

COINAGE STAMPS ISSUED IN MADAGASCAR

1916 - 1922

EMERGENCY NOTES

During the war of 14-18, current transactions suffered from the shortage of divisional money. The noble metal (silver) was hoarded and the non-ferrous metals reserved for weaponry.

In metropolitan France, municipalities or chambers of commerce were authorized to issue emergency notes of low value, secured by equivalent deposits in the bank,

This had already been done during periods of crisis after the defeat of 1870



Banknote of 50 centimes issued by the Municipal Council of Roubaix on November 8, 1871 (approved by the Prefect).



50 centimes banknote issued in 1916 by the Deux-Sèvres Chamber of Commerce (Sower on the left, chamois leather tanner on the right).

or during the French Revolution.

15 Sols trust note issued in 1791 by the Caisse Patriotique de la ville de Saint-Maixent (Deux-Sèvres) on the back of a playing card (queen of diamonds).



COINAGE STAMPS

A Decision of September 12, 1916 of the Governor General of Madagascar Hubert GARBIT authorized postmen to put into circulation postage stamps intended to compensate for the lack of divisional currency. It was not the first time that coinage stamps were used, the invention going to the American John Gault who in 1862, during the American Civil War, proposed to stick a stamp on a strong cardboard or insert in a copper capsule closed by a sheet of mica. Of course, the back had an advertisement!



Images captured on the website de l'Association Philatélique Senlisienne

The stamps will be used later in other colonies such as Guinea or the Ivory Coast.



New Caledonia will use the process, patented s.g.d.g., filed in March 1920 under the trademark FYP or Fallait Y Penser (*you had to think about it*), consisting of inserting a stamp between a stamped aluminum or tin plate illustrated and a mica washer. The back bore an advertising message to cover the manufacturing costs (10 cents for an aluminum cap).



MADAGASCAR STAMPS TYPE SEDAN CHAIR

In 1916, the stamps in use in Madagascar were the "filanjana" vignettes, issued in 1908 after the abandonment of the "traveller's tree and zebu stamps, the design of which was unanimously criticized.

The series known as "transport in filanzane" is large format (24x40). It depicts a man wearing a colonial helmet, transported in a "filanjana *" (sedan chair with 4 carriers), climbing with effort the hills leading to Antananarivo.

13½ x 14 serration. Two-pass flat typography (frame first, then central design with value). Sheets of 75 in three panels of 25.

17 values from 1 centime to 5 francs (n ° 94 to 110). (1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50 and 75 centimes and 1, 2 and 5 francs).

In various forms, the filanjana type will be used until 1944.
A overview can be found at the end of the document.

* *Filanjana means balance or equilibrium in Malagasy!*



Rova of Antananarivo with the PM's palace, the temple, the tombs of the kings, the Tranovola, the Queen's Palace and the Andrianampoinimerina hut.

Train from Antananarivo to the east coast coming out of a tunnel.

Drawing by A. Johannet

COINAGE STAMPS

The Decision of September 12, 1916 of the Governor General Hubert GARBIT specified that the stamps issued to replace the divisional currency would be given to the public against 5 francs ecus (the old Piastre or Ariary) or against banknotes of the Banque de France of 5 F or more (the banknotes came from France and the local issue did not take place until 1926 with the creation of the Bank of Madagascar).

Used figurines could be returned to the Post Office and exchanged for money or banknotes from the Banque de France for a value of 5 F at least.

Concretely, new postage stamps were glued by the official printing office on a strong cardboard bearing on the back a dog drawn by Mr. Turlot (possibly the founder of block letters, in Paris).

Even if bronze coins were still in circulation, since 1914 the French small coin values had been the "perforated" nickel coins of 5, 10 and 25 centimes of the Lindauer or Patey types as well as (since 1897), the "silver sowers", engraved by Oscar Roty, of 50 centimes, 1 franc and two francs. These are the values retained for the stamps money of Madagascar, but in several stages and with several labels.

It was an indisputable payment system because the face values of postage stamps are official fiduciary values.

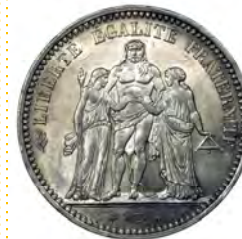
Indeed, the Malagasy, especially in the countryside where 95% of the population lived, used little banknotes from France and often refused large denominations of 50 francs and outright hated those of 20 francs. To make these "objects" understandable and acceptable, they had to be named with the monetary terms that the Malagasy had used before the introduction of French currencies.

Tests were carried out in 1916 for the 25c and 2F, without mention of the value on the back as well as a test for the 10c with mention only of the value in cents on the back (without the Malagasy equivalent).



CORRESPONDANCE BETWEEN MALAGASY AND FRENCH DENOMINATIONS

NAME	PERCENTAGE	WEIGHT (grams)	NUMBER (grains of rice)	CONTERVALUE in francs	ROUND VALUE in francs
ARIARY	1	27,073	1008	5,00	5,00
LOSO	½	13,54	504	2,50	
VENTY SY KIROBO	5/12	11,28	420	2,083	2,00
SASANANGY	1/3	9,02	336	1,667	
KIROBO	¼	6,77	252	1,25	
IRAIBILANJA	5/24	5,64	336	1,042	1,00
VENTY	1/6	4,51	168	0,833	
SIKAJY	1/8	3,38	126	0,625	
LASIROA	15/144	2,71	105	0,521	0,50
ROAVOAMENA	1/12	2,26	84	0,417	
LASIRAY	1/16	1,69	63	0,313	
VOAMENA	1/24	1,13	42	0,208	0,20
ILAVOAMENA	1/48	0,56	21	0,104	0,10
ERANAMBATRY	1/72	0,376	14	0,069	
VARIFITOVENTY	7/720	0,263	10 - 1/5	0,049	0,05
VARIDIMIVENTY	1/144	0,188	7	0,035	
VARIRAIVENTY	1/720	0,0376	1 + 2/5	0,007	0,01



Whole piastre of 27.073 g of silver, worth 5 francs, 4 shillings, 720 grains of paddy and 1008 grains of husked rice.



Kirobo (1/4) plus Venty (1/6) = 5/12

1 franc (5/25 of 5) corresponded to IRAIBILANJA (5/24 of Ariary). However, the equivalent value of 2 francs was not two iraimbilanja (iraimbilanja roa), but VENTY SY (plus) KIROBO which gives exactly 5/12 of ariary (one sixth plus one quarter).

Indeed, Iraimbilanja was conveniently retained for 5 / 24th of an Ariary but according to purists, in fact represented 23 / 120th. This would indeed (as the name suggests), be the weight in silver, of an ancient unit of iron.

LASIROA (15/144 was assimilated to 50 centimes (15/150)



We got 25 cents not with half of 50 but by adding 5 to 20: Fitoventy sy Voamena.



ILAVOAMENA (1/48) was assimilated to 10 centimes (1/50).

Curious value, equal to 9.8 grains of rice but to 7 grains of paddy, round figure in the primitive system. Equivalent to 5 cents.

In BLACK: successive divisions by 2 of the piastre in the Arabo-Swahili system. IN BROWN, successive divisions by 2 of an old Merina coin (the nangy) worth 2/3 of a piastre and (underlined) subdivisions of the voamena. Other colors: other divisions of the piastre.

THE SEPTEMBER 12, 1916 ISSUE

The values initially retained in the first issue were 25c., 50c. and 2F, as well as 50c. and 1F.
The first three were stamps Nos. 101, 106 and 109 "sedan chair ,type".



25 centimes blue and black

50 centimes violet and black

2 francs blue and olive

Drawing of a "dog" on the backside ; big numbers; equivalent value in Malagasy currency.
24mm x 40mm; 1.5mm thick

THE SEPTEMBER 12, 1916 ISSUE

But there were still stocks of Group type stamps (Madagascar and Dependencies cartridge) of 1 franc (n ° 40) and 50 centimes (n ° 38) and above all, a good number of Group stamps from MOHÉLI (n ° 12) whose impression had far exceeded needs.



- All the coinage stamps being printed at once regardless of the size of the stamps, they had to be trimmed to match the format of the Group type labels (approximately 20x24.5mm). As a result, on Group type stamps, values are absent, both in French currency and in Malagasy equivalent.
- These vignettes are extremely rare and remain in private collections.
- Stamps at 50c. come from a cgb sale in 2006. Offered at € 200, they started at € 786 with a maximum bid of € 1,750!
- The 1 Franc Madagascar et Dépendances could not be found.
- On the other hand, there is a 5 centimes Groupe n ° 42A which was part of the aforementioned sale and obtained the same price.
- However, this reference is not cataloged by Brambilla and this value is not cited in the Decision of September 12, 1916 (o.j. Madagascar and Dependencies of September 16, 1916, page 888).. But it is listed in the Kolsky catalog. Mystery!

NEW VALUE ISSUED ON SEPTEMBER 15, 1916

- The lowest value was 25 cents, which was still high for small transactions.
- Three days after the first ruling, (but published the same day*), Governor Garbit extended the measure to the 10c stamp (pink and lilac-brown) type filanjana n° 98, "Ilavoamena" (formerly 1/48 piastre).

*(O.J. Madagascar and Dependencies of September 16, 1916, page 888)..



ADDITIONS OF DECEMBER 4, 1916 AND MARCH 9, 1917

- To fill the too large gap between the values of 50c and 2F, a new decision of December 4, 1916* extended the issue to 1F filanzane (n ° 108), light brown and olive.
- But at the other end, the 5 centimes was still sorely lacking. It was not until the decision of March 9, 1917**, to see a coinage stamp bearing a green and olive 5 cent stamp n ° 97.

* J.O. of December 9, 1916, p 1162 and ** OJ of March 10, 1917, page 1198),



VOLA ALIKA SY VOLA OMBY

The Malagasy, who nickname everything and everyone, had named the dog coinage "**vola alika**" (dog money). It was no more flattering in Malagasy than in French!

Towards the end of 1917, new stamps bearing the image of a zebu (Madagascan humpback beef) were put into circulation for values of 5, 10, 25, 50 centimes as well as 1 and 2 francs.

It is not known who made the decision to replace the dog with an ox but we can guess why. Unlike the dog, little regarded, the zebu is a noble animal.

He is the source and sign of wealth.

He shares the daily tasks of transporting or periodically trampling the rice fields before the stitching.

Very involuntarily, he accompanies the Malagasy in all the significant stages of personal or social life: not a family event (marriage, birth, circumcision, death) or collective rite (reversal of the dead or famadihana, ex-voto or tsakafara, lifting of 'a taboo, exorcism or bilo), without sacrificing a judiciously chosen beef and sharing meat whose consumption is rare.

Immediately, the Madagascans called these 6 new stamp coins "**vola omby**" (beef coin).



VOLA OMBY ISSUED IN 1917



5 centimes green and olive

10 centimes rose et brown-lilac

25 centimes blue and black

An ox (zebu) on the backside ; big numbers ; countervalue in malagasy currency.

24mm x 40mm ; 1,5mm thick.

VOLA OMBY ISSUED IN 1917



50 centimes violet and black



1 franc light brown and olive



2 francs blue and olive

VARNISHING THE COIN STAMPS

However, the new design on the back did not change much in the condition of the stamps. Dressed in "lamba" (large togas often white, without pockets), the Malagasy carried the coins in a small purse suspended from the neck by a cord and held the banknotes and boxes in a tight hand (the custom still sometimes continues today.). The stamps were simply glued to the front of the cardboard, without protective coating or insulating material (as will be the mica in the coinage a few years later).

Passing from hand to hand, these bits of cardboard got dirty very quickly. The colors and values of the stamps faded to the point that they were sometimes refused in transactions. Particularly in the countryside because in Antananarivo, used stickers could easily be returned to the public treasury then incinerated and replaced by new ones in equal quantity.

An attempt was made to remedy this towards the end of 1917 by varnishing both sides in a printing press before trimming, so that the edges stand out clearly on these cuts. The translucent coating was waterproof but its application was long and quite expensive. Above all, it was sticky so that, when held in the hands, the paper coins became sticky and even dirtier. The trial, which was inconclusive, was quickly abandoned.



LAST ISSUE IN 1918

A new and arguably last issue probably took place after July 1918, when the amount of stamp coins in circulation was greatly increased.

The designs remained of the “zebu” (omby) type, still for the 6 values of 5, 10, 25 and 50 centimes, as well as 1 and 2 francs, but the numbers and letters were smaller and the mention “cent.” Was added for small values. Learned from experience, these stamps were not varnished.



5 centimes green and olive

10 centimes rose et brown-lilac

25 centimes blue and black

LAST ISSUE IN 1918



50 centimes violet and black

1 franc light brown and olive

2 francs blue and olive

An ox (zebu) on the backside ; big numbers ; countervalue in malagasy currency.

24mm x 40mm ; 1,5mm thick ; no varnishing

SUPPORTS USED

All the final prints of the "dog" cardboard (filanjana type vignette) were made on grey cardboard approximately 1.5mm thick.

For the zebu type:

- At the beginning there was also a print on thick grey cardboard.
- In a second wave, the cardboard used was brownish in color.
- Then came the grey varnished cardboard whose surface has yellowed over time.
- Then there were prints on a thin yellow glazed cardboard.
- Finally, again a grey support was used for the last prints with small numbers.

These nuances are only fully observed on the few stamps that have come down to us in good condition. The high traffic, the age and the fragility of the supports sometimes make it all the more colorful.



THE HORSE TYPE

The catalog published in 1988 by Pierre Broustine, shows a strip of vignettes taken from a printing plate found by the Curator of the Archeology section of the French Institute for Black Africa. This would be an essay not adopted, for a stamp coin intended for West Africa or Madagascar because the graphics are close to that used for the "dog" and "zebu" coins.



Desnos mentions this horse test. Brambilla doesn't talk about it. We do not know what reception the horse might have received, a stranger to the Malagasy fauna and acclimatized for a relatively short time by Gallieni and Lyautey. Yet, if the horse was only used by Europeans and a few "andriana" (Malagasy nobles), horse races were very popular on the hippodrome (now converted into a football field), in the main square of Mahamasina, below the Rova de Tananarive, but also on the racetracks of Tamatave, Fianarantsoa, Majunga and Antsirabe in particular.



Type Hova - TANANARIVE



TANANARIVE - Champ de Courses

FORGERIES

Simplistically made, these boxes were suitable for counterfeiting and there were forgeries to serve, in particular by using a badly canceled stamp or by erasing the cancellation or by sticking a figurine of a value lower than that marked on the back.



We could also scratch identifiable elements, by adding a 5 to the 2 centimes to make 25 or by replacing the c of centime by the f of franc. Thus, in March 1918, false "alikas" were spotted in Andriba (province of Maevatanana): they were unused postage stamps of 1 centime (purple and olive), overprinted with 1 franc after rubbing the C, then soiled and greased so as to brown the purple of the frame like 1 franc (light brown and olive).



Also, falsifying the designs on the back was quite easy, including affixing them to cardboard from a sculpture made from a soft material like a pumpkin. Ten thousand fake "ombys" were made in Antananarivo by two forgers and scattered throughout the island.

In a circular of November 1922, the Director of Posts and Telegraphs instructed the employees of the central office in Antananarivo, responsible for receiving used stamps for incineration, to carry out rigorous checks.

FORGERIES

Few of these "forgery to serve" have come down to us. But on the other hand, there are "collector's" fakes, so easy it is, even today, to stick a new stamp on cardboard recovered or reprinted by hand.

As stamp coins are negotiated in good condition between 300 and 400 € for "vola alika" and 275 to 320 € for "vola omby", the operation can be lucrative. You still have to choose the right vignettes and not commit anachronisms.

Indeed, the 25c. purple and black was issued in 1922 (the 1908 one is blue and black).

➤ Likewise, the 50c. blue and black is from 1922, the one from 1908 is purple and black.



LA FIN DES TIMBRES-MONNAIE

The first issue of 1916 amounted to 1,500,000 francs. The figure climbed quite quickly with the following issues. On March 12, 1919, a decision fixed the maximum amount at 1,450,000 francs. The ceiling was then raised to 1,500,000 (July 16), 2,000,000 francs (December 9), 2,250,000 (May 1, 1919) and finally to 2,500,000 francs (decision of December 18, 1919, published in the OJ of the colony of December 20). This last limit was almost reached because used and withdrawn stamps were regularly replaced.

In 1921, a notice published in the O.J of Madagascar on July 30 (p 917), allowed the exchange of stamps coins, against French nickel coins of 5, 10 and 25 centimes, but in Antananarivo only. However, they circulated until 1922.

In 1924 (law of July 2), the tokens of the Chambers of Commerce of France in bronze-aluminum, of 50 centimes, 1 and 2 francs were introduced in the Colony. The color pleased the Malagasy and some even tried to melt them to make jewelry.

The supply of Madagascar becoming sufficient in divisional tokens and nickel coins, an order of April 25, 1928 of Governor General OLIVIER, published in the Official Gazette of the Colony on May 5, 1928 (p 503), prescribed the final withdrawal of the circulation of coinage stamps on October 1 of the same year. Until that date, they could be exchanged at post offices for their face value, in legal tender. But many of these boxes quickly soiled and deteriorated, had disappeared or the stamps had come off. Taking into account the losses, oversights and refusals, the withdrawal left a substantial profit for the Treasury.

Not very popular, coinage stamps have left a bad souvenir in the memory of the ancients. Whether dog (Alika) or ox (Omby), they remain synonymous with monkey money.



SOURCES

Les illustrations proviennent des collections de l'auteur ou de relevés d'images sur les sites de CGB (cgb.fr), de François Hède (<https://collectiondemonnaie.net/timbresmonnaie/madagascarzebu/index.html>) et de Monnaies d'Antan (monnaiesdantan.com)

- ❖ Marcel BRAMBILLA : *Timbres de Madagascar, Ministère des Travaux Publics et des Communications, Tananarive 1972.*
- ❖ Jean et Sylvette CHAUVICOURT : *Numismatique Malgache, Tananarive, 1968. Les monnaies frappées pour Madagascar (fascicule I) ; Les monnaies françaises et de l'Union Latine à Madagascar (Fascicule II) ; Les premières monnaies introduites à Madagascar (fascicule III) ; La monnaie coupée et les poids monétaires à Madagascar (fascicule IV) ; Histoire de la monnaie malgache : les billets de banque.*
- ❖ Raymond DECARY in *La Revue de Madagascar, N°30, Tananarive juillet 1941.*
- ❖ Dr. Jacques DESNOS : *Philatélie Malgache, Bulletin COL.FRA Hors-Série n°5-8A (2009).*
- ❖ J-C HEBERT : *Le système monétaire malgache des temps anciens, in Tradition et dynamique sociale à Madagascar. Nice : Institut d'études et de recherches interethniques et interculturelles, 1978. pp. 191-274. https://www.persee.fr/doc/ierii_1764-8319_1978_ant_9_1_983*
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- ❖ Louis MOLET : *Les monnaies à Madagascar, Revue européenne des sciences sociales- doc IRD, Cahiers Vilfredo Pareto, Librairie Droz, Genève, 1970.*
- ❖ Luc MONTERET : *Madagascar il y a 100ans en cartes postales anciennes, chez l'auteur, Niort 2013 (épuisé).*
- ❖ Pera RAVAILTERA : *Les alika et les omby falsifiés. L'Express de Madagascar, 7 novembre 2019.*

Text translated from french by the author

MADAGASCAR STAMPS IN SEDAN CHAIR TYPE

In various forms, the type at filanjana will have a long lifespan. For the 17 vignettes from 1908:

- The 10 pink and lilac brown cents will be overcharged **+5** in 1915 for the benefit of the Red Cross.
- Five stamps will be overprinted in Antananarivo in 1921. Indeed, since August 16, 1920, the rate for a single letter has increased from 15 to 25 centimes and the registration tax from 25 to 35 centimes. While waiting to be supplied from France, the Department of Post and Telegrams in Antananarivo had to increase the number of stamps of 25 and 30 centimes (foreign postcard and printed 2nd echelon) and had to create figurines at 60 centimes for registered single letters. It also took the opportunity to overprint the remaining stocks of Group and "zebu and ravenala" type stamps. The 15c. Received a large "1 cent." overprint; the 35c. has been overprinted "0.25" in black and red; the 40c. brown and lilac-black has been overprinted with "0.25" in black and "0.30" in red; the 45c. became "0.25" and the 75c. "0.60". Thus, 3 old values became 25 cents, the old 35c stamp being overprinted in both black and red. On 2 stamps, the old values (40 and 75c) were not even crossed out. You had to carefully examine the figurines so as not to be mistaken. The "artisanal" overload in Antananarivo produced a large number of faults and anomalies, a study of which can be found in J. Desnos (Volume I, pages 113 to 117).
- Four other values from 1908 will be overprinted in 1922, but in Paris, this time: the 2 and 5 francs with a "0.25c" overprint and the 75c. pink and black (65c); We must add the 15c. purple-brown and red, overprinted again, but at 25c. in small numbers this time and the 45c. green and black which, on the contrary, was no longer overprinted 0.25 but "85c"
- The 1f (overprinted 50c) and the 2f (overprinted 25c as in 1922), will be modified in 1932.
- Only the small values (1, 2, 4 and 5 cents) remained unchanged.



MADAGASCAR STAMPS IN SEDAN CHAIR TYPE

A new series of 10 stamps will be issued in 1922, with different colors to comply with UPU recommendations, resulting in

two 10c ...

N°132 : green and olive

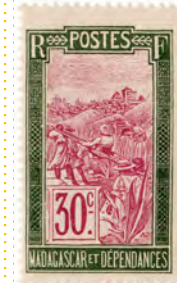
N°133 : yellow-brown and purple



... two 30c ...

N°135 : red and brown

N°136 : green and lilac



... et two 50c.

N°138 : blue and black

N°139 : black and ocher



MADAGASCAR STAMPS IN SEDAN CHAIR TYPE

- Because of tariff changes (5 times in 5 years), lead to the surcharge in Paris in 1922, values becoming useless such as the light blue 1f (n ° 143), were immediately overprinted 1f25 in red (n ° 151, in Paris).



- We thus see new values overprinted even before being sent to Madagascar where they will not be valid such as n ° 147 (75c purple on pink, overprinted 60c), n ° 150 (75c brick on pink) overprinted 90c and n ° 152 (1f blue and light blue), revalued at 1f50.



- The three stamps initially issued at 5f (green and purple, red and lilac, pink-lilac and blue-green), will suddenly be changed to 3F (n ° 153), 10F (n ° 154) and 20F (n ° 155).



MADAGASCAR STAMPS IN SEDAN CHAIR TYPE

- A limited series (15c. in two colors, 30c., 45c., 1f and 1f10) will be printed in 1927 and used until 1930 when the first vignettes representing Malagasy characters or subjects arrive (sakalava chiefs, hova and betsileo women, zebus teams). Note that 15c and 30c were both "dark green and green-yellow" in color.
- The Governor of Madagascar, Mr. Annet had remained faithful to the Vichy regime. On the pretext of a possible Japanese incursion, the British invaded Madagascar in 1942 and took control of the island, which was returned to fighting France only thanks to the vehement protests of General de Gaulle, who had not been warned of the operation! All current stamps will be overprinted FRANCE LIBRE, including three filanjana stamps (already overprinted in 1922).
- In 1941 we had taken the basic design, but simplified with in the upper right corner, the effigy of Marshal Pétain (n ° 229-230). The same motif will be overprinted in 1944 (284-285)

