent either prepaid or postage due.

Foreign destinations

Mostaganem to
Kamiesch, Crimea,
November 1, 1855

"10" décimes due
marking is metal
handstamp.

Reverse – Marseille
transit and Armée
d'Orient receipt
markings.



The French army was still in the Crimea following their arrival in mid-1854. The allied (French, British, Sardinian) forces had succeeded in occupying the peninsula just a month before.

Alger to
Copenhagen,
Denmark,
January 18, 1862

M/s "35" skillings
added at Hamburg,
Thurn & Taxis, for
letters weighing up
to 7-½ grams. Rate
effective March 1,
1854.

Reverse – Two
Hamburg transit
markings, m/s "2"
silbergroschen debit
to Denmark, and
"KIOBEHAVN"
receipt mark.



Interlude

Prepaying postage was still optional, although with the July 1854 rates came a 50% penalty for underpaying. These letters received a "hollow numeral" handstamp rating the postage due in centimes. The basic letter rate was twenty centimes, the penalty rate was thirty.

Unpaid letters



Bougie to Sétif,
December 3,
1856

Reverse – two Sétif transit marks and a Bougie receipt mark (December 18!), and seal of the civil police at Bougie.

Addressed to the innkeeper at Dra el Arba, near Bougie (not Sétif).

Alger to
Erétudans,
France, February
15, 1859

Reverse – sealed with
customs stamp.



Mimeographed official form letter from customs director at Alger in response to request from M. Eglin to appoint a customs agent in Alger. M. Elgin is to appear with birth certificate and other documents at the nearest customs house and remit a 60 franc fee. Agency is then in place for three years.

Interlude

Another means of collecting for unpaid postage was postage due stamps, first issued January 1, 1859. The first stamp was lithographed and in use for just a month before a typographed version was also issued.

Postage due stamps



Nemours local use, July 27, 1859

Postage due stamp is the first issue, lithographed. Note the fine detail and the horizontal accent over the "a."

Sidi-Bel-Abbès local use, June 14, 1861

Typographed second printing – lower quality and the accent over the "a" is nearly vertical.

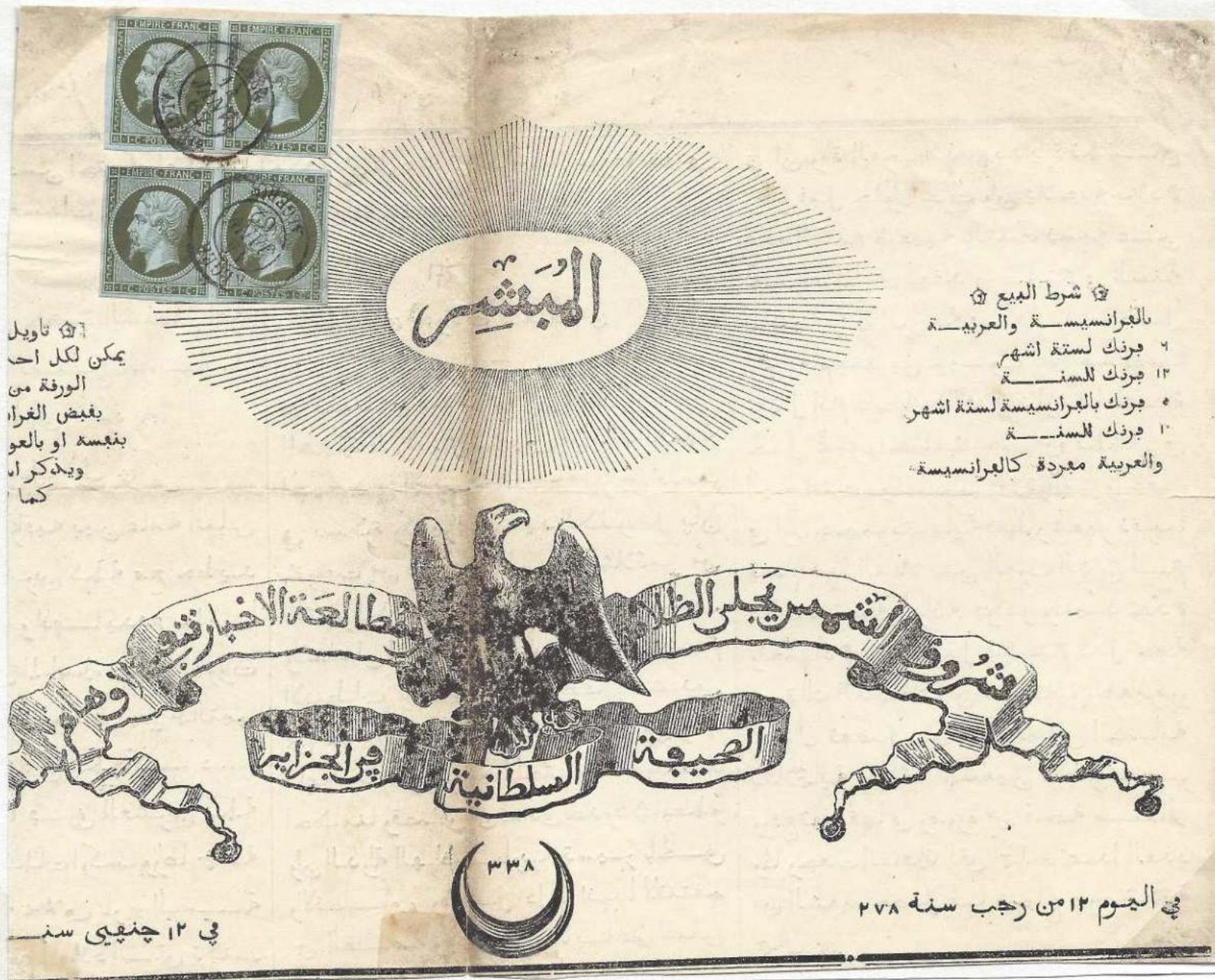


10 centime rate of April 1, 1830, remained in effect without a penalty for not prepaying postage.

Interlude

Small numeral cancels were not used on all stamps. Printed matter and sometimes local letters had stamps canceled with the CDS instead of the numeral. This practice continued until the numerals were retired.

Newspaper rate



Alger to ??, January 14, 1862

Four centimes newspaper rate up to 40 grams effective August 1, 1856, for papers reporting on politics and the social economy.

This is *The Herald*, "The Paper of the Sultanate in Algeria," for January 12, 1862. The story on the back relates new telegraph rates for members of the military.

Small Numerals

Small numeral cancels were officially retired on January 1, 1862. While the small numerals were replaced with large numeral cancels, there were a few Algerian post offices that occasionally used the old small numerals well after 1862. Because these were used after 1862, the stamps are later issues. Finally, some small numerals were used intermittently until all numeral cancels were retired in 1876.

Late usages



Alger to Bury St.
Edmunds,
England,
January 15, 1875

Illegal use of British
stamp to pay
postage. Small
numeral cancel
applied and m/s "6"
décimes postage due
added at Alger.

Only known late use of Alger small numeral cancel. Unpaid letter rate effective July 1, 1870.

Sétif to Marseille,
France, March
10, 1865

Small numeral 3735
used at Sétif until
1868.



Sétif did not use its large numeral cancel until 1866, a very late start for an office that was open before 1863. Letter is an order for "good" vermouth.

Small Numerals

Late usages



Laghouat to
Alger, March 18,
1876

Very late use, since all numeral cancels were withdrawn on March 31. Postal card issued in 1873.

Postal card rate effective January 15, 1873 (first authorization of postal cards). There are no Laghouat large numeral cancels on stamps issued after 1870, so the post office may have resurrected its small numeral after losing or damaging the large numeral cancel.

Aïn Beïda to
Constantine,
June 15, 1875

Small numeral 4116
used until October
1875.



Front only.

French postal service requested return of canceller in November 1865 because 4116 was reassigned (as large numeral cancel) to Paris-Vaugirard. Stamp is Type III, with small dots of color in upper corner ornaments. See frame six, last page, for more information.

Type III

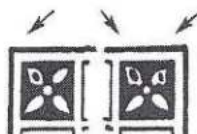


Illustration from Yvert.

Large Numerals

On January 1, 1863 the entire French postal service changed to a new numbering system. The old small numeral cancels were replaced with new large numerals. In Algeria the assigned numbers started at 5000, continuing to 5078, with supplemental numbers assigned starting at 5081 and continuing to 5171. The supplementals were assigned as late as March 1876, the last month large numeral cancels were used.

Recettes



Douéra to
Ceyzériat, France,
January 16, 1863

Large numeral 5027
assigned to Douéra.

"OR" applied to letters
picked up by mailmen
on their rounds.

1853 stamps were replaced by perforated stamps in late 1862, but a few of the 1853 issue were used after that date. No small numeral cancels are known on the 1862 stamps other than late uses, indicating the stamps did not arrive in Algeria until 1863.

Arzew to Saint-
Denis-du-Sig, July
7, 1863

Large numeral 5008
assigned to Arzew.



Perforating was in its infancy in France. This stamp was separated by scissors to preserve the design at the top and bottom since the horizontal perforations cut into it.

Large Numerals

By this time there were at least 100,000 French settlers in Algeria living between the coast and the Atlas Mountains. The postal system continued to develop, adding new offices (at a slower rate) and changing the status of offices as population grew or waned.

Recettes



Biskra to Marseille,
France, January 29,
1865

Large numeral 5012
assigned to Biskra.

Unlisted use of *recette*
cancel with 1862 stamp.
Biskra was not officially a
recette until 1870.

Typical commercial letter to Noilly Prat discussing order, shipment and payment for various products. There is a docketing notation that the writer was formerly the baker in Biskra. Biskra had a dwindling French population of about 250 in 1865.

Boghar to
Angers, France,
February 3, 1866

Large numeral 5014
assigned to Boghar.



The 1862 perforated stamps remained in use at least through 1868. The violet pencil notation says the missing contents were a letter from General Philbert's wife to her mother.

Large Numerals

1862 basic postal rates were in effect until 1870 (20 centimes for letters up to 10 grams), and the 1862 stamps were still found on letters.

Recettes



Tiaret to Niort, France,
September 4, 1865

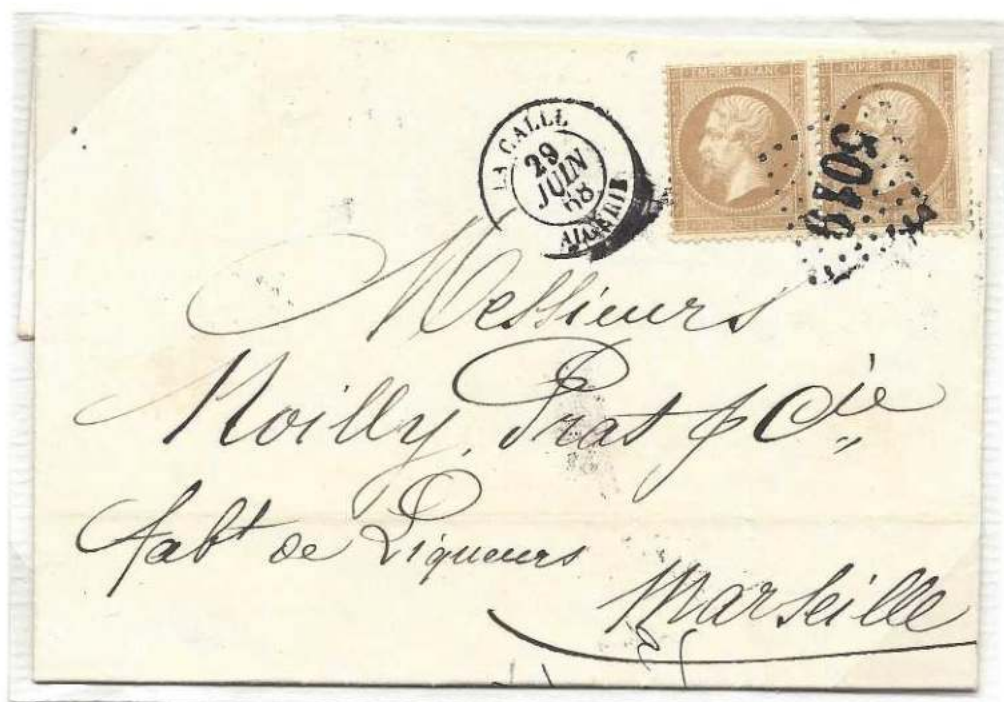
Large numeral 5076
assigned to Tiaret.

Double rate mourning
cover weighing between
10 and 20 grams.

Tiaret was a slow-growing village around since Roman times. The 1,400 people there in 1865 were about 1/3 Jews, 1/3 French and the rest natives or other Europeans.

La Calle to
Marseille,
France, June 29,
1868

Large numeral 5019
assigned to La Calle.



A late use of the 1862 perforated issue. This eastern seaport was growing with French and other European settlers. The writer was ordering absinthe, brandy and cognac of "good quality."

Large Numerals

As before, the large numerals were assigned consecutively to an alphabetic list of post offices without regard to the class of service. The *distributions*, roughly equivalent to a U.S. second class office, received large numeral cancels in January 1863 as well.



Aïn-Tédélès to
Oran, March 30,
1863

Large numeral 5003
assigned to Aïn-
Tédélès.

Aïn-Tédélès was
settled in 1845.

Aïn-
Temouchen
to Alais,
France, May
5, 1863

Large numeral
5004 assigned to
Aïn-Temouchen.

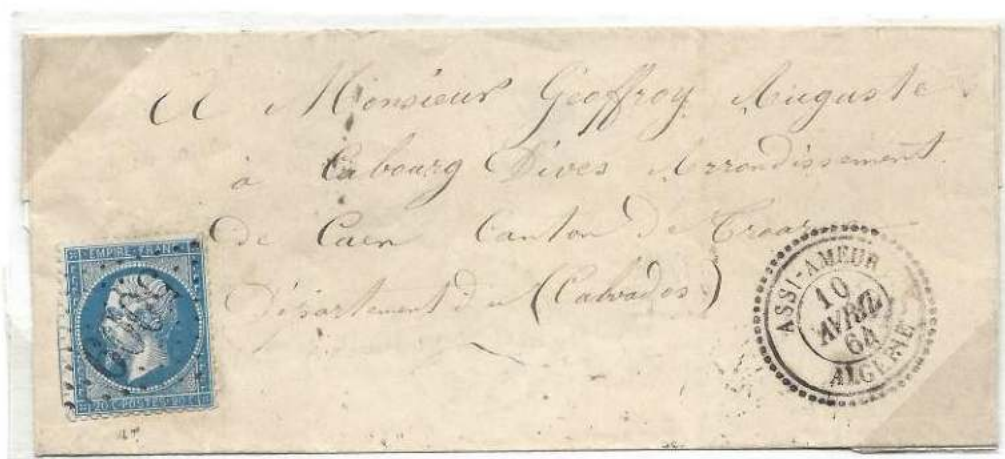
Written in Aïn-
Salado, a place
too small for a
post office.



Assi-Ameur to
Dives, France, April
10, 1864

Large numeral 5009
assigned to Assi-Ameur.

Assi-Ameur was founded
in 1848 when the first
wave of colons (colonial
settlers) came from
France.



Large Numerals

The smaller post offices processed few letters. La Maison-Carrée was an ancient Turkish fort near Alger. Saïda was originally a small fort built in 1844. Kouba was founded in 1832 by Alsatians. Each had between 150 and 750 French residents in the village.

Distributions



La Maison-Carrée
to Blois, France,
October 10, 1865

Large numeral 5040
assigned to La Maison-
Carrée.

Saïda to Paris,
France, May 7, 1866

Large numeral 5060
assigned to Saïda.



Kouba to Clermont-
Ferrand, France,
April 5, 1867

Large numeral 5036
assigned to Kouba.



Large Numerals

Tébessa was an ancient Roman fort in the desert near the Tunisian border. Gastonville was created in 1848 when the first wave of *colons* left France after the Paris Commune. L'Alma was founded in 1856 about 25 miles east of Alger. Again, the French population was very small.

Distributions



Tébessa to
Constantine,
January 15, 1867

Large numeral 5071
assigned to Tébessa.

Local letter rate
effective January 1,
1863, for letters up to 10
grams.

Gastonville to Alger,
April 7, 1868

Large numeral 5031
assigned to Gastonville.



L'Alma to Alger,
January 31, 1870

Large numeral 5057
assigned to L'Alma.



Earliest known letter from L'Alma, only reported use on this stamp. Official correspondence from sheriff.

Large Numerals

As early as December 1862 new stamps appeared with a laureated Louis Napoleon as the main design. The 10 and 20 centimes values were issued in 1867. Here are a few usages to show the 1867 stamps (*recettes* and *distributions*). Many more of these will appear later in the exhibit.

New stamps



Oued-el-Hammam
to Oran, December
25, 1868

Large numeral 5053
assigned to Oued-el-
Hammam.

Médéah to Alger,
May 14, 1868

Large numeral 5043
assigned to Médéah.



Red "BM" applied to letters deposited in movable letter boxes, where letters were deposited and the entire box taken to the post office before opening.



Dély-Ibrahim to
Toulouse, France,
December 2, 1867

Large numeral 5025
assigned to Dély-
Ibrahim.

"C" in circle is carrier mark. Early stamp printings had small dots in bottom line (20C · POSTES · 20C).

Large Numerals

The French continued to settle towns in the north and build military forts in the desert. Each *recette* and *distribution* received a large numeral assignment when the post office opened. Assignments were no longer consecutive, since numerals were also assigned to new French and colonial offices, too.

New post offices



Bordj-bou-Argeridj
to Marseille,
France, May 13,
1868

Large numeral 5125
assigned to Bordj-bou-
Argeridj.

This military outpost and town was about 50 miles inland. The French population was around 50 in 1868. It was enough to operate a *recette*, although official records indicate it was a *distribution*.

Djelfa to Alger,
February 24, 1868

Large numeral 5109
assigned to Djelfa.



Djelfa was a military outpost 250 miles south of Alger, well into the desert. The *distribution* post office opened in 1863, but by this time there were still less than 200 French.

Large Numerals

Other Europeans were also settling in Algeria, partly because of political unrest at home, but also as the result of the promise of the new country. France engaged in a public relations campaign to attract settlers, since America was still the destination of choice. Some Europeans also served in the French military.

Foreign destinations



Djidjeli to Alessio,
Italy, October 15,
1864

Large numeral 5026
assigned to Djidjeli
(formerly spelled
Gigelly).

Front only.

This significant port had about 200 non-French Europeans living there at the time. Settlers moved in only in 1858 because the town was accessible only from the sea.

Alger to Messina,
Italy, June 16,
1865

Large numeral 5005
assigned to Alger.

Rectangular mark
indicates it was
carried by French
ship rather than
Italian.

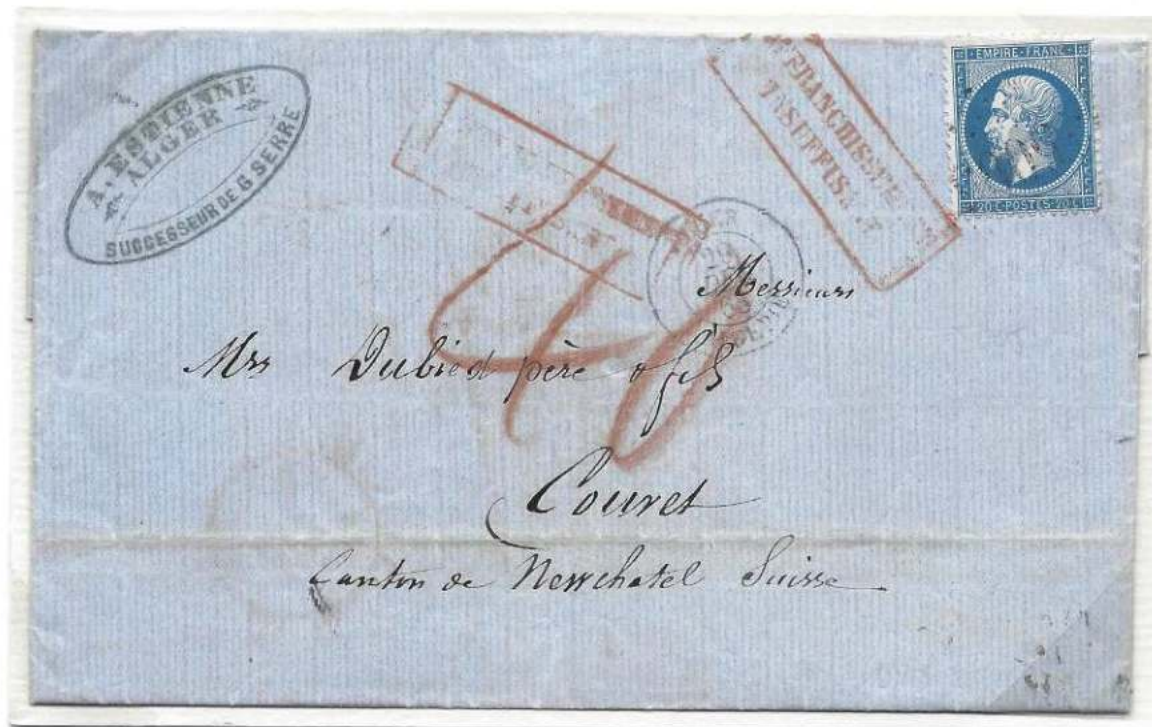


Both letters were fully prepaid (PD=Paid to Destination). The 40 centimes rate was effective October 1, 1861 for letters weighing up to 10 grams, regardless of the ship's flag.

Large Numerals

Prepayment was not mandatory for foreign letters. Credit was usually given for partial prepayment.

Foreign destinations



Alger to Couvet,
Switzerland,
December 29,
1863

Boxed red
"AFFRANCHISSE-
MENT
INSUFFISANT"
added at Lyon.

Red crayon "40"
Swiss centimes due
marking.

Forty centimes rate for prepaid letters weighing up to 7-½ grams effective July 1, 1850.

Alger to Helsingör,
Denmark, December 5,
1865

Pencil "2" indicates second weight class. Octagonal F. 34 for Article 34 of the France-Thurn & Taxis Letter Bill of April 1, 1862.

7-1/6 silbergroschen total debit to Denmark equaled 30 skillings. Additional 7 skillings for internal Danish transit, 37 skillings due from recipient.



French currency rate was 56 centimes (4 silbergroschen, 8 pfennigs) for double weight letters. Red crayon "7" silbergroschen debit (rounded off) to Denmark on reverse, as well as Marseille and Hamburg transit marks and Helsingör receipt mark.

Large Numerals

The French launched an expedition to Mexico in 1862 that installed Maximilian, an Austrian, as emperor in 1864. After the American Civil War ended in 1865 the U.S. forced the French troops to leave, abandoning Maximilian to face a firing squad in 1867.

Foreign destinations



Front only.

Cherchell to Mexico,
February 22, 1863

Large numeral 5021
assigned to Cherchell.

Boxed red "PD" required on
all letters sent to Mexico if
mailed under special rate
convention.

Fifty centimes rate for letters weighing up to 10 grams sent to officers in the Mexico expeditionary force via British packet effective February 12, 1862.

Cherchell to
Mexico, June 8,
1863

Routed through St.
Nazaire, French packet
departure point, and
Martinique to Vera
Cruz.



Twenty centimes rate for letters weighing up to 10 grams sent to any member of the Mexico expeditionary force via French packet effective April 14, 1862.

Large Numerals

Papiers d'Affaires

The French added a special rate for mailing legal papers on August 1, 1856. The fixed rate of 50 centimes up to 500 grams (and extra postage over the weight limit) remained in place until the war rates in 1871.



Mostaganem to Alger, February 6, 1868

Large numeral 5048 assigned to Mostaganem.

Left-most stamp shows constant plate variety. White line at lower left is filled with ink. Mostaganem was a port between Oran and Alger. More than 10,000 people lived there in 1868, nearly half of which were French and other Europeans.

Large Numerals

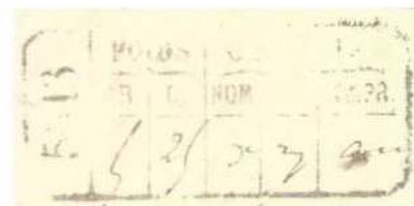
On July 1, 1854 the postal service combined registration and insured letter service as *chargement*. The fixed fee for a letter, prepayment mandatory, was 20 centimes.

Registered mail

Blidah to Paris,
France, July 10, 1863

Large numeral 5013
assigned to Blidah.

Red **CHARGÉ** and m/s
"No. 380" indicates
service.



Reverse – cachet descriptif with numeral 5013, weight and notations about the wax seals.

Kouba to Caen,
France, December 23,
1866

Postal form No. 103, receipt
for delivery of *chargement*
letter from Nancy to Alger.

N° 103. DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE DES POSTES. 1

AVIS DE RÉCEPTION DE CHARGEMENT.

Chargement expédié du bureau de
département d
le 23 Décembre 1866
sous le n°
à l'adresse de M.
à
mess
L'expéditeur demande si le chargement a été reçu.

L. Receveur des Postes.

Le chargement ci-dessus désigné a été présenté le
le 23 Décembre 1866
au destinataire qui en a donné reçu (7).

L. Receveur des Postes.

RÉCEPTION.

En cas de réception du chargement au bureau français,
le préposé du bureau de destination envoie le présent avis au pré-
posé du bureau sur lequel il a réexpédié le chargement, et en cas de
préposé rempli le tableau ci-dessous.

(1) Si le chargement a été réexpédié à l'étranger, on n'a pas touché en outre pour une
casse quatorze, les cinq décimes avec une billes et complées par l'insert de fin de
réception de fin de fin.

DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE DES POSTES.

AVIS DE RÉCEPTION DE CHARGEMENT.

Pour le Bureau de Poste
de Caen
Département de Calvados

KOUBA
23
DEC.
66
ALGERIE

Receven des P

Large Numerals

Chargement mail

Chargement service and rates changed again on July 6, 1859. Now one could send a "declared value" letter with proportional insurance, but only from *recettes*. Delivery receipts (form no. 103 on previous page) were mandatory.



Oran to Sassenage, France, October 15, 1867

Large numeral 5051 assigned to Oran.

Reverse – *cachet descriptif*, Marseille to Lyon *ambulant*, Grenoble transit mark (and manuscript notation), and Sassenage receipt mark.

July 6, 1859 letter rate was 80 centimes for declared value letters weighing between 20 and 100 grams. *Cache descriptif* indicates 37 gram weight. Fixed fee for declared value letter was an additional 20 centimes, accounting for the 1 franc postage. Note combination of 1862 and 1863 stamps.

Declared value proportional fee of 10 centimes per 100 francs, or 40 centimes for 400 francs, had to be paid in cash in addition to the postage.

Interlude

CDS mail

As shown in an earlier interlude, many in-city letters and low rate mail were canceled only with a circular date stamp, not the large numeral.



Constantine to
Narbonne, France,
April 28, 1865

Combined use of 1862 and
1863 stamps.

One centime printed matter
rate, which included official
notices in a paper band, for
items weighing up to five
grams. Additional one
centime for each five grams
over the initial five. Rate
effective August 1, 1856.

Mailed from the Chief of
Police in Alger to the
marshal of the police
barracks at Narbonne.

Alger local use,
October 31,
1866

Ten centimes local
letter rate for
prepaid letters
weighing up to ten
grams effective
January 1, 1863.



Official notice to provide the court with proof of debts within twenty days.