

TAHITI

Counterfeited Surcharges.

Counterfeits of the provisional stamps of Tahiti have been seen quite frequently of late and notwithstanding they are not well enough counterfeited to deceive any experienced philatelists, as very happily, like many other cases, the counterfeiters have overlooked some of the most important features, it may not be out of order to give a few points to enable collectors to detect these forgeries.

The 25c on 35 yellow of the 1880 imperforated issue had its first and second types closely imitated but in most of the cases the counterfeited surcharges were seen on the reprints of the 35c stamp of the 1887 imperforated issue of the French Colonies which are a deep violet brown on orange instead of being gray violet brown on yellow and this alone should be sufficient to detect the fraud, but in the counterfeits the top bar measures 17mm. and the bottom bar 16mm instead of being an even length measuring 15 to 16mm. The figures 25 are only 6½mm high instead of 7. The space between the figures and the bottom bar is 3mm and should only be 2½mm.

Cancelled specimens of these are easier yet to be detected as the bogus postmark used, has its inner circle made of dots instead of a continuous lined circle.

All the above points apply to the 25 on 40 vermillion on straw but here only reprints of the 40c stamp of the 1877 imperforated issue were used and as they are of the second type with the N of INV placed under U of Republique instead of having it under B.

The 5c on 20 green perforated of the 1884 issue which comes in four different types of surcharge, has also tempted the imitators but in all cases known they have added a bar to the A of TAHITI. In the 10c on 20 green of the same issue which originally came in four types, they have overlooked the peculiar shape and wideness of the A and the characteristic narrowness of the H in the word TAHITI. Of the last two, the surcharges were cut with a penknife in some ordinary wood in two blocks of four, one for each value, but after

some use, one, two and later on three, of each stamp got broken, the wood used for the engraving not being as hard as such usually used for that purpose and of course were withdrawn from use thus explaining why some surcharges are more numerous than others. Notwithstanding the 25c on 1fr bronze green imperforated is listed as 1882 issue it was really issued in 1884 the same time as the 5c and 10c on 20 green. In the counterfeits the figures 25 are as high and in the genuines the 5 is about 1mm higher than the 2.

There are numerous types of the diagonal overprint TAHITI of the 1893 issue, among which three very distinct varieties are known, but the forgeries measure differently from the genuines. The counterfeits which are more commonly met with are about 3½mm high and fully 20mm width from the first stroke of the T to the end of the I while the genuines are from 3¼ to 3½mm high and from 18½ to 19mm wide according to surcharge. Of the two lines overprint 1893 TAHITI there are also a number of varieties in the figures 1893 or in the letters of the word TAHITI, sometimes the stamps were overprinted two by two with a double hand-stamp, in some other cases the stamps were single overprinted.

All the surcharges and over prints were handstamped and sometimes show great differences between one another. This could be accounted for in the way the hand stamp has been applied on the postage stamp, the more or less ink used or the wear of the handstamp. So we have surcharges with T or the final I broken at top or bottom, T with one or two strokes missing, I or 3 broken, but these are infinitesimal accidental varieties which are certainly not worthy to be collected even by the more fastidious and I merely mention them so that they would not look suspicious if they should sometimes be met with.

The information given above will certainly enable anybody to tell the counterfeits from the genuines in most cases but it may be well to say that these imitations come principally from Bordeaux, Marseilles, Brussels, London, Cleveland, St. Louis and New York.

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