

## The Post Office of the Rebels of Therisson, Crete (September 1<sup>st</sup>/November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1905)

The construction of the modern Greece and its liberation of the Ottoman yoke have started with the 1821 revolution and have finished at the end of the second world war in 1947.

Crete, the "big island" of the Greek archipelago has been unified with the Kingdom of Greece only on 1913 after many revolts and transitional statutes. Following countless unsuccessful attempts to join the Motherland, Crete has been placed in 1897, under an international administration (France, Great Britain, Italy & Russia) and became the following year an autonomous administration governed by **Prince George of Greece**, high commissioner of the island while remaining under the suzerainty of the Sublime-Porte.

**Eleftherios Venizelos**, principal writer of the Cretan Constitution (1899), member of the Cretan Assembly, then Ministry of Justice, has taken the lead of a group of seventeen Cretan chiefs and of about 1.500 rebels who have met on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1905 in the village of **Therisson**, on the south of **Chania**. The main claim of this revolt was the attachment of Crete to Greece: the "ΕΝΩΣΙΣ" ("UNION") and the departure of **Prince George of Greece**. After some skirmishes with the Cretan Gendarmerie and the Russian military forces, the Great Powers (France, Great Britain, Italy & Russia) were still administrating the island, the rebellion rapidly took a diplomatic turn. The uprising ended on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1905 by the laying down of arms of the insurgents and an amnesty of all the protagonists.

**Eleftherios Venizelos** came out nevertheless strengthened with a reputation become international and with the departure of **Prince George of Greece** in September 1906. He will be the main architect of the union of Crete to the Kingdom of Greece in 1913 and will become the Greece's most remarkable politician of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Very rapidly, the revolutionary government organized itself and created commissions in charge of troops, transport, finances and post services... On August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1905, the revolutionary assembly published a decree to announce the institution of a postal service and the emission of 5.400 stamps for each of the five values printed: the 5, 10, 20 & 50 lepta and 1 drachma gold. These five provisional values were printed on site and in a hurry, manually and individually by **D. Kokinokos**. The first day of issue of the first emission was September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1905.

A new decree on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1905 announced the emission of a second set of six values: the 5, 10 & 20 lepta for 50.000 units each and the 50 lepta, 1 & 2 drachma for 10.000 units each. This second set was created by **K. Mitsotakis** and the stamps were printed in lithography in **Athens** by the printer **Grundman & Stangel** by sheets of 50 and 100 (50 X 2) depending of the value. The first day of issue of the second emission was October 12<sup>th</sup>, 1905 and these stamps were in circulation for about twenty days only...

None of these two emissions has been recognised by the Universal Postal Union (U.P.U.) and obviously neither by the Cretan postal administration. Only very few letters have circulated up to the Greek continent and to Europe, conveyed by revolutionary boats.

The revolutionary government of **Therisson** controlled no more than a ten of villages distant to each other's by only few kilometres... There was no need at all for such an elaborate postal service... So, it's more than probable that the leaders of the insurrection thus sought to promote their movement throughout Europe and to get funds to finance their revolutionary initiatives by taking advantage of the appeal of these "stamps" from the philatelists all over the world...

The chronicles of that period report that the insurgent soldiers received, at the end of the rebellion, the balance of their pay with these stamps...

This presentation is first of all of historical interest through the use of philately as a means of propaganda and financing.

### Plan:

- Introduction & historic Pages 1 - 2
- The first provisional emission (Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>, 1905) Pages 3 - 8
  - Non-accepted project & non-issued stamps
  - Type-stamps & covers
- The second emission (October 12<sup>th</sup>, 1905) Pages 9 - 15
  - Decree, die-proof & plate-proofs
  - Type-stamps & covers
- Epilogue Page 16

### Bibliography:

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- **M. M. Tjivoglou**, *Les timbres de Thérison, Crète, Philotelia, Athènes*, 1951
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- **Rienk M. Feenstra & Friends**, *KPHTH - CRETE*, Athens, 2001



Eleftherios Venizelos





## First provisional emission - Non accepted project, unissued stamps

These three values are unknown cancelled. The central effigy is representing a map of the island of Crete and the legend is "Provisional Government of Crete - Postal Service". This is probably an initial project refused by the revolutionary government. **Only a few dozen of these exist**, but as with the eleven values in the two issues of this collection, there are a considerable number of counterfeits from various sources.



Postcard showing the Cretan people in revolt and demanding union with Greece ("ΕΝΩΣΙΣ") in front of allegories of Greece and the three great powers (France, Russia and England). The dates of the main previous Cretan revolts against the Ottoman occupier are indicated in the laurel wreaths at the top of the columns.



## First provisional emission - 5 lepta

In the rectangle we can read: "Provisional Government of Crete - Postal Service".

The central effigy depicts an allegory of Nike, Goddess of Victory, with the word "ΕΝΩΣΙΣ" for "Union".



Mint block of four.



Block of four cancelled at Therisson (September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1905).



Cover sent from Therisson on September 26<sup>th</sup>, 1905, arrived in Malaxa on September 27<sup>th</sup>, 1905 (postmark on the back).



## First provisional emission - 10 lepta

In the rectangle we can read: "Provisional Government of Crete - Postal Service".

The central effigy depicts an allegory of Nike, Goddess of Victory, with the word "ΕΝΩΣΙΣ" for "Union".



Mint block of four.



Block of four cancelled at Therisson (September 24<sup>th</sup>, 1905).



Postal card sent from Therisson on September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1905 to Athens, showing the rebels of the village of Laccous.



## First provisional emission - 20 lepta

In the rectangle we can read: "Provisional Government of Crete - Postal Service".

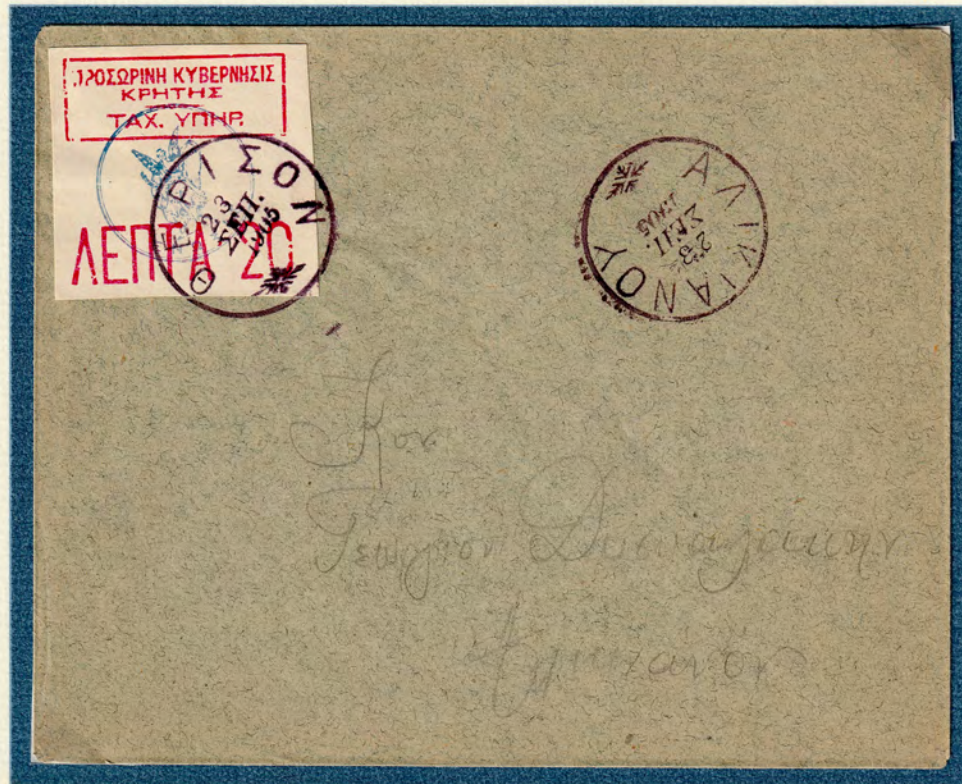
The central effigy depicts an allegory of Nike, Goddess of Victory, with the word "ΕΝΩΣΙΣ" for "Union".



Mint block of four.



Block of four cancelled at Therisson (September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1905).



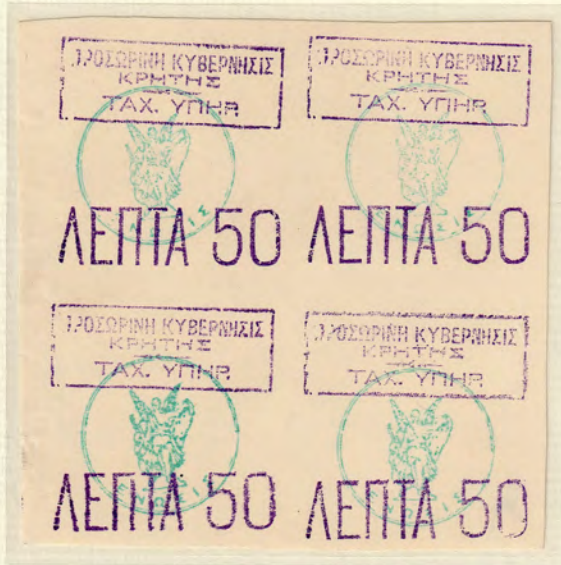
Letter sent from Therisson on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1905, arrived the same day at Alikianou.



## First provisional emission - 50 lepta

In the rectangle we can read: "Provisional Government of Crete - Postal Service".

The central effigy depicts an allegory of Nike, Goddess of Victory, with the word "ΕΝΩΣΙΣ" for "Union".



Mint block of four.



Block of four cancelled at Therisson  
(September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1905).



Letter sent from **Therisson** on September 25<sup>th</sup>, 1905,  
arrived the same day at **Alikianou**.



## First provisional emission - 1 drachma

In the rectangle we can read: "Provisional Government of Crete - Postal Service".

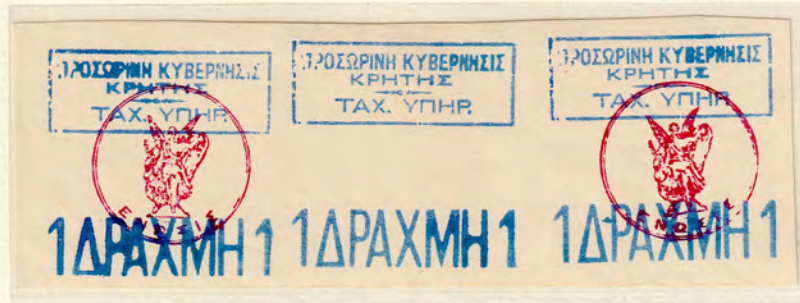
The central effigy depicts an allegory of Nike, Goddess of Victory, with the word "ΕΝΩΣΙΣ" for "Union".



Mint block of four.



Block of four cancelled at Therisson (Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>).



Mint strip of three with the allegory missing on the middle stamp.



Letter sent from Alikianou on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1905 arrived the same day at Therisson.



Second definitive emission - Die-proof

For the six values, we can read in the rectangle: "Provisional Government". The central effigy depicts the allegory of a seated woman in mourning, with the words "ΚΡΗΤΗ ΔΟΥΛΗ" for "Crete in bondage" on the 5, 10, 20 & 50 lepta values and the portrait of the King of the Hellenes **Georges I<sup>st</sup>**, with the word "ΚΡΗΤΗ" for "Crete" on the 1 & 2 drachmas values.



Die-proof of the lithographic stone of the six values. **Unique item.**



Insurgés de Sfakia à Malaxa.

Postal card showing the rebels of the Sfakia province.

Decree of the Revolutionary Council of September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1905, announcing the second issue of 6 values (5, 10, 20, 50 lepta and 1 & 2 drachmas). --->

ΕΠΙΣΗΜΟΣ ΕΦΗΜΕΡΙΣ

ΤΗΣ ΕΠΑΝΑΣΤΑΤΙΚΗΣ ΣΥΝΕΛΕΤΣΕΩΣ

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΙΣ ΤΩΝ ΠΕΡΙΕΧΟΜΕΝΩΝ

Πρακτικόν συνεδριάσεως τῆς Ἐπαναστ. τῶν Κρητῶν Συνελεύσεως περὶ ἐκδόσεως δευτέρας σειρᾶς γραμματοσήμων.

ΠΡΑΚΤΙΚΟΝ ΣΥΝΕΔΡΙΑΣΕΩΣ

ΤΗΣ ΕΠΑΝΑΣΤΑΤΙΚΗΣ ΤΩΝ ΚΡΗΤΩΝ ΣΥΝΕΛΕΥΣΕΩΣ

ΠΡΟΕΔΡΕΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΑΝΤΙΠΡΟΕΔΡΟΥ κ. Μ. ΧΑΤΖΑΚΗ

Ἡ Ἐπαναστατικὴ Συνέλευσις συνεληθούσα ἐν Θερίσει τῇ 29 Σεπτεμβρίου 1905 ἐν τῇ ἐπὶ τούτῳ ρισμένη αἰθούσῃ εἰς δημοσίαν συνεδρίασιν ἐψήφισε τὸ ὑπὸ τοῦ ὑπογραμματέως κ. Κ. Μητσοτάκη ὀβληθὲν σχέδιον ψηφίσματος, ἔχον ὡς ἑξῆς :

Ψ Η Φ Ι Σ Μ Α

ΠΕΡΙ ΕΚΔΟΣΕΩΣ ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑΣ ΣΕΙΡΑΣ ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΟΣΗΜΩΝ

Η ΕΠΑΝΑΣΤΑΤΙΚΗ ΤΩΝ ΚΡΗΤΩΝ ΣΥΝΕΛΕΥΣΙΣ

Ψ η φ ί ζ ε ι

Α'.—Νὰ ἐκδοθῇ δευτέρα σειρά γραμματοσήμων ἀνά 50,000 τῶν λεπτῶν 5, 10 καὶ 20 ἀνά 10,000 τῶν λεπτῶν 50 καὶ τῆς μιᾶς καὶ τῶν δύο δραχμῶν.

Β'.—Τὸ γραμματόσημον θὰ κατασκευασθῇ ἐν λιθογραφείῳ, θὰ εἶνε ὀδοντωτὸν καὶ γομαρισμένον θὰ φέρῃ τοὺς ἑξῆς τύπους :

α'.) Τῶν 5, 10, 20 καὶ 50 λεπτῶν θὰ φέρῃ εἰς τὸ ἄνω μέρος τὰς λέξεις «Προσωρινὴ Κυβέρνησις». Εἰς τὸ κάτω μέρος τὴν ἀξίαν τοῦ γραμματοσήμου, εἰς τὸ μέσον δὲ παράστασιν τῆς Κρήτης ὅλης καὶ ὑπ' αὐτὴν τὰς λέξεις «Κρήτη Δούλη».

β'.) Τῆς μιᾶς καὶ τῶν δύο δραχμῶν θὰ φέρῃ εἰς τὸ ἄνω μέρος τὰς ἑξῆς λέξεις «Προσωρινὴ Κυβέρνησις». Εἰς τὸ μέσον θὰ φέρῃ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ Βασιλέως τῶν Ἑλλήνων Γεωργίου τοῦ Α' καὶ ὑπ' αὐτὴν ἐντὸς τοῦ πλαισίου τὴν λέξιν «Κρήτης», ἣτις συνέχεται μὲ τὰς ἐπὶ τοῦ ἄνω μέρος λέξεις «Προσωρινὴ Κυβέρνησις». Εἰς δὲ τὸ κάτω μέρος θὰ φέρῃ τὴν ἀξίαν τοῦ γραμματοσήμου.

Γ'.—Τὸ γραμματόσημον καὶ τῶν ἑξ κλάσεων θὰ ἔχη σχῆμα ὀρθογώνιον, αἱ διαστάσεις δὲ αὐτοῦ εἶσι κατὰ πλάτος 28 καὶ καθ' ὕψος 35 ὑποχιλιομέτρων.

Τὰ χρώματα ἐκάστης τῶν κλάσεων τοῦ γραμματοσήμου ὀρίζονται ὡς ἑξῆς :

Τῆς 1ης κλάσεως τῶν λεπτῶν 5 χρυσομυλῶδες, τῆς 2ας τῶν λεπτῶν 10 φαιόν, τῆς 3ης τῶν λεπτῶν 20 ἰώδες, τῆς 4ης κλάσεως τῶν λεπτῶν 50 κυανοῦν, τῆς 5ης κλάσεως τῆς 1 δραχμῆς ὑπερῶν μετὰ τὴν παράστασιν χρώματος ἰώδους καὶ τῆς 6ης κλάσεως τῶν δραχμῶν 2 πράσινον μετὰ τὴν παράστασιν χρώματος φαιοῦ βαθέος.

Ἀναθέτει τὴν ἐκτέλεσιν τοῦ ψηφίσματος τούτου εἰς τὸ Προεδρεῖον.

Εἶτα ἐλύθη ἡ συνεδρίασις.

Ὁ Ἀντιπρόεδρος  
ΜΙΧ. ΧΑΤΖΑΚΗΣ

Ὁ Ὑπογραμματεὺς  
Κ. ΜΗΤΣΟΤΑΚΗΣ



## Second definitive emission - Plate-proofs

Plate-proofs of the 1 & 2 drachmas. In the rectangle we can read: "Provisional Government". The central effigy represents the portrait of the King of the Hellenes **Georges I<sup>st</sup>**, with the word "ΚΡΗΤΗ" for "Crete".



Plate-proofs w/o central effigy.  
Only few items known.



Plate-proof printed on a bond.  
Unique piece known so far.



Plate-proofs with inverted effigy.  
Only few items known.



## Second definitive emission - Type stamps of 5, 10, 20 & 50 lepta

In the rectangle we can read: "Provisional Government". The central effigy depicts the allegory of a seated woman in mourning, with the words "ΚΡΗΤΗ ΔΟΥΛΗ" for "Crete in bondage".



Commandement  
du Comité  
de Thérisso.

Postal card cancelled with a stamp of the Cretan Postal Administration of 5 lepta, showing the command post of the revolutionary government in Therisson.

Τὸ ἀρχηγεῖον τῆς Ἐπαναστατικῆς Συνελεύσεως, ἐν Θερίσσῳ.

En Suède le 2/11/1905



## Second definitive emission - Type stamps of 1 & 2 drachmas

In the rectangle we can read: "Provisional Government". The central effigy depicts the allegory of a seated woman in mourning, with the words "ΚΡΗΤΗ ΔΟΥΛΗ" for "Crete in bondage".



Mint block of four of the 1 drachma.



Mint block of four of the 2 drachmas.



Extremely rare cancels of the villages of Kolymbari and Nipos.  
Only very few pieces known as of today.



Le chef et révolutionnaires de Therisso 1905  
Ο Άρχηγός και Έπαναστάται εν Θερσίω.

Postal card showing  
insurgent village leaders  
with the Greek flag.



Second definitive emission - Covers (1/2)



Letter sent from **Malaxa** on October 27<sup>th</sup>, 1905,  
arrived in **Therisson** on October 28<sup>th</sup>, 1905 (postmark on the back).



Letter sent from **Vamos** on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1905,  
arrived in **Malaxa** on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1905 (postmark on the back).







## Epilogue

Following this rebellion, which ended on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1905, and the elections to the Cretan Parliament in September 1906, **Prince George of Greece**, High Commissioner of the island, was replaced by **Alexander Zaimis**. Nevertheless, after many diplomatic battles, it was not until May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1913 and the signing of the Treaty of **London**, ratified by Turkey on November 1<sup>st</sup>, of the same year, that Crete was officially attached to the Kingdom of Greece. A marble plaque was placed in **Chania** with the following words:  
*"Turkish occupation of Crete 1669/1913: 267 years, 7 months & 7 days of suffering"*.



Postcard showing the laying down of arms by the rebels in early November 1905.

E. A. Venizelos

Signature of Elephterios Venizelos.



Postcard showing the popular proclamation after the declaration of allegiance of the Cretan Parliament to His Majesty, the King of the Hellenes, **George I<sup>st</sup>**, in **Heraklion** on **September 26<sup>th</sup>**, 1908.