

Dahomey Palm Climber Bisects of 1920

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In late 1920 the supply of the 1913 25 centime ultra and deep blue Dahomey palm climber ran out in several cities. (figure 1) The shortage was created by the January 4, 1920 domestic rate increase to 25 centimes. The domestic rate applied to internal mail as well as mail to France. Postal authorities approved bisecting either horizontally or vertically the 1913 50 centime chocolate and brown stamp (figure 2) to fill the need until a new supply of 25 centime stamps could be provided.



Figure 1.



Figure 2.

This authorization covered September 1920 through December 1920. The cities of Bohicon, Cotonou, and Porto-Novo were authorized to use the bisect method. The precise usage was not clear to users, however. Officially the 50 centime stamp should have been bisected horizontally or vertically. However, postally used examples are known with incorrect cutting as well examples of incorrect stamps being bisected with mixed usage.

Figure 3 is the front of a letter mailed to the chief physician of Porto-Novo on Oct 30, 1920 from Cotonou with a 50 centime stamp bisected diagonally. Figure 3a shows the reverse of this letter backstamped Oct 31, 1921.



Figure 3. Diagonally bisected 50 centime stamp paid postage to Porto Novo.



Figure 3a. Reverse of Figure 3 cover with Porto Novo receiver.

An example of mixed franking mailed Dec 24, 1920 from Bohicon to France using a bisected 20 centime stamp and a 15 centime stamp to create proper postage is shown in figure 4. Figure 4a is the reverse of this cover showing the Dijon receiver mark dated Jan 20, 1921 indicating it passed successfully through the post.



Figure 4. Bohicon to Dijon cover franked with bisected 20 centime stamp.



Figure 5. Bohicon to Cotonou with bisected 30 centime stamp.



Figure 4a. Reverse off the cover in figure 4 with Dijon receiver.



Figure 5a. Reverse of the cover in figure 5 with Cotonou receiver.

Another mixed franking example was mailed November 14, 1920 from Bohicon to a resident in Cotonou. (figure 5) The 30 centime stamp from this series was bisected and paired with a 10 centime stamp to pay the correct 25 centime rate. The reverse (figure 5a) shows the Cotonou receiver mark dated November 16, 1920. These letters had no trouble traveling to their destination.

The cover shown in figure 6 is from this period of 25 centime stamp shortage, having been mailed September 16, 1920 from Porto Novo to Grand Popo, where it was received September 18, 1920.

(figure 6a) It was addressed to **Société Commerciale et Industrielle de la Cote d'Afrique** with no return address. It was franked with a red 10 centime and grey 15 centime postage due stamp creating the proper rate of 25 centimes. The Porto Novo postmark is both in the normal upper right hand position as well as on both postage due stamps.

Because this was early in the range of exception, and I have not seen an exact date of the authorization to begin bisecting the 50 centime stamp, this example may have been an attempt to make the 25 centime postage using the postage due stamps. With the Grand Popo receiver on the re-

verse and commercial address it appears to have travelled through the postal system. However, if the cover had arrived without proper postage it should have been charged a double rate. In addition, the Porto Novo (originating post office) postmark cancelled the postage due stamps. The question is why didn't they use a combination of regular stamps? I am not aware of shortages in other denominations of this series. While odd, as it goes to a commercial organization it doesn't appear to be a collector created item. I would appreciate any thoughts or input. I can be reached at jere@duttenterprises.com.

Timbres Fiscaux-Quittances Question?



Over the years I have accumulated several of these Bulletin D'Expédition forms franked by Tunisian parcel post stamps. This example is the only one I have labeled VALEUR DÉCLARÉE with the quittances revenue stamps applied. Were these applied to pay the insurance? Any comments will be welcomed. Contact the editor to respond. Nrasmu@gmail.com. Thanks.



Figure 6 and 6a. Cover front to from Porto Novo to Grand Popo and reverse.

