

Greece: The 4th of August regime (1936-41)

On August 4, 1936, a new regime assumed power in Greece, led by Ioannis Metaxas, former Army General, politician since 1922, and for a few months appointed Prime Minister. The regime immediately suspended major constitutional articles and dissolved Parliament.

Postal operations were very much affected by the new political climate: currency protection control and censorship in disguise on international mail as well as intense propaganda in favour of the dictatorship and the monarchy. Basic propaganda tools included messages on mechanical cancellations, commemorative handstamps, as well as stamp and postcard issues featuring the regime and the Royal Family.

On the other hand, the Post Office lived through a period of tidiness, showed exemplary progress and brought in a number of innovations, such as illustrated postmarks, mailboxes on ships, pre-printed covers and meter stamps to name a few.

However, the most important feature of the period was the fast development of air transportations, which Greece followed very closely. The major European trans-continental airlines used Greek cities (Athens, Corfu or Suda Bay) for their stop overs on their way to the Far East or Africa.

In WWII, Greece remained neutral until October 28, 1940, when the Italian army crossed the Greek-Albanian border. It was finally defeated by the Axis forces six months later, when invaded by the German army. The subsequent occupation of Athens, on April 27, 1941, officially terminated the life of the 4th of August dictatorship.

During the war period, new postal peculiarities emerged, like the suspension or redirection of transportation routes. When Greece got engaged, two large networks were established: (a) the military mail system and (b) the censorship service which absorbed the former currency protection control.

Postal rates	
<i>Basic postal rates remained unchanged during the period in question.</i>	
<i>Currency in use was the drachma (D.), subdivided into 100 lepta (l.).</i>	
Domestic	
Postal card:	2.00 D.
Letter (to 20 g):	3.00 D.
Registration:	4.00 D.
International	
Postal card:	5.00 D.
Letter (to 20 g):	8.00 D.
Registration:	8.00 D.

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Exhibitor's major published work

"Mail of a displaced citizen on Folegandros in 1938", Philotelia no. 733/2022.

"The 31 mailboxes at sea 1939-40", Philotelia no. 704/2017.

"Airmail in Africa during the 1930s", Philotelia nos. 682-683/2013, 684-685/2014.

"A 1940 American exchange control cachet", Philotelia no. 667/2011.

"The 1937-41 Social Welfare stamps", Philotelia nos. 648-649/2008.

"Greek airmails 1939-40", Philotelia no. 628/2004.

"The 1940-41 illustrated postal cards", Philotelia no. 613/2002.

FIRST DAYS OF THE REGIME

Dictatorship
day 2:

From Patra
(Aug. 5, 1936) to
Urbana, OH, USA.

Rates: Surface 8 D.,
airpost since May 2,
1933, 18 D.



Dictatorship
day 3:

From Piraeus
(Aug. 6, 1936)
to Amsterdam,
the Netherlands.

Rates: Second weight
surface (20-40 g)
13 D. (8+5),
third weight airpost
(20-30 g)
since June 8, 1933,
21 D. (3x7).

Postage dues - Underpaid postal card



From Sperchias (Oct. 8, 1936)
to Patra (Oct. 10).

Rates: Postal card surface 2 D.
(1 D. was paid instead).

- The handstamp ΕΙΣΠΡΑΚΤΕΟΝ ΤΕΛΟΣ [postage due] was applied on arrival and the missing 1 D. was paid double by a 2 D. postage due stamp.

Postage dues - Missing overweight

60%



From Athens
(Apr. 15, 1940) to
Mytilene (Apr. 18).

Rates: Second weight
surface 5 D. (3 D.
were paid instead),
social welfare 50 l.

- The missing 2 D. were paid double on arrival by a block of eight 50 l. postage due stamps.

Postage dues - Mixed franking with French stamps

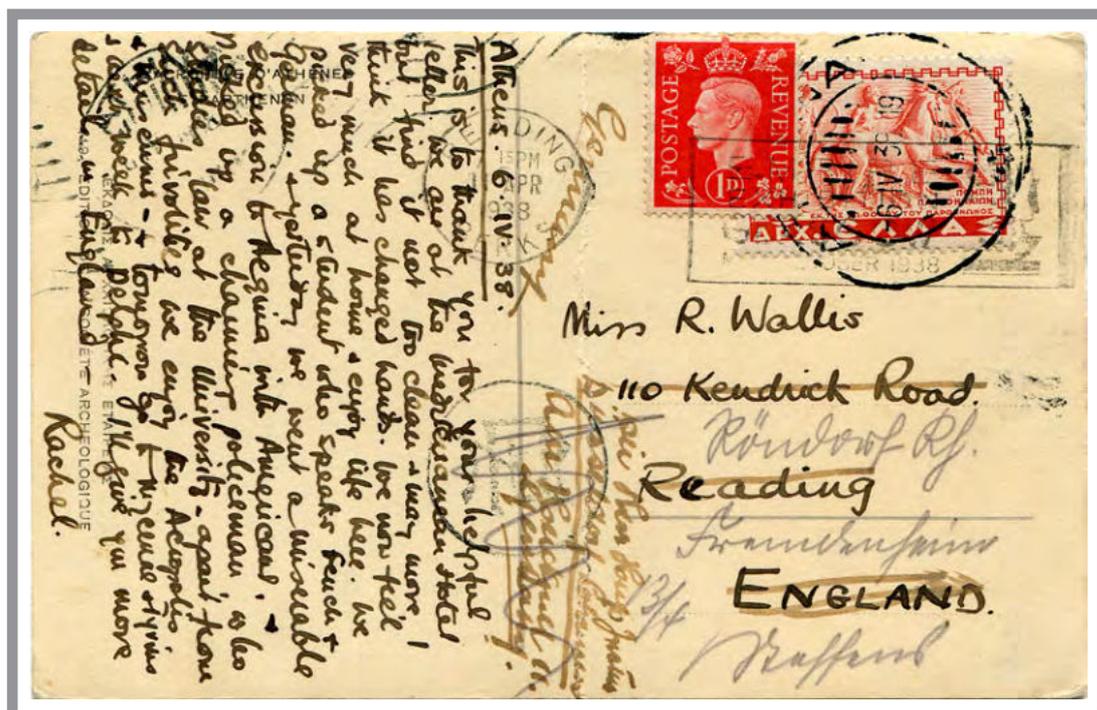


From Athens (July 10, 1937) to Pas de Calais, France (July 15).

Rates (in Greece): Surface 8 D., social welfare (optional) 1 D. Rates (in France), valid to July 31, 1937: Surface 1.50 F.

- The Greek 8 D. stamp was withdrawn and invalidated since Jan. 24, 1937 (red crayon line around stamp, handstamp "T". Also pencil marks "50 c" (gold centimes) and "3" (French francs) in France. The equivalent of the improperly affixed 8 D. was 25 gold centimes. The cover was properly charged with double the rate due, i.e. 50 gold centimes, or 3.00 F, paid with French postage due stamps. It so happened that this was double the French surface rate. Athens currency control applied on departure.

Readressed abroad - Mixed franking with a British stamp



From Athens (Apr. 6, 1938) to Reading (Apr. 11), U.K., re-addressed to Düsseldorf, Germany, and re-addressed for a second time within Germany.

Rates (Greece to U.K.): Postal card surface 5 D. (15.625 gold centimes)

Rates (U.K. to Germany): 1½d (15 gold centimes)

- Postal clerk's error: The additional rate of 1d should not have been charged. The rate that has been paid in Greece was greater than the UK rate.
- Athens currency control.

Magazine wrapper

Κύριον
Γεώργιου Νηλιόπουλου
Πολυτεχνικόν Μηχανικόν
1802, ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟΝ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ 1931
Δ 1 Μουσίου 28
Π. Φ. Ξ. Α. η ρ ο ν

1-23

“ANNALES TECHNIQUES,”
Organe bimensuel de la Chambre Technique
de Grèce
15 Rue des Philhellènes.—Tel. 30.166
Athènes

ΕΝ ΤΥ Π Ο Ν



“ΤΕΧΝΙΚΑ ΧΡΟΝΙΚΑ,”
ΔΕΚΑΠΕΝΘΗΜΕΡΟΝ ΕΠΙΣΗΜΟΝ ΟΡΓΑΝΟΝ ΤΟΥ
ΤΕΧΝΙΚΟΥ ΕΠΙΜΕΛΗΤΗΡΙΟΥ ΤΗΣ ΕΛΛΑΔΟΣ
γραφεία Φιλελλήνων 15—Τηλέφωνον 30.166—ΑΘΗΝΑΙ

From Athens (Aug. 21, 1939) to Paleo Faliro (Aug. 21, on the reverse).
Rates: Fifth weight magazine (400-500 g) 25 l. (5x5).

• The 25 lepta 1927 definitive was officially withdrawn ten days later, on Sep. 1, 1939.

Receipt for a domestic registered letter

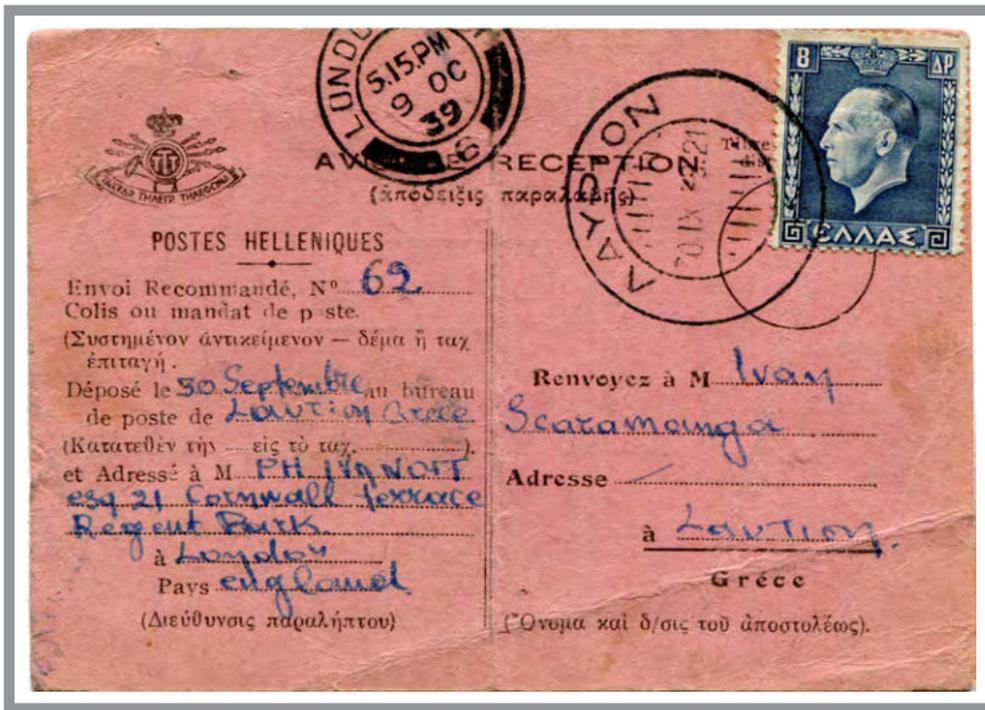


50%

From Patra (May 8, 1940) to Asprogerakas, Cephalonia (May 11) and back to Patra (May 14). Rates: Receipt for a domestic registered letter 5 D.

- Diamond handstamp "48" denotes the rural route between villages at the south-eastern tip of the island.

Receipt for a registered letter to abroad



From Lavrio (Sep. 30, 1939) to London (Oct. 9), signed as appropriate, sent back to Lavrio, where it reached the original sender on Nov. 1 (handwritten note on the reverse).

Rates: Receipt for a registered letter to abroad 8 D.

Parcel post form



Parcel post form for a parcel (850 g) from Athens (Nov. 27, 1940) to Florina (Dec. 3, on the reverse). Rates: 10 D. for parcels to 1 kg. Also, anti-TB rate (compulsory throughout the year) 50 l.

- The stamps on parcel post forms were either razor-cut or punched in order to prevent postal employees from selling them.

Merchandise sample



From Thessaloniki (Apr. ??, 1937) to Siegmarschönau, Saxony, Germany.
Rates: Double weight merchandise sample (50-100 g) 3.20 D. (2x1.60).

Postal money order



Postal money order (3984 D.) from Lamia (Apr. 15, 1941) to Galaxidi. Rates: 14 D. for money orders 3501-4000 D.

- The stamps on money orders were destroyed in a similar manner to the ones on parcel post forms.

International surface rates - Fifth weight



60%



From Athens (May 21, 1937) via Chicago, IL (June 1), to Denver, CO, USA (June ??).
 Rates: Fifth weight surface 28 D. (8+4x5), registration 8 D., social welfare (optional) 1 D.

- Handstamped on arrival with LETTER PARCEL - COLLECT TEN CENTS; collected with one 10 c. postage due.
- Athens currency control.

NATIONAL CURRENCY PROTECTION COMMISSION

A few days after the 4th of August dictatorship was established, a new civil service was organised, in order to protect the national currency, by the thorough examination of international correspondence.

It was called "National Currency Protection Commission" and its offices were closely bound to all the central post offices in major towns. As we shall later see, the Commission was actually engaged to censorship practices as well.

Different types of handstamps and tapes were used by the various offices. As it is usually the case, some of them are pretty common, others are quite scarce.

On October 28, 1940, when Greece was engaged in World War II, the National Currency Protection Commission gave way to a regular war-time Censorship Service, applied to both domestic and international mail, while using brand new handstamps and tapes.

Athens currency control - Ligature types "ΠΕΝ" & "ΥΕΣ"

Currency control handstamps in the form of ligatures were only used in Athens and Piraeus. As expected, the Athens types are very common. Surprisingly though of the Piraeus types very few items have survived to date.



From Athens (July 5, 1938) to Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Rates: Second weight surface (20-40 g) 13 D. (8+5), fourth weight airmail (30-40 g) since June 8, 1933, 28 D. (4x7), social welfare (optional) 1 D.

- "ΠΕΝ" are Greek initials for "National Currency Protection".

Piraeus currency control - Ligature type "EYAIΠ" type 1



From Piraeus
(Dec. 12, 1936)
to Vienna, Austria.

Rates: Surface 8 D.

- "EYAIΠ" are Greek initials for the Currency Control Commission of Piraeus.

Piraeus currency control - Ligature type "EYAIΠ" type 2



From Piraeus (Jan. 1, 1937) to Zagreb, Yugoslavia.
Rates: Printed matter surface 1.60 D., anti-TB rate (optional) 10 l.

Piraeus currency control - Ligature type "ΕΥΑΠ" type 3



From Piraeus (Jan. 23, 1937) to Genova, Italy (Jan. 26, on the reverse).

Rates: Postal card surface 5 D., airpost 5 D. since Sep. 7, 1933 (paid 7 D. instead, the rate valid to most countries in Europe), social welfare (optional) 1 D.

- Final day of use of King Constantine I mourning issue.

Illustrated handstamps depicting goddess Athena

By far the most recognizable type of currency control handstamp, also called the Axelos' Athena handstamp, honouring the renowned Greek artist. It was used in the larger cities and the majority of the prefecture seats, as well as a number of smaller towns. The depicted handstamp from Ellassona is quite hard to come across.



60%

From rural route "695" via Ellassona (June 3, 1940) and Thessaloniki (June 4) to Saranac Lake, NY, USA.

Rates: Surface 8 D., social welfare (optional) 1 D.

- Ellassona currency control.

Handstamps bearing town names

From Kavala (Nov. 5, 1939) via Athens (Nov. 6, on the reverse) to Louisville, KY, USA.

Rates: Second weight surface (20-40 g) 13 D. (8+5), fifth weight airpost (20-25 g) since Oct. ??, 1939, 120 D. (5x24), social welfare (optional) 1 D.

- Kavala currency control.



Currency control officers' insignia



40%

From St. Nicholas, Crete (Nov. 11, 1937) via Herakleio (Nov. 12) and Athens (Nov. 15) to Florence, Italy (Nov. 17).

Rates: Letter 8 D., airpost 5 D. since Sep. 7, 1933, social welfare (optional) 1 D.

- Herakleio currency control with insignia "E.A."

Currency Control or Censorship? - A legitimate question



How do currency control marks on items such as postal cards or telegrams justify themselves?

[Top] Postal card:

From Mykonos (Mar 29, 1939) to London.

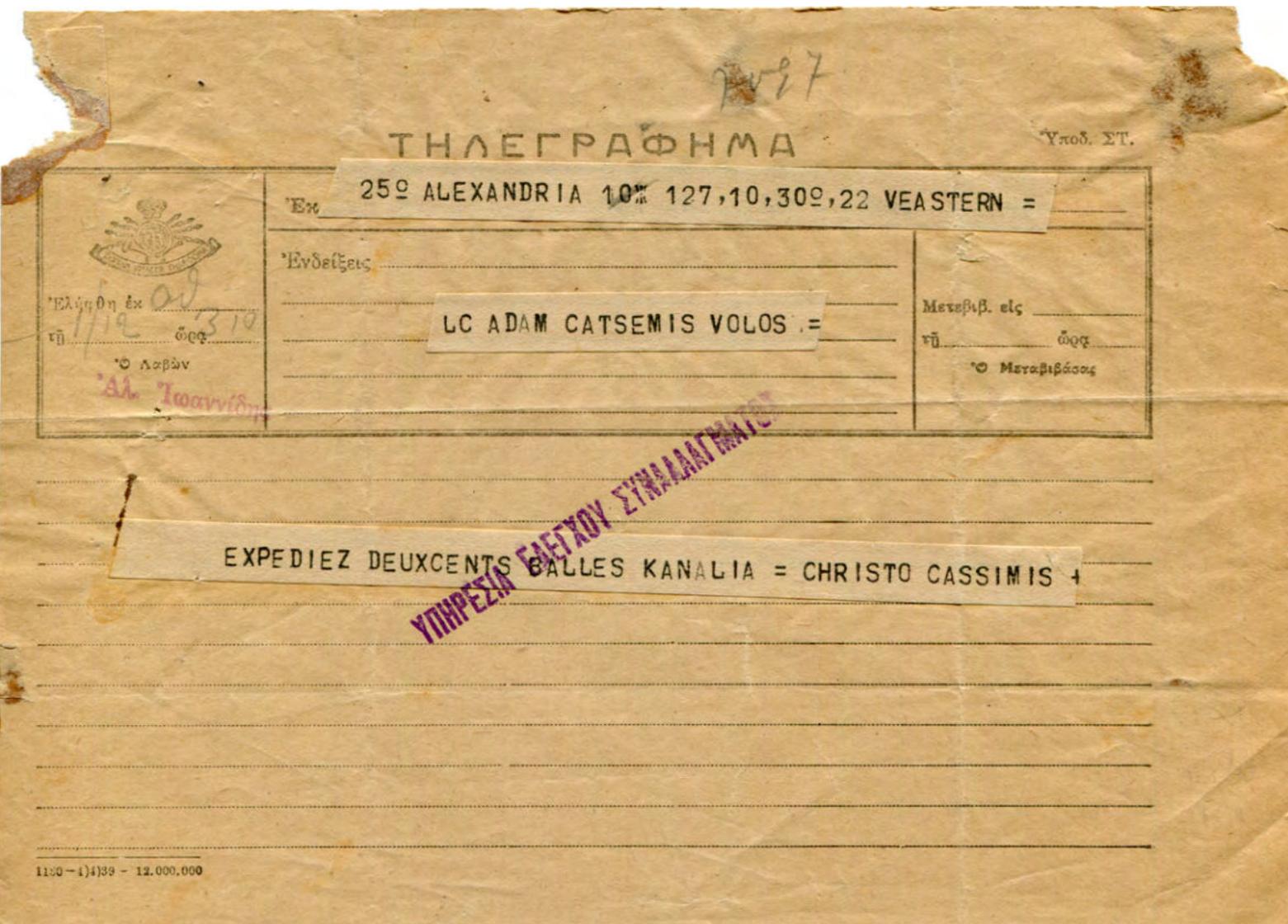
Rates: Postal card surface 5 D.

- Piraeus currency control.

[Bottom] Telegram:

From Alexandria to Volos.

- Linear handstamp ΥΠΗΡΕΣΙΑ ΕΛΕΓΧΟΥ ΣΥΝΑΛΛΑΓΜΑΤΟΣ [Commission for Currency Control].



***Currency Control or Censorship?
Evidence suggests to both practices at the same office***

When the "National Currency Protection Commission" was set up, the official documents did not mention the word "Censorship" at all. It seems, however, that the oral instructions pointed differently. As a result, a very small number of offices used short-lived, and therefore rarely seen handstamps reading "Censorship" instead of "Currency Protection". These "Censorship" handstamps were of local initiatives in Patra, Thessaloniki plus a handful of police stations and were fairly quickly withdrawn. Such a fine example is the cover depicted herein.

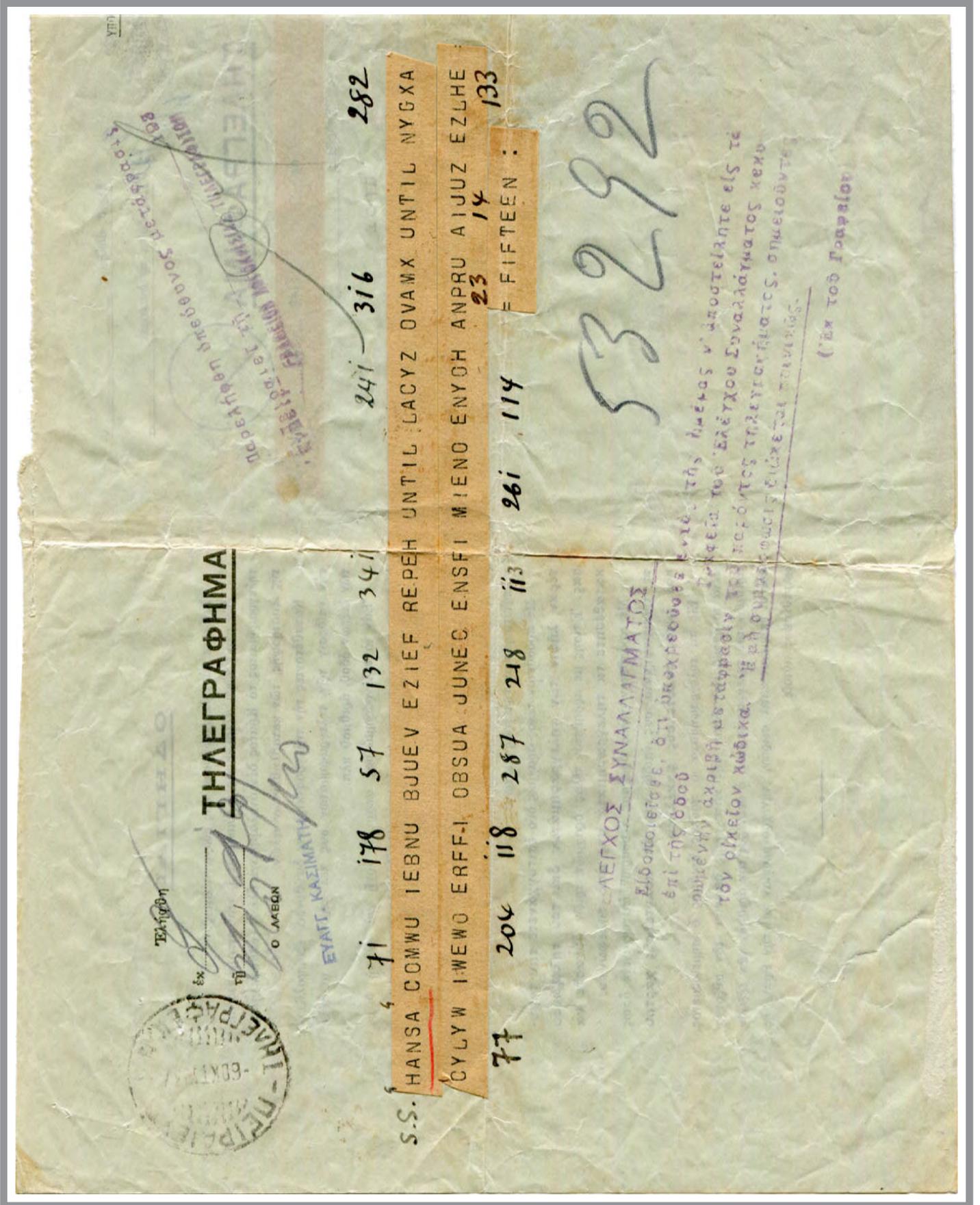


*From Patra (Oct. ??, 1936) to Chicago IL, USA.
Rates: Surface 8 D.*

- *Dual circle "ΛΟΓΟΚΡΙΣΙΑ ΤΑΧΥΔΡΟΜΕΙΟΥ ΠΑΤΡΩΝ"
[Censorship of the Post Office in Patra].*

Currency Control or Censorship? - An indisputable answer

The bottom handstamp on the depicted telegram from Copenhagen to Piraeus reads: "Currency Control: You are requested to send during the day the translation of the telegram to the offices of the Currency Control...". The top handstamp reads: "...translation received. Telegraphs Censorship Office". Currency control included no doubt censorship in disguise.



THE DICTATORSHIP'S PROPAGANDA

A. Propaganda messages on the mechanical cancellations

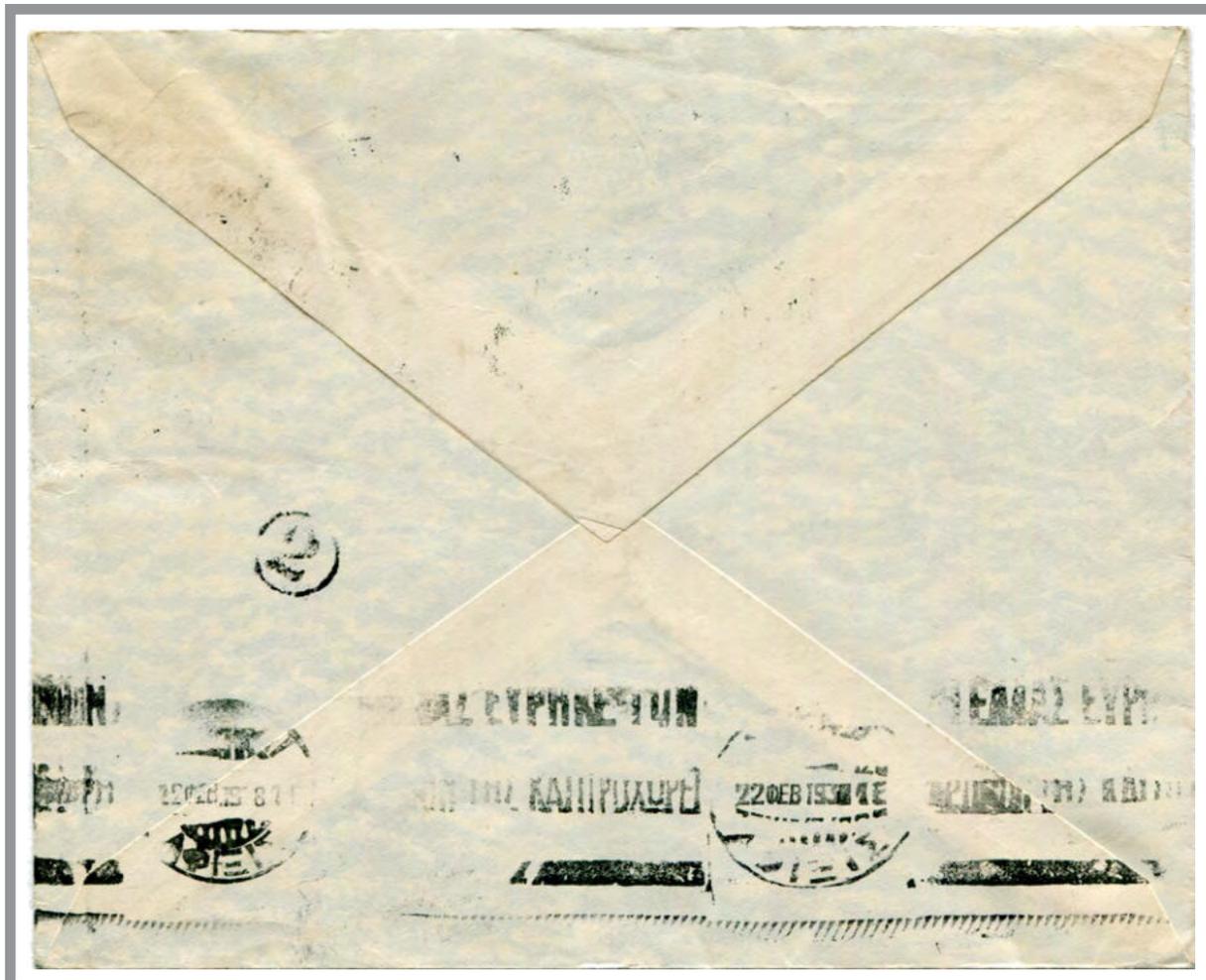
The Athens central post office six types of mechanical cancellations carried at times different propaganda slogans, mostly inspired by the dictator's speeches. Forty or so different messages have been recorded.

Type 1: ΑΘΗΝΑΙ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΗ [Athens Dispatch]

From Athens (Nov. 21, 1937)
to Argos (Nov. 27, on the reverse).

Rates: Surface 3 D., social welfare 50 l.

- "The new State needs Greeks disciplined".



Type 2: ΑΘΗΝΑΙ ΑΦΙΕΙΣ [Athens Arrival]

From Thessaloniki
(Feb. 21, 1938)
to Athens (Feb. 22).

Rates: Surface 3 D.,
social welfare 50 l.,
Thessaloniki 20 l.

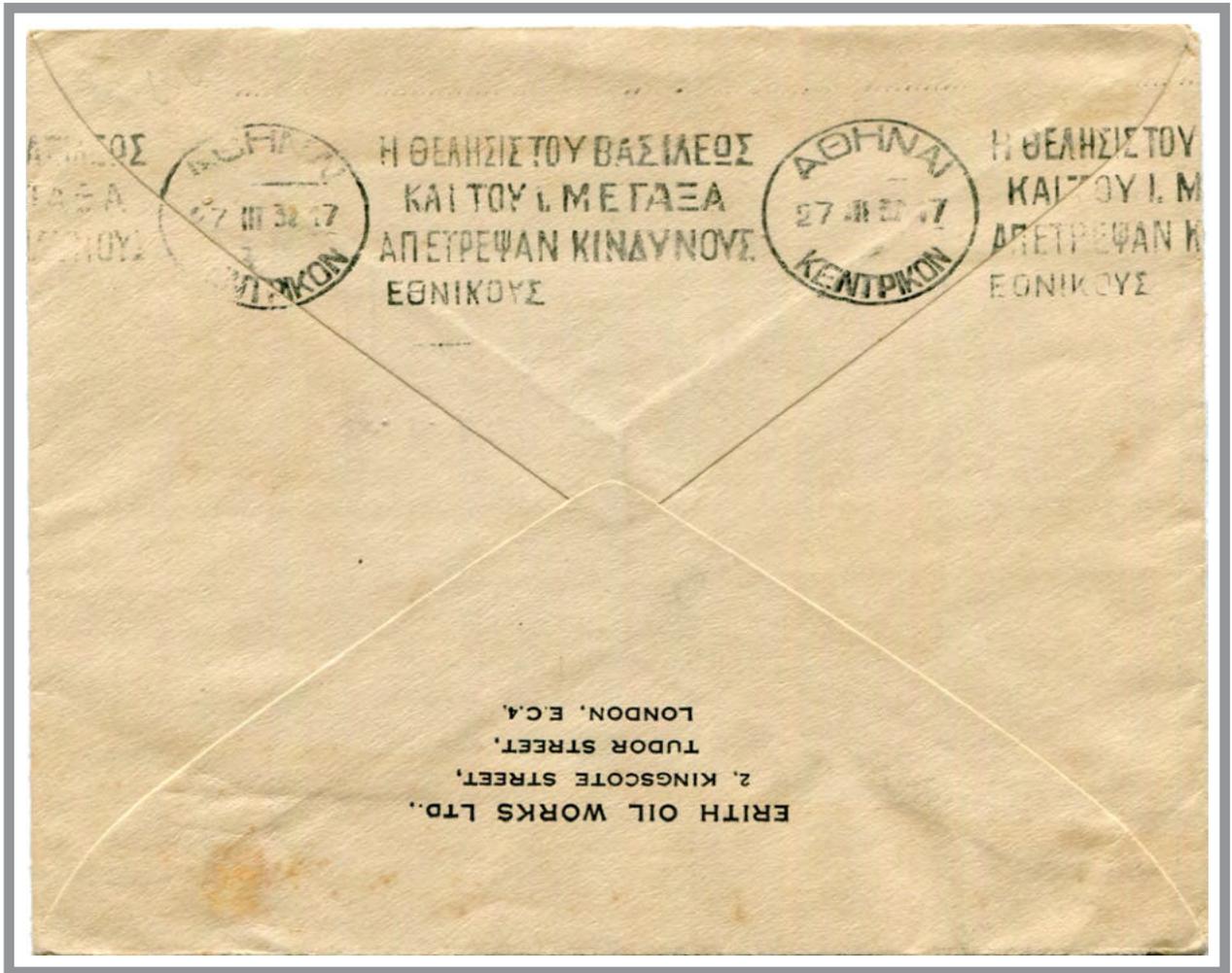
- "Greece has found her pace and is marching on - I. Metaxas".

Type 3:
ΑΘΗΝΑΙ
ΚΕΝΤΡΙΚΟΝ
[Athens Central]

From London
(Mar. 23, 1937,
on the reverse) to
Athens (Mar. 27).

Rates: Surface 3 D.,
social welfare 50 l.

- "The will of the King and of I. Metaxas prevented national dangers".



40%

Type 4: ΑΘΗΝΑΙ
ΚΕΝΤΡΙΚΟΝ
[Athens Central]
with small star

From Patra (May
3, 1938) to Athens
(May 4).

Rates: Second weight
surface 5 D. (3+2),
social welfare 50 l.

- "One nation, one-of-a-kind people - I. Metaxas".

Type 5:
ATHINAI

From Athens (Apr. 27, 1939) to Hamburg, Germany.

Rates: Surface 8 D., social welfare (optional) 1 D.

- "The Greek land is our passion and our cross - I. Metaxas".
- Athens currency control.



Type 6:
ATHINAI
POSTE AERIENNE

From Patra (Nov. 22, 1939) via Athens (Nov. 22) to Gera, Germany.

Rates: Surface 8 D., second weight airpost (10-20 g) since Oct. ??, 1939, 16 D. (2x8), social welfare (opt.) 1 D.

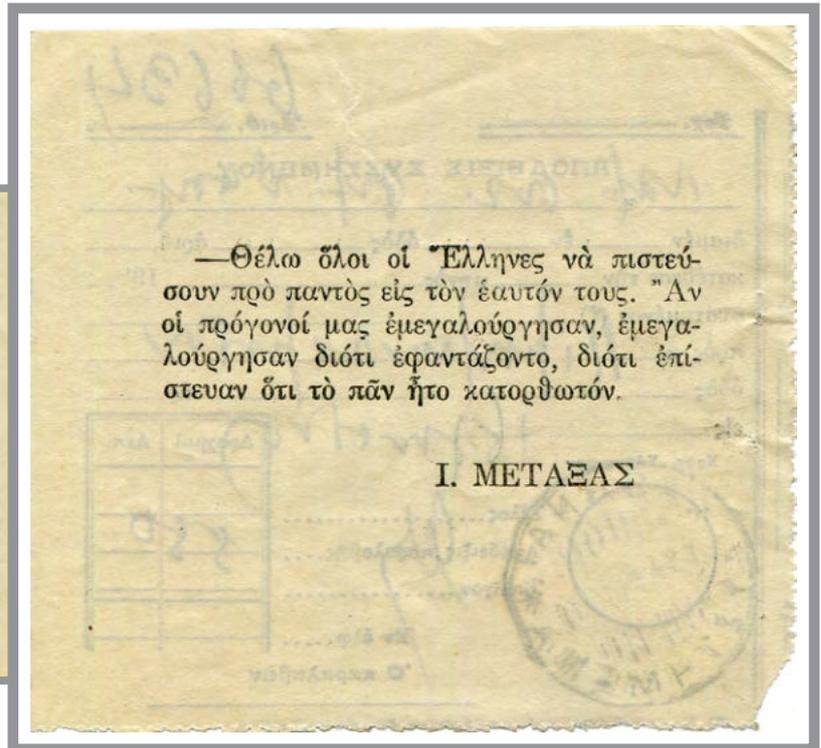
- "Support soupes".



B. Propaganda message on the receipt for the dispatch of a registered letter



70%



From Athens (Sep. 19, 1940) to Elefsis. Rates: Receipt 5.50 D.

- "I want all Greeks to believe first of all to themselves..." I. Metaxas

C. The 4th of August 1938 & 1939 commemorative handstamps



Patra 1938: From Patra (Aug. 4, 1938) to Zakynthos (Aug. 6). Rates: Surface 3 D., social welfare 50 l.

- The 4th of August commemorative handstamps appeared in 1938 and in 1939 only. They were used as regular obliterating cancellers on anniversary day.

[Top]
Herakleio 1939:

From Herakleio
(Aug. 4, 1939)
to Athens (Aug. 6).
Rates: Surface 3 D.,
social welfare 50 l.

- Propaganda slogan on the arrival mechanical cancellation: "Hurrah the 4th of August 1939".

[Bottom]
Volos 1939:

From Volos (Aug. 4, 1939)
to Athens (Aug. 5).
Rates: Third weight sur-
face 7 D. (3+2+2),
registration 4 D.,
social welfare 50 l.



D. The 1940 National Youth (E.O.N.) stamps



The National Youth Organization (E.O.N.) was established in order for the regime to manipulate the youngsters' educational and cultural activities. All other similar organizations, e.g. boy-scouts, were forced to cease their operations.

The twenty stamps, which comprised the regular and the airpost E.O.N. sets, were valid for postal use for three days only (3-5 Aug.).

The stamps were only sold in complete sets with the exception of the 3 D. of the regular set and the 2 D. of the airpost set which were also sold individually.

[Top]
Use of the 3 D. regular stamp:

From Corfu (Aug. 5, 1940) to Athens (Aug. 7).
Rates: Surface 3 D., social welfare 50 l.

[Bottom]
Use of the 2 D. airpost stamp:

From Herakleio (Aug. 3, 1940) to Athens (Aug. 3).
Rates: Surface 3 D., registration 4 D., airpost 2 D., social welfare 50 l.



E. The 1940 E.O.N. illustrated postal cards

On August 4, 1940, the day of festivities for the 4th anniversary of the dictatorship, a set of fifteen illustrated postal cards were released by the Post Office. The depicted themes were chosen from E.O.N. activities. The cards are all erroneously numbered A1, instead of B1-B15.

Two weeks earlier, on King George's II 50th birthday (July 20, 1940), a set of six illustrated postal cards was also released, the Royal Family set. It was later completed by two more cards (December 1), in celebration of Prince Constantine's birth. The cards are numbered A1-A9, less A4 which was never issued.

Although largely publicized, these cards' sales were a major disappointment. Even smaller was the number of cards postally used. Seven of the fifteen cards of the E.O.N. set and the complete Royal Family set are presented here.



50%



From Lavrio (Aug. 4, 1940) to La Seyne-sur-Mer, France.
Rates: Postal card 5 D.

- Posted on the day the cards were placed in circulation.
- Athens currency control.

The 1940 E.O.N. illustrated postal cards (cont.)

50%



From Kilkis (Nov. 15, 1940) via Army central P. O. "Γ" (Nov. 16) to military P.O. 790 (Nov. 17).

Rates: No postage necessary to a military P.O.

- Civil (blue) and military (red) censorships.



50%



From Patra (Nov. 29, 1940) to Kifissia (Dec. 2).

Rates: Postal card 2 D., social welfare missing.

- Patra civil censorship.



The 1940 E.O.N. illustrated postal cards (cont.)

50%



From Polygyros (Nov. 18, 1940) via Army central p. o. "Γ" (Nov. 21) to military P.O. 518 (Nov. 24).

Rates: No postage necessary to a military P.O.

- Handwritten "censored" and signed.



50%



From Elateia (Nov. 20, 1940) to Thessaloniki (Nov. ??).

Rates: Postal card 2 D., social welfare missing.

- Elateia police censorship.



The 1940 E.O.N. illustrated postal cards (cont.)



50%



From Athens (Feb. 7, 1941) in town (Feb. 8).

Rates: Postal card 2 D., social welfare missing.

- Athens civil censorship.



50%



From Thessaloniki (Nov. 13, 1940) to Athens (Nov. 22).

Rates: Postal card 2 D., social welfare missing.

- Thessaloniki military censorship.

F. The 1940 Royal Family illustrated postal cards



50%

From Thessaloniki (Nov. 14, 1940) to Athens.

Rates: Postal card 2 D., social welfare missing.

- Thessaloniki military censorship.



50%

From Xanthi (Oct. 31, 1940) to Kilkis (15 Nov.).

Rates: Postal card 2 D., social welfare missing.

- Athens civil censorship.



The 1940 Royal Family illustrated postal cards (cont.)

50%



From Ierapetra (Sep. 12, 1940) to Patra (Sep. 19).

Rates: Postal card 2 D., social welfare 10 l.



50%



From Megalopoli, cancelled with Kalamata-Tripoli T.P.O. (Aug. 2, 1940), via Corinth (Aug. 2) to Patra.

Rates: Postal card 2 D., social welfare missing.



The 1940 Royal Family illustrated postal cards (cont.)



50%

From Elateia (July 26, 1940) to Thessaloniki (Aug. 16).

Rates: Postal card 2 D., social welfare missing.

- The cards were placed on sale on July 20.



50%

From Thessaloniki (Nov. 19, 1940) to Alexandroupoli.

Rates: Postal card 2 D., social welfare 10 L.

- Thessaloniki military censorship.



The 1940 Royal Family illustrated postal cards (cont.)



50%



From Thessaloniki
(Jan. 2, 1941)
to military P.O. 461.

Rates: Postal card 2 D.,
social welfare 10 l.,
anti-TB (holidays) 50 l.

- Thessaloniki
military censorship.



50%



From Athens
(Dec. 5, 1940)
to Alexandroupoli.

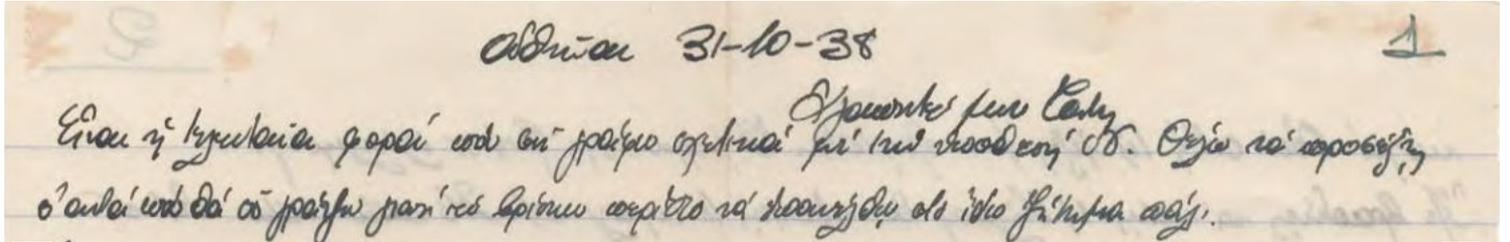
Rates: Postal card 2 D.,
social welfare 10 l.

- Athens
civil censorship.

Enemies of the regime were displaced on remote islands

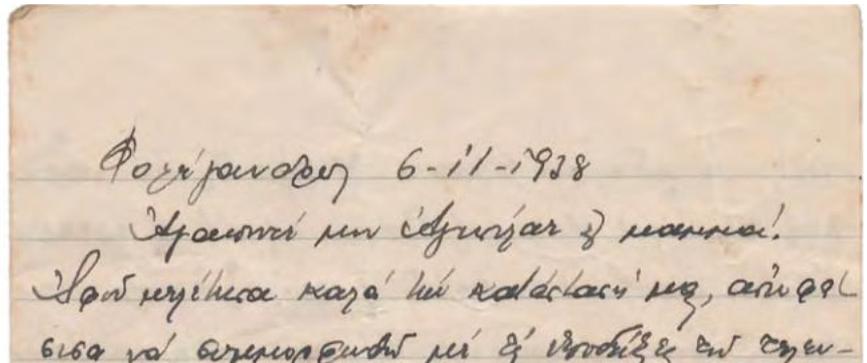
The most common enemies of the regime were the communists. They were sent on remote islands until they signed a written statement that they had nothing to do with communism, they renounced it and from that point on they would be standing by their government.

The depicted cover revealed two pieces of mail (also shown here) between two brothers at the very critical point of the life of the whole family.



In the first (October 31, top), the eldest brother writes to the youngest, who was displaced on Folegandros and tries to convince him by producing a million reasons why he should sign the declaration and walk home free.

In the second (November 6, right), the youngest replies that he finally decided to sign the statement, but everything must be done very fast, because he will be in danger when it is revealed on the island that he had signed.



From Athens (Oct. 31, 1938) to Folegandros (Nov. 4, on the reverse). Rates: Surface 3 D., social welfare 50 l.

COMMEMORATIVE POSTMARKS, HANDSTAMPS, POSTER STAMPS, CACHETS, etc.

Messolonghi Sacred City handstamp (1937)



From Messolonghi (Apr. 26, 1937, sender's note on the reverse) to Patra.

Rates: Postcard surface 2 D., social welfare 10 l. (paid letter rate 50 l. instead).

- A sample of regular commercial correspondence, where the stamps were cancelled with the commemorative handstamp.
- The handstamp was used on Apr. 25 & 26.

Thessaloniki International Fair poster stamp (1937)



From Athens (Nov. 15, 1937) to Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Rates: Surface 8 D., airpost 7 D. since June 8, 1933, social welfare (optional) 1 D.

- No commemorative postmark was ever used for the annual Thessaloniki International Fair. Each year the Fair was promoted by a mechanical cancellation and a poster stamp.
- Athens currency control.

The Royal Wedding commemoration in red ink (1938)



From Athens (Jan. 9, 1938) to Voerde, Germany. Rates: Surface 8 D., social welfare (opt.) 1 D., anti-TB (opt.) 20 l.

- Red ink on the mechanical cancellation and on the currency control ligature to commemorate Prince's Paul wedding to Princess Frederica of Hanover. Around twenty post offices across the country used red ink on their postmarks on wedding day.

Hygiene Exhibition handstamp (1938)



From Athens to Zurich, Switzerland (Dec. 30, 1938).

Rates: Postcard surface 5 D.

- A sample of regular correspondence, where the stamps were cancelled with the commemorative handstamp.
- The exhibition was held in Zappeion, Athens, from Nov. 13 to Dec. 31.

International Postal Convention postmark (1938)



From Athens (May 31, 1938) via Marseilles (June 11, on the reverse) to Paris.
Rates: Surface 8 D., airpost 6 D. since June 1, 1938, social welfare (optional) 1 D.

- May 31, 1938, is thus verified as the earliest day of circulation of the overprinted social welfare 50 l. green, so far believed to be June 1. Reported in *Philotelia* no. 648/2008, p. 62.
- The postal convention was held in Athens from May 24 to June 1.
- Athens currency control.

First Flight cachets between Athens & Herakleion (1939)



30%

From Athens (Apr. 12, 1939) to Herakleio (Apr. 13), back to Athens (Apr. 18).

Rates: Surface 3 D., registration 4 D., airpost 1 D., social welfare 50 l., anti-TB (Easter 1939) 50 l.

- Purple cachet FIRST FLIGHT ATHENS-HERAKLEIO EEES (Greek initials of the Hellenic Company of Air Transportation).



30%

From Herakleio (Apr. 13, 1939) to Athens (Apr. 13).

Rates: Surface 3 D., airpost 1 D., social welfare 50 l., anti-TB (Easter 1939) 50 l.

- Purple cachet FIRST FLIGHT HERAKLEIO-ATHENS EEES.

"Herakleio museum"
illustrated postmark



POST OFFICE INNOVATIONS

A. Illustrated postmarks

The illustrated postmarks first appeared in 1937. They were distributed in museums, archaeological sites, recreation parks etc. They were hardly used and the postal material survived to dated is quite scarce.

"Parnitha shelter"
illustrated postmark



"Acropolis"
illustrated postmark

(a) on the postcard;
the stamps are cancelled
at the nearby Makrygianni
p.o.

From Athens (Aug. 12, 1937)
to Zidlochovice, Czechoslovakia.

Rates: Reduced postal card rate
for five words text or less at 2 D.

"Acropolis"
illustrated postmark

(b) on the stamps;
the postcard is also
cancelled at the nearby
Makrygianni p.o.

From Athens (Apr. 15, 1938)
to Hermsdorf, Germany.

Rates: Postal card 5 D.,
social welfare (optional) 10 l.



B. Ship mail handstamps

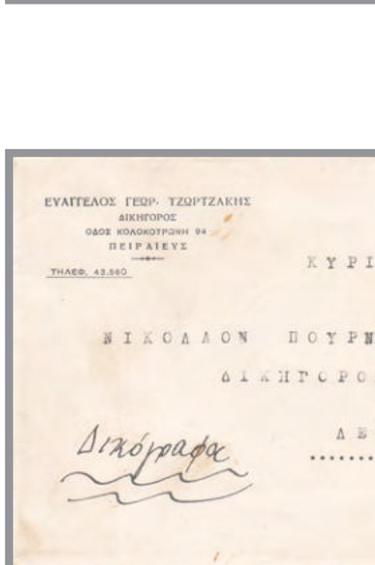
Joint Directorship of Coastal Transport
 [ΚΟΙΝΗ ΔΙΕΥΘΥΝΣΙΣ ΑΚΤΟΠΛΟΪΚΩΝ ΣΥΓΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΩΝ]



Late in 1939, mail-boxes were placed on selected domestic liners. Handstamps of uniform type were prepared for the purpose, bearing the "Joint Directorship of Coastal Transport", "Act no. 1652", and the name of the liner, all in Greek. Although 31 steamships were licensed, very few postal items have survived to date.

The depicted item is a company cover, erroneously bearing **ΑΚΤΟΠΛΟΪΚΩΝ** instead of **ΑΤΜΟΠΛΟΪΚΩΝ**

From Arta (21 Dec. 1940, on the reverse) to Piraeus (24 Dec. 1940, on the reverse).



50%

Cancelled on
 SS HELLINIS:

From Piraeus to Lefkas
 (30 May 1940).
 Rates: Surface 3 D.,
 social welfare 50 l.

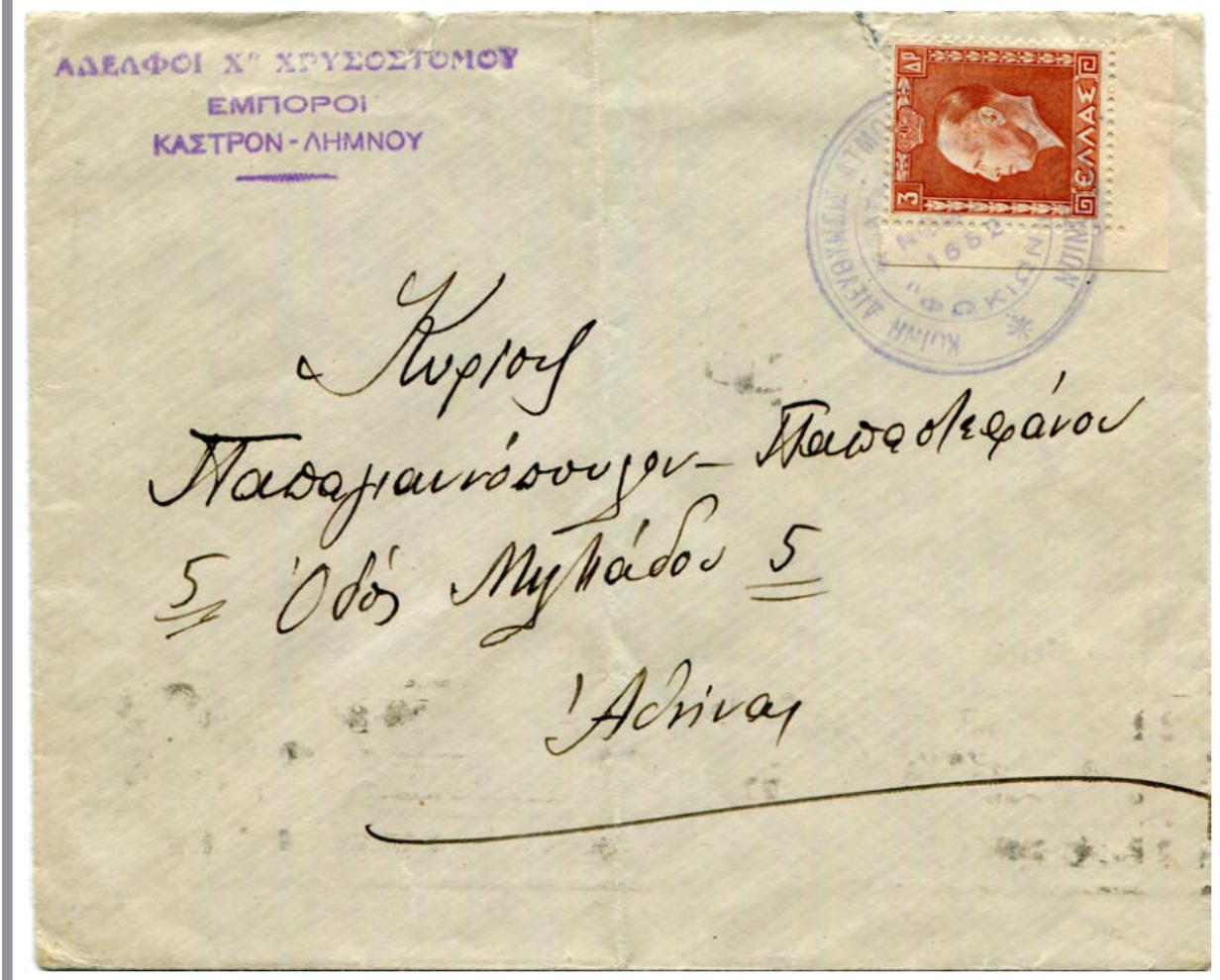




Cancelled on (SS FRINTON):

From Lemnos to Athens (22 June 1940, on the reverse).

Rates: Surface 3 D., social welfare 50 l.



Cancelled on SS FOKION:

From Rethymno to Athens (14 Sep. 1940, on the reverse).

Rates: Surface 3 D., social welfare 50 l. (on the reverse).

C. Pre-printed covers

On September 1, 1939, two pre-printed covers were placed in circulation, one for domestic (3+0.50 D.) and one for international use (8+1 D.). They were meant to serve rural areas, in order to relieve postal customers from buying covers and stamps separately. The domestic covers were scarcely used.



50%

From Vassaras, a village in Lakonia, Peloponnese (Oct. 14, 1939), via Sparti (Oct. 14) to Athens (Oct. 15 & 16).



50%

From Palaiomiri, a village in Arkadia, Peloponnese (Feb. 7, 1941), via Megalopoli (Feb. 6)! and Athens to Chicago IL, USA.

- Megalopoli censorship.

THE LIMITED USE OF GREEK PERFINS

Perfin stamps in Greece were hardly used. The first law on perfins was issued in 1930. During the dictatorship period, five companies only were licensed to use perfin stamps in the following fiscal years (April 1 to March 30):

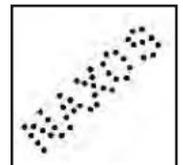
Office for the protection of Greek figs (1936-37)
 Agricultural Bank (1936-40)
 Naxos S.A. Industrielle (1937-41)
 Ford Motor Company of Greece (1936-41)
 Bank of Greece (1936-41)

Of the first two, a single cover has yet to be reported. Very few examples each have been recorded of Naxos and Ford items. Bank of Greece perfin covers of branches other than Athens and Thessaloniki are quite uncommon too.

Naxos Société Anonyme Industrielle (NAXOS) perfins



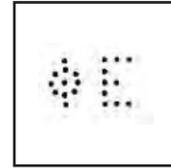
60%



From Syros (Mar. 29, 1939) via Athens (Mar. 30) to New York, USA.
 Rates: Surface 8 D., airpost since Jan. 21, 1939, 6 D., social welfare (optional) 1 D.

- Airpost stamps not perfined.
- Athens currency control.

Ford Motor Company (Φ.Ε.) perfins

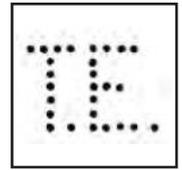


50%

From Athens (May 24, 1940)
via New York (June 15)
to Dearborn, MI, USA (June 17).

Rates: Second weight surface (20-40 g)
13 D. (8+5), registration 8 D.

- Athens currency control.



Bank of Greece
perfins (T.E.)
Athens branch

From Athens (Feb.
2, 1938) to Vienna,
Austria.

Rates: Surface 8 D.,
social welfare (opt.)
paid with anti-TB
stamps 1 D.

- Athens
currency control.



Bank of Greece
perfins (T.E.)
Thessaloniki
branch

From Thessaloniki
(June 23, 1938)
to Pforzheim,
Germany.

Rates: Surface 8 D.,
social welfare
(optional) 1 D.

- Thessaloniki
currency control.

Bank of Greece perfins (T.E.) - Patra branch

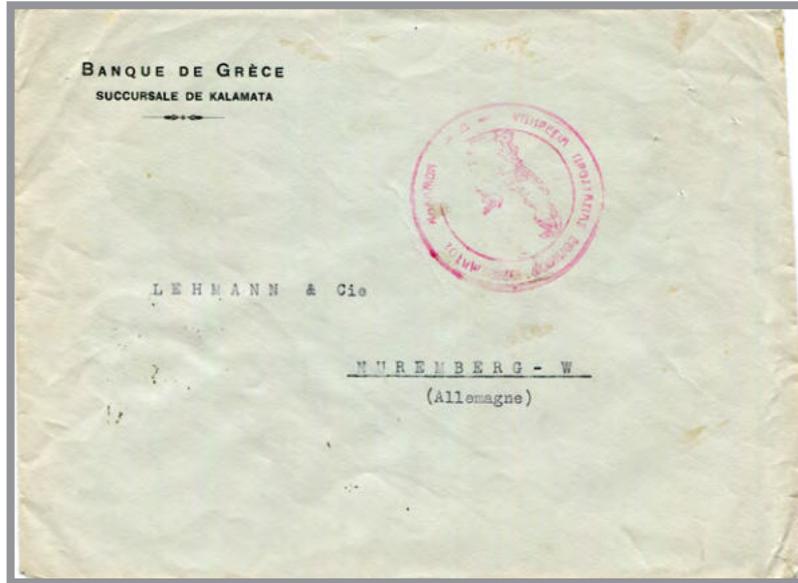


From Patra (Oct. 7, 1938) via Athens (Oct. 8) to Dortmund, Germany (Oct. 10).

Rates: Second weight surface (20-40 g) 13 D. (8+5), registration 8 D., fourth weight airpost (30-40 g) since June 8, 1933, 28 D. (4x7), social welfare (optional) 1 D.

- Patra currency control.

Bank of Greece perfins (T.E.) - Kalamata branch



60%



*From Kalamata (Mar. 28, 1937) via Patra (Mar. 30) to Nuremberg, Germany.
Rates: Surface 8 D., social welfare (optional) 1 D.*

- *Kalamata currency control.*

Bank of Greece perfins (T.E.) - Volos branch



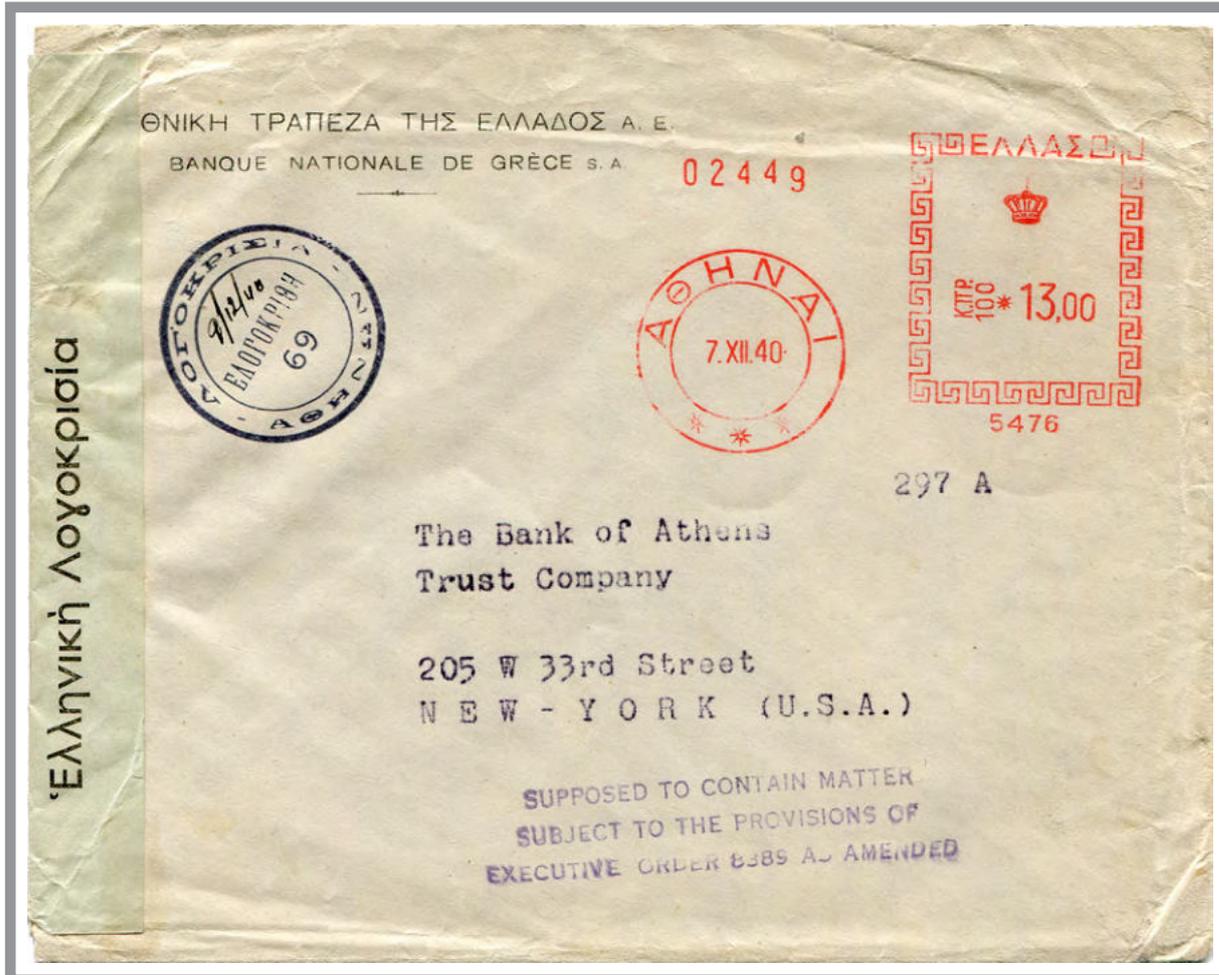
60%



From Volos (July 5, 1940) via Athens (July 6) and Lisbon (Aug. 6) to London. Rates: Surface 8 D., second weight airmail (5-10 g) to Lisbon (as indicated on the cover) since July 5, 1940, 36 D. (2x18), social welfare (optional) 1 D.

- *Volos currency control, British censorship on arrival.*

THE PERFINS GIVE WAY TO THE FIRST HASLER FRANKING DEVICES

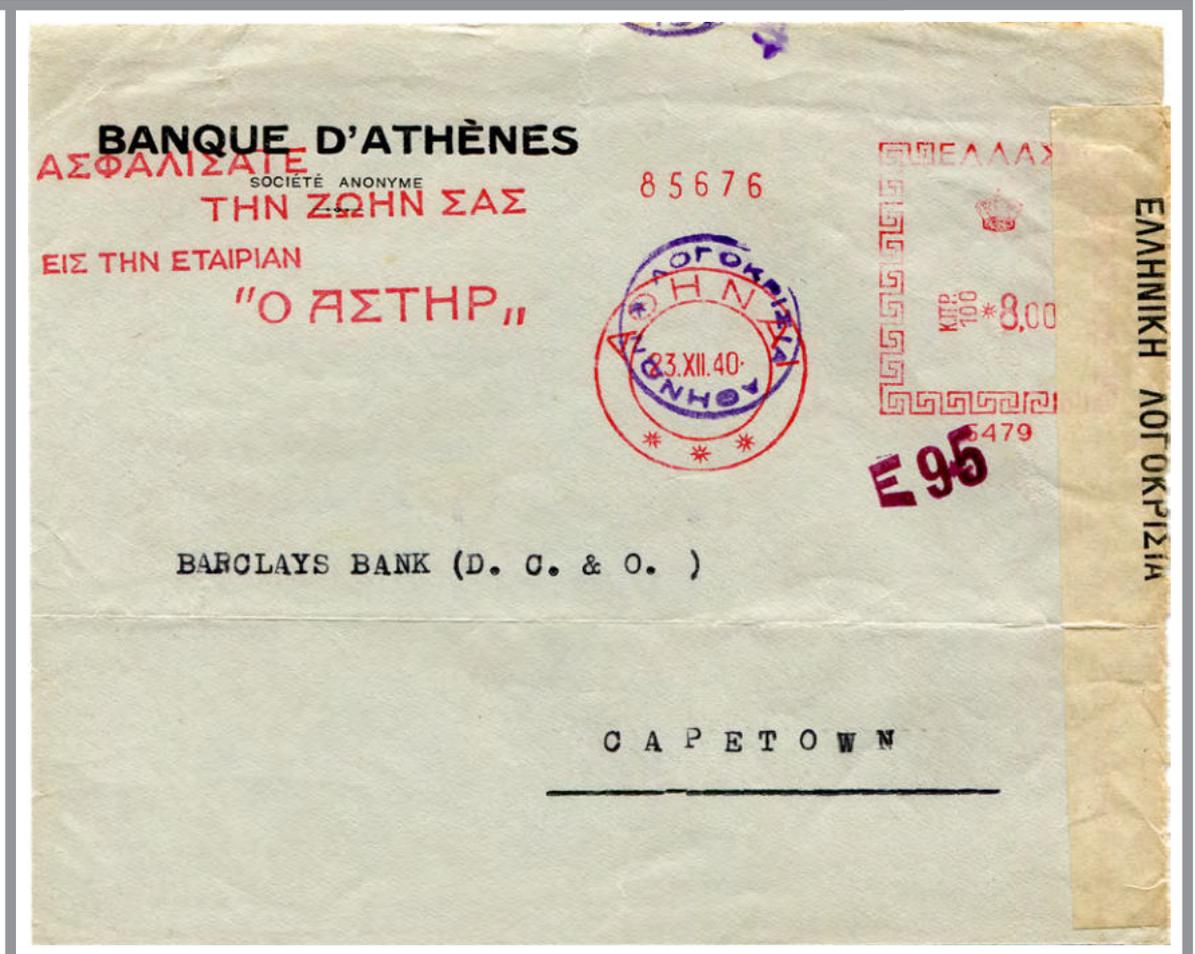


National Bank
Hasler device
no. 5476

From Athens
(Dec. 7, 1940)
to New York, USA.

Rates: Second weight
surface (20-40 g) 13
D. (8+5), social wel-
fare (optional) 1 D.

- Athens censor-ship. Also, a rare case of US currency control: The Executive Order 8389 was issued on April 10, 1940, "to protect the funds of victims of aggression", when it became known that Denmark and Norway were invaded by the Axis.



Bank of Athens
Hasler device
no. 5479

Cover front from Athens
(Dec. 23, 1940)
to Capetown,
South Africa.

Rates: Surface 8 D.,
social welfare (optional)
1 D.

- Athens censorship.

AIRMAIL POSTMARKS & CACHETS OF THE HELLENIC P.O.

The first four airmail postmarks in a foreign language (in French)



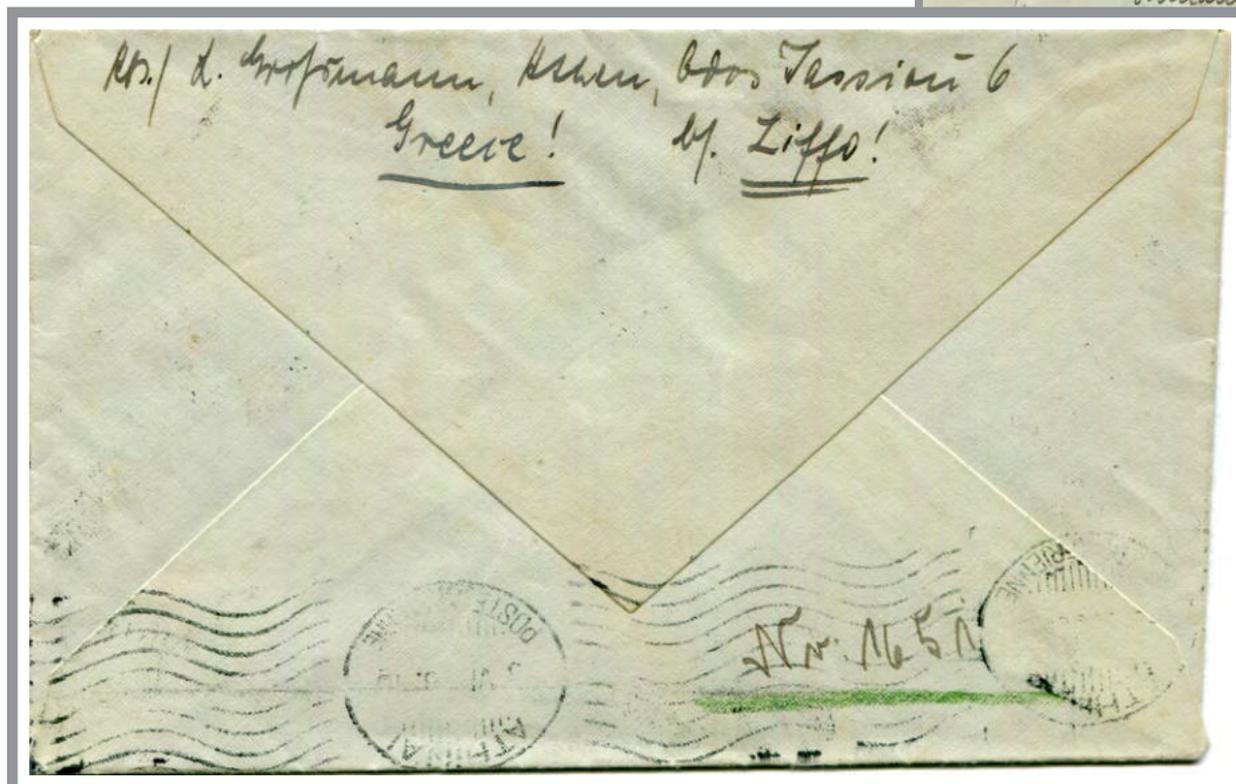
Dual circle postmark

From Athens (Feb. 21, 1937) to Holzhausen, Germany.

Rates: Surface 8 D., airpost since June 8, 1933, 7 D., social welfare (optional) 1 D.

- First days of use of the postmark.
- Athens currency control.

Mechanical cancellation



50%

From Athens (June 3, 1938) to Cottbus, Germany.

Rates: Surface 8 D., airpost since June 8, 1933, 7 D., social welfare (opt.) 1 D.

- First days of use of the cancellation.
- Athens c. control.

Bridge postmark (Type I - narrow)

From Athens
(May 21, 1938)
to Brussels,
Belgium.

Rates: Surface 8 D.,
airpost since
June 8, 1933, 7 D.,
social welfare
(optional) 50 l.

- Athens
currency control.



Bridge postmark (Type II - wide)

From Athens
(Dec. 29, 1938)
to Lincoln, UK.

Rates: Surface 8 D.,
second weight
airpost (10-20 g.)
since June 8, 1933,
14 D. (2x7),
social welfare
(optional) 1 D.

- Athens
currency control.

The misspelled airmail cachet

The misspelled airmail cachet ΑΕΡΟΠΡΙΚΩΣ instead of ΑΕΡΟΠΟΡΙΚΩΣ was used in Syntagma Square P.O. in Athens. It is recorded in both dark violet and dark red.

Top
(in dark violet):

From Athens
(Dec. 15, 1939)
to Chicago, IL, USA.
Rates: Surface 8 D.,
third weight airpost
(10-15 g) since Oct ??,
1939, 72 D. (3x24),
social welfare (opt.) 1 D.
• Athens currency control.

Bottom
(in dark red):

From Athens
(July 6, 1940)
to Vienna.
Rates: Surface 8 D.,
second weight airpost
(10-20 g) since July 5,
1940, 12 D. (2x6),
social welfare (opt.) 1 D.
• Athens currency control.



By air for part of the trip

From Herakleio
(July 27, 1939) to
Brno, Moravia, part
of the newly estab-
lished Reich control-
led Protectorate.

Rates: Surface 8 D.,
airpost to Athens
1 D., social welfare
(optional) 1 D.

- Dual-line cachet in French indicating "by air to Athens".
- Herakleio currency control.



From Herakleio
(Dec. 28, 1939)
to Zurich,
Switzerland
(Jan. 1, 1940).

Rates: Second
weight surface
(20-40 g) 13 D.,
third weight air-
post (30-45 g)
3 D. (3x1),
social welfare
(optional) 1 D.

- Dual-line cachet in Greek indicating "by air to Athens".
- Herakleio currency control.

Early plane departure



50%

From Thessaloniki
(Oct. 6, 1937)
to Athens (Oct. 7).

Rates: Surface 3 D.,
airpost 1 D.,
social welfare 50 l.,
Thessaloniki 20 l.

- Dual line cachet indicating in Greek that the cover was deposited after the plane's departure.



From Thessaloniki
(Jan. 15, 1939)
to Prague (Jan. 19
on the reverse).

Rates: Surface
(reduced to the Bal-
kans and Czechoslo-
vakia) 6 D., second
weight airpost
(10-20 g) since
March 1, 1938, 8 D.
(2x4), social welfare
(optional) 1 D.

- AVION PARTI cachet, indicating that the cover was deposited after the plane's departure.
- Thessaloniki currency control.

Sent by surface

From Thessaloniki
(Nov. 17, 1937)
to Vienna.

Rates: Surface 8 D.,
airpost since
June 8, 1933, 7 D.,
social welfare
(optional) 1 D.

- Paid first weight airpost rate (to 10 g), instead of second weight (10-20 g), as the handwritten note in blue "grs 12" indicates. The airmail label was crossed out and a bilingual multi-line cachet was placed on the cover indicating "by surface route because of underpayment of the airpost rate".
- Thessaloniki currency control.



From Athens (Mar. 7, 1939) via Budapest (Mar. 8, on the reverse) to Prague (Mar. 10, on the reverse).

Rates: Surface (reduced to the Balkans and Czechoslovakia) 6 D., second weight airpost (10-20 g) since Jan. 21, 1939, 11 D. (2x5.50), social welfare (opt.) 1 D.

- Airmail label crossed out, indicating that the cover was sent by surface mail.
- Athens currency control.

Crash mail



70%



From Port Said, Egypt (Sep. 30, 1937), to Athens (Oct. 10).

- Salvaged from Imperial Airways' Courtier flying boat, which sunk at Faliro bay, Greece, on Oct. 1, 1937.
- Rectangular handstamp in Greek and French, "From sunk hydroplane".

GREEK AIRMAIL TO THE CONTINENTS

A. Airlines in West Africa



-  Air France
-  Air Afrique or Sabena
-  Aeromaritime

The French Régie Air Afrique and the Belgian Sabena alternated weekly flights to Central Africa, while in 1939 the service became biweekly. Régie Air Afrique flew from Paris all the way to Tananarive (Antananarivo today), Madagascar, while Sabena flew from Brussels to Elisabethville, Belgian Congo (Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo today).

French West Africa (Afrique Occidentale Française, AOF), a federation of eight colonies, dominated the area and brought in Aéromaritime that run from Niamey, Niger, via Cotonou, Dahomey (Benin today), westbound to Dakar, Senegal, and eastbound to Pointe Noire, French Congo (Republic of the Congo today). When the Niamey-Cotonou leg was suspended, following the breakout of WWII, mail from Europe was carried to Dakar by Air France.

Greek airmail to West Africa was first transported by Imperial Airways from Athens to Marseille.

On Air Afrique or Sabena to Belgian Congo



From Athens (June 24, 1939) to Elisabethville, Belgian Congo (July 3, on the reverse).
Rates: Surface 8 D., airpost since Jan. 21, 1939, 16 D., social welfare (optional) 1 D.

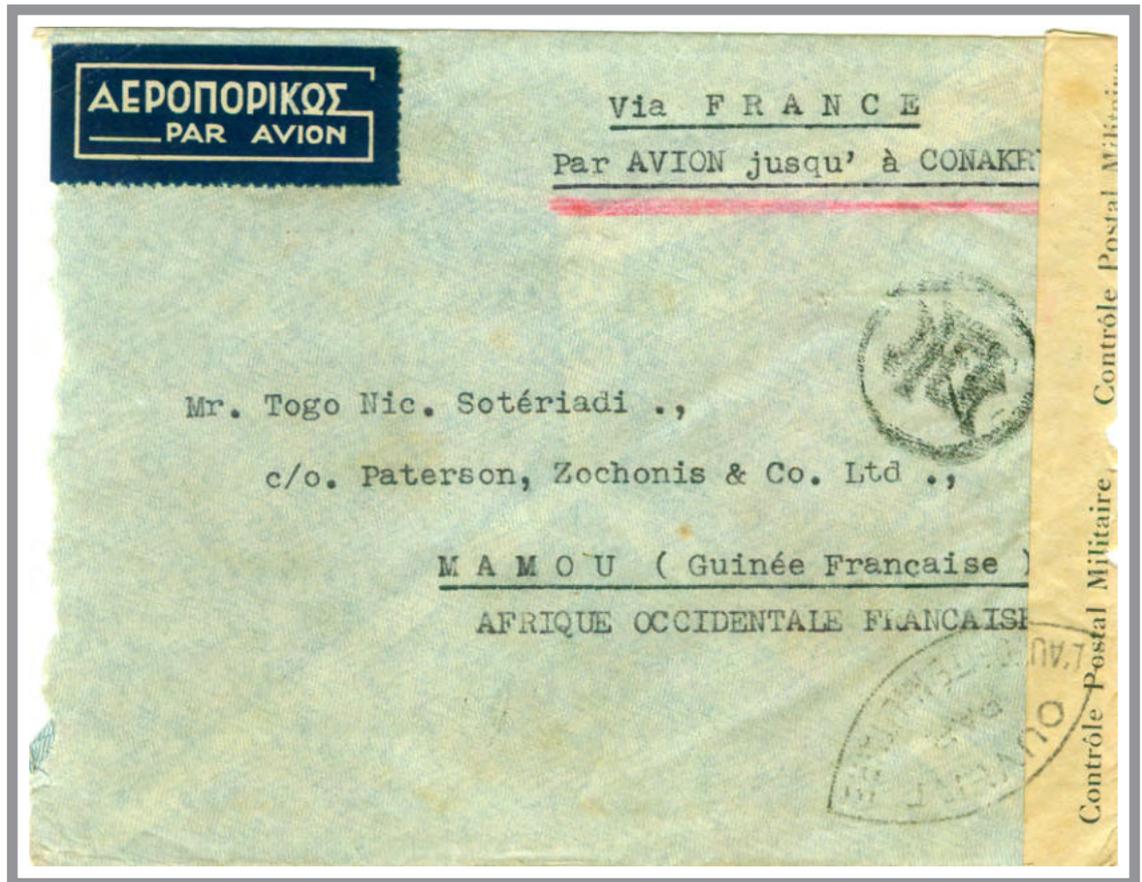
- Elisabethville, Belgian Congo is today Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- Athens currency control.

**On Aéromaritime
to French Guinea
(A.O.F.)**

From Athens (May 4, 1940)
via Marseille, Dakar,
Conakry, French Guinea
(Guinea today, June 1).
Next, surface to Mamou,
100 km to the interior
of the colony.

Rates: Surface 8 D.,
airpost 21 D.
since Mar. 30, 1940,
social welfare (optional) 1 D.

- Athens currency control
and French censorship.



50%



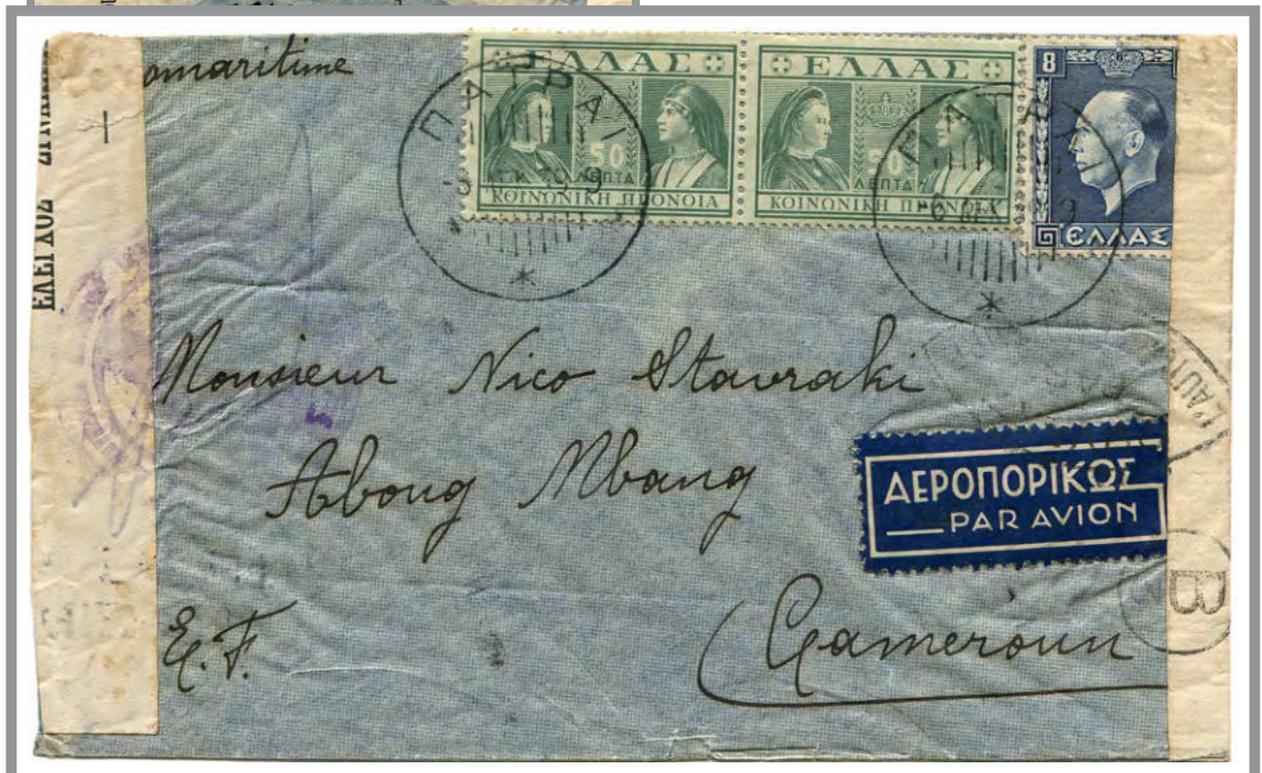
50%

**On Aéro-
maritime
to Cameroon
(A.E.F.)**

From Patra (Dec.
6, 1939) via
Marseille (Dec. 9),
Dakar and Douala
(Dec. 17) to Abong
Mbang, Cameroon,
a further 500 km to
the east.

Rates: Surface 8 D.,
airpost since
Oct. 1, 1939, 20 D.,
social welfare
(optional) 1 D.

- Athens
currency control
and French
censorship.



B. Airlines in East Africa



Imperial Airways flew from Southampton to Alexandria and Khartoum in Sudan all the way to Durban in South Africa. From Khartoum also run a westbound line service that reached Lagos in Nigeria.

When Italy captured Ethiopia in 1936, Ala Littoria which already landed in Tunis and Tripolis added several destinations at the Horn of Africa to its regular schedule.

A few local airlines were established in the 1930s in order to take care of local transportation and grew very fast. Such an example is South African Airways.

Greek airmail to East Africa was transported by Imperial Airways.

- Imperial Airways
- Imperial Airways (Khartoum-Lagos line)
- Ala Littoria (ALSA)
- South African Airways

On Imperial Airways and Ala Littoria to Ethiopia



From Athens (June 10, 1938) via Alexandria (June 11, on the reverse) to Addis Ababa (June ??, on the reverse). Rates: Surface 8 D. (on the reverse), registration 8 D. (on the reverse), third weight airpost (10-15 g) since Mar. 1, 1938, 36 D. (3x12), social welfare (optional, on the reverse) 1 D.

On Imperial Airways Khartoum-Lagos line to Chad

From Athens (Feb. 2, 1938)
via Khartoum (Feb. 5, on
the reverse) to Fort Lamy
(N'Djamena today), Chad
(Feb. 10, on the reverse).

Rates: Surface 8 D., second
weight airpost (5-10 g)
since Oct. 31, 1936,
34 D. (2x17), social welfare
(opt., on the reverse) 1 D.

- Erroneously paid airpost
rates of AOF (Afrique Occi-
dentale Française) instead
of AEF (Afrique Equatori-
ale Française) which were
cheaper at 22 D. / 10 g.
- Athens
currency control.



On Imperial Airways and South African Airways to South Africa



From Athens
(Feb. 26, 1938)
to Cape Town,
South Africa.

Rates: Surface 8 D., second
weight airpost
(5-10 g) since
Oct. 31, 1936,
34 D. (2x17),
social welfare
(opt., on the
reverse) 1 D.

- Athens
currency
control.

C. Airlines in the Far East

Three airlines used to carry mail from Europe to the Far East, giving priority of course to their colonial interests: Air France to the French Indochina, KLM to the Dutch East Indies and Imperial Airways to Australia.

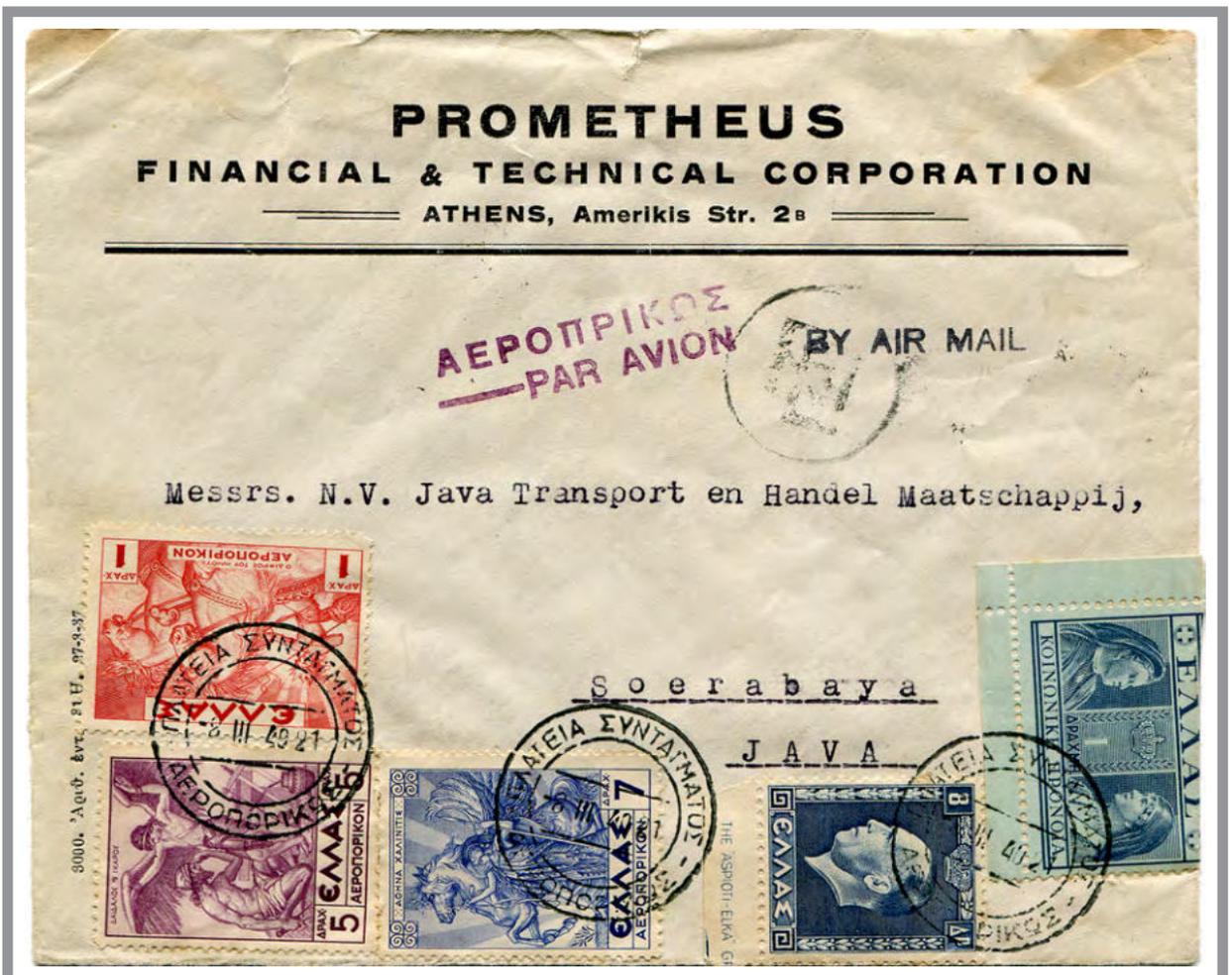
When the war broke out, Air France changed its route from the north to the south of the Mediterranean, hence it no longer used Athens as a night stop. At that time, KLM moved its terminal from Amsterdam to Naples and continued to use Athens as a stop over.

In June 1940, following the German invasion of the Netherlands and France, Air France suspended its services and KLM moved its terminal to Lydda, Palestine. This actually means that during the war most of the Greek mail was left to be carried to the Far East on Imperial Airways.



- Imperial Airways or KLM/KNILM
- Qantas
- - - → by sea to April 1940, then on TEAL

On Imperial Airways or KLM/KNILM to the Dutch East Indies



From Athens (Mar. 8, 1940) to Surabaya, Dutch East Indies (part of Indonesia today).

Rates: Surface 8 D., airpost 22 D. since Oct. xx, 1939, (paid 13 D. instead), social welfare (optional) 1 D.

- Athens currency control.

On Imperial Airways and on Qantas to West Australia



70%



From Patra (Apr. 22, 1939) via Athens (Apr. 24) and Sydney (May 2 & 3) to Perth, Australia (May 4). Rates: Surface 8 D., registration 8 D., third weight airpost (10-15 g) since Jan. 21, 1939, 75 D. (3x25), social welfare (optional) 1 D.

- Patra currency control.

On Imperial Airways to East Australia

From Piraeus (Feb. 14, 1939)
via Athens (Feb. 14, on the
reverse) to Brisbane, Australia
(Feb. 22, on the reverse).

Rates: Surface 8 D., second
weight airpost (5-10 g) since
Jan. 21, 1939, 50 D. (2x25),
social welfare (optional) 1 D.

- Piraeus
currency control.



On Imperial Airways and by sea to New Zealand

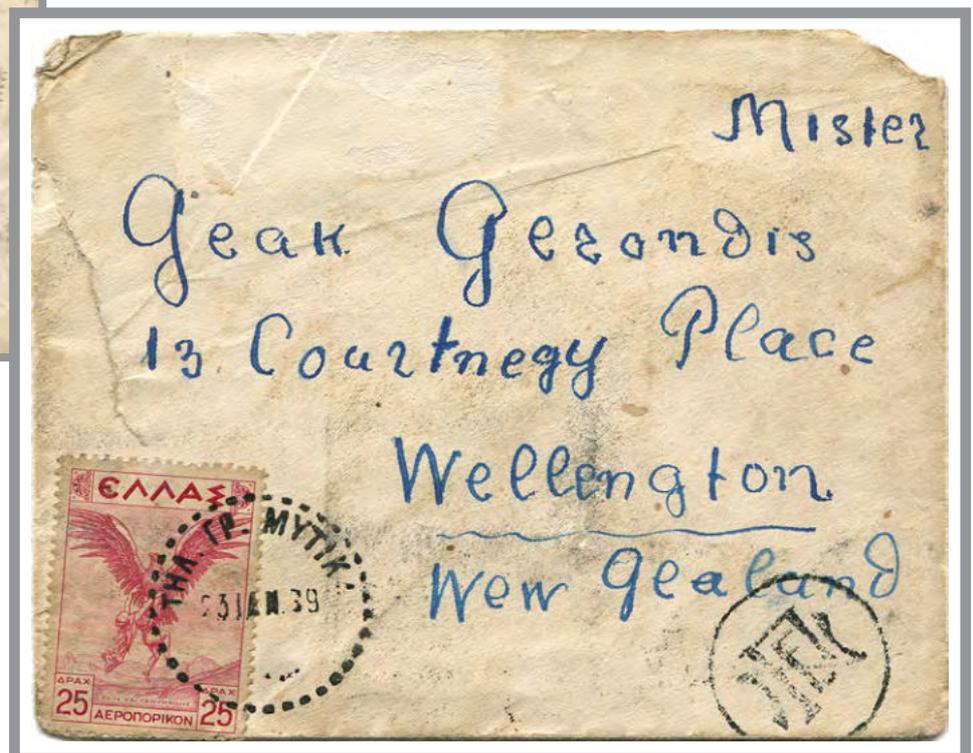


60%

From Mytikas (Jan. 23, 1939)
to Wellington, New Zealand.

Rates: Surface 8 D., second weight air-
post (5-10 g) since Mar. 21, 1939, 40 D.
(2x20), social welfare (optional) 1 D.

- Paid cheaper airpost rates, changed
two days earlier, not unusual for a
remote p.o.
- Athens currency control.



D. Airlines in South America



→ Air France or Lufthansa or LATI
→ Panair (Brazil)

Before the war, the flights from Europe to South America were alternating on a weekly basis between Air France from Paris and Deutsche Lufthansa from Berlin. When the war broke out, Lufthansa immediately suspended its flights. On November 21, 1939, the Italian LATI, flying from Rome, took over to compliment Air France. The last Air France flight to South America left Marseille on June 23, 1940.

Airmail to local destinations was mostly taken care of by the two main Brazilian competitors, i.e. Condor and Panair.

Before the war, Greek mail was first forwarded from Athens to Marseille by Imperial Airways and then transferred onto either Air France or Lufthansa.

On LATI to Brazil



60%



From Athens (June 19, 1940) to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (July 11 & 12).

Rates: Surface 8 D., air-post since June ??, 1940, 114 D., s. w. (opt.) 1 D.

- "Voie Lisbonne" is a clear indication of the transportation by LATI.
- Athens currency control.

On Panair from Paraguay to Brazil and then on Air France or Lufthansa to Europe



From Asuncion,
Paraguay
(July 14, 1939)
to Athens (July 25, on
the reverse).

Rates: Surface 18 pesos,
airpost 102 pesos.

- Flights between Asuncion and Rio de Janeiro on Brazilian airline Panair.

On Air France to Argentina



From Athens (Nov. 2, 1939) to Buenos Aires, Argentina (Nov. 9, on the reverse).

Rates: Surface 8 D.,
airpost since Oct. ??, 1939, 105 D.,
social welfare (optional) 1 D.

- It is the period when Air France operated alone from Europe to South America.
- Athens currency control.

E. Airlines in Central America



Mail on the first leg of the trip from Central America to Europe was transported by Pan American flying clippers on the line from Panama City to Brownsville and then on to New York.

Until the introduction of the Pan Am service FAM-18 on May 20, 1939, which flew over the Atlantic, mailbags were next loaded on steamers to Le Havre, France, then on rail to Marseille and finally on air carriers to final destinations.



—→ Pan American Airways
 - - - - - by sea

From San Jose, Costa Rica (Mar. 23, 1937) via Brownsville, TX, USA (Mar. 25) and New York (Mar. 26) to Athens (Apr. 9). Transit and arrival postmarks on the reverse.

Rates: Fifth weight airpost (20-25 g) 1.45 colon (0.45 + 4x0.25), registration 0.40 colon.

- The official correspondence between the Greek Commercial Attaché in San Jose and the Finance Minister in Athens was not subjected to currency control.

GREECE NEUTRAL DURING THE FIRST YEAR OF WWII

Prelude to WW II: The Spanish Civil War

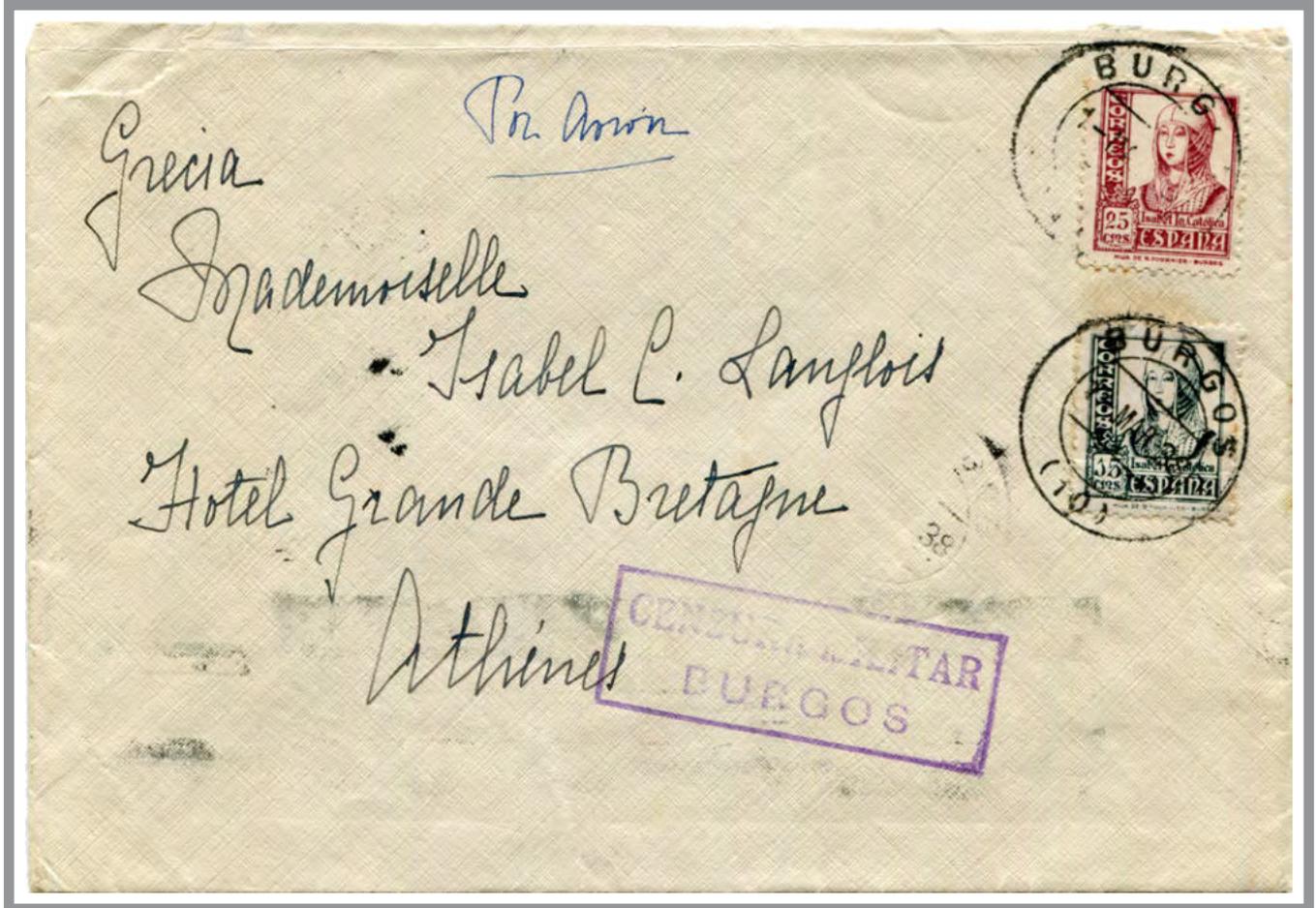
The Spanish Civil War lasted from July 1936 to April 1940 and -as expected- censorship was applied to correspondence (top cover). Although Spain remained neutral during WWII, censorship practices continued all along (bottom cover).

From the Nationalists' capital Burgos (Mar. 1, 1938), via Vienna (Mar. 5) to Athens (Mar. 8).

Rates: Surface 0.40 Ptas.

- Not paid the airpost rates of 1.25 Ptas since Apr. 1, 1937 (or 1.50 Ptas since Mar. 1, 1938).

- Censored in Burgos.



55%

From Piraeus (June 18, 1940) to Marseille, France, redirected to Barcelona, Spain.

Rates: Surface 8 D., airpost since June ??, 1940, 18 D., social welfare (optional) 1 D.

- Piraeus currency control and Barcelona censorship.

ALSA flights grounded for two months at the beginning of WW II

Italian carrier ALSA resumed its Rome-Athens-Rhodes-Haifa pre-war route on October 26, after having been grounded since the beginning of WW II on September 3, 1939.

From Athens (Oct. 3 & 25, 1939) to Rhodes, Italian Dodecanese (Oct. 27, on the reverse).

Rates: Surface 8 D., airpost since Oct. 31, 1936, 2 D., social welfare (opt.) 1 D.

- The cover was postmarked at the Syntagma square P.O. on dispatch and post-marked again three weeks later at the Athens central P.O., with the mechanical ATHINAI - POSTE AERIENNE. It is fair to suppose that the second postmark was placed the day it was confirmed that the flights to Rhodes would resume. It was finally postmarked in Rhodes two days later.



Germany invades Denmark and Norway (April 9, 1940)

Dutch carrier KLM immediately suspended its flights to Paris and London, so Greek mail to France and England was transported by BOAC direct flights, with much increased rates.



30%

From Athens (June 4, 1940) to London.

Rates: Surface 8 D., second weight airpost (5-10 g) since May 15, 40 D. (2x20), social welfare (opt.) 1 D.

- Athens cur. control.

**Germany attacks
The Netherlands,
Belgium & France
(May 10, 1940)**

From Loutra Aedip-
sos (Oct. 1, 1940) to
Gothenburg, Sweden.

Rates: Surface 8 D.,
second weight airpost
(10-20 g) since July 5,
1940, 24 D. (2x12),
social welfare (opt.)
1 D.

- On May 10, 1940,
the Swedish ABA
discontinued the
Stockholm-Berlin
line, so Greek mail to
Sweden was carried
by LARES to Bucha-
rest, AEROFLOT to
Moscow, and ABA to
Stokholm.

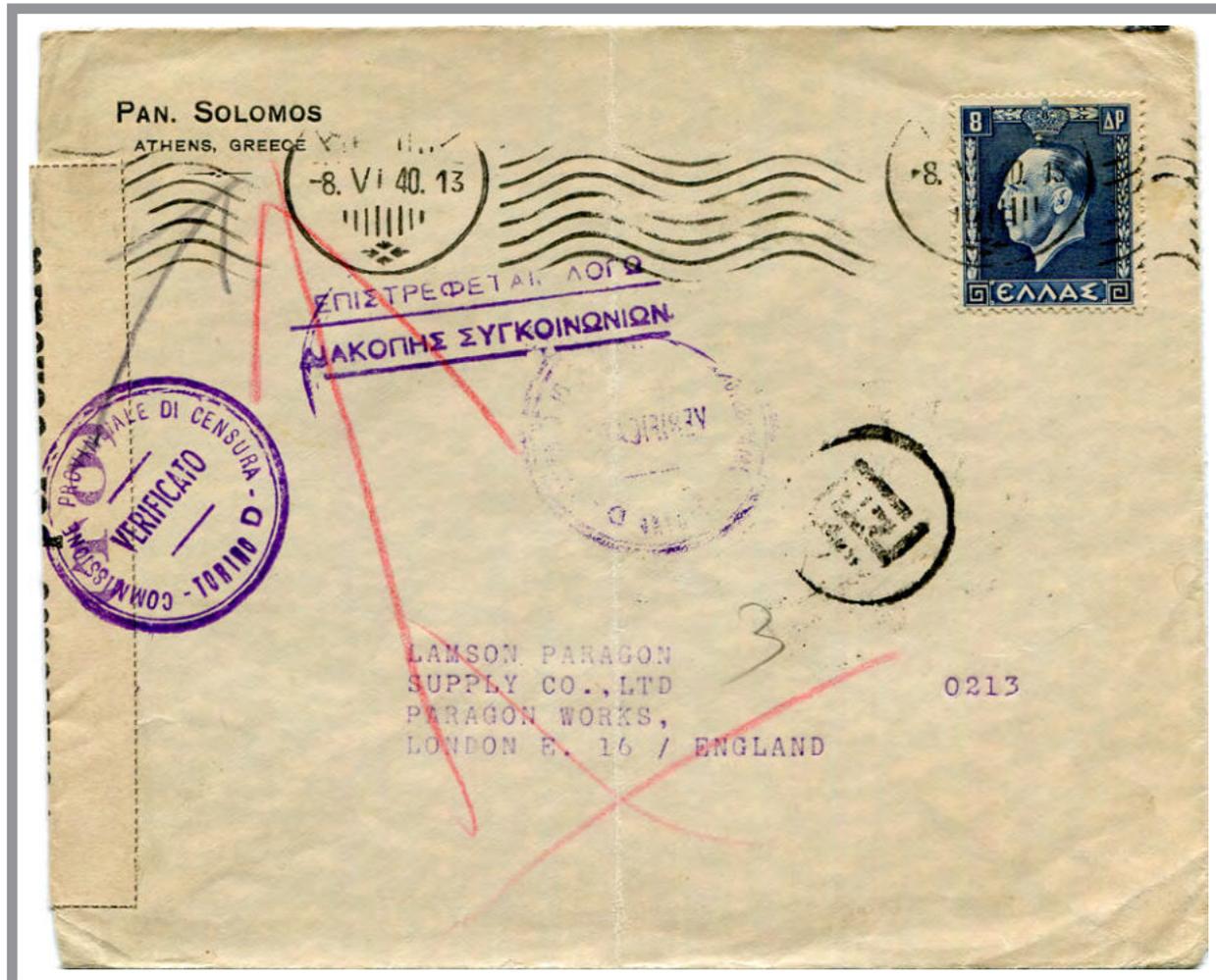


**Italy declares
war on England
(June 10, 1940)**

From Athens (June
8, 1940) destined
to London by rail.
Intercepted in Turin,
Italy, censored, and
returned to Greece.

Rates: Surface 8 D.

- Handstamped
ΕΠΙΣΤΡΕΦΕΤΑΙ
ΛΟΓΩ ΔΙΑΚΟ-
ΠΗΣ ΣΥΓΚΟΙ-
ΝΩΝΙΩΝ
[Returned due
to suspension of
services]. This is
the first instance
this rubber
handstamp was
used. The hands-
tamp was used in
similar situations
until April 1945.



The fall of France (June 22, 1940)

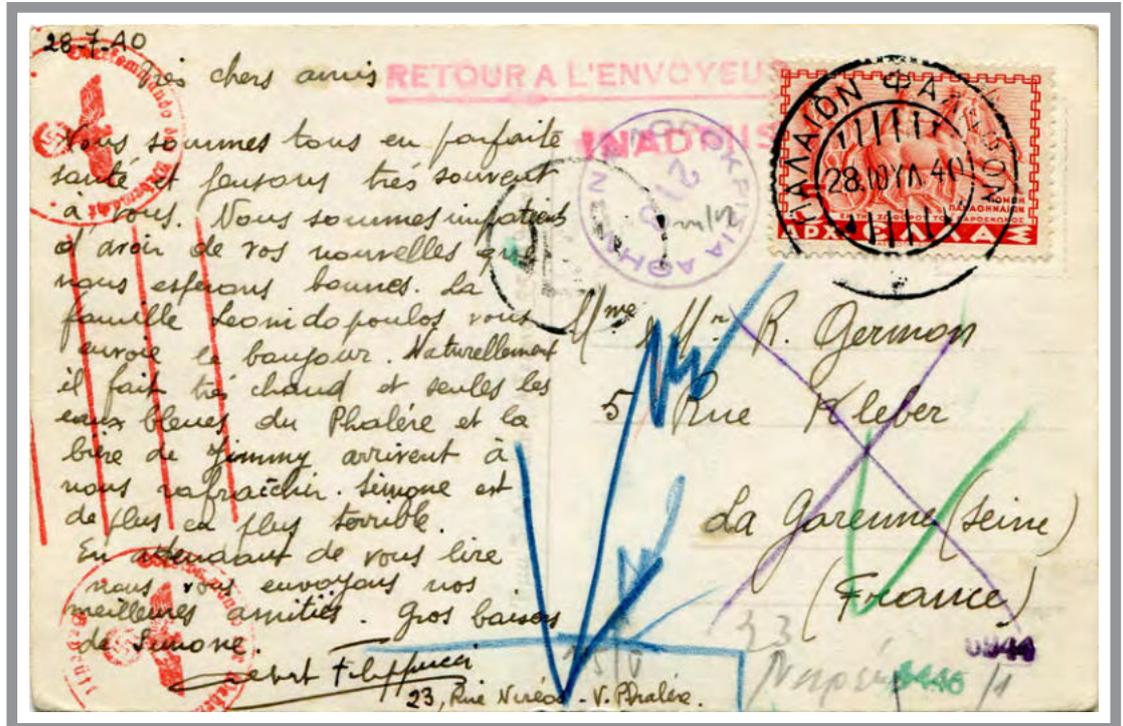
After the fall of France, the country was divided in two parts. Occupied Northern France and "Free" Southern France (Vichy France), an ally to the Axis powers. Correspondence between Northern France and Greece was immediately suspended, while between Vichy France and Greece continued regularly until the latter was occupied too, in April 1941.

Occupied Northern France

From Paleo Faliro (July 28, 1940) destined to La Garenne (a Paris suburb), France.

Rates: Postal card surface 5 D.

- Athens currency control on departure as appropriate.
- Intercepted, sent to Vienna to be censored and returned to the sender. By that time, Greece had entered the war, and the card was censored for a second time on arrival in Athens.
- Handstamped RETOUR A L'ENVOYEUR and INADMISSIBLE, to indicate that the card was inadmissible to France.



Vichy France

From Athens (Nov. 8, 1940) to Marseille, France.

Rates: Surface 8 D., social welfare (optional) 1 D.

- Censored on departure in Greece and then in Vienna, it seems it arrived safely in Marseilles.
- No restrictions in correspondence between Greece and Vichy France.

Towards the Greco-Italian War (October 28, 1940)

Permanent suspension of ALSA flights to and from Greece

From Athens (Oct. 26, 1940) to New York.

Rates: Surface 8 D., airpost since May 15, 1940, 32 D., social welfare (opt.) 1 D.

- The cover was meant to fly towards Rome on the scheduled ALSA flight of Tuesday Oct. 29, which never took place. It was transported by rail towards Lisbon. Censored by the Italians in Trieste, it is doubtful if it ever reached its destination.

- Athens currency control.



Permanent suspension of DLH flights to and from Greece

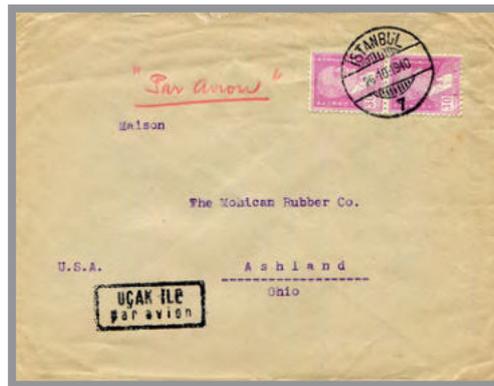
From Athens (Oct. 27, 1940) to Sofia (Nov. 8, on the reverse).

Rates: Surface 8 D., second weight airpost since Oct. ??, 1939, 6 D. (2x3), social welfare (opt.) 1 D.

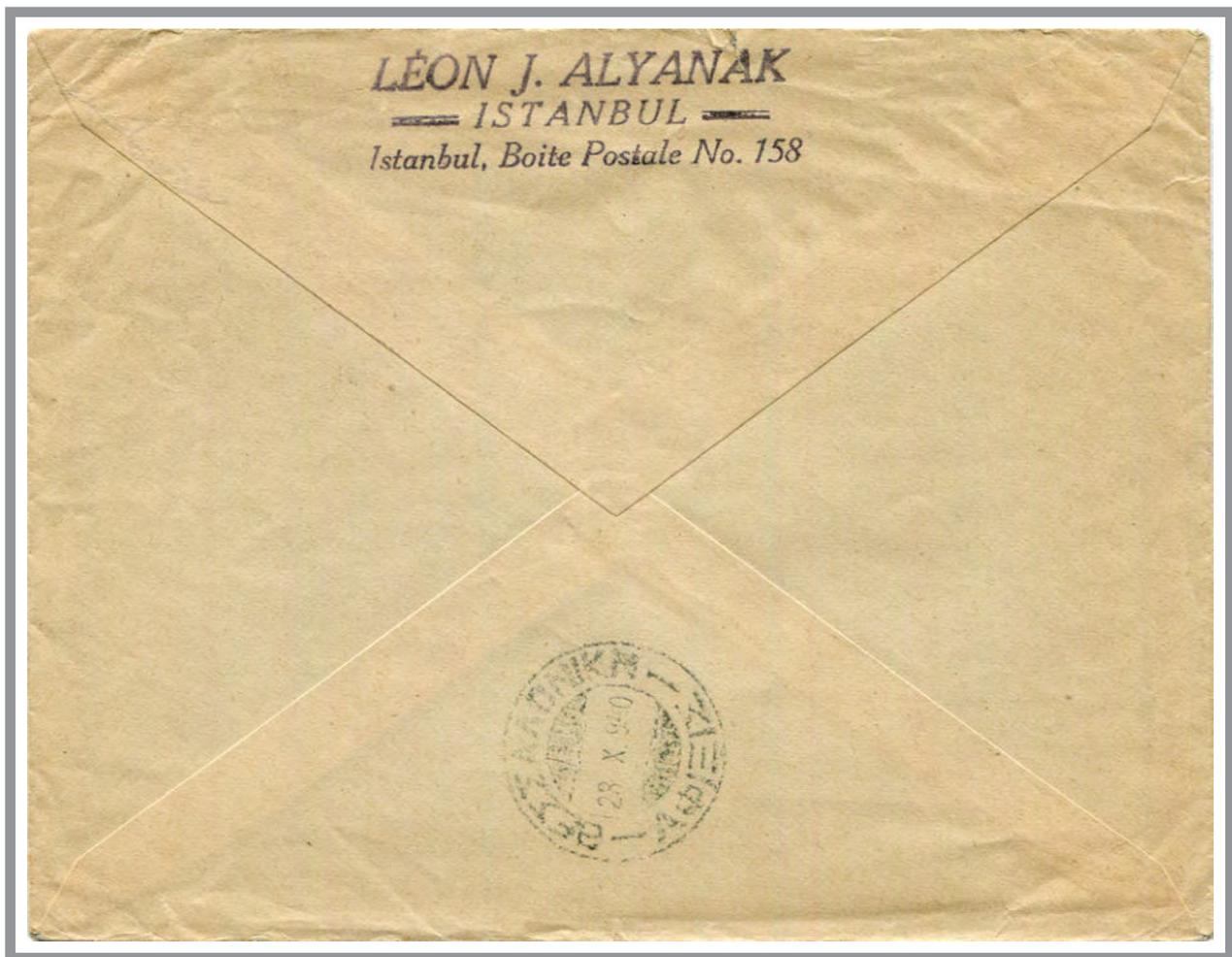
- The cover was supposed to be transported on the DLH flight scheduled for Monday Oct. 28, which was also suspended. It finally reached Sofia ten days later, most probably by rail.
- Athens c. control.

GREECE ENGAGED IN WWII

The Axis powers declared war on Greece on October 28, 1940, when the Italian army attacked the Greek-Albanian border. After five months of hostilities, the Greek army had secured a territory in Southern Albania (Northern Epirus). On April 6, 1941, the Wehrmacht invaded Greece from Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. Although assisted by troops from Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand, the Greek army finally capitulated and the Wehrmacht marched in Athens on April 27, 1941.

The first day of the Greco-Italian war

40%



From Istanbul (Oct. 26, 1940) via Thessaloniki (Oct. 28) to Ashland, OH, USA.
Rates: Surface 10 krş, airpost since July 50 krş.

- Cancelled in Thessaloniki on Oct. 28, on its way to Lisbon and then to the USA. It missed the suspended ALSA flights Thessaloniki-Tirana-Rome and Rome-Lisbon. It probably reached Lisbon by rail via Germany.
- The sender, Leon Alyanak was a renowned philatelist and stamp dealer in Istanbul.

Suspension of mail services between Greece and Italy

From Athens (Oct. 27, 1940)
destined to Milan, Italy.

Rates: Surface 8 D.,
airpost since July 5, 1940, 8
D., social welfare (opt.) 1 D.

- The cover was cancelled at 24:00 hrs. on the 27th, a few hours before the beginning of the Greek-Italian confrontation. Handstamped ΕΠΙΣΤΡΕΦΕΤΑΙ ΛΟΓΩ ΔΙΑΚΟΠΗΣ ΣΥΓΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΩΝ [Returned due to suspension of services], one of the very first victims of the war.
- Athens currency control.



Censorship takes over from Currency Control

From Athens to Mytilene, not postmarked but censored as appropriate. The censor handstamp no. 262 is one in a numbered series from 1 to 513 applied in Athens, but of a unique type, much larger in diameter, usually applied on large items.

The official postal cards of the Army postal service



From Army P.O. 912 (III Infantry Division, Apr. 14, 1941) to Athens (Apr. 21).

- Sent and received between the fall of the front to the Nazis (Apr. 6) and the arrival of the Nazis in Athens (Apr. 27).
- One of six different illustrations and of sixteen different messages of encouragement at the bottom. Army censorship.

The scarcely used official postal card of the Navy postal service



From Naval Unit 212 (most probably in Navy HQ, Athens, Feb. 21, 1941) to Army P.O. 652 (Provisions Centre "B").

- In a completely different philosophy of the Army postal service, which issued a lot of different types of postal cards (see above) and in large quantities, the Navy postal service issued only the depicted type in very limited quantities. Athens civil censorship.

Italian Army postal cards captured and used by the Greek soldiers



From military P.O. 212 (3rd Army Corps, Jan. 22, 1941) to Athens.

- "Cartolina postale per le Forze Armate" crossed out and written instead: "Hellenic Army" in Greek.
- Military censorship.

The British and Commonwealth Army in Greece



From British F.P.O. 193 (Dec. 6, 1940) to Bornemouth, Dorset, England.

- Four Field Post Offices were set up by the British and Commonwealth Forces that fought in Greece, namely 192, 193, 194 and 195. Postal items of the first three F.P.O.s are hard to come across, while of the fourth (F.P.O. 195) an item has yet to be reported.
- British censorship in Cairo.

The Greek counter-offensive inside South Albania (Northern Epirus)



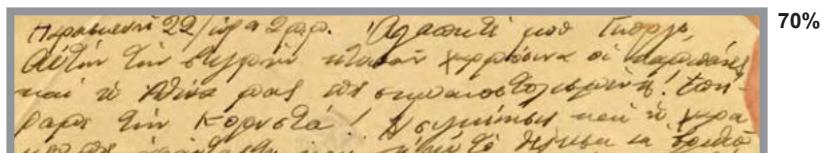
The Greek counter-offensive started two weeks after the beginning of the hostilities. On November 22, 1940, the Greek army marched in Korytsa, a Greek stronghold. Most of the part of Northern Epirus fell the following days: Ag. Saranda and Delvino (Dec. 6); Argyrokastró (Dec. 8).

Four post offices opened in the newly occupied area: Korytsa (Dec. 5), Argyrokastró (Dec. 18), Ag. Saranda (Jan. 7, 1941) and Delvino (Feb. 14).

New stamps (Dec. 10, 1940) and stationery (Jan. 1, 1941) overprinted ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΙΟΙΚΗΣΙΣ [Greek Administration] were placed in circulation.

The Greek army remained in Northern Epirus until the capitulation in April 20, 1941 (offices closed April 11-15).

Ringling bells! - The fall of Korytsa



From Athens (Nov. 22, 1940) to Istanbul. Rates: Postal card surface 3.50 D., social welfare (optional) 10 l.

- First lines in the text: "Friday 22, 2:00 p.m. At this moment the bells are ringing joyously and in Athens flags are everywhere. We took Korytsa! My emotion and joy are unimaginable..."
- Athens civil censorship.

The overprinted stamps
Korytsa (Korçë) post office (Dec. 5, 1940 - Apr. 11, 1941)



From Korytsa (Feb. 11, 1941) to Athens. Rates: Surface 3 D., social welfare 50 l. Korytsa civil censorship.



From Korytsa (Feb. 22, 1941) to Athens. Rates: Postal card surface 2 D., social welfare 10 l. Korytsa civil censorship.

The 2 D. overprinted postal card
Argyrokastro (Gjirokastër) post office (Dec. 18, 1940 - Apr. 13, 1941)



From Argyrokastro (Feb. 1, 1941) to Athens. Rates: Postal card surface 2 D. Social welfare rate is missing.

- Argyrokastro police censorship.

The 3.50 D. overprinted pre-paid cover
Ag. Saranda (Sarandë) post office (Jan. 7 - Apr. 13, 1941)



60%

From Ag. Saranda (March 4, 1941) to Mytilene (Mar. 18).

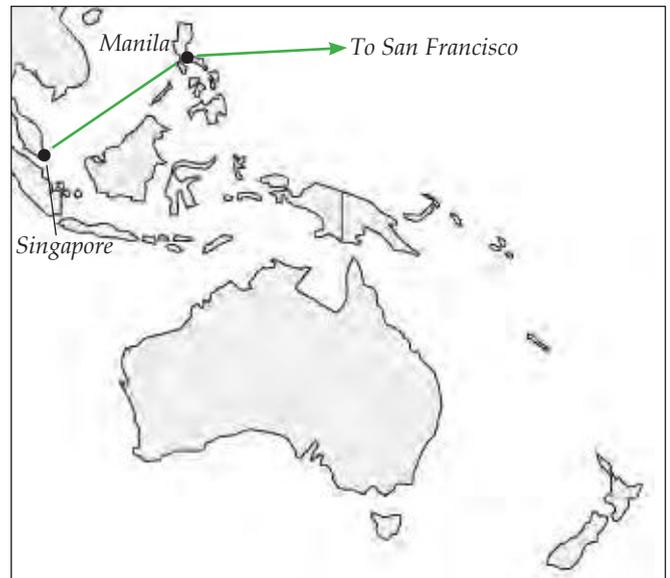
Rates: Pre-paid cover 3.50 D.,
registration 4 D.

- Ag. Saranda naval censorship.

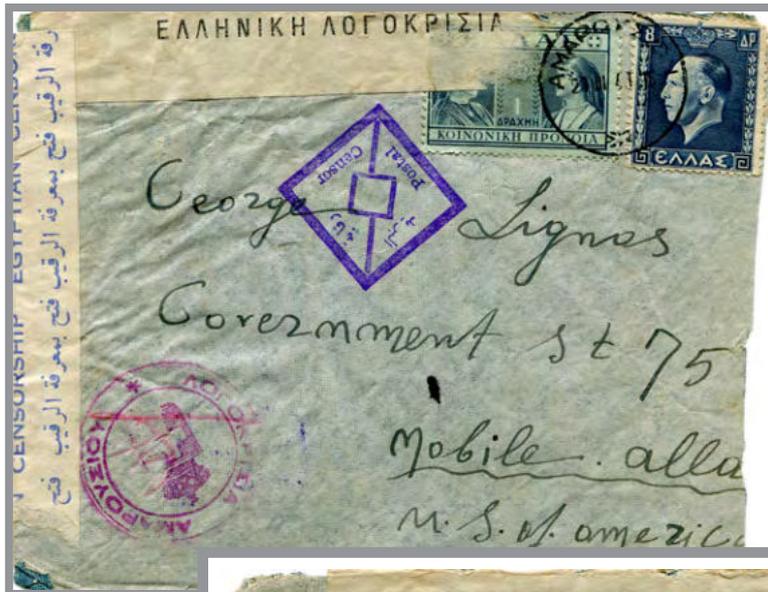


**Last pieces of mail to the Allied world
The Pacific route on Pan Am FAM-14**

The Pacific route was added as an option in January 1941. Postal rates for a letter to the U.S.A. were considerably more expensive at 64 D./5 g, compared to 23 D./5 g via the Atlantic route. It was a longer trip, however more secure. Mail was transmitted by rail via Turkey and Syria to Egypt (a six-days trip) and then on Imperial Airways to Singapore. The flight over the Pacific was taken care of by the Pan Am service FAM-14 via Hong Kong, Manila, Guam, Wake, Midway and Honolulu to San Francisco.



→ Pan Am FAM-14



70%



From Amaroussion, Athens (Mar. 21, 1941) to Mobile, AL, USA.
Rates: Surface 8 D., airpost on the Pacific route since Jan. 25, 1941, 64 D., social welfare (optional) 1 D.

- Amaroussion and Cairo censorships.

*Last pieces of mail to the Allied world
The Pacific route on Pan Am FAM-19*

At sometime in late March 1941, the Hellenic P.O. made arrangements to forward mail to the U.S. on an even longer trip via Sydney and Auckland and there on via New Caledonia, Fiji, Canton and Honolulu to San Francisco on the Pan Am service FAM-19, with even more expensive rates at 75 D. /5 g.

When the Nazis occupied Greece, mail to the Allied world was suspended altogether until well after the liberation, on Nov. 1, 1944.



→ TEAL
→ Pan Am FAM-19



From Athens (Apr. 13, 1941) via Cairo, Egypt, to New York, USA.
Rates: Surface 8 D., fourth weight airpost (15-20 g) on the Pacific route since Mar. 25, 1941, 300 D. (4x75), social welfare (optional) 1 D.

- Athens and Cairo censorships.

April 27, 1941

Athens fall to the Nazis - The 4th of August regime is terminated

To the interesting question whether the Post Office in Athens was open for business on the day the Germans marched into the Capital, the depicted E.O.N. propaganda illustrated postal card provides the answer.



50%



From Athens (Apr. 27, 1941) to Piraeus.
Rates: Postal card 2 D. Also, anti-TB rate 50 lepta.

- Compulsory payment of the anti-TB rate during Easter from Apr. 14 to Apr. 27, 1941.