

CONTEXT

On 6 April 1941, Germany attacked Greece, and on the 27th, the Wehrmacht entered Athens. Aided by Italian and Bulgarian troops, the enemy forces remained in Greece for three and a half years.

The countdown to liberation began in early September 1944, but it did not come easily. The main body of the Wehrmacht had left Greece by the end of October, but a German garrison remained on the island of Melos and in western Crete until 10 May 1945. In the meantime, a second round of the civil war broke out in December, and despite the February armistice, left-wing partisans held out in the formerly Bulgarian-occupied territory until late March 1945.

During the occupation, the country was governed by a Greek administration under the close supervision of the occupying forces. As expected, the Kingdom of Greece was renamed the Greek State, the royal coat of arms was abolished, and any reference to the previous 4th of August regime or the royal family was prohibited.

POSTAL CONNECTION

The Hellenic Post continued to operate throughout the entire period in question, with Greek stamps used in the largest part of the country. Notable exceptions were the following:

- (a) Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace – These regions were occupied by Bulgarian forces. Greek post offices were shut down, and new ones were established under Bulgarian administration, using Bulgarian postmarks and metropolitan stamps.
- (b) Ionian Islands – Under Italian quasi-annexation, Greek post offices remained operational, using Greek postmarks and overprinted Italian metropolitan stamps.
- (c) Eastern Crete – Similarly occupied by Italian forces, the Greek post offices were initially dependent on Rhodes, using Rhodes' stamps. In February 1942, a Greek civil administration was appointed, restoring a degree of postal autonomy.

POSTAL HIGHLIGHTS

Postal highlights of the period include:

- Restrictions and prohibitions
- Inflation
- Censorship
- Suspension of communications
- Enemy Post
- Mail to and from abroad
- Restoring the networks
- Partisans and the Civil War

EXHIBIT'S PURPOSE

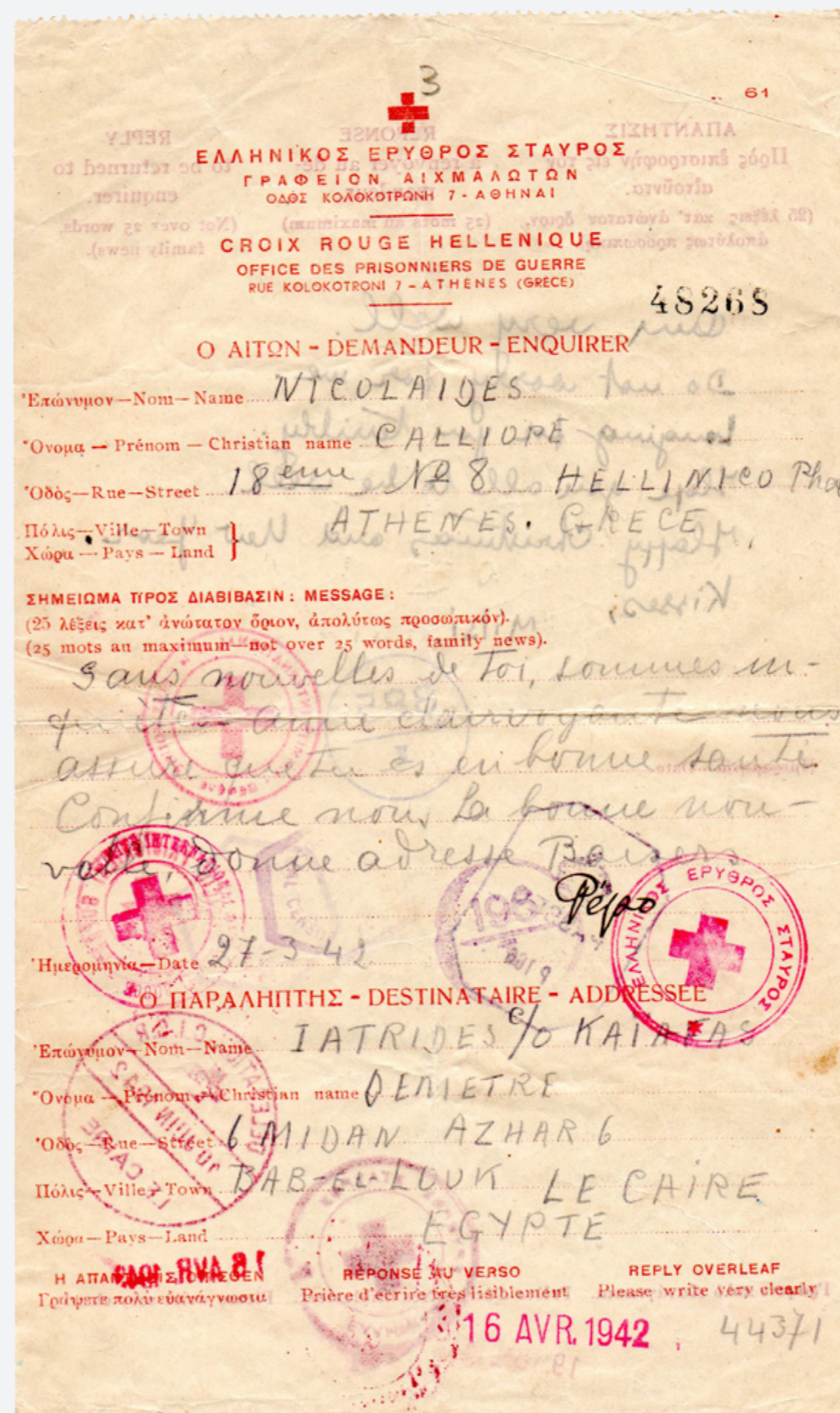
Occupied Greece during WWII was by far the most devastating period the country has ever experienced. A population ravaged by hunger, a nation in ruins, an inflation-stricken economy, and a shattered communications network were all that remained.

Postal history documents have become indisputable eyewitness accounts, substantiating crucial details that the heavily censored daily press, incomplete or destroyed public records, and one-sided narratives have entirely overlooked. Hence, my interest in collecting material from this period and creating this exhibit.

SURFACE POSTAL RATES

Implementation date:	20.9. 1941	1.1. 1942	15.5. 1942	1.9. 1942	1.11. 1942	1.2. 1943	1.8. 1943	10.11. 1943	15.3. 1944	1.7. 1944	15.8. 1944	15.9. 1944	
Domestic rates (in drachmas)													
Postcard:	2	2.50	5	7	15	25	75	125	300	3,000	30,000	150,000	3 mil.
Letter:	3	4	7	10	25	50	100	200	500	4,000	50,000	200,000	5 mil.
International rates (in drachmas)													
Postcard:	5	6	9	15	30	50	125	250	600	6,000	60,000	300,000	6 mil.
Letter:	8	10	15	25	50	100	200	400	1,000	10,000	100,000	500,000	10 mil.

Occupied Greece During WWII (1941–1945)



The only means of correspondence between Greece and the free world was the service established by the International Red Cross (IRC). This message was sent from the IRC office in Athens on 27 Mar. 1942, via Rome and the IRC Headquarters in Geneva, to Cairo. After the recipient replied in the message's reverse side, it was returned to the sender in Athens on 19 June 1943, fifteen months later.

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EXHIBITOR'S MAJOR PUBLISHED WORK

- 'Greece 1944-45: Stumbling towards liberation', *Opus XIII*, 2013.
- 'Returned mail during WWII', *Philotelia* No. 643/2007.
- 'Partisan stamps', *Philotelia* Nos. 633–635/2005; also published as booklet No. 58 by the Hellenic Philatelic Society, Athens, 2008.
- 'The Bulgarian occupation of Greece 1941–44', *Philotelia* Nos. 614–616/2002; also published as booklet No. 50 by the Hellenic Philatelic Society, Athens, 2008.
- 'The postal rates during WWII foreign occupation', *Philotelia* Nos. 607–608/2001.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Marchese, G., *La Posta Militare Italiana 1940–1943* (1981).
- Petradakis, M., *Italian military post offices 1897–1943* (1991).
- Riemer, K. H., *Die Überwachung des Auslandsbriefverkehrs während des Zweiten Weltkriegs durch deutsche Dienststellen* (2004).
- Sirotti, L., *Le Isole Jonie e momenti della Seconda Guerra Mondiale* (2021).

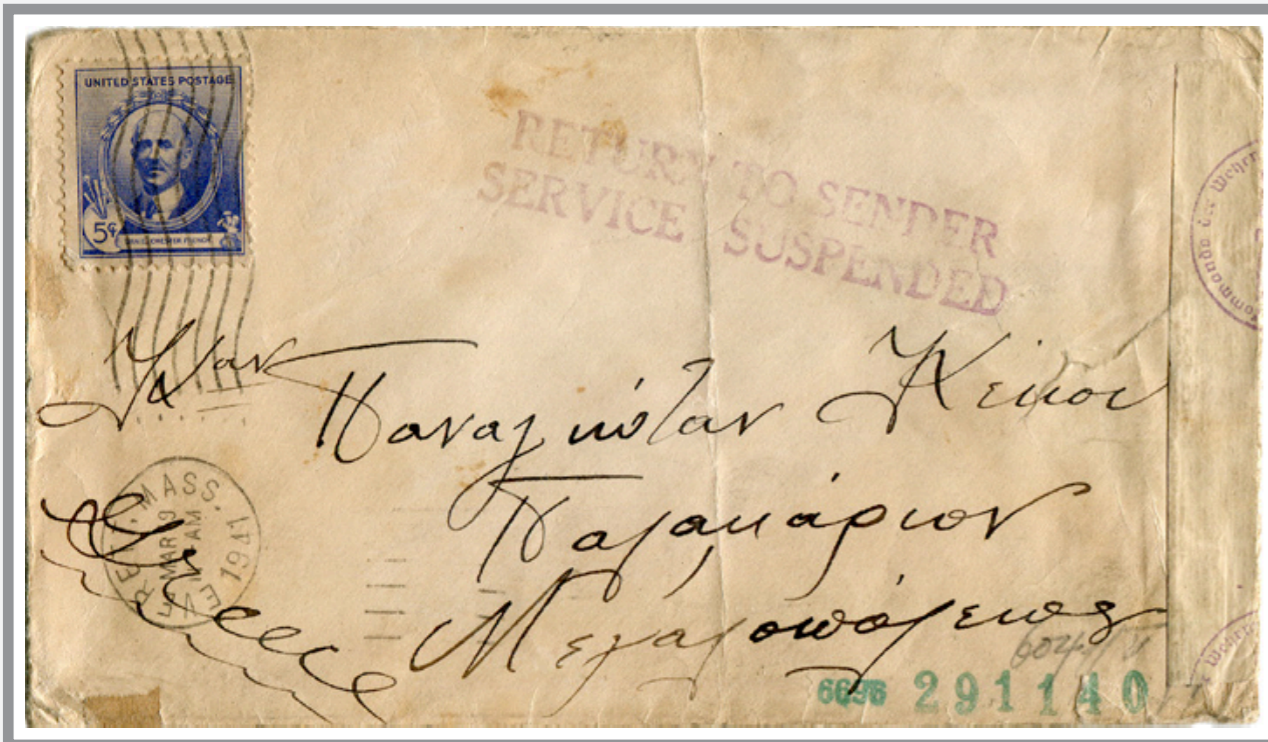
SYMBOLS and CONVENTIONS

- Symbols of currencies extensively used were the Greek drachma (D) divided by 100 lepta (λ), Italian lira (L) divided by 100 centesimi (c), German pfennig (pf), and Bulgarian lev (лв).
- All month names with five or more letters were abbreviated to their first three letters.
- The start or end dates of specific periods of postal rates are omitted if they fall outside the range of 27 April 1941 and 10 May 1945.

1. FIRST MEASURES & CONSEQUENCES

The occupation authorities immediately prohibited international correspondence. The restriction was lifted for Germany and its territories on 30 May 1941, for Italy on 20 June 1941, and for selected destinations between late 1942 and early 1943. All stamps and postal stationery depicting the former 4th of August regime and the royal dynasty were withdrawn and invalidated. Meanwhile, a major concern for the postal service was the rapid restoration of the main mail routes in a network severely damaged by bombardment.

Suspended communications with neutral USA



Suspended communications with hostile Great Britain



From Paddington, UK (12 Mar. 1941), to Athens.

Rates: Surface up to 1oz 3d.

- The cover was censored in the UK and Egypt while en route to Greece. In the meantime, Greece had been occupied by the Wehrmacht. Consequently, the cover was redirected back to London (10 Nov.).
- During its return journey, the boxed **NO SERVICE / RETURN TO SENDER** handstamp was applied in London.

[Top left]: From Everett, MA, USA (19 Mar. 1941), to Palamari village in the Peloponnese.

Rates: Surface up to 1oz 5c.

- Before the cover's arrival in Greece, the country had been occupied by the Wehrmacht. Consequently, the Germans intercepted it, censored it in Vienna, and redirected it back to New York (27 Dec., on the reverse).
- During its return journey, the **RETURN TO SENDER / SERVICE SUSPENDED** handstamp was applied in New York.

[Bottom left]: From San Francisco, USA (2 June 1941) to Athens. *Rates:* Surface up to 1oz 5c.

- The cover was initially censored by the British en route to Greece (**EXAMINER 2297**, on the sealing tape on the reverse). However, Greece had already been occupied by the Wehrmacht prior to the cover's despatch. Consequently, the Germans intercepted it, censored it in Vienna, and redirected it back to New York (29 Nov., on the reverse).
- During its return journey, the **SERVICE SUSPENDED / RETURN TO SENDER** handstamp was applied in New York.



Resumed local communications in the Peloponnese



From Xylokastro (8 May 1941) to Patra.

Rates: Postcard surface 2D to 19 Sep. 1941; social welfare 10λ to 14 Nov. 1941; total 2.10D.

- Third day of resumed local mail service after the Wehrmacht invaded the Peloponnese. The Corinth-Patra route was reopened on 6 May.

Resumed communications between Athens and the Peloponnese



From Athens (9 May 1941) via Kalavryta (12 May) and Kato Kleitoria (Iso known as Mazeika, 15 May) to Lefkasio village.

Rates: Postcard surface 2D to 19 Sep. 1941; social welfare 10λ to 14 Nov. 1941; total 2.10D.

- First delivery of mail from Athens to the Peloponnese.

Resumed communications between Athens and Thessaloniki



From Nea Smyrni, Athens (18 May 1941), to Thessaloniki (28 May, on the reverse).

Rates: Postcard surface 2D to 19 Sep. 1941; missing social welfare.

- First days of restored communication lines between Athens and Thessaloniki.

Resumed communications with Germany



From Athens (31 May 1941) to Ebingen, Germany.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 8D to 19 Sep. 1941; soc. welfare 1D to 14 Nov. 1941; total 9D.

- Resumed services to Germany were announced in the daily press on 30 May.
- German censorship in Vienna.

Withdrawal of the royal preprinted covers

Final days of use of the royal preprinted covers. The covers were withdrawn and invalidated on 20 June 1941. They were reissued on 1 June 1942, overprinted with a large grotesque image and new face values, ensuring that the royal effigies were no longer visible.



From Thessaloniki (12 June 1941) to Muegeln, Germany.
Rates: Surface up to 20g **8D**, to 19 Sep. 1941; 2nd weight airmail 10–20g **16D** (2x8D) from 29 May 1941 to Sep. 1942; social welfare **1D** to 14 Nov. 1941; total **25D**.
 • German censorship in Vienna.

From Volos (19 June 1941, the day before the preprinted covers were withdrawn) to Athens.
Rates: Preprinted cover **3D+50λ** to 20 June 1941.

Withdrawal of King George II's stamps

Final days of use of King George II's stamps, which were withdrawn and invalidated on 20 June 1941.



Invalidated royal preprinted cover

Invalidated preprinted cover for international use with the royal stamps (8D+1D) crossed out. The 8D stamp was covered with the 5D stamp. The torn-out second 6D light brown stamp reveals the red crayon marks.



From Athens (7 June 1941) to Leipzig, Germany.
Rates: Preprinted cover **8D+1D** to 20 June 1941.
 • German censorship in Vienna.

From Athens (15 Nov. 1941) to Venice, Italy.
Rates: Surface up to 20g **10D** from 20 Sep. to 31 Dec. 1941; airmail up to 10g **5D** from 20 June 1941 to 8 Sep. 1943; social welfare **2D** from 15 Nov. to 31 Dec. 1941; total **17D** (the second 6D stamp was torn out).
 • Posted on the day of implementation of increased social welfare rates.
 • Italian censorship in Venice.



Withdrawal of the last remaining royal stamp



From Thessaloniki (20 Sep. 1941) to Athens (22 Sep.).

Rates: Surface up to 20g **4D** from 20 Sep. to 31 Dec 1941; airmail up to 15g **2D** from 9 June 1941 to Apr. 1943; social welfare **50λ** to 14 Nov. 1941; Thessaloniki Fair **20λ** to 31 Aug. 1942; total **6.70D**.
 • Posted on the day the green 50λ Queens' stamp was withdrawn and invalidated.



From Agrinio (3 Oct. 1941) to Patra.

Rates: Postcard surface **2.50D** from 20 Sep. to 31 Dec. 1941; social welfare **50λ** from 20 Sep. to 31 Dec. 1941; total **3D**.

• The green 50λ stamp was used fourteen days after it had been invalidated; hence, it was improperly used and invalidated.

Suspended communications with neutral Switzerland

From Athens (7 Oct. 1941) to Zurich, Switzerland.

Rates: Surface up to 20g **10D** from 20 Sep. to 31 Dec. 1941; airmail up to 10g **8D** from 29 May 1941 to Sep. 1942; social welfare **1D** to 14 Nov. 1941; total **19D** (three more stamps totalling **3D** are on the reverse).

- Mail to or from neutral Switzerland was suspended until the spring of 1944.
- Handstamped **ΕΠΙΣΤΡΕΦΕΤΑΙ ΛΟΓΩ ΔΙΑΚΟΠΗΣ ΣΥΓΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΩΝ** [Returned due to the suspension of services].



Suspended communications with Nazi-occupied Netherlands

From Athens (16 Dec. 1941) to Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Rates: Surface up to 20g **10D** from 20 Sep. to 31 Dec. 1941; airmail up to 10g **8D** from 29 May 1941 to Sep. 1942; social welfare **2D** from 15 Nov. to 31 Dec. 1941; total **20D**.

- Mail to or from occupied Netherlands was suspended until the autumn of 1942.
- Handstamped **ΕΠΙΣΤΡΕΦΕΤΑΙ ΛΟΓΩ ΔΙΑΚΟΠΗΣ ΣΥΓΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΩΝ** [Returned due to the suspension of services].

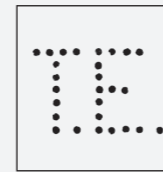


Perfin stamps gave way to mechanical franking

The Bank of Greece was one of three companies registered to use perfins during the 1941 fiscal year (1 Apr. 1941 – 31 Mar. 1942). The depicted perfin cover is one of two surviving examples from the bank's mail, the other being from domestic mail.

In Greece, the first franking devices appeared in 1939. Before Greece's involvement in WWII, three banks and three private companies had already installed their franking devices at their premises. The Bank of Greece had set them up in three of its most active branches: Athens, Piraeus, and Thessaloniki.

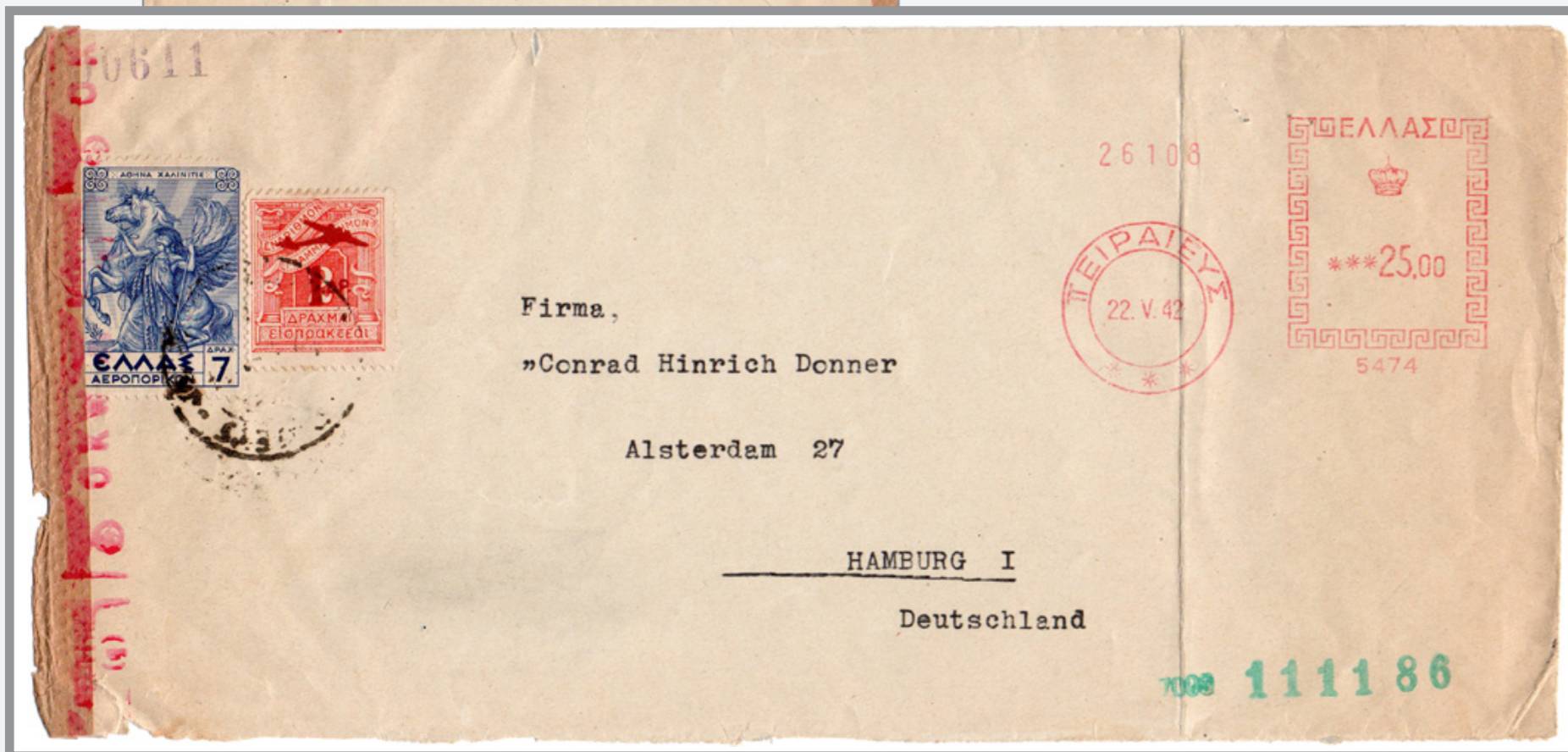
The dramatic decline in commercial activity following the German occupation, along with the subsequent inflation, prevented companies from using perfin stamps throughout the Axis occupation period.



50%



50%



From Volos (22 June 1941) to Schweinfurt, Germany.
Rates: 4th weight surface 60–80g 23D (8D + 3x5D) to 19 Sep. 1941, overpaid at 25D; airmail 8D from 29 May 1941 to Sep. 1942, no overweight was paid; total 33D.

- This case of insufficient payment of airmail rates is not unique. It can be attributed to confusion in the first few days under the new rules regarding airmail to foreign destinations.
- Italian censorship in Volos and German in Vienna.

From Piraeus (22 May 1942) to Hamburg, Germany.
Rates: Surface up to 20g 25D from 15 May to 30 Aug. 1942; airmail up to 10g 8D from 29 May 1941 to Sep. 1942; total 33D.

- Hasler device No. 5474 used by the Bank of Greece, Piraeus Branch.
- German censorship in Vienna.

2. POSTAL RATES

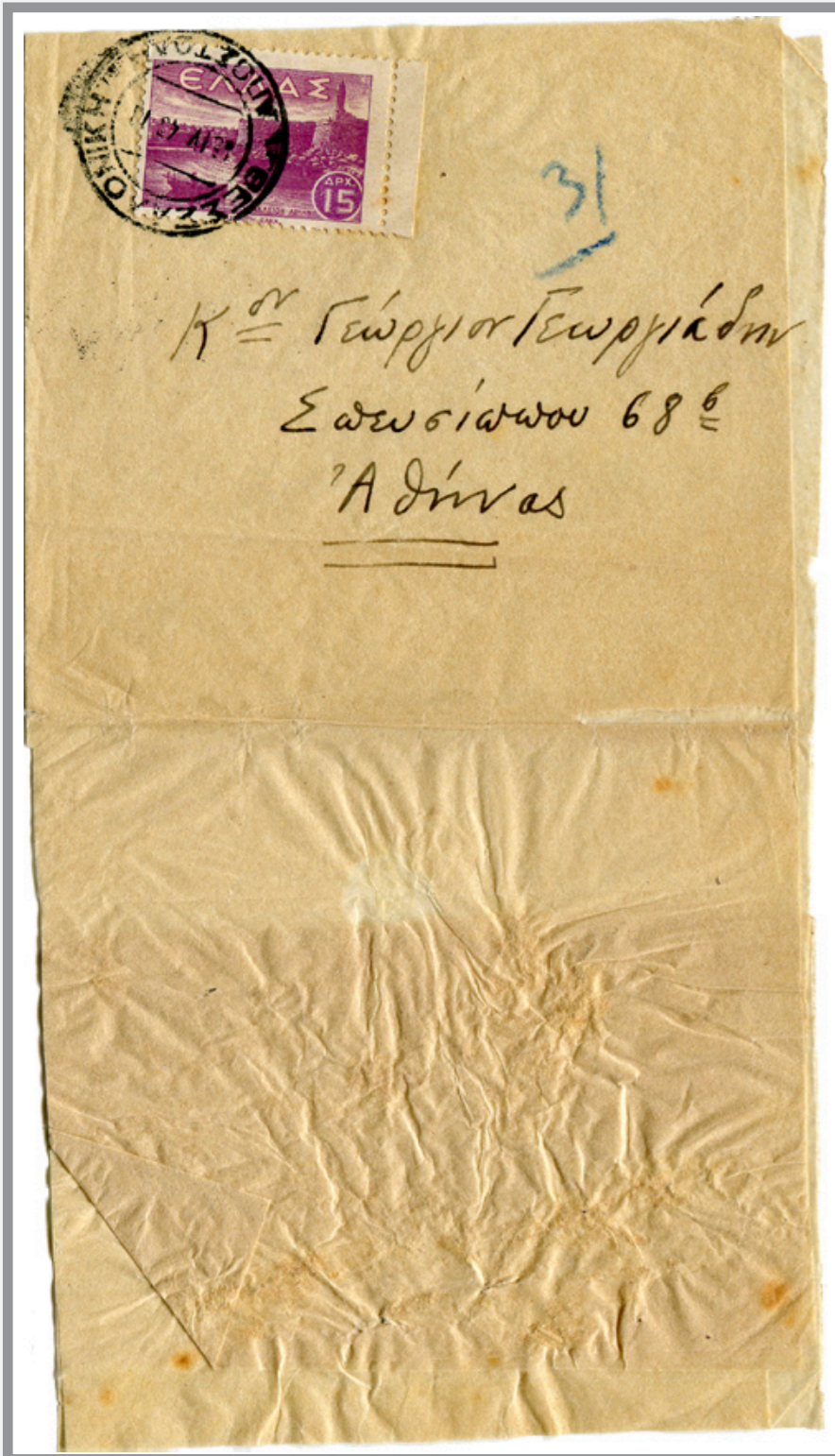
The last adjustment to the surface postal rates prior to the war occurred in 1933. In contrast, during the occupation, the postal rates were continuously increasing due to sharply rising inflation.

In addition to the surface rates, several compulsory or optional supplementary rates were imposed at various times and for specific periods. These were intended to raise funds for:

- Social welfare
- Postal staff affected by tuberculosis (anti-TB fund)
- Thessaloniki International Fair (the fair was inactive)
- Children's welfare
- Victims of the Piraeus bombardment
- Children's camps

Strictly speaking, the airmail rate was also considered a supplementary rate.

Newspaper wrapper



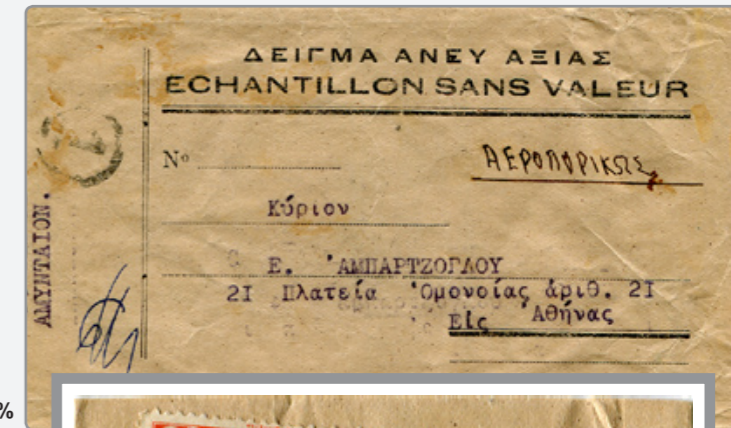
Newspaper wrapper from Thessaloniki (15 Apr. 1943) to Athens.
Rates: Wrapper up to 50g 15D from 1 Feb. to 31 July 1943.

Printed matter in bundles of 200



Printed matter from Athens (27 May 1943), sent in-town.
Rates: Bundle of 200 similar items at 10D per item from 1 Feb. to 31 July 1943.

Rejected(?) as a merchandise sample



70%



From Amyntaio (18 Nov. 1943) via Thessaloniki (22 Nov.) to Athens.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 500D from 10 Nov. 1943 to 14 Mar. 1944; airmail up to 15g 20D from 10 Sep. to 30 Nov. 1943; total 520D.

- It is possible that it was rejected as a merchandise sample, which would have been subject to a discounted rate of 150D per 50g, and the recipient was instead asked to pay the regular letter rate.
- Sent by land to Thessaloniki and then by air to Athens.

Airmail rates

	Domestic Rate	International Rate	International Destination
9.6.1941	2D/15g		
June 1941		2D/10g	Dodecanese
20.6.1941		5D/10g	Italy
1.3.1942		7D/15g	Albania
29.5.1941		8D/10g	Germany
Sep.1942		9D/10g	"
Nov.1942		10D/10g	Germany and others
1.4.1943		50D/10g	"
Apr. 1943	10D/15g		
10.9.1943	20D/15g	100D/10g	"
1.12.1943	100D/15g	200D/10g	"
15.3.1944	2,000D/15g	*	
1.7.1944	15,000D/15g		
15.8.1944	100,000D/15g		
15.9.1944	1,000,000D/15g		

* There are no intrnational airmail rates in effect beyond 15 Mar. 1944.

Airmail rates to Germany



From Thessaloniki (24 Feb.1943) to Vienna.

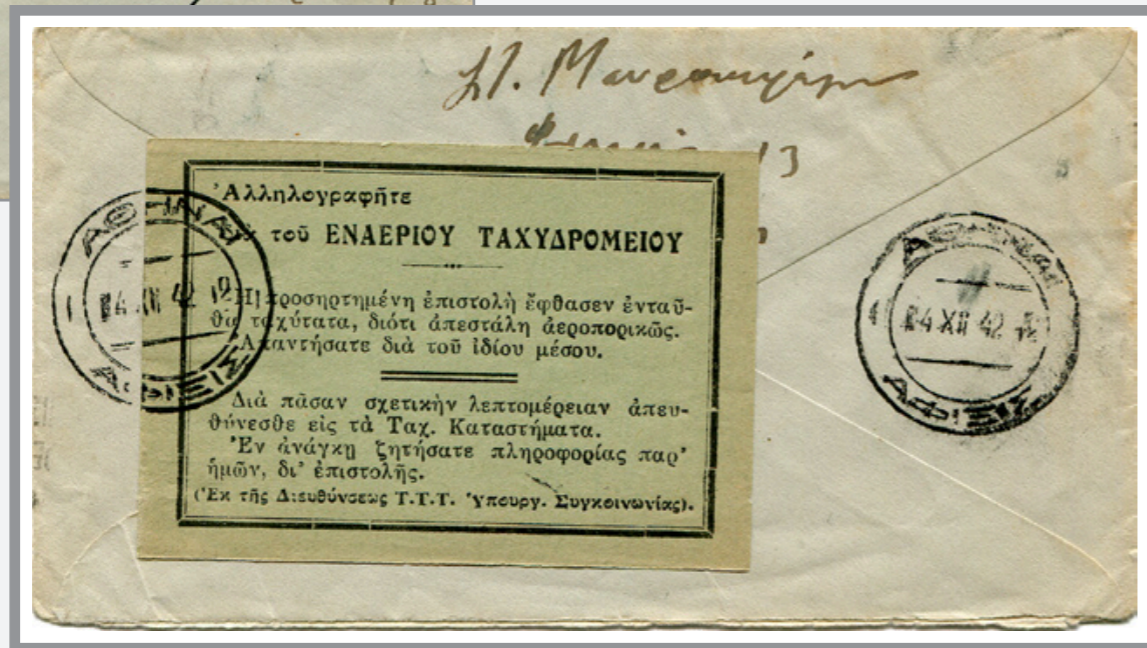
Rates: 3rd weight surface 40-60g 450D (200D+2x125D) from 1 Feb. to 31 July 1943; 5th weight airmail 40-50g 50D (5x10D) from Nov. 1942 to 31 Mar. 1943; total 500D.

- Most likely a unique case of a 50D orange 'little aeroplane' stamp on a commercial cover.
- German censorship in Vienna.



70%

Domestic airmail rate



From Thessaloniki (3 Dec. 1942) to Athens (4 Dec.).

Rates: Surface 50D from 1 Nov. 1942 to 31 Jan.1943; airmail up to 15g 2D from 9 June 1941 to Apr. 1943; anti-TB rate 10D from 1 Dec. 1942 to 31 Jan. 1943; Thessaloniki Fair rate 1D from 1 Sep. 1942 to late 1943; total 63D.

- The green label promoting the use of airmail was affixed upon arrival. It was an example of a long-forgotten 1933 label that was revived ten years later. It may not be a coincidence that two days earlier a new government took office in Athens, likely opting to strongly promote airmail correspondence.

From Papados village on Lesbos island via Mytilene (12 May 1943) and Athens (23 May), both postmarks on the reverse, to Cottbus, Germany.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 200D from 1 Feb. to 31 July 1943; airmail up to 10g 50D from 1 Apr. to 9 Sep. 1943; total 250D.

- Very late use of the 50D airmail stamp, officially withdrawn on 1 July.
- Consecutive censorships: German in Mytilene; Italian in Athens; German in Vienna.



Airmail rate to Italy

Airmail rate to the Italian Dodecanese

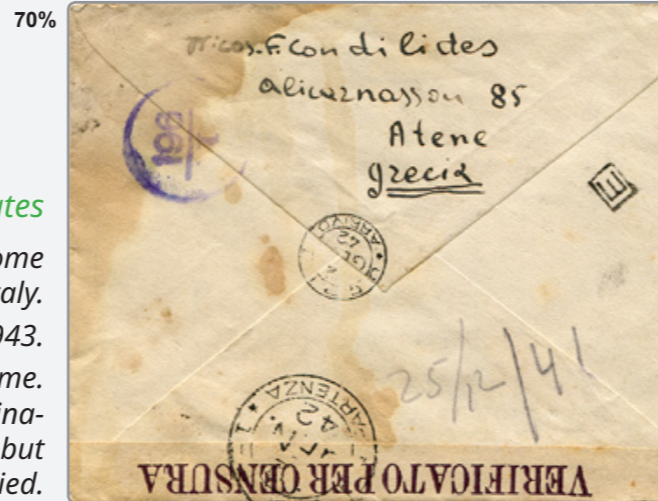


From Athens (31 Oct. 1941) to Rhodes.
 Rates: Surface up to 20g 10D from 20 Sep. to 31 Dec. 1941; airmail up to 10g 2D (the period has yet to be confirmed); social welfare 1D to 14 Nov. 1941; total 13D.
 • Italian censorship in Rhodes.

From Athens (8 Jan. 1942) to Milan.
 Rates: 3rd weight surface 40-60g 33D (15D+2x9D) and registration 12D, both from 1 Jan. to 14 May 1942; 5th weight airmail 40-50g 25D (5x5D) from 20 June 1941 to 8 Sep. 1943; total 60D.

POW Mail: Exempt from surface postal rates

From Athens (25 Dec. 1941) via Rome (12 Jan. 1942) to Ascoli Piceno, Italy.
 Rates: Airmail up to 10g 5D from 20 June 1941 to 8 Sep. 1943.
 • Italian censorship in Rome.
 • POW mail was exempt from surface postage to all destinations. Initially, the airmail rate had to be paid in full, but from 10 Sep. 1943 a 75% discount was applied.



Social welfare rates

The rates had been compulsory since 1937. On 15 Nov. 1941, they were increased as follows: (a) postcards from 10λ to 50λ; (b) domestic letters from 50λ to 1D; (c) international letters from 1D to 2D. These rates were suspended on 31 Dec. 1941.



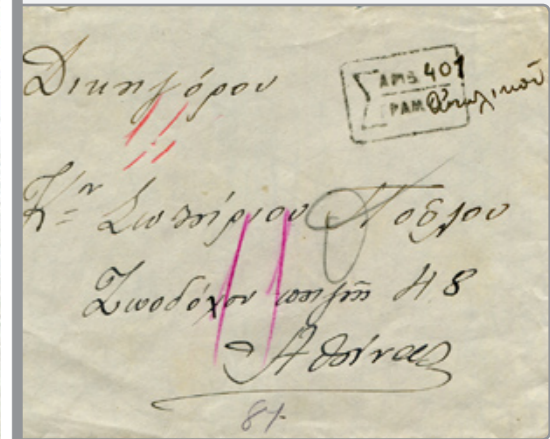
From Thiva (15 Nov. 1941) to Athens (17 Nov.).

Rates: Surface up to 20g 4D from 20 Sep. to 31 Dec. 1941; social welfare 1D from 15 Nov. to 31 Dec. 1941; total 5D.

- Posted on the day the new social welfare rates were in effect.

Children's welfare rate

This is a special rate paid using special stamps issued for only one month, in Oct. 1943. Their use was compulsory on domestic mail and optional on international mail.



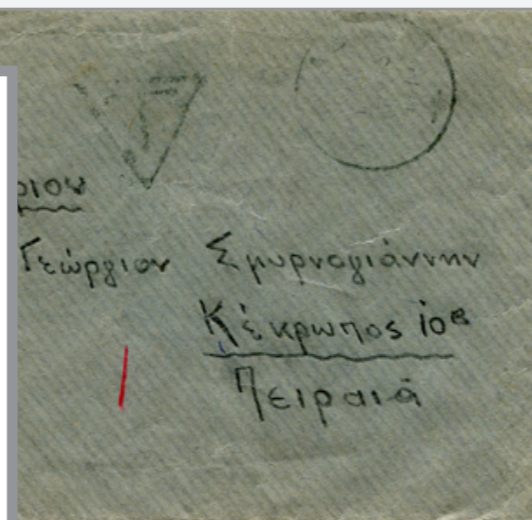
From Aetoliko (Oct. 1943) to Athens.

Rates: Surface plus children's welfare rate up to 20g 200D+100D; registration 200D; total 500D.

- A regular stamp was correctly used to pay the registration fee.

Postal staff anti-TB rate

This rate was compulsory: (a) initially during the Christmas fortnight of 1941-42 from 23 Dec. to 6 Jan. In the following two holiday seasons (1942-43 and 1943-44) the period was extended from 1 Dec. to 31 Jan.; (b) during the Easter fortnight; (c) additionally, from 1 Apr. 1944, it was also applied during the first ten days of each month.



From Glyfada (Dec. 1943) to Piraeus (17 Dec.).

Rates: Sent in town up to 20g 300D from 10 Nov. 1943 to 14 Mar. 1944; Unpaid anti-TB rate 30D, collected at double the amount, i.e., at 60D, upon delivery (18 Dec.).

Victims of the Piraeus bombardment rate

Ten overprinted stamps bearing BOMΒΑΡΔΙΣΜΟΣ ΠΕΙΡΑΙΩΣ [Piraeus bombardment] were optionally used from 11 to 30 June 1944. An indication of the rising inflation is that the surcharge was set at 100,000D, when the surface letter rate was 4,000D.



From Thessaloniki (19 June 1944) to Larissa (22 June).

Rates: Surface up to 20g 4,000D and registration 4,000D, both from 15 Mar. to 30 June 1944; Piraeus bombardment optional rate 100,000D.

- Handwritten Ηλέγχθη [inspected] and signed.

Children's camp fund rate

The ten stamps of the children's camp fund overprinted with ΠΑΙΔΙΚΑΙ ΕΞΟΧΑΙ [children's camp] were in circulation from 20 July to 10 Nov. 1944. They included a 50,000D surface rate plus an optional 450,000D fee.

Although they remained available for over 100 days, they were used significantly less frequently than the Piraeus bombardment stamps, which were on sale for only 20 days.



From Athens (20 Aug. 1944) to Stuttgart, Germany.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 500,000D, including the 50,000D of the Children's camp stamp from 15 Aug. to 14 Sep. 1944; optional children's camp rate 450,000D.

- Most likely a unique case of a cover sent abroad bearing the children's camp fund stamp.
- German censorship in Vienna.

Postal rates amid ever-rising inflation

Until the currency reform of 11 Nov. 1944, surface postal rates increased approximately every three months. As a result, there were thirteen periods of surface rate changes over the course of three and a half years.

To better understand the impact of inflation on the Greek economy, it is worth noting that the first weight domestic letter rate rose from 3D in Apr. 1941 to 5,000,000D by Sep. 1944.



From Levadia (25 Sep. 1944) to Athens (3 Oct.).

Rates: 3rd weight surface 40–60g 9,000,000D (5,000,000D + 2x2,000,000), and registration 5,000,000D, both from 15 Sep. to 10 Nov. 1944; total 14,000,000D.

- The rates measured in millions roughly coincided with the Germans' northward withdrawal from Greece between September and October 1944.

Postage dues for poste restante



70%

Poste restante from Chalkis (18 Jan. 1942) to Athens (19 Jan.).

Rates: Surface up to 20g 7D and poste restante 2D, both from 1 Jan. to 14 May 1942.

Postage dues for underpayment



60%

From Patra (11 Nov. 1942) to Athens (12 & 15 Nov.).

Rates: Preprinted cover surface up to 20g 60D, underpaid at 30D.

• The missing 30D was paid double on arrival, i.e., 60D.

Postage dues across a rates' increase



Poste restante from Chalkis (15 May, 1942) to Athens (illegible).

Rates: Surface up to 20g 7D from 1 Jan. to 14 May 1942; poste restante 5D from 15 May to 31 Aug. 1942.

• The cover was cancelled on the day new rates were implemented (15 May). It had paid the surface rate of the previous period, possibly because it was collected from a letterbox. Upon arrival, the local post office charged the new rate for the post restante service.

Postage dues for notification to collect mail



60%

From Astakos (3 Feb. 1943) to Athens (9 Feb.).

Rates: Preprinted cover surface up to 20g 120D and registration 100D, both from 1 Feb. to 31 July 1943; postage dues 25D.

• Upon arrival, the addressee could not be located, was notified to collect the cover, and was charged with the poste restante rate.

3. POSTAL STATIONERY & SPECIAL FORMS

A selection of official stationery and special forms either issued by or used on behalf of the Hellenic Post. All depicted examples are hard to come across, each for its own reasons.

The 7D preprinted cover

This preprinted cover was issued during the Greek-Italian War on 15 Feb. 1941, for use in correspondence with the countries of the Petite Entente, namely Yugoslavia, Turkey, and Romania. These destinations enjoyed a preferential reduced first weight 'Balkan rate' at 6D instead of the 8D rate that applied to all other destinations.

The 7D preprinted cover became practically worthless after the German invasion of Greece. Almost forgotten, it was finally withdrawn from sale on 15 Oct. 1941. *A handful of properly used preprinted covers have survived to date.*



From Thessaloniki (6 Sep. 1941) to Aachen, Germany.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 8D to 19 Sep. 1941; soc. welfare 1D to 14 Nov. 1941; total 9D.

- German censorship in Vienna.

The 30D preprinted cover

From Thessaloniki (26 Sep. 1942) to Berlin, Germany.

Rates: Preprinted cover surface up to 20g 55D (5D of which was the envelope's premium) from 1 Sep. to 31 Oct. 1942; airmail up to 10g 9D from Sep. to Nov. 1942; total 64D.

- German censorship in Vienna.



The 120D preprinted cover

From Thessaloniki (28 July 1943) to Athens.

Rates: Preprinted cover surface up to 20g 120D from 1 Feb. to 31 July 1943; airmail up to 15g 10D from Apr. to 9 Sep. 1943; total 130D.

- Italian censorship in Athens (on the reverse).



Ancient Art postcards: Twelve postcards, numbered Δ1-Δ6 with Greek or French captions, were issued on 15 Nov. 1941, after the portrait of hostile King George II was substituted by a neutral Venus de Milo on the 2D imprint stamp. *Very few properly used examples have survived to date.* [...]

[...] Initially sold with a 6D premium, at 8D, the postcards proved very expensive, considering the great famine of 1941-42. Their rising price reflected the increasing postal rates, and they never became popular among the public. All four depicted here were mailed by members of the occupation forces.



50%

No. Δ5
with French caption
From Athens (10 Dec. 1941) to Mannheim, Germany.
Rates: Surface 6D; social welfare 1D.
• German censorship in Vienna.



50%

No. Δ6
with Greek caption
From Athens (20 Mar. 1942) to Napoli, Italy.
Rates: Surface 9D; airmail 5D.
• Italian censorship in Napoli.



50%

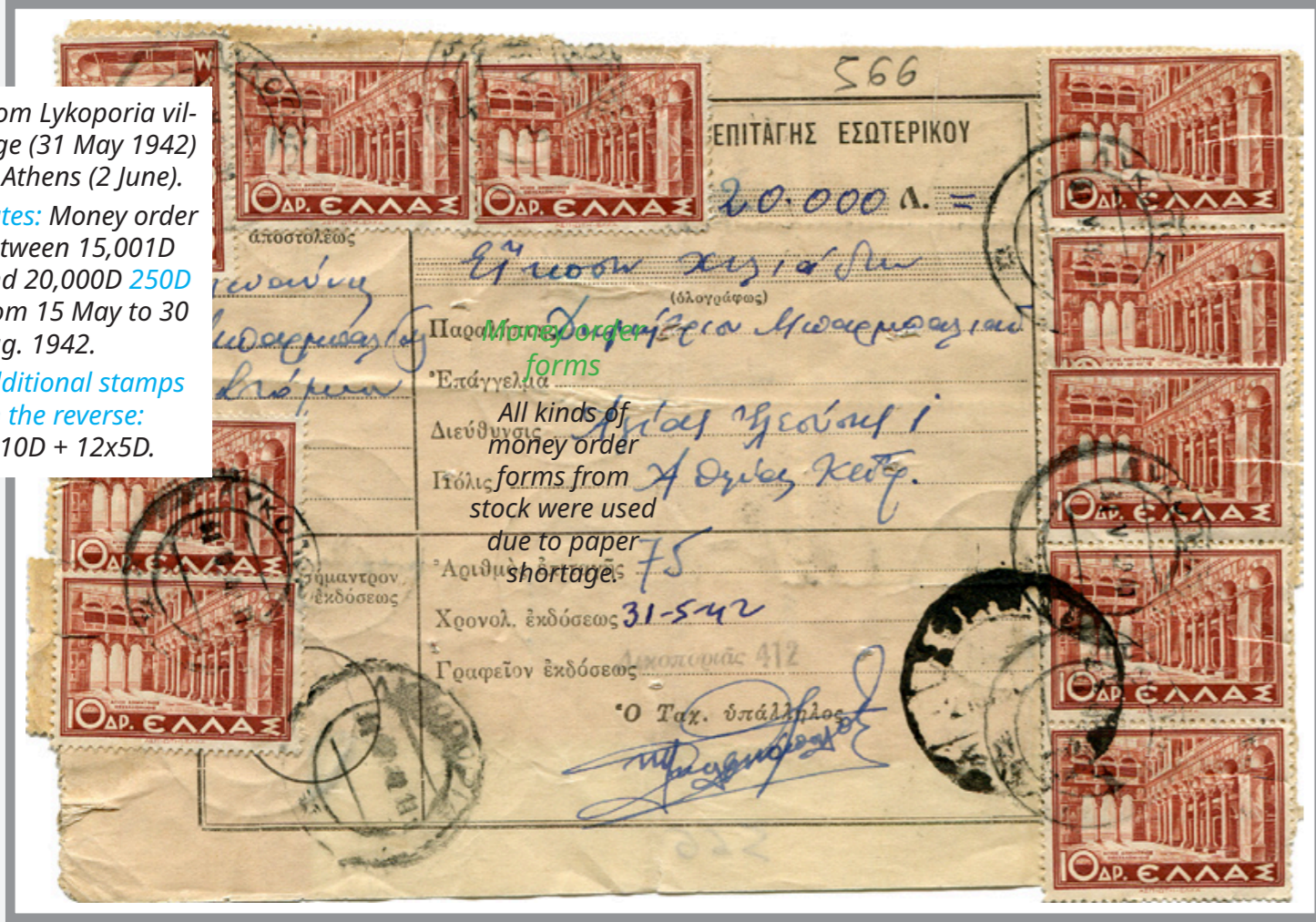
No. Δ1
with Greek caption
From Samos (20 Nov. 1942) to Florence, Italy.
Rates: Surface 50D.
• The 2D imprint was ignored after the new rates of 1 Sep.
• Italian censorship in Samos.



50%

No. Δ6
with French caption
From Samos (22 Dec. 1942) to Florence, Italy.
Rates: Surface 50D; airmail 5D, overpaid at 7D.
• Italian censorship in Samos.





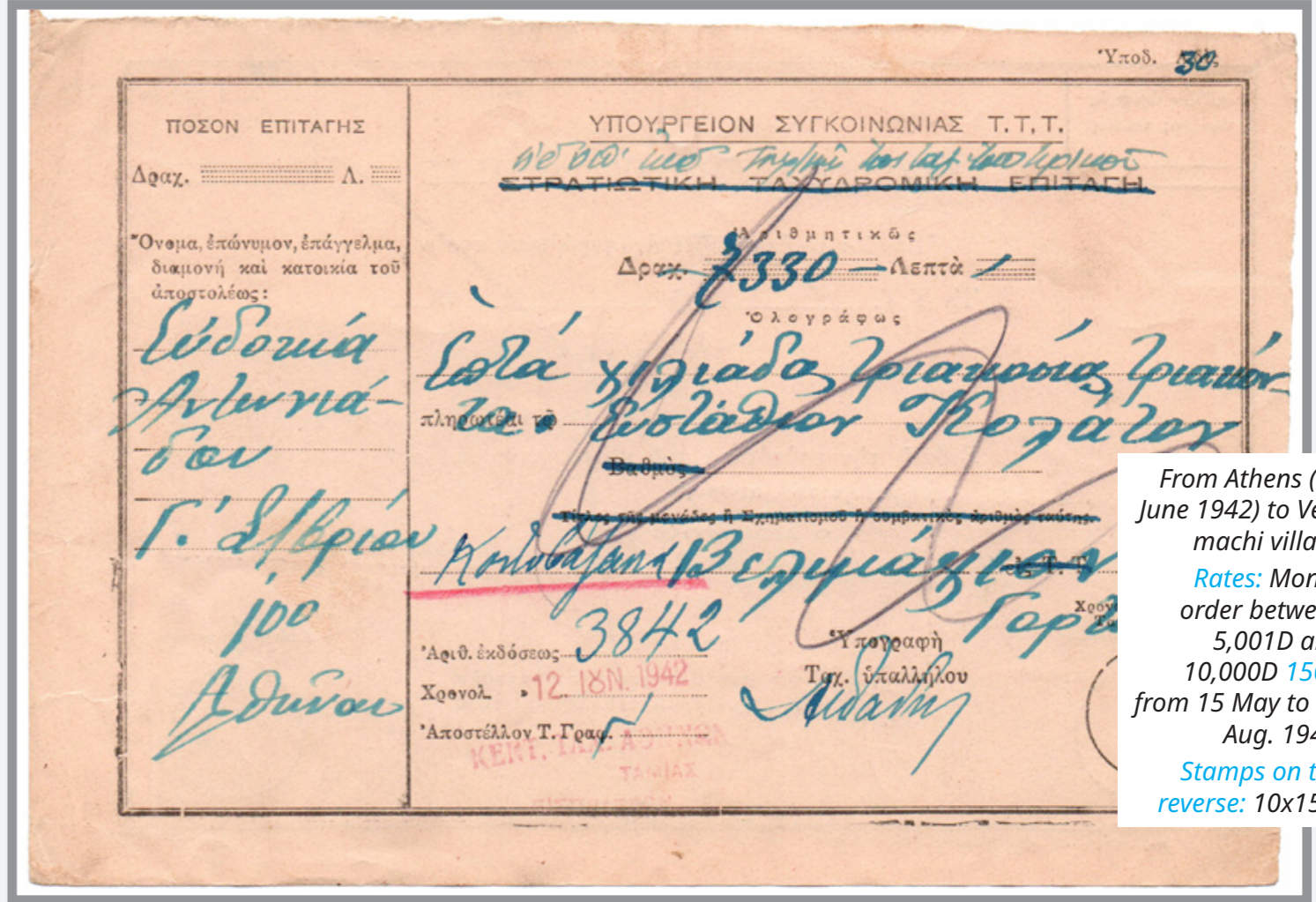
From Lykorporia vil-
lage (31 May 1942)
to Athens (2 June).
Rates: Money order
between 15,001D
and 20,000D 250D
from 15 May to 30
Aug. 1942.
Additional stamps
on the reverse:
9x10D + 12x5D.



From Sykia village
(19 Feb. 1942) to
Yiannitsa (2 Mar.).
Rates: Money
order between
12,001D and
14,000D 120D
from 1 Jan. to 14
May 1942.
Additional stamps
on the reverse:
11x7D + 4x2D.



From Athens (24
June 1942) to
Stylida (28 June).
Rates: Money order
between 20,001D
and 30,000D 350D
from 15 May to 30
Aug. 1942.
Stamps on the
reverse: 14x25D.



From Athens (12
June 1942) to Veli-
machi village
Rates: Money
order between
5,001D and
10,000D 150D
from 15 May to 30
Aug. 1942.
Stamps on the
reverse: 10x15D.

4. GERMAN CENSORSHIP & MEASURES

The Wehrmacht was deployed throughout Greece; however, it claimed complete control over only 20% of the total territory, leaving 65% to the Italian army and the remaining 15% to the Bulgarian army.

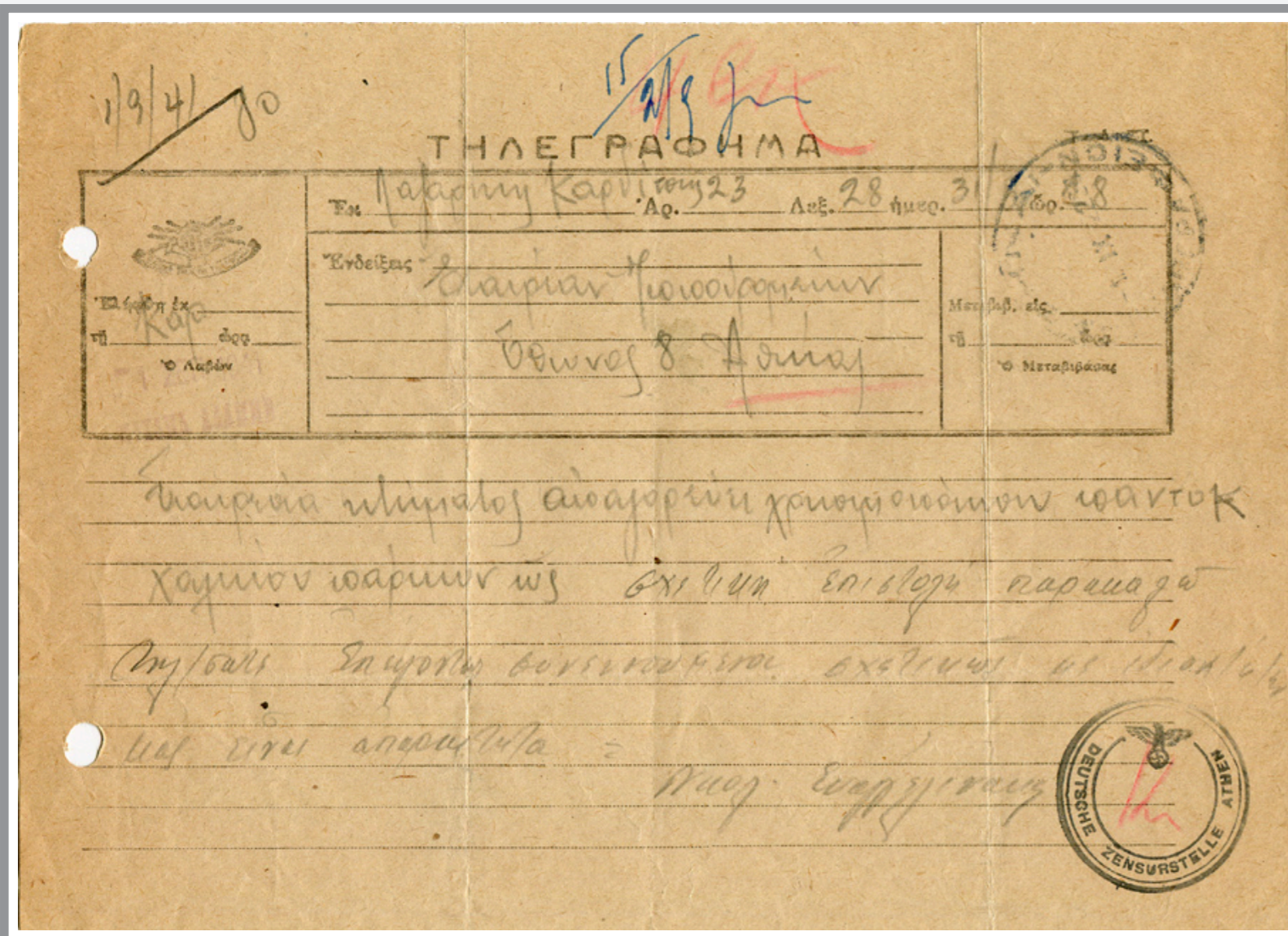
In mainland Greece, the Wehrmacht controlled the part of Macedonia between the Haliacmon and Strymon (Struma) rivers, as well as a narrow strip along the Greek-Turkish border. It also exclusively controlled the islands of Lemnos, Mytilene, Chios, Skyros, and Melos, along with the prefectures of Chania, Rethymno, and Heraklion in Crete, where it also carried out censorship.

German censorship in mainland Greece was limited to the district of Epirus after the capitulation of Italy.

The censorship of mail to Germany and its annexed territories, which comprised the bulk of Greek international correspondence, was under the responsibility of Vienna.



German censorship on telegrams



In Athens, German censorship was applied in telegrams only.

The Evros neutral zone

The Evros neutral zone was a German-controlled strip, 10–30 km wide, along the Greek-Turkish border. The rest of the prefecture was under Bulgarian control.

From Didymoteicho via Thessaloniki to Patra (17 Feb. 1943).

Rates: Surface up to 20g 50D from 1 Nov. 1942 to 31 Jan. 1943.

- One of a handful of examples of mail from Didymoteicho, the only post office allowed to operate in the Evros Neutral Zone.
- Illegible dates of despatch and transit postmarks. The 50D stamp suggests that the cover was despatched between 1 Nov. 1942 and 31 Jan. 1943.
- Italian censorship in Patra.

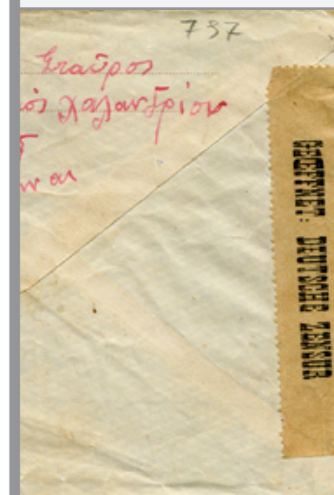


Lemnos censorship

From Chalandri, Athens (31 Aug. 1942) to Moudros, Lemnos.

Rates: Preprinted cover up to 20g 15D from 15 May to 31 Aug. 1942.

- One of a handful of examples of civilian mail with Lemnos German censorship.





Mytilene censorship

From Mytilene (6 Aug. 1941) to Athens.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 3D to 19 Sep. 1941; social welfare 50λ to 14 Nov. 1941.

- German censorship in Mytilene with a dual-line handstamp in German and Greek and the A7 marking from the Greek-Italian war.

Chios censorship

From Chios (30 Oct. 1942) to Mytilene (6 Nov., on the reverse).

Rates: Surface up to 20g 25D from 1 Sep. to 30 Oct. 1942.

- German censorship in Chios with a dual-line DEUTSCHE CENSUR.



Mytilene censorship

From Mytilene (13 Sep. 1943) to Athens (21 Sep., on the reverse).

Rates: Surface up to 20g 200D from 1 Aug. to 9 Nov. 1943.

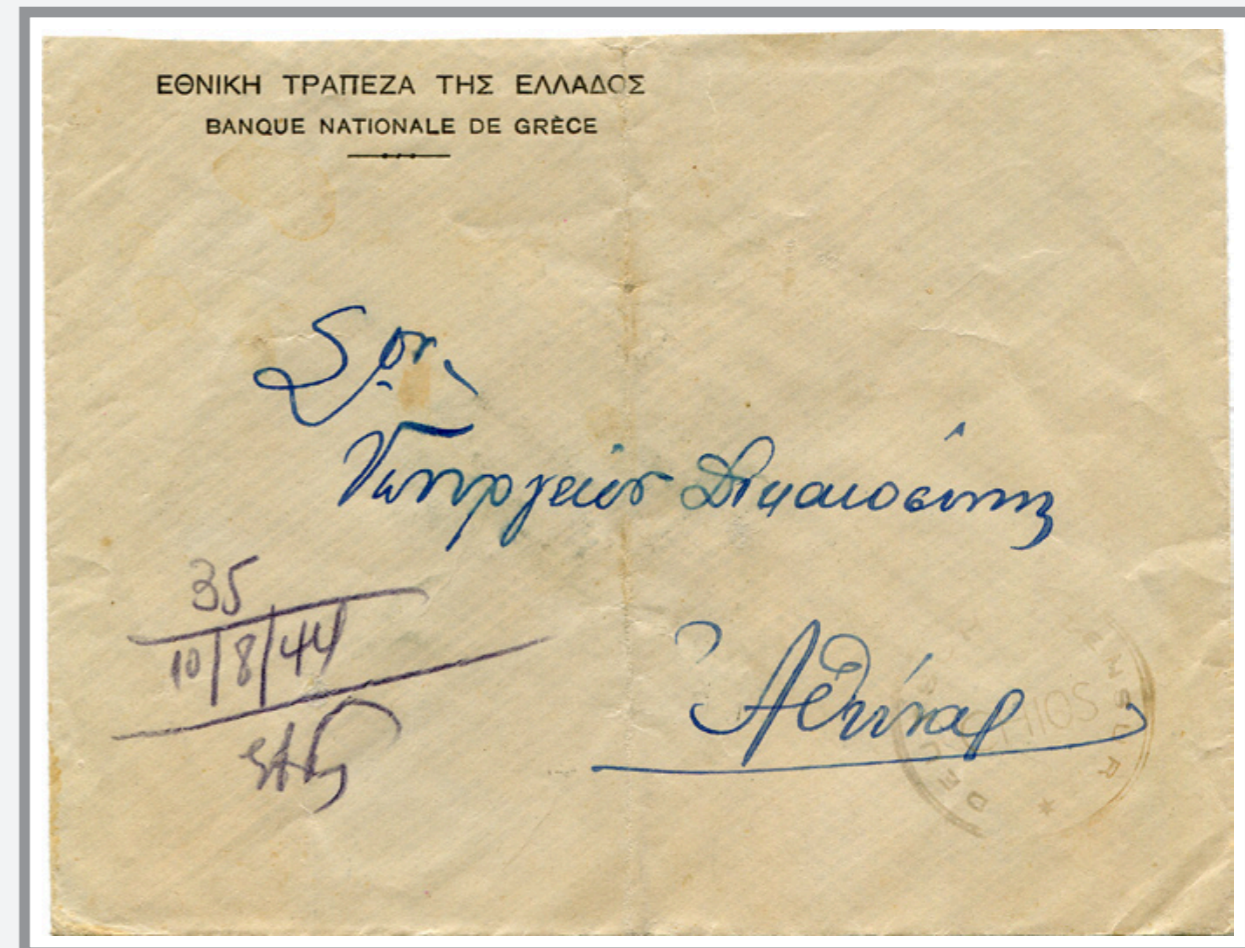
- German censorship in Mytilene with a dual-circle DEUTSCHE ZENSUR MYTILENE, the A.10 marking from the Greek-Italian War and, quite unexpectedly, with the censor's name handstamp Charilaos Chatziagiariou.

Chios censorship

From Chios (27 June 1944, on the reverse) to Athens.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 4,000D from 15 Mar. to 30 June 1944 (on the reverse).

- German censorship in Chios with a circular DEUTSCHE CENSUR / CHIOS.



Special restrictions in Crete

Three restrictions applied to civilian correspondence from Crete: (a) Until the end of September 1941, mail had to be carried by air; (b) until the late summer of 1942, outgoing mail should be written in German; (c) until the end of the military occupation and with the exception of corporate mail (banks, public services, the Red Cross, etc.), outgoing mail was permitted only on postcards.



Heraklion July 1941
 Frau Zabalou
 ich sie zwei wörter nur
 zu sagen das Antony ist
 tot. Gussen zu Fraulein
 alle
 Ich danke sie sehr
 Demeter Christopoulos

50%

From Heraklion (pmk. 1 July 1941, ms. 2 July) via Chania (censors) to Athens.

Rates: Postcard surface 2D to 19 Sep. 1941; airmail 2D from 9 June 1941 to Apr. 1943; soc. welfare missing; total 4D.

- German censorship in Chania with linear *Zensiert Feldkommandantur*.
- Outgoing mail from Crete: written on a postcard, in German and sent by air.



50%

From Volos (27 Aug. 1941) to Kato Fourni village, Crete (illegible date).

Rates: Postcard surface 2D to 19 Sep. 1941; airmail 2D from 9 June 1941 to Apr. 1943; soc. welfare missing; total 4D.

- Incoming mail to Crete: written on a postcard in either Greek or German and sent by air.

Cover from the German Public Works, Chania

From Chania (1 Nov. 1941) via Heraklion (4 Nov.) to Ierapetra.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 4D from 20 Sep. to 31 Dec. 1941; social welfare 50λ to 14 Nov. 1941; total 4.50D.

- Cover mail permitted from *Kriegsmarine Hafenbauabteilung Kreta, Chania* [Naval War Department, Harbour Construction in Crete, Chania].
- Not censored.



Cover censored and privately (?) transported

From Chania to Athens (20 June 1943, on the reverse).

Rates: Surface up to 20g 100D from 1 Feb. to 31 July 1943.

- The stamps were cancelled by pencil, probably by the censors, *Zensuriert / Kreiskommandantur / Chania*, that also permitted the cover to be privately transported to Athens. Hence, the stamps were not postmarked.



Heraklion censorship: Cover mail



From Heraklion (9 Aug. 1942) to Athens.

Rates: Preprinted cover up to 20g 15D from 15 May to 31 Aug. 1942.

- Mail to the Red Cross Headquarters in Athens was not subject to the use of postcards.
- German censorship in Heraklion with a Greek handstamp used in the Greek-Italian War.

Ioannina censorship

The Wehrmacht assumed control of the district of Epirus after the capitulation of Italy on 8 Sep. 1943 and established censorship offices in Ioannina.



From Ioannina (19 Oct. 1943) to Pfalzerhof, Germany.

Rates: Postcard 250D from 1 Aug. to 9 Nov. 1943, overpaid at 300D; children's welfare rate (optional on international mail) 125D; total 425D.

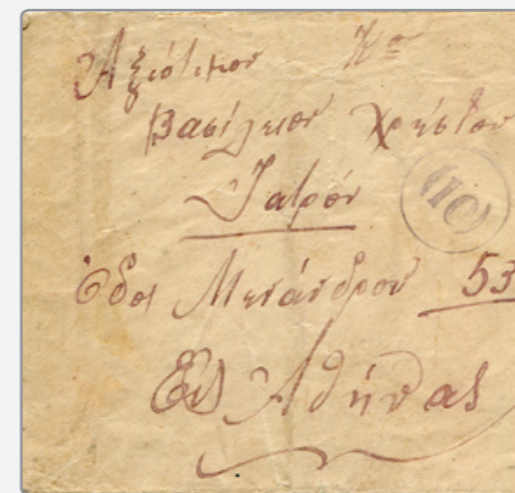
- The children's welfare stamps were used between 1 and 31 Oct. 1943. Their use was mandatory only for domestic mail.
- German censorship in Ioannina and Vienna.



From Heraklion (18 Sep. 1944) to Athens (28 Sep.).

Rates: 3rd weight surface 40-60g 400,000D (200,000D + 2x100,000D). These rates were valid to 14 Sep. 1944. They do not reflect the rate change of 15 Sep.

- German censorship in Heraklion with circular **KREISKOMMANDATUR IRAKLION / ZENSIERT**.
- The cover was sent from the Commercial Bank of Greece.
- The second Athens postmark was erroneously dated **XI** instead of **IX**.



70%



From Ioannina (27 June 1944) to Athens.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 4,000D from 15 Mar. to 30 June 1944.

- German censorship in Ioannina with tape and a small circular handstamp (10). The rhomboid 7 belonged to the city postman in Athens.

Vienna censorship

Greek correspondence to and from Germany was generally censored in Vienna (*insignia g*). If, for any reason, a piece of mail needed to be returned to the sender, it was censored for a second time on its way back.



Munich censorship

The depicted cover was censored in Bologna (*insignia II*) instead of Rome (*insignia I*), where Greek mail was redirected for a few days in late October 1942. It was then forwarded—treated as an Italian cover—to the Munich censorship office (*insignia d*), rather than to the one in Vienna (*insignia g*). Other Greek pieces of mail of the same period were forwarded from Bologna to Vienna following the usual procedure.



From Patra (21 Dec. 1943) to Vienna (8 Jan. 1944), returned via Thessaloniki (25 Jan.) to Patra (30 Jan.).

Rates: Surface up to 20g 1,000D from 10 Nov. 1943 to 14 Mar. 1944.

- Label *Firma erlöschten / raison sociale / n'existe plus* and handstamp *zurück / retour*. The cover was censored in Vienna twice, corresponding to the two legs of the trip.



From Athens (Oct. 1942) to Schlag b. Gablonz, Germany.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 50D from 1 Sep. to 31 Oct. 1942.

- The postmark is illegible. However, the 50D postage and the censorship in Bologna are strong indications that the cover was mailed in late October.

5. ITALIAN CENSORSHIP & MEASURES

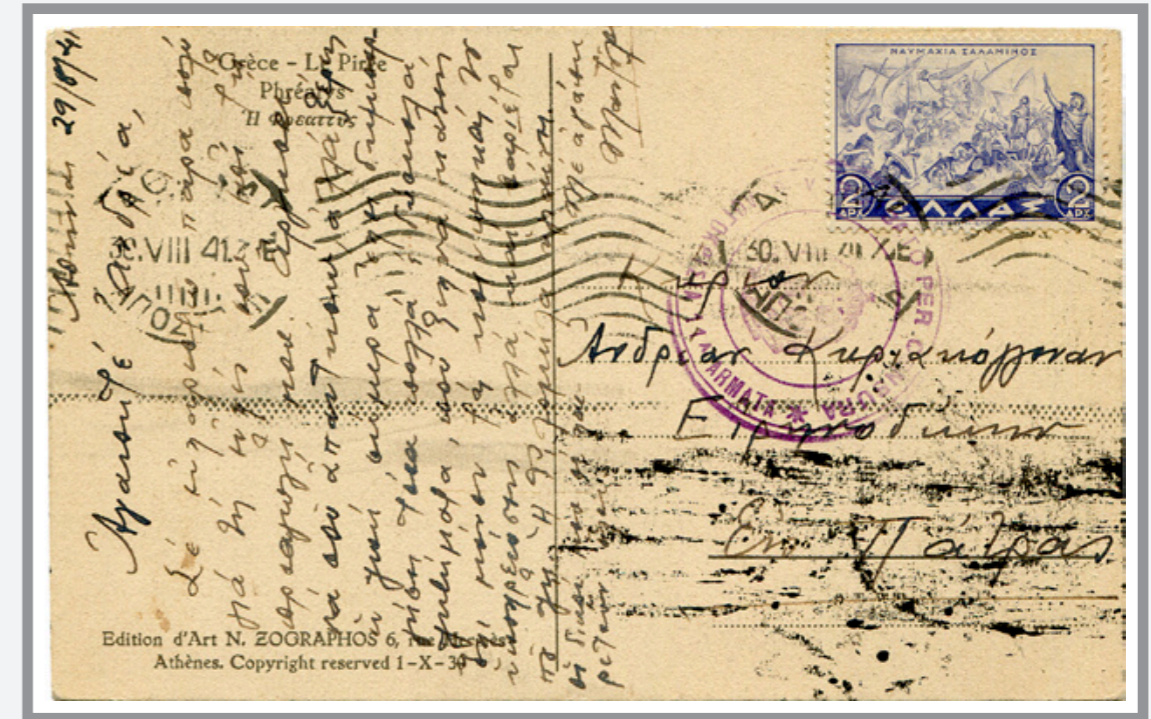
The deployment of Italian troops covered 65% of Greece but only until the capitulation on 8 Sep. 1943.

In the Ionian Islands throughout the entire period and in the prefecture of Lassithi, Eastern Crete, until February 1942, different postal rules applied, which are examined separately.

In the early days, the occupants made an unsuccessful attempt to incorporate the Aegean Islands into the Italian Dodecanese, but the Germans refused to give their consent.

Domestic correspondence was selectively examined by Italian censorship offices assigned to the army units.

Correspondence to and from Italy was generally censored in Rome.



North Peloponnese - Patra censorship

From Athens (30 Aug. 1941) to Patra (1 Sep., on the reverse).

Rates: Postcard surface 2D to 19 Sep. 1941; missing social welfare.

- Italian censorship in Patra with a rarely used dual-circle VERIFICATO PER CENSURA / ΛΟΓΟΚΡΙΣΙΑ [censorship] 11^A ΑΡΜΑΤΑ.



East Peloponnese: Corinth censorship

From Corinth (26 Aug. 1942) to Athens (28 Aug.).

Rates: Visiting card cover surface 5D from 15 May to 31 Aug. 1942.

- Italian censorship in Corinth with a circular dual-circle COMANDO SUPERIORE FORZE ARMATE DI GRECIA / VERIFICATO PER CENSURA / ΠΕΡΝΑΕΙ ΑΠΟ ΛΟΓΟΚΡΙΣΙΑ [passed censorship].



South Peloponnese - Kythira (Cerigo) censorship

From Potamos village telegraph office on Kythira (11 Jan. 1942) to Athens.

Rates: Postcard surface 2.50D from 20 Sep. and social welfare 50λ from 15 Nov., both valid to 31 Dec. 1941; total 3D. The card was posted well into the new rates.

- The southernmost of the seven Ionian Islands was not part of the Isole Jonie administration. Kythira remained under the superintendence of the 59th Division Cagliari, based in Tripoli, which was in control of the South Peloponnese.
- Italian censorship in Kythira with a dual-circle VERIFICATO PER CENSURA 59/3.



East Peloponnese: Nafplio censorship

From Drepano village (5 Oct. 1942, rural route 388) via Nafplio (7 Oct., on the reverse) and Athens (11 Oct.) to Atalanti.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 25D and registration 25D, both from 1 Sep. to 31 Oct. 1942; total 50D.

- The new rural postmarks were introduced in 1941 and substituted the earlier diamond-shaped handstamps.
- Italian censorship in Nafplio with VERIFICATO PER CENSURA / 11^A ΑΡΜΑΤΑ.



70%

Cyclades Islands: Paros

From Paros telegraph office (7 Jan. 1943) to Athens.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 50D from 1 Nov. 1942 to 31 Jan. 1943; anti-TB rate 10D; total 60D.

- The office in Paros combined postal and telegraphic services. The letter was cancelled by the telegraphic (dotted) postmark.
- Compulsory payment of the anti-TB rate during the 1942-43 holiday season.

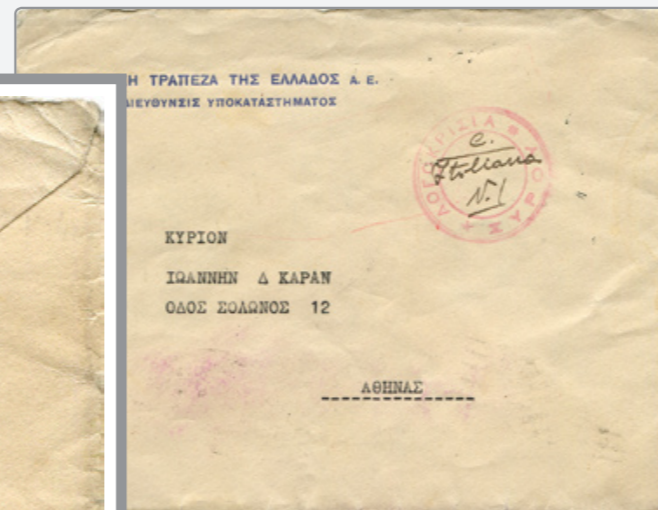


Cyclades Islands (Cycladi in Italian): Syros, the capital

From Syros (16 July 1941) via Athens (17 July) to Prague.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 8D to 19 Sep. 1941; airmail up to 10g 5D from 20 June 1941 to 8 Sep. 1943; total 13D.

- Italian censorship upon departure with *Censura Italiana N.1* in place of the removed Greek coat of arms in the **ΛΟΓΟΚΡΙΣΙΑ ΣΥΡΟΥ** [Syros censorship] handstamp, originally used in the 1940-41 Greek-Italian War. Also, German censorship in Vienna.
- Naxos S.A. was among the three companies licensed to use perfins during the 1941 fiscal year. The depicted and a second reported cover indicate that the company did not perforate its stamps.



60%

Cyclades Islands: Thera (Santorini)

From Thera (26 May 1941) to Athens (5 Aug.). **Rates:** Surface up to 20g 3D to 19 Sep. 1941; social welfare 50λ to 14 Nov. 1941; total 3.50D.

- Italian censorship in Syros with *Censura Italiana N.1* in place of the removed Greek coat of arms in the **ΛΟΓΟΚΡΙΣΙΑ ΣΥΡΟΥ** [Syros censorship] handstamp, originally used in the 1940-41 Greek-Italian War.



Cyclades Islands: Andros

From Andros (21 Dec. 1942) via Syros (3 Jan. 1943, on the reverse) to Athens.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 50D and registration 50D, both from 1 Nov. 1942 to 31 Jan. 1943; anti-TB 10D, paid with a regular stamp; total 110D.

- Italian censorship in Syros with a large and grotesque V.
- Compulsory payment of the anti-TB rate during the 1942-43 holiday season.

*Samos and neighbouring islands (Sporades or Sporadi in Italian):
Early postal dependence on Rhodes & Samos censorship*



From Rhodes (9 June 1941) to Samos.
Rates: Surface up to 15g 50c.
 • Mail sent between Italian Rhodes and the occupied Greek Aegean Islands, charged at Italian domestic postal rates, was seen as an indication of plans to annex the islands to the Dodecanese.

Western Greece: Modena Division censorship



From Ioannina (16 Apr. 1942) to Athens.
Rates: Postcard surface 5D from 1 Jan. to 14 May 1942.
 • Italian censorship with a dual-circle **COMANDO DIVISIONE MODENA / VERIFICATO PER CENSURA** and a single-circle **M**. The 37th Division was based in Arta.

Western Greece: Casale Division censorship



70%

From Nenedes village (rural route 426) via Samos (16 Dec. 1941) to Piraeus (5 Feb. 1942).
Rates: Surface up to 20g 4D from 20 Sep. to 31 Dec. 1941; social welfare 1D from 15 Nov. to 31 Dec. 1941; total 5D.
 • Italian censorship in Samos with tape and a single-circle (4).



Written on Lefkada island (2 Aug. 1942) and posted at the nearby mainland (the telegraphic postmark is illegible; it more likely belongs to Vonitsa) to Athens.
Rates: Postcard surface 7D from 15 May to 31 Aug. 1942.
 • Italian censorship with a dual-circle **COMANDO DIVISIONE FANTERIA CASALE 56E / VERIFICATO PER CENSURA / XI ARMATA**. The 56th Division was based in Agrinio. Also, a boxed **VERIFICATO PER CENSURA / ΕΛΟΓΟΚΡΙΘΗ [censored]**.



60%



Thessaly: Volos censorship

From Kassaveteia village (18 Jan. 1943) to Athens (25 Jan.).

Rates: Preprinted cover surface up to 20g 60D; anti-TB rate 10D; total 70D.

- Compulsory payment of the anti-TB rate during the 1942-43 holiday season.
- Italian censorship in Volos.



50%



Ufficio Censura Posta Estera I in Rome

From Athens (17 Nov. 1942) to Germany.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 100D from 1 Nov. 1942 to 31 Jan. 1943; airmail 10D from Nov. 1942 to 31 Mar. 1943.

- Censored in Rome, the regular office for incoming Greek mail to Italy.



70%



Brindisi checkpoint

From Athens (25 Oct. 1941) via Brindisi (29 Oct.) and Rhodes (3 Nov.) to Trianta village, Rhodes.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 10D and registration 10D, both from 20 Sep. to 31 Dec. 1941; airmail up to 10g 2D; social welfare 1D to 14 Nov. 1941; total 23D.

- Until early March 1942, the examination of Greek registered mail was performed in Brindisi.
- Italian censorship in Rhodes with tape and a boxed C1.

Ufficio Censura Posta Estera II in Bologna

From Athens (31 Oct. 1942) to Germany.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 50D from 1 Sep. to 31 Oct. 1942.

- The censorship of incoming Greek mail to Italy was exceptionally carried out in Bologna (UCPE II) for a few days in late October 1942, instead of the regularly used office in Rome (UCPE I).



6. THE STATUS OF THE IONIAN ISLANDS

The Italian administration imposed a peculiar form of annexation, which, among other measures, forbade the use of Greek stamps except for the special anti-tuberculosis (anti-TB) stamps.

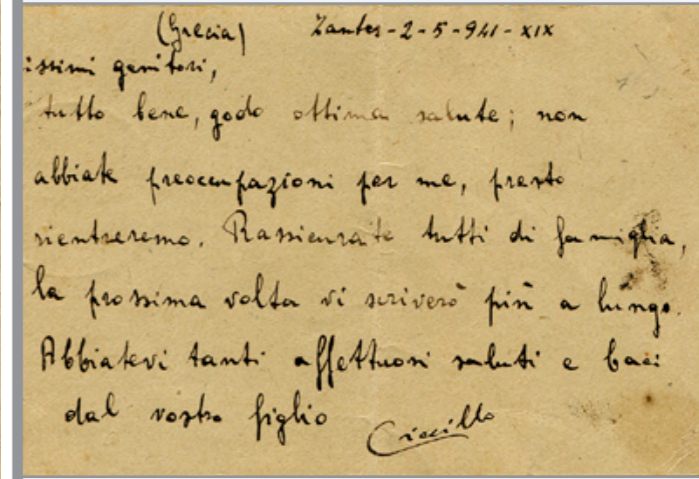
Italian overprints were used exclusively: initially on Greek stamps during the first three months, and subsequently on Italian metropolitan stamps for the remainder of the period. However, the existing Greek post offices and postmarks were retained.

The rates remained unchanged over the period in question.

Here are three different examples of the use of Greek stamps.



Second day of occupation of Zakythos



70%

From Zakythos (2 May 1941, according to text) via Brindisi to Tricarico, Matera, Italy (9 May).

- Posted the day after the Italian army landed on Zakythos (Zante) bearing contemporary Greek stamps (2D domestic postcard surface rate and 10λ social welfare rate). It was possibly part of the first Italian mail despatched from the island. Notably, the Greek stamps were accepted in Brindisi and no postage dues were charged.
- Italian censorship in Brindisi with a linear VERIFICATO per CENSURA.



Mixed franking during the 1941-42 holidays

From Corfu (2 Jan. 1942) to Athens (22 Jan., on the reverse).

Rates: Domestic 2nd weight surface 15-30g 1.00L (2x50c); anti-TB rate 50λ.

- Compulsory payment of the anti-TB rate at 50λ during the 1941-42 holiday season.
- Italian censorship in Corfu with tape, boxed VERIFICATO PER CENSURA, and single-circle 3.



Mixed franking during the 1942-43 holidays

From Corfu (31 Dec. 1942) to Athens.

Rates: Domestic postcard surface 30c; anti-TB rate 1D.

- Compulsory payment of the anti-TB rate at 1D during the 1942-43 holiday season.
- Italian censorship in Corfu with a single-circle 2.

CORFU overprints



70%

Military money order form fragment from Skriperon village on Corfu (12 Apr. 1941) sent to a Greek military postal sector, undelivered and returned to the sender in Skriperon (15 July).

- Sometimes a small piece of paper is all that is needed to tell the whole story. Fortunately, its reverse side reveals all the missing details. The fragment is part of a military money order form, addressed to a soldier serving in the Greek Epirus Battalion. By the time it was due to reach the front, the Greek Army had already signed the armistice (21 Apr. 1941). As a result, the money order had to be returned to the sender in Skriperon village. It was carried by the rural postman on his designated rural route 69, who collected 2D from the sender—a flat fee for an undelivered money order—by affixing a CORFU overprinted stamp.

CEFALONIA e ITACA overprints

From Argostoli (26 Aug. 1941) to Chionata village.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 3D; social welfare 50λ; total 3.50D.

- The CEFALONIA e ITACA overprints were used on mail from 20 May to 31 Aug. 1941.
- Not censored, as it travelled solely within the island.



ΟΙΚΙΑΝ ΔΙΟΝΥΣΙΟΥ ΣΟΛΩΜΟΥ
ΧΙΟΝΑΤΑ - ΘΗΡΑΜΟΝΑ
Κ Ε Φ Α Λ Α Η Ν Ι Α Ν



From Corfu (13 or 15 Aug. 1941) to Athens.
Rates: 2nd weight letter 20–40g 5D (3D+2D).

- Late use of CORFU overprints, which were released on 5 June and officially scheduled to be withdrawn from post office counters on 12 Aug. 1941.
- Italian censorship in Corfu with tape, boxed VERIFICATO PER CENSURA and single-circle (3).



70%



ZANTE overprints

From Zante (18 Aug. 1941) to Patra.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 3D; social welfare 50λ, paid with anti-TB stamp, total 3.50D.

- The ZANTE overprints were used on mail from mid-May to 31 Aug. 1941.
- Italian censorship in Zante with a boxed UFFICIO CENSURA ZEP in green, indicative of the first period.



[Top left]:

**From Cephalonia:
Rural route 48**

From Skala village, Cephalonia (rural handstamp 48) via Asprogerakas telegraph office (registration handstamp), Argostoli (17 Oct. 1942), and Corfu (27 Oct.) to Athens (5 Nov., all postmarks on the reverse).

Rates: Domestic surface up to 15g 50c; registration 1.25L; total 1.75L.

- Italian censorship in Corfu with tape, boxed VERIFICATO PER CENSURA, and single-circle CENSORE 3/3.

[Bottom left]:

**From Cephalonia:
Short-lived military censor**

From Argostoli (19 Nov. 1941) to Athens (18 Dec., on the reverse).

Rates: Domestic surface up to 15g 50c.

- Italian military censorship in Argostoli with a dual-circle COMANDO 17o REGGIMENTO FANTERIA - ACQUI. The military censorship of civilian mail in Argostoli has been recorded for a limited period, from late 1941 to early 1942.

[Bottom right]:

From Ithaca

From Ithaca (13 Oct. 1942) via Corfu (24 Oct., on the reverse) to Athens.

Rates: Domestic 9th weight surface 120-135g 4.50L (9x50c).

- Italian censorship in Corfu with boxed VERIFICATO PER CENSURA (on the reverse).

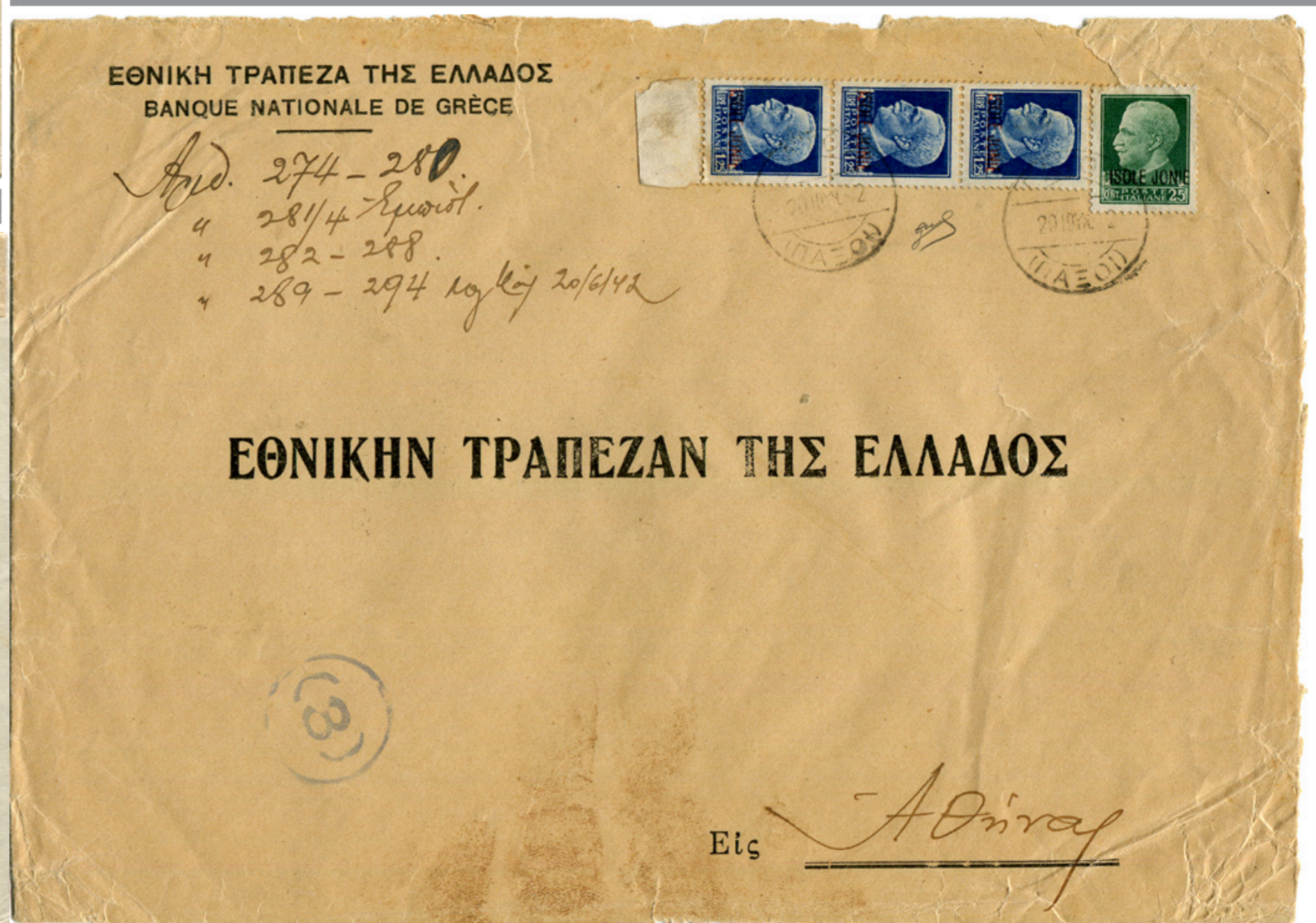
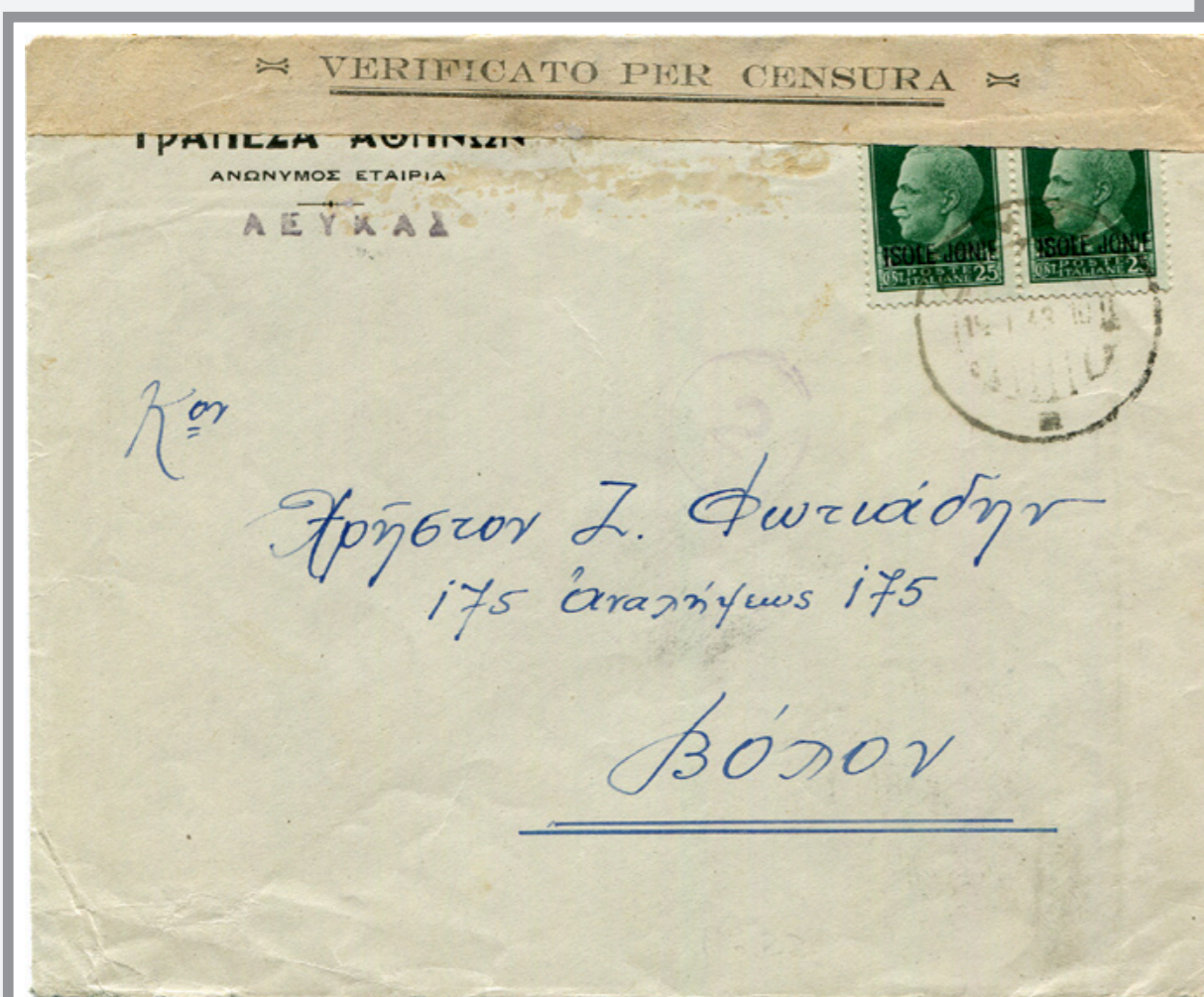




[Top left]:
 From Zakynthos (Zante)
 From Zakynthos (9 Feb. 1943) to Athens (25 Feb., on the reverse).
 Rates: International (instead of domestic charged after Feb. 1943) surface up to 20g 1.25L; registration 1.50L; total 2.75L.
 • Early application of international (instead of domestic) rates to mainland Greece.
 • Italian censorship in Zakynthos with tape and a dual-circle *UFFICIO AFFARI CIVILI / PER L' ISOLA DI ZANTE* with coat of arms.

[Bottom left]:
 From Lefkada (Santa Maura)
 From Lefkada (19 Jan. 1943) via Corfu (11 Feb.) and Piraeus to Volos (28 Feb.; all transit and arrival postmarks on the reverse).
 Rates: Domestic surface up to 15g 50c.
 • Italian censorship in Lefkada with tape and a single-circle 2. Also, a dual-circle *AFFARI CIVILI / S. MAURA / CENSURA POSTALE*, and a single-circle 1 (both on the reverse).

[Bottom right]:
 From Paxoi
 From Gaios village on Paxoi (20 June 1942) via Corfu (26 June, on the reverse) to Athens.
 Rates: Domestic 8th weight surface 105-120g 4.00L (8x50c).
 • Italian censorship in Corfu with a single-circle (3), and a boxed *VERIFICATO PER CENSURA* (on the reverse).





Postage dues

From Corfu to Merano, Italy (13 Dec. 1941).

- The use of an official Hellenic Post cover did not entitle the sender to postage exemption. Upon arrival, the cover was charged 2.50L—double the international rate of 1.25L—collected with postage due stamps.
- Italian censorship in Corfu with a single-circle (3).

Corfu to Athens with international rates

Examples of postal items from the Ionian Islands to Athens charged with international rates are quite frequent since February 1943.



From Corfu (6 Mar. 1943) via Rome (the usual air route) to Athens.

Rates: International surface 75c; airmail 1.00L; total 1.75L.

- This is the second Italian postcard, overprinted to be used in the Ionian Islands. It is a re-printing of the one issued in 1942 with the additional message **VINCEREMO** [we will win].
- Italian censorship, first in Corfu with a dual-circle **AFFARI CIVILI / CORFU / CENSURA POSTALE** and a single-circle **CENSORE 3/3**, and later in Rome with a **52/I**.



From Naples to Corfu via Rhodes!

From Naples (17 Mar. 1942) via Rome (censors) and Rhodes (21 Mar.) to Corfu (2 Apr.).

Rates: Domestic surface 30c; airmail 50c (paid with a regular stamp).

- Italian censorship in Rome with a single-circle 31/I and in Corfu with a single-circle (3).



60%



From Corfu (30 Aug. 1943) to Athens.

Rates: International surface up to 20g 1.25L; registration 1.50L; airmail to 20g 1.00L; total 3.75L.

- Italian censorship in Corfu with a dual-circle **CENSURA * POSTELEGRAFICA - CIVILE** (infrequently used towards the end of Italy's occupation) and a **CENSORE 3/5**.





50%



Sitia office

60%

Arrival of the Italian forces at Sitia, eastern Crete, on 28 May at 4:45 pm

From Sitia (29 May 1941) to Rome (25 July).

Rate: Domestic postcard surface 0.50L.

St Nicholas office



7. THE STATUS OF EASTERN CRETE

The situation in Eastern Crete differed from that of the Ionian Islands. Its special political status lasted only until February 1942, when a Greek civil administration was appointed.

Until that point, the post office in St Nicholas operated as a branch of Rhodes handling both incoming and outgoing mail. The use of Greek stamps was not permitted, except for the special anti-TB issues. Stamps in use included Italian metropolitan issues, as well as those produced for the Dodecanese.

From St Nicholas (26 Sep. 1941) via Rhodes (3 Oct.) to Athens (23 Oct., on the reverse).

Rates: International surface up to 20g 1.25L; airmail up to 15g 50c; total 1.75L.

- Mainland Greece was considered an international destination. However, the airmail rate was the same as the Italian domestic airmail rate.
- The cover was postmarked in St Nicholas, but the stamps were cancelled in Rhodes. This procedure was in effect from August to mid-October 1941.
- Italian censorship in Rhodes with tape and a boxed C5.



From Sitia (14 Aug. 1941) via St Nicholas (16 Aug.), Rhodes (22 Aug.), Vienna (censors), and Thessaloniki (4 Sept.) to Athens (6 Sept.).

Rates: International surface up to 20g 1.25L.

- Local mail from Eastern Crete was initially directed to St Nicholas before being sent to Rhodes.
- Censorships: Italian in Rhodes and German in Vienna. During August and September 1941, part of the correspondence was selectively sent to be censored for a second time in Vienna after it had passed through the censors in Rhodes.
- The single-circle handstamp 43 is not part of any censorship. It is the city-postman's handstamp, who delivered the cover in Athens.



The Forerunners — P.M. 550 (Syros detachment)

From P.M. [50th Division Regina] (11 Aug. 1941) to Italy.

- Prior to the permanent establishment of the 6th Division Cuneo and its respective P.M. 62 on Samos and P.M. 62 Sezione A on Syros, postal services in the Aegean Islands were managed by P.M. 550, based in Rhodes. The **CICLADI** and **SPORADI** postmarks were used in Syros and Samos respectively until late August 1941.
- Handwritten note by the sender **Zona sprovvista di francobolli** (top right) to claim postal exemption. This exemption was officially validated by the rectangular handstamp **ESENTE DA TASSA AUTORIZZAZIONE POSTGEN.**

8. ITALIAN MILITARY POST

The Italian military post (Posta Militare, P.M.) managed official correspondence between military units, for which no postage was required. It also handled private correspondence for military personnel, civil servants, and civilians. If the special handstamps indicating postage exemption were not present, correspondence had to be properly prepaid.

As a rule, the stamps in use were Italian metropolitan issues and, from late April 1943, P.M. overprints. On rare occasions, Rhodes stamps were used by offices in the Aegean, while Ionian overprints were used by the offices in the Adriatic. There were also instances when Greek stamps were accepted on P.M. mail.

Every large military unit (at least a Division) and some smaller independent units had their own post office, each identified by a unique P.M. number.

The rates remained unchanged throughout the period in question.



Greek stamps in the Peloponnese — P.M. 82 (Patra)

From P.M. 82 [29th Division Piemonte] (8 Sep. 1941) to Canelli, Asti, Italy (13 Sep., on the reverse).

Rates: Domestic surface up to 20g 4D, the equivalent of 50c in Italian currency.

- On occasion, for a short period in 1941, the P.M. authorities permitted the use of Greek stamps in P.M. correspondence.
- Italian censorship in Asti (**AT** tape on the reverse).



Taxed on arrival / P.M. 106 (Corinth)

From P.M. 106 [XI Army] (3 Oct. 1941) to Rome (10 Oct.).

Rates: Surface up to 15g 50c, not prepaid. Upon arrival, the cover was charged with 50c postage dues.

- Postal exemption was not granted, even when the indication **Zona sprovvista di bollo** [zone free of postage] was clearly marked on the cover.

IOLE JONIE overprints on Posta Militare mail — P.M. 82 (Zante detachment)

From P.M. 82 [29th Division Piemonte] (18 Apr. 1942) to Taranto.

Rates: Postcard surface not charged, airmail 50c.

- **IOLE JONIE** overprints were occasionally used in the Ionian Islands. The card was mailed from Zante, where a detachment of the Piemonte Division was relocated from Patra.
- Italian censorship in Taranto.



Rodi & Metropolitan stamps used in the Aegean Islands
P.M. 62 (Samos) & P.M. 62A (Syros)



From P.M. 62 [6th Division Cuneo] (31 Oct. 1942) to Milan.
Rates: Surface up to 15g 50c; airmail up to 15g 50c; total 1.00L.
• Italian censorship on Samos with tape, a pair of PRELEVATA... and RESTITUITA... and a numeral 31.



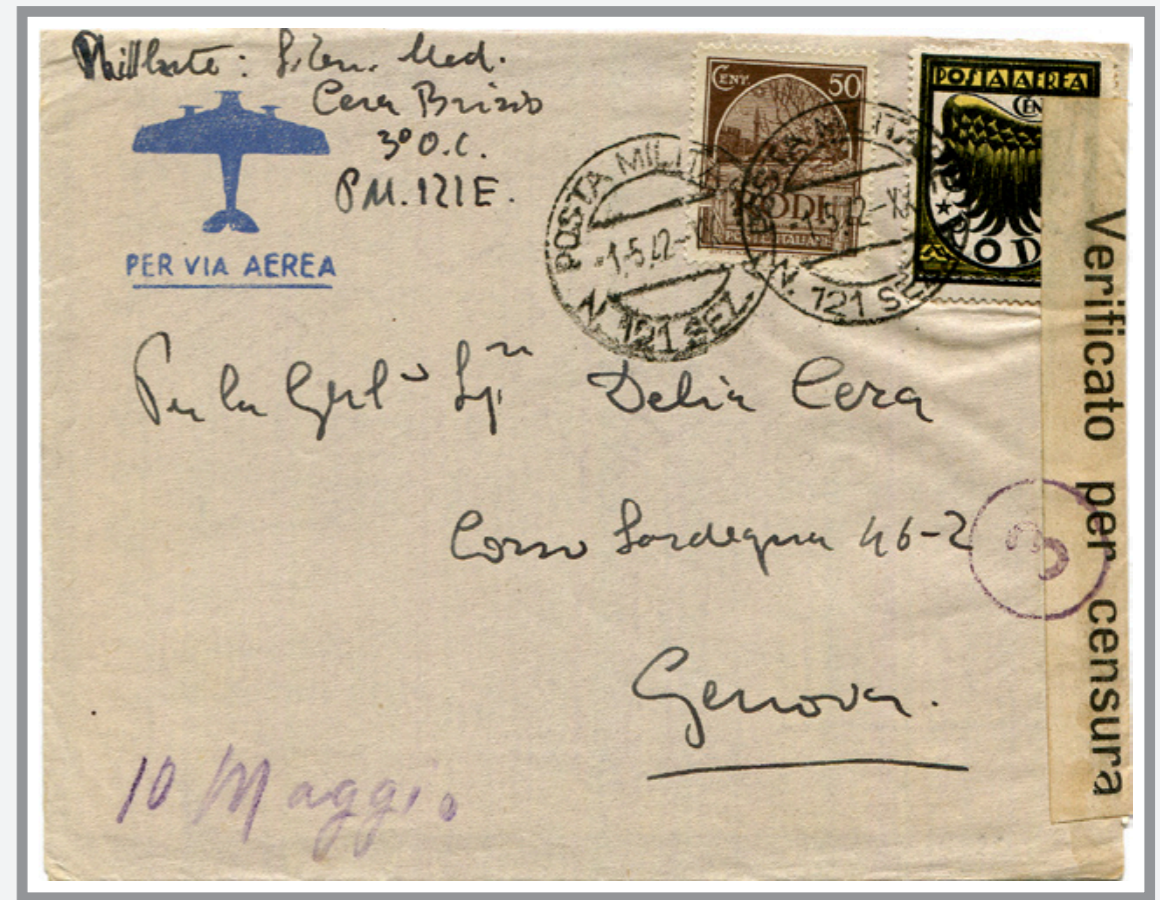
Rodi & Metropolitan stamps used in Eastern Crete
P.M. 121 (St Nicholas) & P.M. 121A (Neapolis)



From P.M. 121 [51st Division Siena] (4 Feb. 1942) to Rhodes.
Rates: Surface up to 15g 50c, paid with an airmail stamp.
• One of two surviving examples of the St Nicholas handstamp.



From P.M. 62A [branch A of the 6th Division Cuneo] (21 Jan. 1942) to Rhodes (25 Jan.).
Rates: Surface up to 15g 50c.
• Mail between two branches of Banco di Roma, not censored.



From P.M. 121A [branch A of the 51st Division Siena] (1 May 1942) to Genova.
Rates: Surface up to 15g 50c; airmail up to 15g 50c.
• Italian censorship in St Nicholas, Eastern Crete, with tape and a single-circle numeral 3.

Registered mail
P.M. 121A (Neapolis)



From P.M. 121A [branch A of the 51st Division Siena] (22 Jan. 1943) to Ostiglia, Mantova, Italy (30 Jan.).
Rates: Surface up to 15g 50c; registration 1.25L; airmail up to 15g 50c; total 2.25L.
• Italian censorship in Mantova.

Registered mail
P.M. 139 (Prevesa)



From P.M. 139 [Superior Command of the Armed Forces in Greece] (5 Apr. 1943) to Torino (14 Apr.).
Rates: Surface up to 15g 50c, paid with an airmail stamp; registration 1.25L; airmail up to 15g 50c; total 2.25L.

Registered mail & P.M. overprints
P.M. 65 (Larissa)



From P.M. 65 [24th Division Pinerolo] (26 June 1943) to Fagnano Olona, Varese, Italy (7 July).
Rates: Surface up to 15g 50c; registration 1.25L, 1.00L was paid with airmail stamps; airmail up to 15g 50c; total 2.25L.
• Italian censorship in Varese.

Registered mail & P.M. overprints
P.M. 29 (Tripoli)



From P.M. 29 [59th Division Cagliari] (13 June 1943) to Rome (18 & 19 June, on the reverse).
Rates: Surface and registration rates were not charged to the Tribunale Militare di Guerra F.F. A.A. Grecia - Sezione di Tripolis; airmail up to 15g 50c, paid with regular stamps.



Mail sent abroad: USA
P.M. 82 (Patra)

From P.M. 82 [29th Division Piemonte] (3 Aug. 1941) to South Barre, MA, USA.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 1.25L; airmail up to 20g 2.75L, paid with regular stamps; total 4.00L.

- Italy and the USA maintained regular postal relations until the attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 Dec. 1941.



Insured mail
(Posta Assicurata)
P.M. 202 (Nafplio)

From P.M. 202 [3rd Alpine Division Julia] (13 Oct. 1941) to Turin.

- Official cover, postage exempt, not censored.



Mail sent abroad: Switzerland
P.M. 17 (Corinth)

From P.M. 17 [VIII Army] (16 July 1943) via Salsomaggiore (21 July) to Zurich, Switzerland.

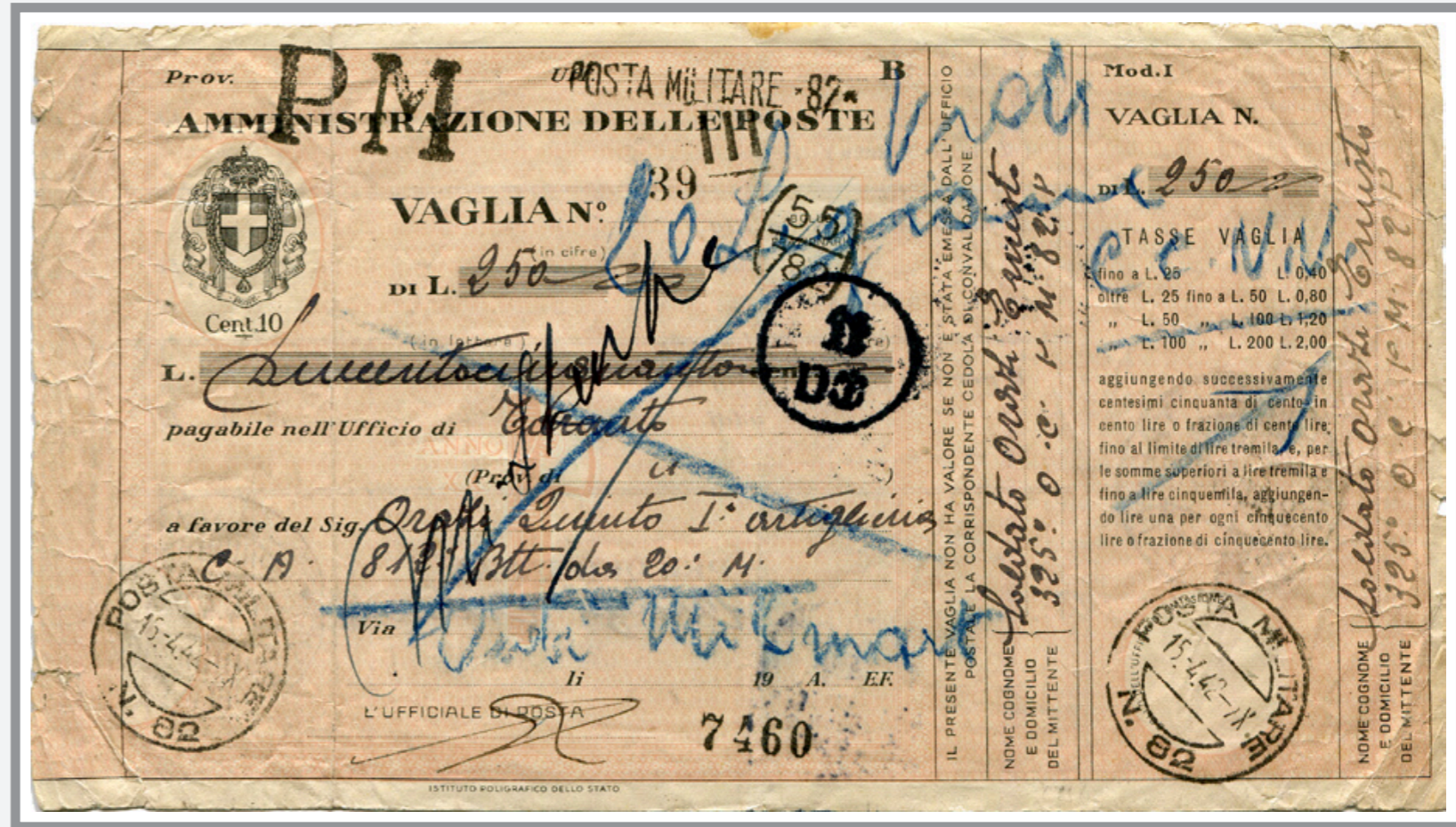
Rates: Surface up to 20g 1.25L; registration 1.50L; airmail up to 20g 1.00L; total 3.75L.

- Italian censorship in Salsomaggiore at UCPE III, i.e., International mail censor office III, which has substituted the Milan office since May 1943.

Postal money order
P.M. 82 (Patra)

From P.M. 82 [29th Division Piemonte] (15 Apr. 1942) to Taranto, Italy (28 Apr., on the reverse).

- Undelivered and postmarked again (5 May, on the reverse) to be returned to the sender.



Propaganda di Guerra labels
P.M. 38 (Athens)



From P.M. 38 [36th Division Forlì] (4 Sep. 1942) to Rome.

Rates: Surface up to 15g 50c; airmail up to 15g 50c; total 1.00L.

- The depicted pairs comprising one stamp (25, 30, or 50c) and one of four different propaganda labels were issued on 14 Aug. 1942. They were rarely used at the military post offices.

Mail captured by the Allies
P.M. 29 (Tripoli)



From P.M. 29 [59th Division Cagliari] (12 July 1943).

Rates: Surface up to 15g 50c; airmail up to 15g 50c, paid with a regular stamp; total 1.00L.

- The cover fell into the hands of the Allies and was subsequently censored by the British.

Propaganda di Guerra labels
P.M. 162 (Syros)



From P.M. 162 [branch of 6th Division Cuneo] (26 Sep. 1942) to Rome.

Rates: Surface up to 15g 50c; airmail up to 15g 50c; total 1.00L.

- In May 1942, the P.M. 62A of Syros was upgraded from a branch office of Samos to a regular post office of Syros (P.M. 162).
- Italian censorship in Syros with a single-circle D/*.

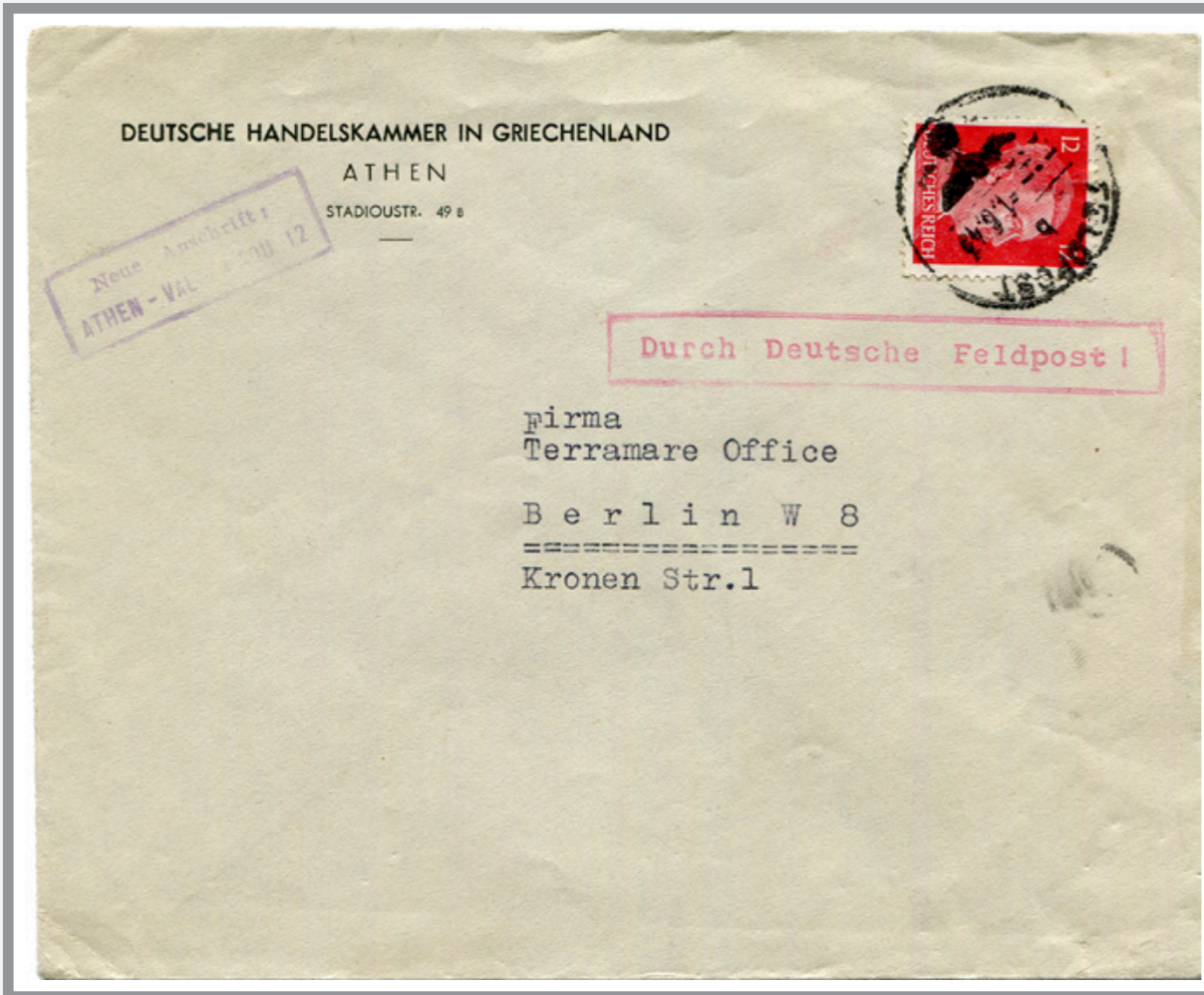
Mail directed to a P.O.W. camp following the Armistice
P.M. 65 (Larissa)



From P.M. 65 [24th Division Pinerolo] (6 Sep. 1943).

Rates: Postcard surface 30c overpaid at 50c.

- Two days after the card was postmarked, the Armistice was signed. Following fierce fighting, most of the troops of the Pinerolo division were captured by the Germans and sent to POW camps. This is a case where POWs, along with the last sackfuls of mail, were sent to Stalag X-B, in Sandbostel, near Bremen, Germany.

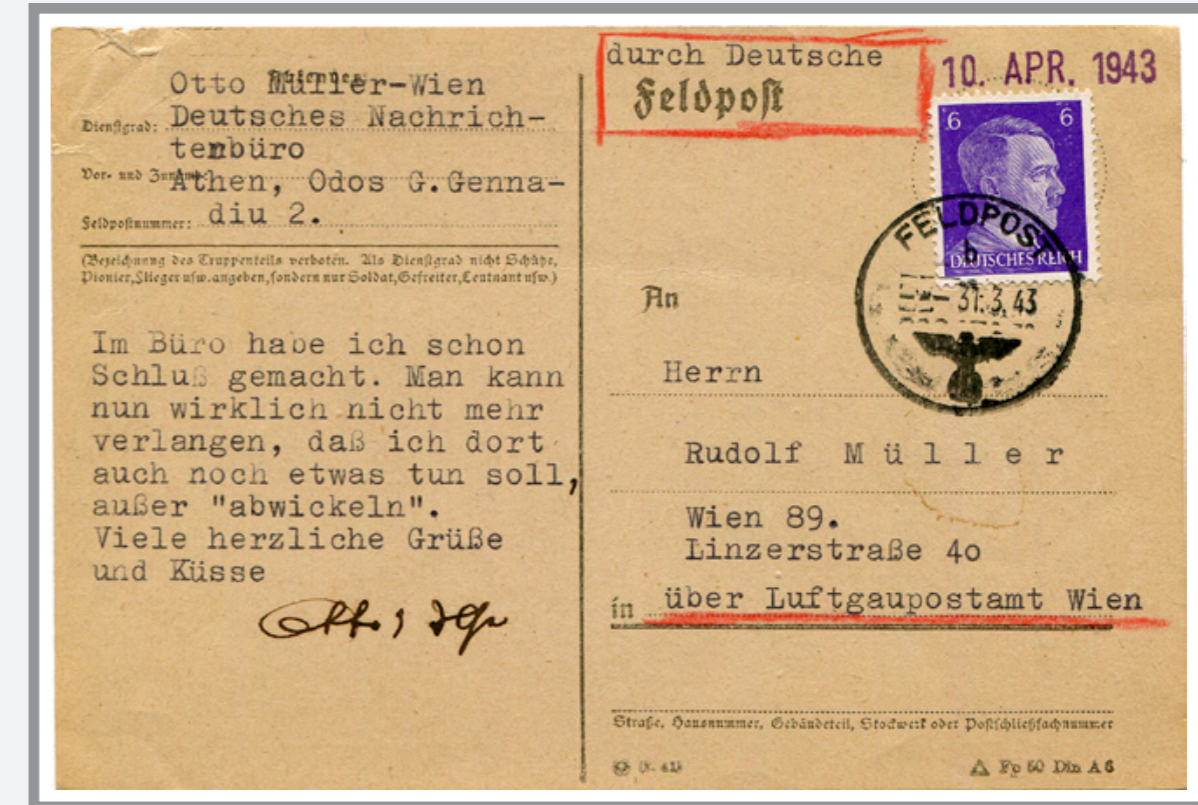


9. GERMAN MILITARY POST (franked correspondence)

Unlike the Italian Posta Militare, the German Feldpost primarily handled the official and private correspondence of the military personnel, which was exempt from postage.

In rare cases, the Feldpost also carried civilian mail, provided the following conditions were met:

- (a) The indication 'Durch Deutsche Feldpost' [by the German military post] should be written on the cover, along with 'Ueber Luftgaupostamt...' [airmail to...], when necessary.
- (b) German metropolitan stamps should be affixed.
- (c) Domestic (German) postal rates should be paid.



Postcard

From Athens (31 Mar. 1943) to Vienna.

Rates: Postcard surface 6pf.



[Top left]:

First weight letter from Feldpost b

From Athens (1 June 1943) to Berlin, Germany.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 12pf.

[Bottom left]:

First weight letter from Feldpost d

From Athens (6 Dec. 1943) to Braunlage, Germany.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 12pf.

Second weight letter

From Athens (3 Feb. 1944) to Berlin, Germany.

Rates: 2nd weight surface 20-100g, 24 pf.

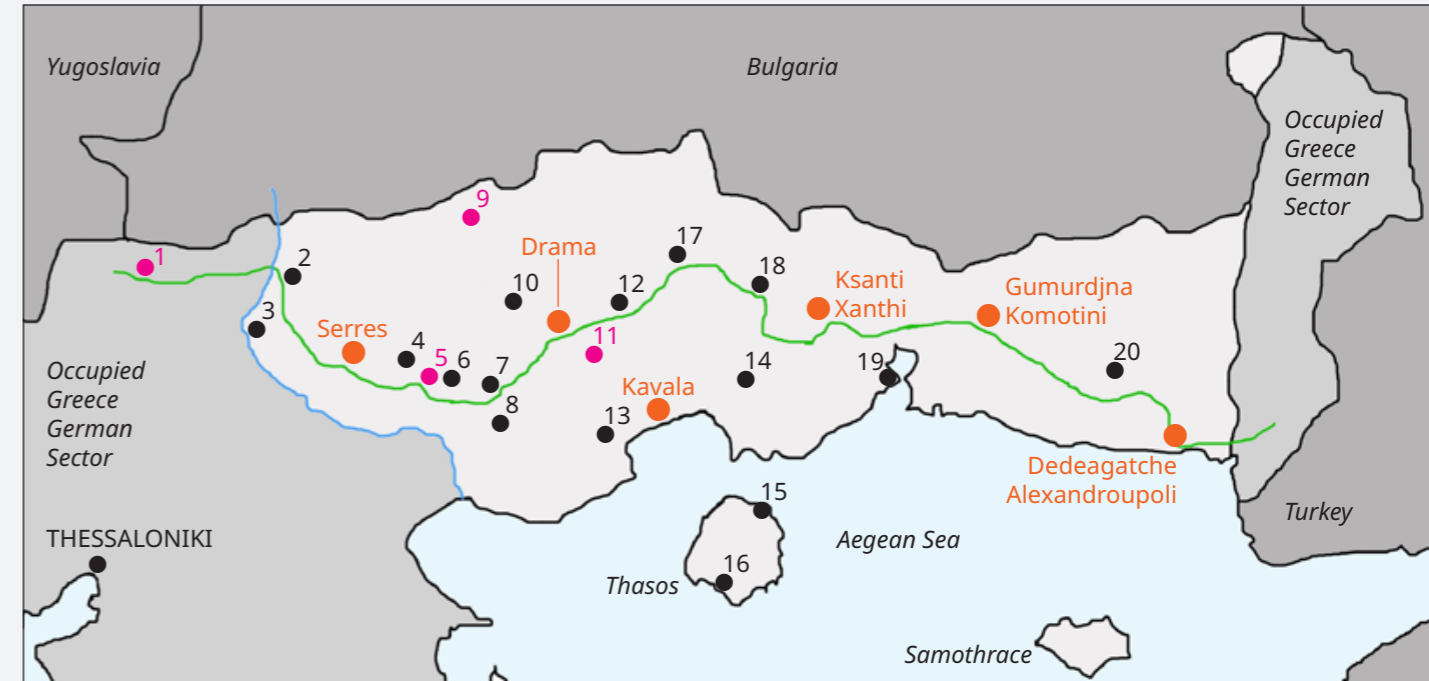


10. BULGARIAN POST

The occupation of Greece by the Wehrmacht was accompanied by the deployment of Bulgarian forces in Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace, less a narrow strip along the Evros river and the Greek-Turkish border, which remained under German administration. The grey area of the adjacent map remained under control of the Bulgarian army until October 1944.



To date, twenty-six post offices have been verified as operating in the Aegean Administration to handle correspondence to and from Bulgaria, several Axis countries, neutral territories, and the Bulgarian-occupied regions of Greece and Yugoslavia. No official means of correspondence with mainland Greece existed. Bulgarian metropolitan stamps and new Bulgarian postmarks were used.



- Bulgarian post offices in Greece (light grey area)
- 6 towns represented ●
- 16 villages represented ●
- 4 villages not represented ●
- Railway in 1941 —
- Struma River —

KAVALA: GATEWAY TO THE AEGEAN

Kavala was the largest and most vibrant town in the occupied area, as evidenced by the abundance of surviving postal items. It also served as the headquarters of the Bulgarian Armed Forces.

Despite its renowned port and significant pre-war industrial and commercial activity, Kavala was not selected as the capital, perhaps due to its considerable distance from the railway and the border with mainland Bulgaria. Instead, Ksanti was chosen. Nevertheless, Kavala was intended to become Bulgaria's gateway to the Aegean Sea.



Попълнете и подпишете наставленията на обратната страна!

ГЛАВНА ДИРЕКЦИЯ НА ПОЩИТЪ, ТЕЛЕГРАФИТЪ И ТЕЛЕФОНИТЪ

Обр. 304

ПОЩЕНСКА ДЕКЛАРАЦИЯ №

За частни таксувани колетни пратки, писма и кутии съ обявена стойност и наложенъ платежъ.

Подателъ: **МИКО ТОМОВЪ**
Златаръ

живущъ въ **СОФИЯ-3 УЛ. МОРАВА 68** ул. №

обявявамъ, че предадохъ на мѣстната п. т. т. станция една пратка ценно писмо съ обявена стойностъ **ханджа петстотинъ** лева и съ наложенъ платежъ лева

за **Мл. Вачинъ Антонъ Миковъ Шоловъ ч. Кавала**
ул. Подгледне 6404 Рилска, която съдържа: **дрези**

Пратката носи следния печатъ или пломба: Гр. или село **София XIV** 1943 год.

Подателъ: **М. Томовъ**

№ на пратката (отъ книга № 301)	Тежестъ		Събрана такса за:					Всичко
	кгр.	гр.	тежестъ	обявена стойностъ	наложенъ платежъ	доставане въ жилище		
01304	1	400	05				15	

Попълватъ се всички графи безъ стърганя и поправки

Приелъ чиновникъ: _____

Клеймо на главницата на мѣстоподаннето

Клеймо на главницата на мѣстоназн. ченето

КАВАЛА / KAVALA

Parcel post form from Sofia (7 Dec. 1943) to Kavala (11 Dec.).

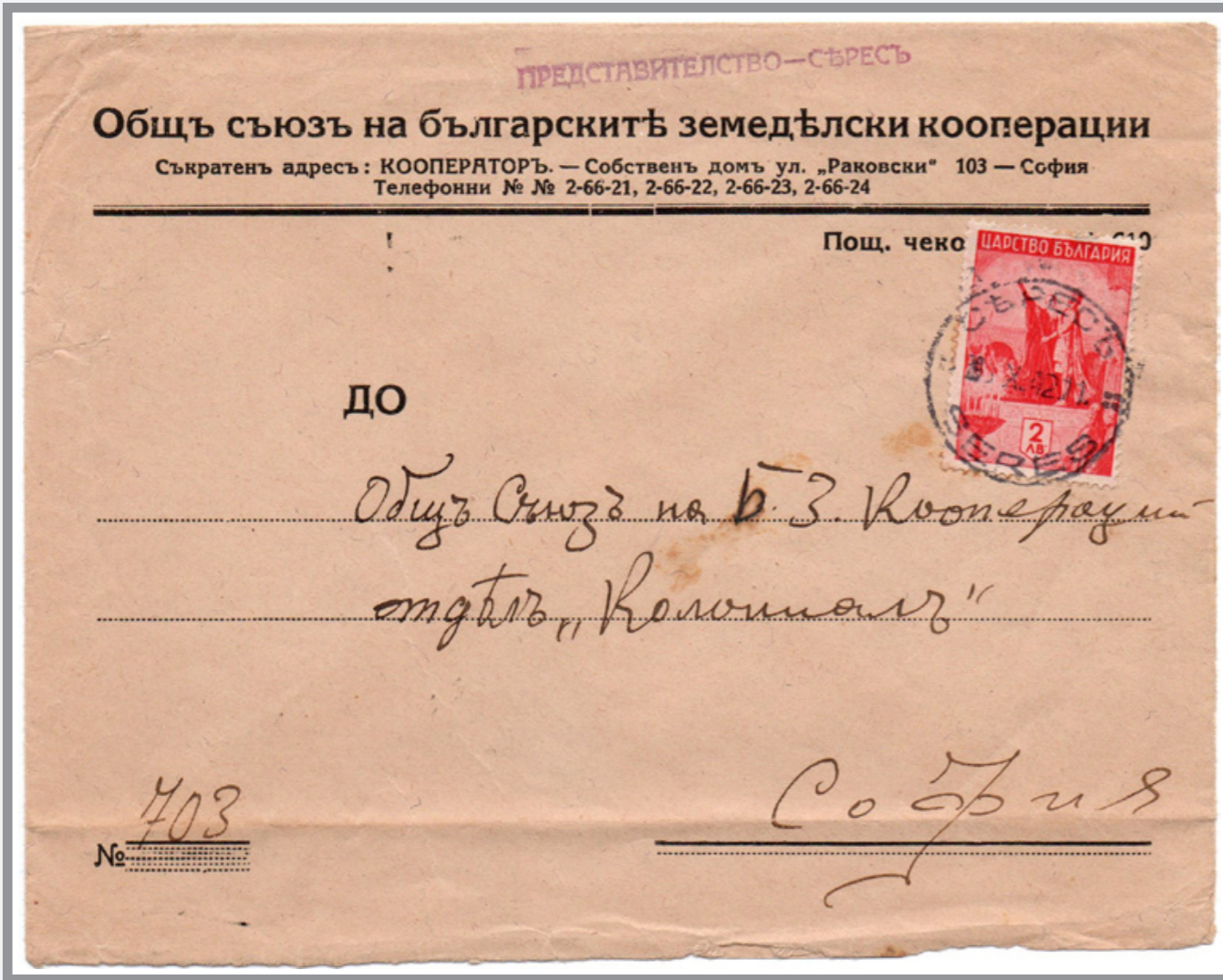
- Rates: Parcel post 15лв.
- The form was charged at 1лв, paid with a revenue stamp (ГЕРБОВА МАРКА).

КАВАЛА / KAVALA

From Vienna (15 Jan. 1944) to Kavala (1 Feb.).

- Rates: Surface up to 20g 12pf (destination Bulgaria joined the domestic tariff on 1 Sep. 1942); airmail 10pf; express 50pf; total 72pf.
- The *Durch Geboten* red label marked express mail.
- German censorship in Vienna.

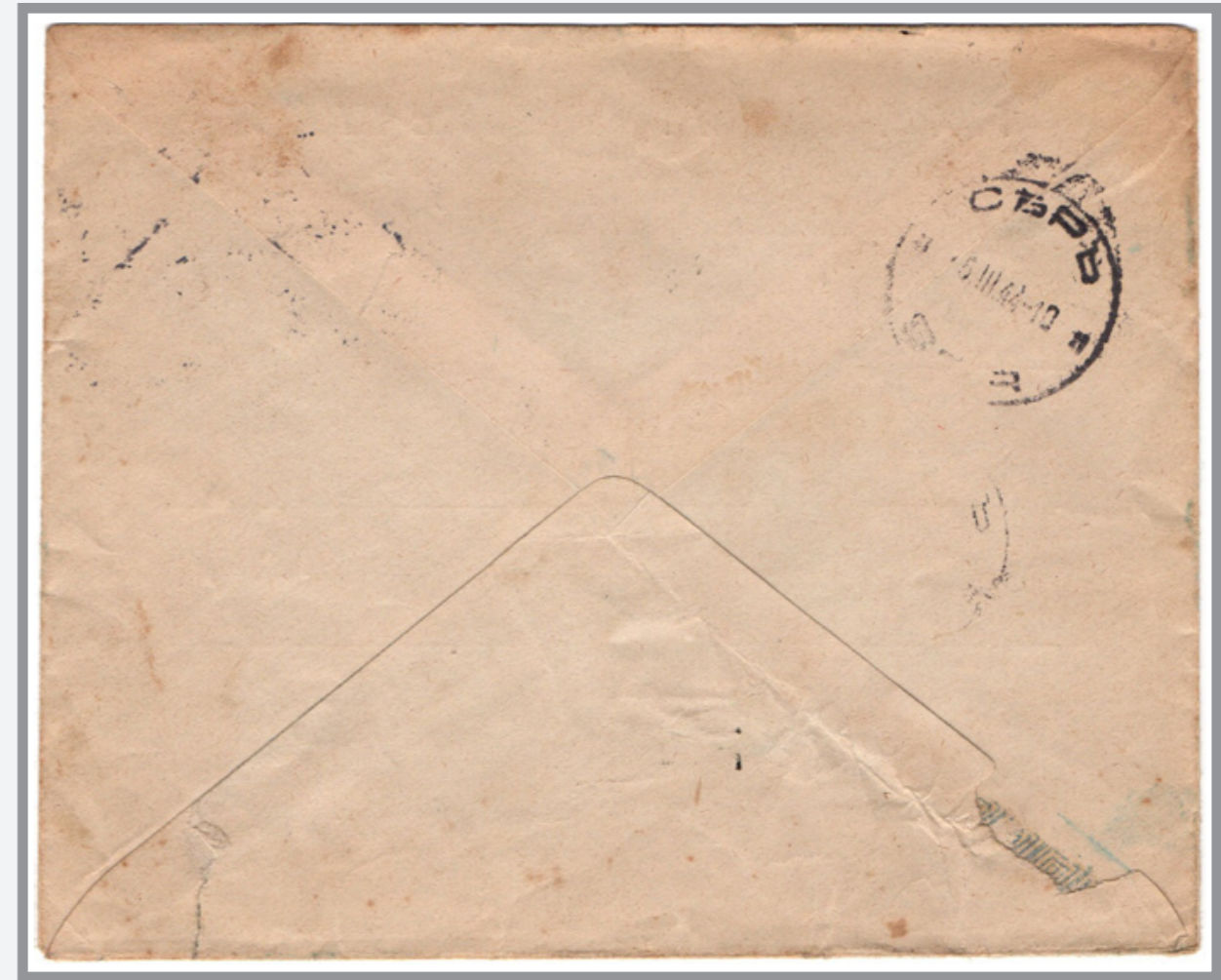




СЪРЕСЪ / SERRES: The regular postmark
 From Serres (5 Oct. 1942) to Sofia.
 Rates: Surface up to 20g **2лв** to 14 Mar. 1944.

**STRUMA VALLEY
SERRES**

The Struma Valley was the most fertile part of the Aegean Administration. Extensive irrigation works were carried out in the late 1930s, which attracted almost 45% of the new settler population. In addition to the main post office in Serres — the capital of the prefecture under earlier Greek rule — eight village post offices operated in the surrounding area, six of which are presented on the next page.



СЪРЕСЪ / SERRES: A rarely used **СЪРЪ / SER** postmark
 From Pleven (1 Mar. 1944, on the reverse) to Serres (5 Mar.).
 Rates: Surface up to 20g **2лв** to 14 Mar. 1944.



СЪРЕСЪ / SERRES: Mail to Hungary
 From Serres (15 Aug. 1941) to Budakeszi, Hungary (23 Aug., on the reverse).
 Rates: Surface up to 20g **7лв**; registration **7лв**; total **14лв**.
 • Correspondence between the Aegean Administration and Axis territories other than Bulgaria proper or Germany is uncommon.

СЪРЕСЪ / SERRES: Mail to Occupied Yugoslavia
 From Serres (20 Mar. 1942) to Skopje (23 Aug., on the reverse).
 Rates: Postcard surface **1лв** to 14 Mar. 1944.
 • Correspondence between the Aegean Administration and the occupied Yugoslavian territory is similarly uncommon.





ДЕМИРЪ ХИСАРЪ / DEMIR HISSAR [No. 2] (today SIDIROKASTRO)

From Demir Hissar (20 Apr. 1942) to Sofia (21 Apr.).

Rates: Postcard surface 1лв to 14 Mar. 1944.

STRUMA VALLEY VILLAGES

Seven of the twenty village post offices known to date were established in the Struma Valley; six of them are presented here. All were situated close to the railway and benefited from their proximity to the River Struma, which served both as the border and as the only gateway to Thessaloniki.

Postal evidence from these offices is scarce. It is likely that some, if not all, did not operate throughout the entire period of the occupation.

The rarity of postal items from smaller offices is partly because their services were available only to Bulgarian citizens.



ДЖУМАЯ ДЕМ-ХИСАРСКО / DJOUMAIA [No. 3] (today IRAKLIA)

From Maglise (30 May 1944) to Lower Djoumaia (5 June), redirected to ПЧЕЛИНЦИ.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 3лв from 15 Mar. 1944.

- The depicted cover is one of two similar samples cancelled with Djoumaia, reported to date, both belonging to the same correspondence.



САРЖ-МУСАКЛИЙ / SARI-MOUSSAKLI [No. 4] (today PENTAPOLI)

From Sari-Moussakli (3 Mar. 1943) via Serres (5 Mar., on the reverse) to Sofia (6 Mar., on the reverse). Rates: Surface 2лв to 14 Mar. 1944; registration 3лв from 2 July 1942 to 14 Mar. 1944; total 5лв.

- The depicted cover is a single postal item reported to date, originating from Sari-Moussakli.



ГАРА АНГИСТА / ANGHISTA GARE [No. 7]

(today ANGHISTA)

Illegible date on pmk.



РАДУЛЕВО / RADOULEVO [No. 8]

(today RODOLIVOS)

pmk. dated 11 Mar. 1943



ЗИЛЯХОВО / ZILIAHOVO [No. 6] (today NEA ZICHNI)

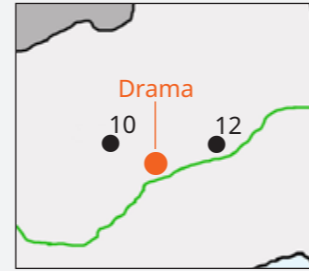
From Ziliahovo (16 Apr. 1943) to Sofia (19 Apr., according to the recipient's handstamp *Получено*, meaning 'received').

Rates: Postcard surface 1лв to 14 Mar. 1944.



DRAMA AND DRAMA PLATEAU

Second in importance and considerably smaller than the Struma Valley, the Drama Plateau had the distinct advantage of a road connection to Sofia via Nevrokop, known today as Gotse Delchev.



In addition to the Drama post office, four more were established in surrounding villages, two of which are featured here. Samples of stationery and additional postmarks representing complimentary services are also depicted on the current and subsequent pages.

ДРАМА / DRAMA

→ From Drama (31 Oct. 1942) via Sofia (1 Nov., on the reverse) to Istanbul, Turkey (4 Nov.).

Rates: Reduced letter rate to Turkey up to 20g 4лв; registration 7лв; total 11лв.

- Outgoing mail to an 'undercover address' in Turkey: The Tiberius family in Istanbul served as undercover mail forwarders for Greeks in the Aegean Administration who wished to contact their relatives in camps in Turkey and the Middle East. **Out of an estimated 600 covers forwarded, only six have survived.** This story was uncovered in 2000 by the Greek postal historian Socrates Bosovitch.

← Coupon receipt (КУПОНЪ РАЗПИСКА) cancelled (ПОЩЕНСКИ ЗАПИСИ * ДРАМА, 27 Apr. 194?) for postal money order of 1000лв sent to Kavala.



ПРОСЪЧЕНЪ / PROSETCHENE [No. 10] (today PROSOTSANI)

← Receipt (РАЗПИСКА) for a submitted telegram (ПОДАДЕ ТЕЛЕГРАМА) cancelled in Prosetchene (4 Mar. 1944).

← From Prosetchene (2 Aug. 1944) to Lesново.

Rates: Postcard surface 2лв from 15 Mar. 1944.



НУСРАТЛИЙ NOUSRATLI [No. 12] (today NIKIFOROS)

From Nousratli (2 Nov. 1943) to Memmingen, Germany.

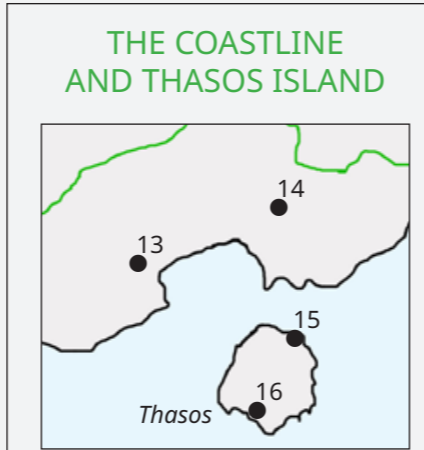
Rates: Reduced letter rate to Germany up to 20g 4лв from 1 Sep. 1942; registration 7лв; total 11лв.

- The depicted registered cover is one of two postal items reported to date originating from Nousratli, the other being a fragment.
- Addressed to a Greek inmate in Stalag VIIIB, Germany.
- German censorship in Vienna.





ПРАВИЩЕ / PRAVISCHTE [No. 13] (today ELEFHEROUPOLI)
 From Pravischte (15 Oct. 1942) to Sofia (18 Oct., on the reverse).
 Rates: Surface up to 20g **2лв** to 14 Mar. 1944; registration **3лв** from 2 July 1942 to 14 Mar. 1944; total **2лв**.



From the Struma Delta in the west to the Nestos Delta further east, the land was largely unattractive for settlement. With limited options available, few newcomers chose to settle there. The exception was the large town of Kavala and its suburbs.

Thasos island, with its lush landscapes and proximity to the mainland, attracted only a few hundred settlers. Despite the apparent low demand for postal services, two post offices were mysteriously established, each located on opposite sides of the island.



САРЪШАБАНАНЪ / SARICHABAN [No. 14] (today CHRYSSOUPOLI)
 From Sarichaban (27 Oct. 1943) to Sofia (30 Oct., on the reverse).
 Rates: Surface up to 20g **2лв** to 14 Mar. 1944.



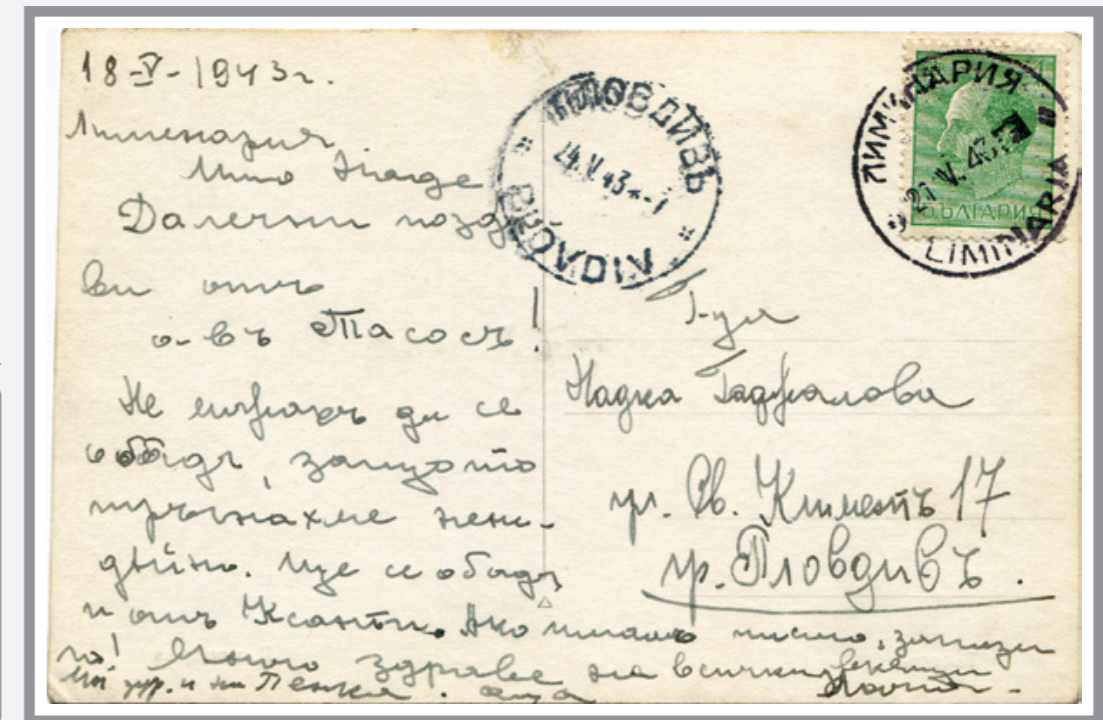
ЛИМЕНЪ / LIMEN [No. 15] (today LIMENAS)
 From Limen (21 July 1943) to Sofia (24 July).
 Rates: Postcard surface **1лв** to 14 Mar. 1944.



← 50%



50% →



ЛИМИНАРИЯ / LIMINARIA [No. 16] (today LIMENARIA)
 From Liminaria (21 May 1943) to Plovdiv (24 May).
 Rates: Postcard surface **1лв** to 14 Mar. 1944.



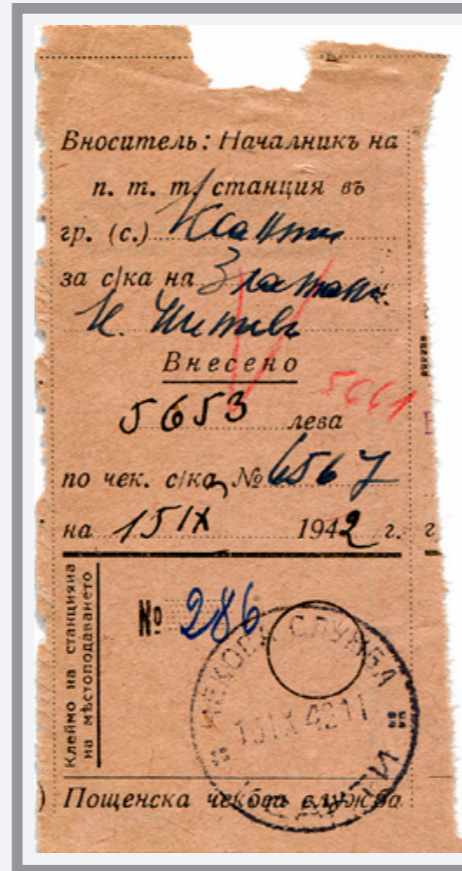
КСАНТИ / KSANTI (today KSANTHI)

▲ From Zemun (24 Dec. 1942) to Ksanti (29 Dec.).

Rates: Reduced postcard rate to Italy, Bulgaria, etc., 2 kuna.

• Incoming mail from the short-lived (1941-45) Independent State of Croatia (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska, or NDH), where Zemun belonged.

→ Coupon receipt of the Postal Cheque Service (**ПОЩЕНСКА ЧЕКОВА СЛУЖБА**) cancelled Cheques Service Ksanti (**ЧЕКОВА СЛУЖБА * КСАНТИ**, 15 Sept. 1942) for payment of 5653лв.



ГАРА ВУКЪ / BOUK GARE [No. 17] (today PARANESTI)

From Bouk Gare (12 June 1943) to Sofia.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 2лв to 14 Mar. 1944; registration 3лв from 2 July 1942 to 14 Mar. 1944.

• The depicted registered cover is **one of two postal items reported to date** originating from Bouk Gare, the other being a regular cover.

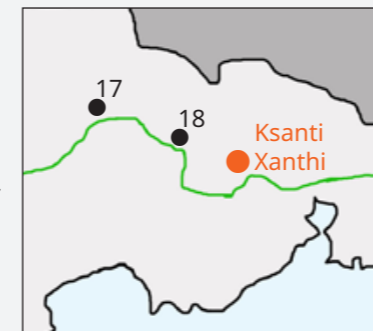


КСАНТИ AND ADJACENT VILLAGES

Second in size only to Kavala, Ksanti was designated the capital of the Aegean Administration.

Strategically located at the centre (in an east-west direction) of the occupied territory, Ksanti attracted a significant settler population who contributed to various public sector services.

Both Bouk (in Macedonia) and Krastopol (in Thrace) are located along the banks of the Nestos River, a natural border between Macedonia and Thrace.



КСАНТИ / KSANTI (today XANTHI)

From Ksanti (6 Oct. 1941) to Sofia (7 Oct., on the reverse).

Rates: Surface up to 20g 2лв to 14 Mar. 1944.

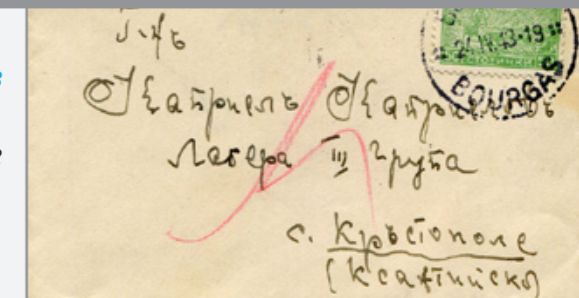
• Censorship handstamp: **ЩАБЪ БЪЛОМОРСКИ ОТРЯДЪ * ЦЕНЗУРНА СЕКЦИЯ** (Headquarters of the Aegean Sea Detachment * Censorship Section).

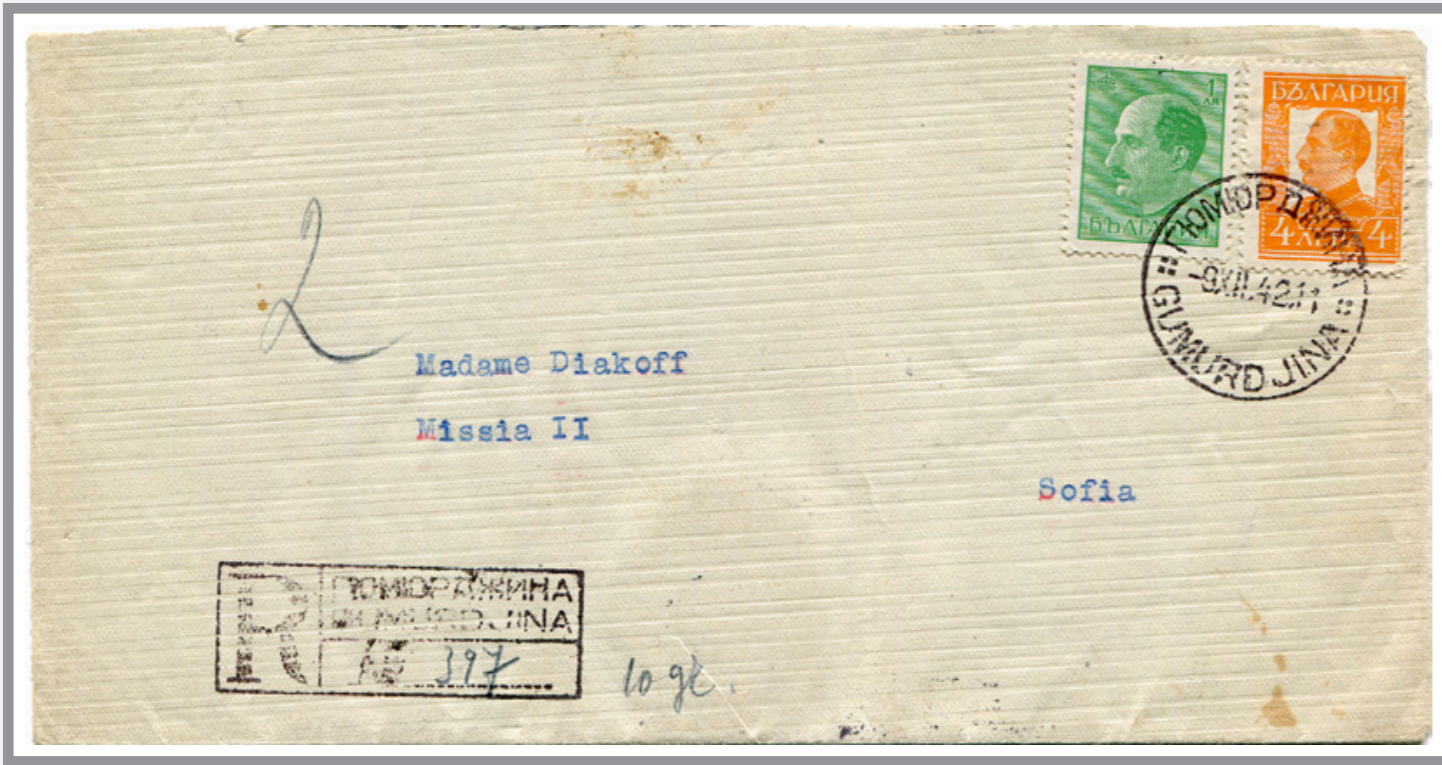
КРЪСТОПОЛЪ / KRASTOPOL [No. 18] (today STAVROUPOLI)

From Bourgas (24 Apr. 1943) to Krastopol (28 Apr.).

Rates: Visiting card cover 0.50лв from 2 July 1942 to 14 Mar. 1944.

• Krastopol was the location of an anti-regime internment camp.





ГЮМЮРДЖИНА / GUMURDJINA
(today КОМОТИНИ)

From Gumurdjina (9 Dec. 1942) to Sofia (12 Dec., on the reverse).

Rates: Surface up to 20g **2лв** to 14 Mar. 1944; registration **3лв** from 2 July 1942 to 14 Mar. 1944.

- Sent from the Vice-Consul of Turkey in Bulgaria, C. Kucamem-foglu; hence, his wax seal on the reverse.



100%

THRACE

Gumurdjina
Komotini

Dedeagatche
Alexandroupoli

Thrace, the easternmost part of the occupied territory, attracted fewer new settlers compared to occupied Macedonia, despite being roughly equal in size. This may be attributed to the region's less fertile land, a significant density of Muslim communities, or both factors combined.

Of the twenty-six new Bulgarian post offices established in Greek territory, only six were located in Thrace: the four depicted on the current page, along with Ksanti and Krastopol, both featured on the previous page.



ДЕДЕ-АГАЧЪ / DEDE-AGHATCHE
(today ALEXANDROUPOLI)

From Dedeagatche (4 Oct. 1941) to Sofia (6 Oct., on the reverse).

Rates: Surface up to 20g **2лв** to 14 Mar. 1944; registration **2лв** to 1 July 1942.



ПОРТО ЛАГОСЪ / PORTO-LAGOS [No. 19]

From Porto-Lagos (28 May 1941) to Kyustendil.

- This enigmatic post office has yet to produce a properly used postal item. Its actual operation remains questionable.
- The postmark on the philatelic cover shown may indicate an attempted, but possibly unrealised, establishment.



ШАПЧИ-ГЮМЮР / ШАПТЧИ [No. 20]
(today SAPES)

From Chaptchi (1 Aug. 1942) to Sofia (4 Aug.).

Rates: Postcard surface **1лв** to 14 Mar. 1944.



III М(ЕЖДУ) С(ЕЛСКИ) УЧАСТЪКЪ * САРЖШАБАНЪ
(SARICHABAN Rural P.O.)

From No. III Sarichaban R.P.O. (27 Feb. 1944) via Sofia (2 Mar., on the reverse) to Shishmanovo, Samokov area. Rates: Surface up to 20g 2лв to 14 Mar. 1944.

• The depicted cover is the only one reported to date originating from this Rural P.O.

⇄ RURAL POST

The Rural Post in the occupied territory was organised in a manner similar to its counterpart in mainland Bulgaria. Post offices providing rural services operated along designated routes numbered as I, II, and so on.

To date, postal items have been discovered from rural routes in Dedeaghat, Demir Hissar, Kavala, and Sarichaban.

⇄ TRAVELLING POST

The Travelling Post operated on the railway Sofia – Simitli – Kulata – Demir Hissar – Dedeaghat. The railway ran on a standard gauge line (Sofia – Simitli), a narrow (or Decauville) gauge (Simitli – Kulata – Demir Hissar), and a standard gauge again for the last part (Demir Hissar – Dedeaghat).

The initially missing Decauville section (Kulata – Demir Hissar) was constructed in record time and inaugurated in December 1941.

Travelling Post postmarks describe the routes Dedeaghat – Sofia and Demir Hissar – Sofia.



П(ОДВИЖНИТЕ) П(ОЩЕНСКИ) П(ИСАЛИЩА) * ДЕДЕ-АГАЧЪ – СОФИЯ
(Travelling Post Office DEDEAGHATCH – SOFIA)

From Dedeaghat – Sofia T.P.O. (23 Dec. 1943) to Sofia (25 Dec., on the reverse). Rates: Surface 2лв to 14 Mar. 1944. Posted in БЪЛЕНЪ ДРАМСКО (Belen in Drama, today Sili, according to the sender's address) located on the railway line.

П(ОДВИЖНИТЕ) П(ОЩЕНСКИ) П(ИСАЛИЩА) * ДЕМИРЪ ХИСАРЪ – СОФИЯ
(Travelling Post Office DEMIR HISSAR – SOFIA)

From Demir Hissar – Sofia T.P.O. (22 Oct. 194?) to Sofia.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 2лв to 14 Mar. 1944.

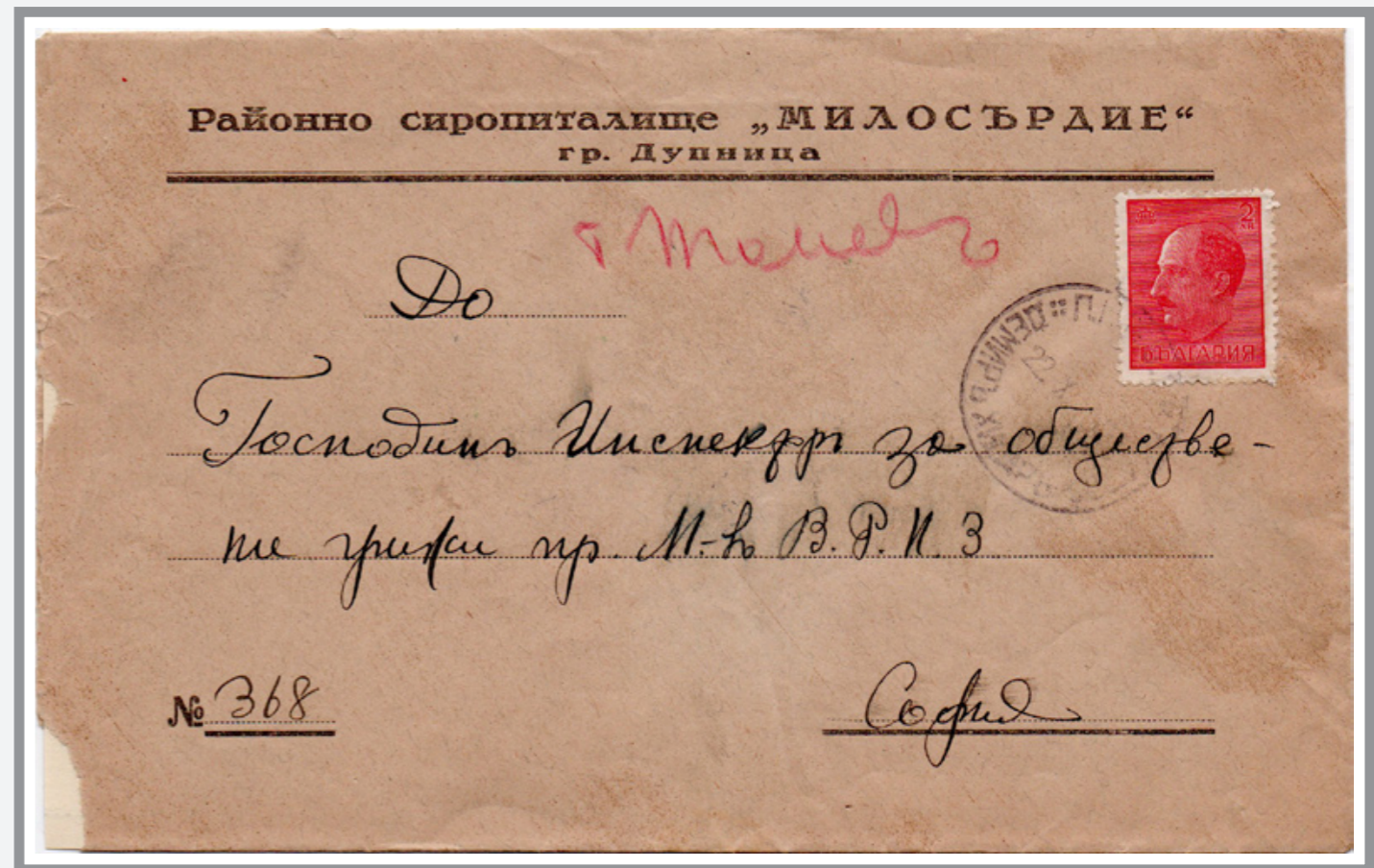
• Posted in ДУПНИЦА (Dupnica), which is located on the railway line.

I М(ЕЖДУ) С(ЕЛСКИ) УЧАСТЪКЪ * КАВАЛА
(KAVALA Rural P.O.)

From No. I Kavala R.P.O. (5 July 1944) to Sofia (10 July, on the reverse).

Rates: Surface up to 20g 3лв from 15 Mar. 1944.

• Handstamp БАНКА БЪЛГАРСКИ КРЕДИТЪ / КЛОНЪ КАВАЛА (Bulgarian Credit Bank, Kavala branch). The bank operated from 1934 to 1948.



11.a. MAIL TO AND FROM ABROAD – FIRST PERIOD

Regarding international mail, the measures implemented in Greece were severe, in contrast to what applied in most occupied countries. During the first period (April 1941 to September 1942), international mail was restricted to and from Germany, Italy and a few annexed territories by the Axis.

Mail from Poland

Mail to or from Poland is rarely seen. This should be attributed to the temporary prohibitive measures imposed by both the Generalgouvernement and the occupation authorities in Greece.



From Sofia (12 Dec. 1941 to Athens (16 Dec., on the reverse).

Rates: to Germany: Surface up to 20g 7лв, airmail 5лв.

- Mail to or from Bulgaria was suspended throughout the entire period of the Axis occupation. This cover was sent by a German civilian to a German merchant in Athens. It may have been exempt or simply delivered by accident.
- Censored in Vienna (insignia *g* on the sealing tape).

Mail from Bulgaria: Exempt or accidental?



Mail to Switzerland: Transition period in Eastern Crete

In February 1942, postal operations in Eastern Crete were transferred from Italian to Greek authorities. Greek mail to Switzerland had previously been permitted under Italian administration but was prohibited under Greek authorities, except for mail addressed to the International Committee of the Red Cross.



From Warsaw (3 July 1941) to Athens (9 July).

Rates: Surface 50 groszy; registration 60 groszy; total 1.10 zloty.

- Censored in Vienna (insignia *g* on the sealing tape).



From Vrahassi, Eastern Crete (31 Mar. 1942) via St Nicholas and Rhodes (10 Apr., on the reverse) to Geneva, Switzerland.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 15D from 1 Jan. to 14 May 1942.

- Censored in St Nicholas with sealing tape and handstamp 8.

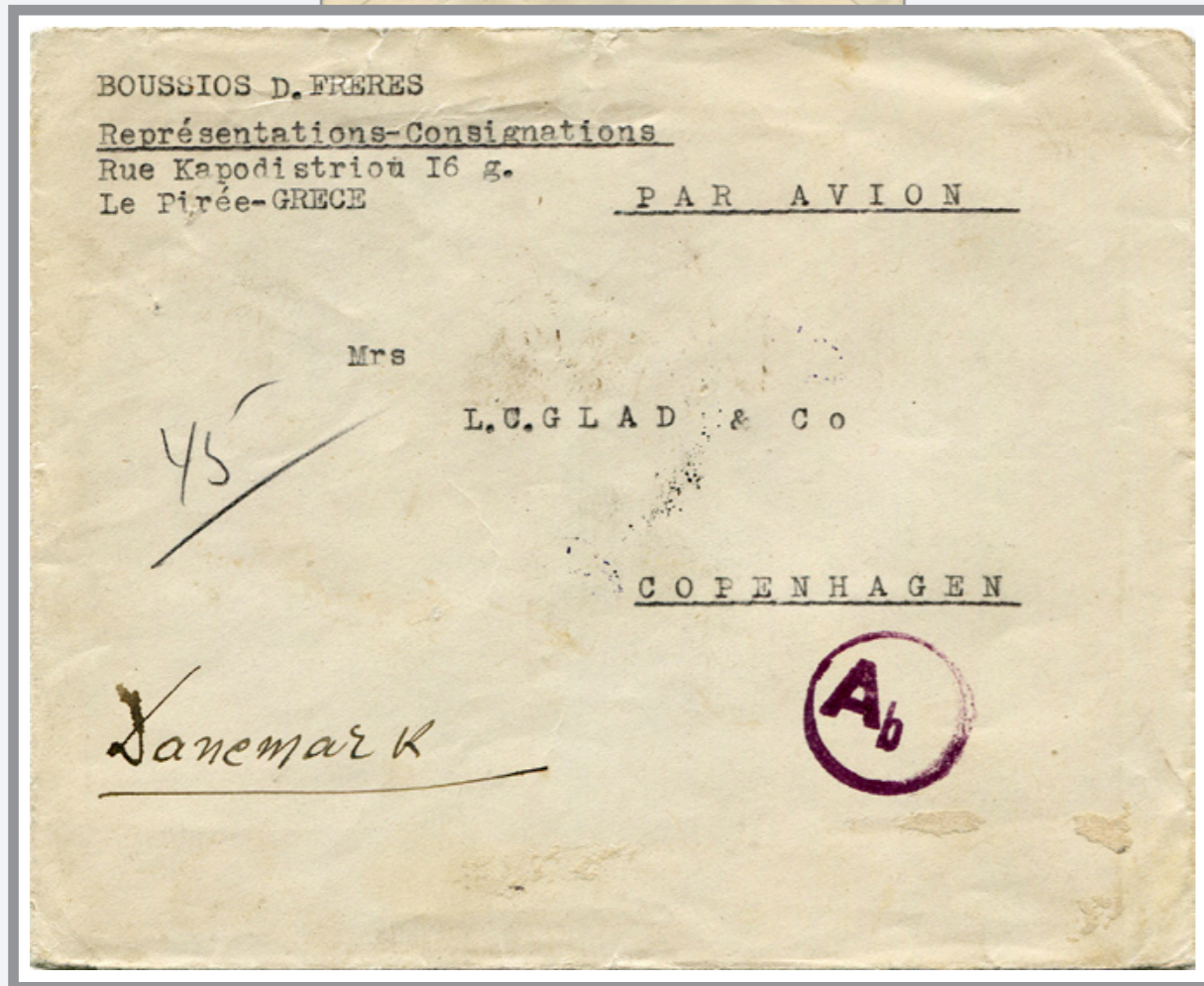
11.b. MAIL TO AND FROM ABROAD – SECOND PERIOD

From October to December 1942, and again from April 1943 onwards, postal communications were re-established with a number of neutral, pro-Axis or occupied countries. Due to prolonged commercial inactivity and the general hardship in Greece, items of mail to or from countries other than Italy (until the capitulation), Germany or their annexed territories **are rarely encountered**.

Mail to Denmark



50%

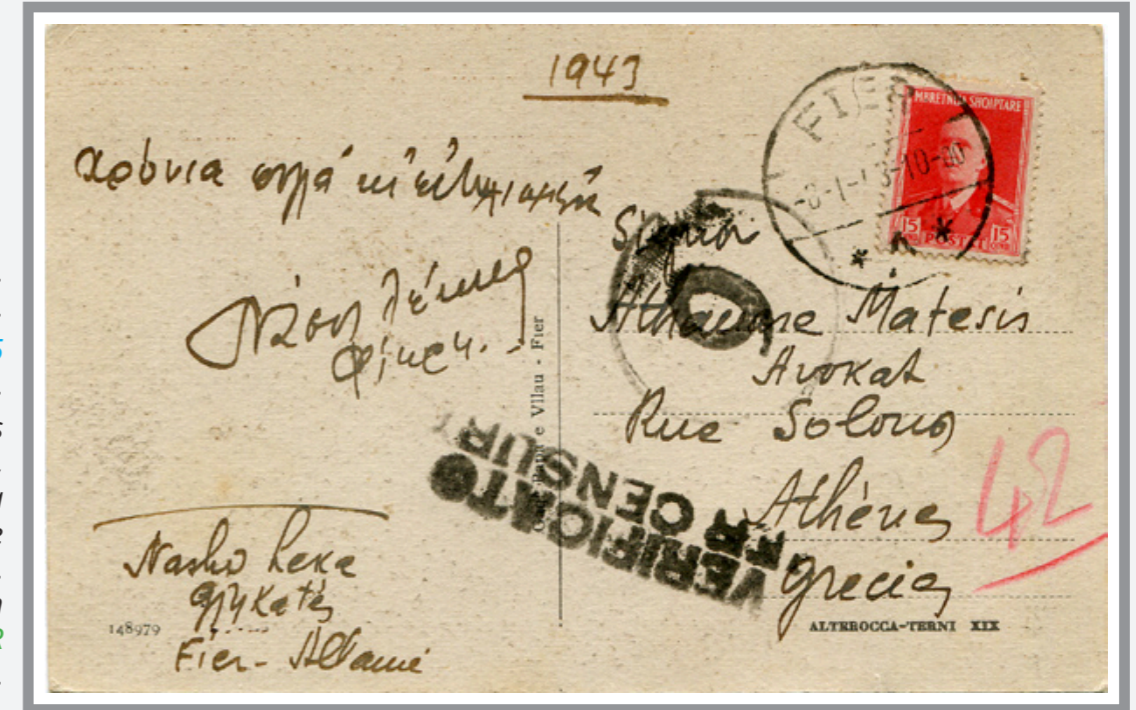


From Piraeus (Dec. 1942) to Copenhagen.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 100D from 1 Nov. 1942 to 31 Jan. 1943; airmail up to 10g 10D from Nov. 1942 to 31 Mar. 1943; total 110D.

- Censored in Rome with sealing tape and handstamps **UCPE I** and **338/I**; also in Berlin (handstamp **Ab** in purple), the censor station for Danish mail.

Mail from Albania



From Fier, Albania (8 Jan. 1943), to Athens.

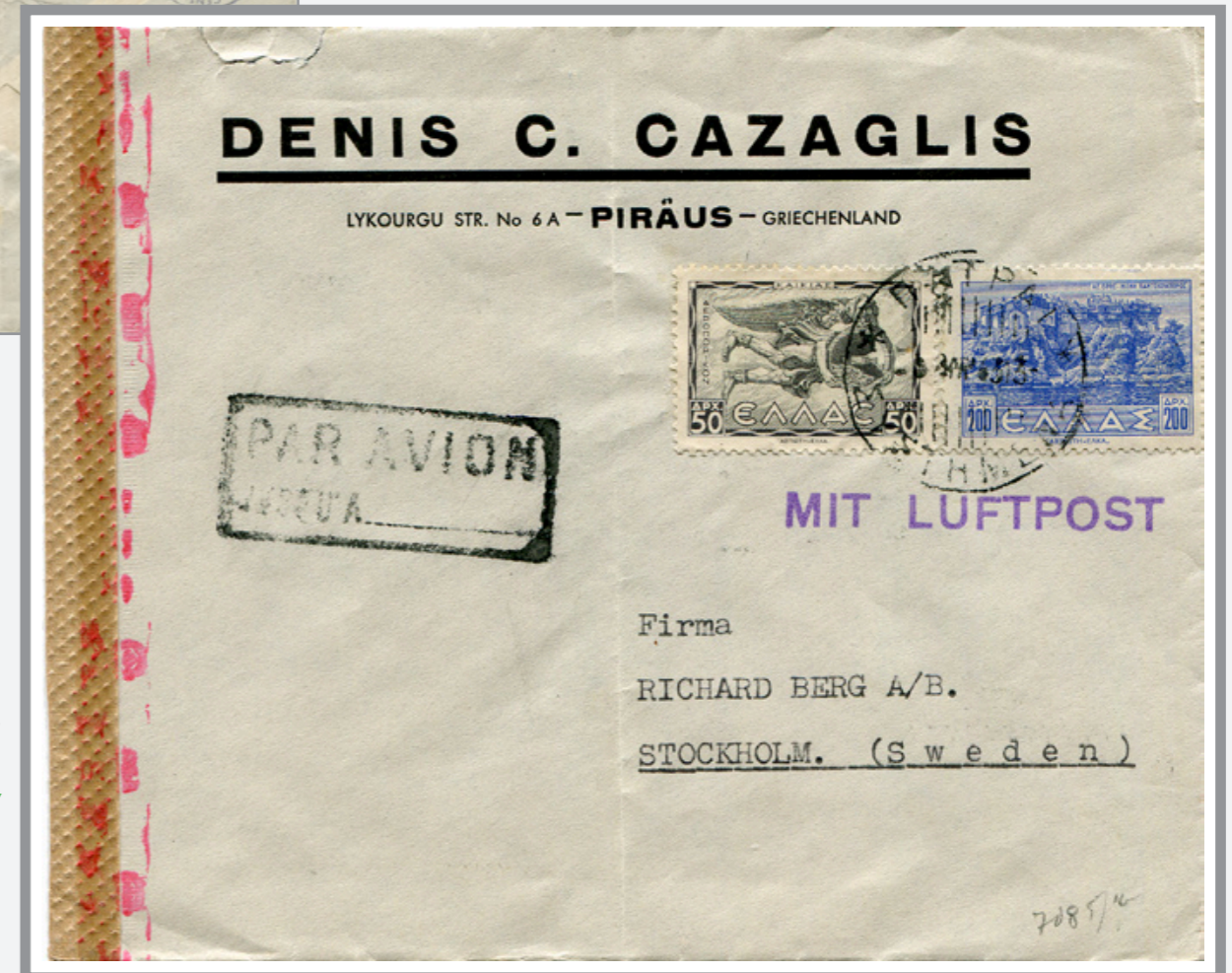
Rates: Postcard surface 15 qindarka (100th of lek).

- Mail to and from Albania was permitted from 1 Mar. 1942, when flights from Athens via Corfu to Rome made a stopover in Tirana.
- Censored in Albania with handstamps **VERIFICATO PER CENSURA** and **6**.



50%

Mail to Sweden



From Patra (6 Apr. 1943) to Stockholm.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 200D from 1 Feb. to 31 July; airmail up to 10g 50D from 1 Apr. to 9 Sep. 1943; total 250D.

- Censored in Athens with tape and handstamps **UCP ATENE** and **42/Gre**; also in Vienna (insignia **g** on the mechanical franking).

Mail to Portugal



From Athens (27 May 1943) to Lisbon (2 June).

Rates: Postcard surface 125D from 1 Feb. to 31 July; airpost 50D from 1 Apr. to 9 Sep. 1943; total 175D.

- Not censored.

Mail from Spain



From Madrid (25 May 1943) to Thessaloniki (18 June, on the reverse).

Rates: Surface up to 20g 75 céntimos.

- Censored in Madrid with sealing tape; also in Munich (insignia *d* on the mechanical franking and censor's numbers in red or purple), the censor station for Spanish mail.

Mail from and to Vichy France



From La Seyne sur-Mer, France (6 July 1943), via Thessaloniki (28 July) to Piraeus (9 Aug.).

Rates: Surface up to 20g 4 French francs.

- Censored in Frankfurt (insignia *e* on the handstamp with the swastika), the censor station for French mail; also in Athens with sealing tape and handstamps UCP ATENE and 27/Gre.



From Athens (5 Apr. 1944) to La Seyne-sur-Mer, France.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 10,000D from 15 Mar. to 30 June 1944.

- Censored in Vienna (insignia *g* on the mechanical franking) and Frankfurt (handstamp *Ae* in red), the censor station for French mail.



Mail from and to Belgium



From Antwerp (21 Apr. 1943) to Athens (15 June, on the reverse).

Rates: Surface up to 20g 2 Belgian francs (BEF); registration 2 BEF; total 4 BEF.

- Censored in Munich (insignia *d* on the mechanical franking and censor's numbers in red and purple), the censor station for Belgian mail; also in Athens with handstamp 55/Gre.

Mail to the Netherlands and Luxembourg



From Athens (24 June 1943) to The Hague, Netherlands.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 200D from 1 Feb. to 31 July 1943; airmail up to 10g 50D from 1 Apr. to 9 Sep. 1943; total 250D.

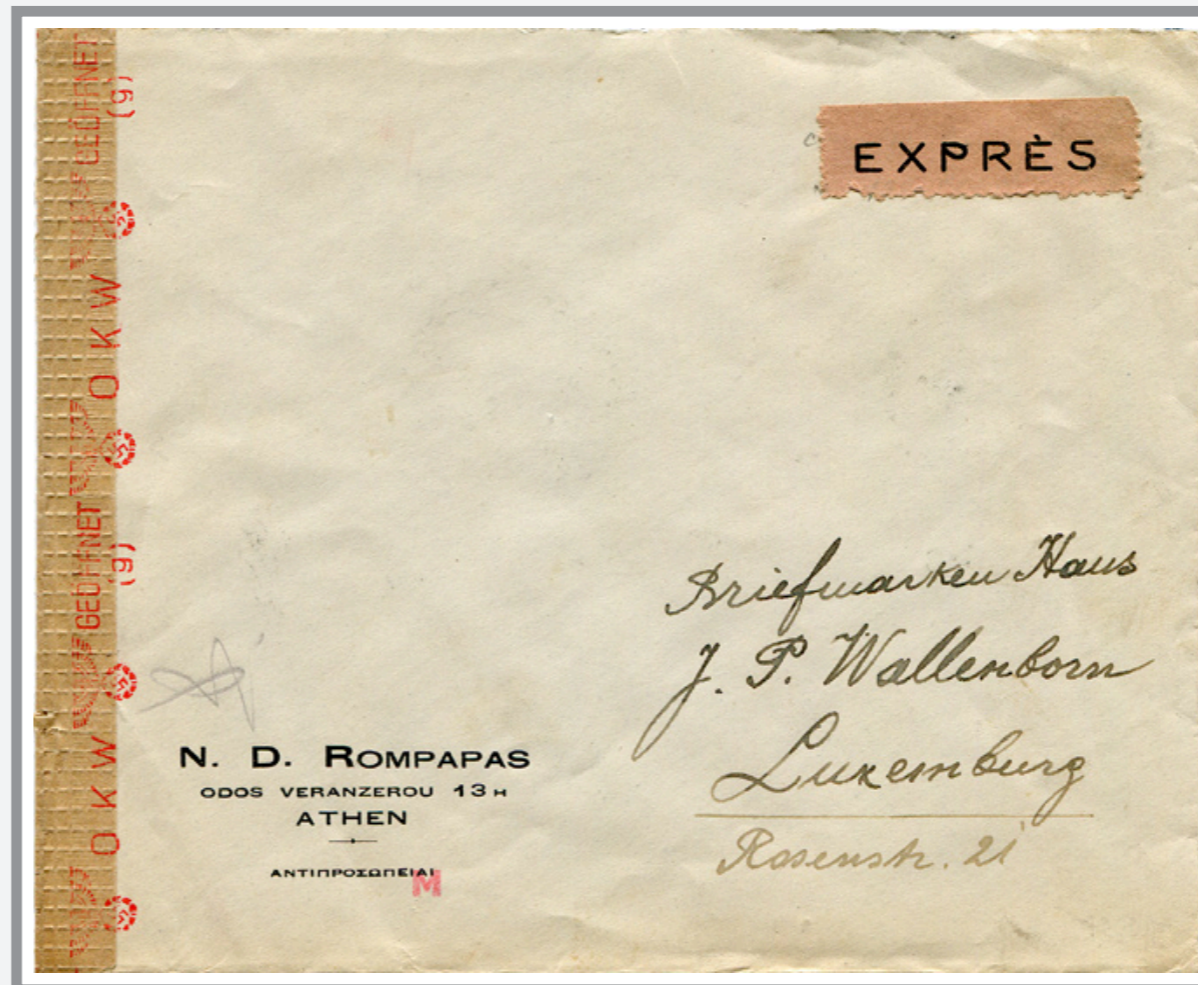
- Censored in Vienna (insignia *g* on the mechanical franking).



From Athens (8 June 1943) to Brussels.

Rates: Postcard surface 125D from 1 Feb. to 31 July 1943.

- Censored in Athens with handstamps VERIFICATO PER CENSURA and UCP/AT-ENE; also censored in Vienna.

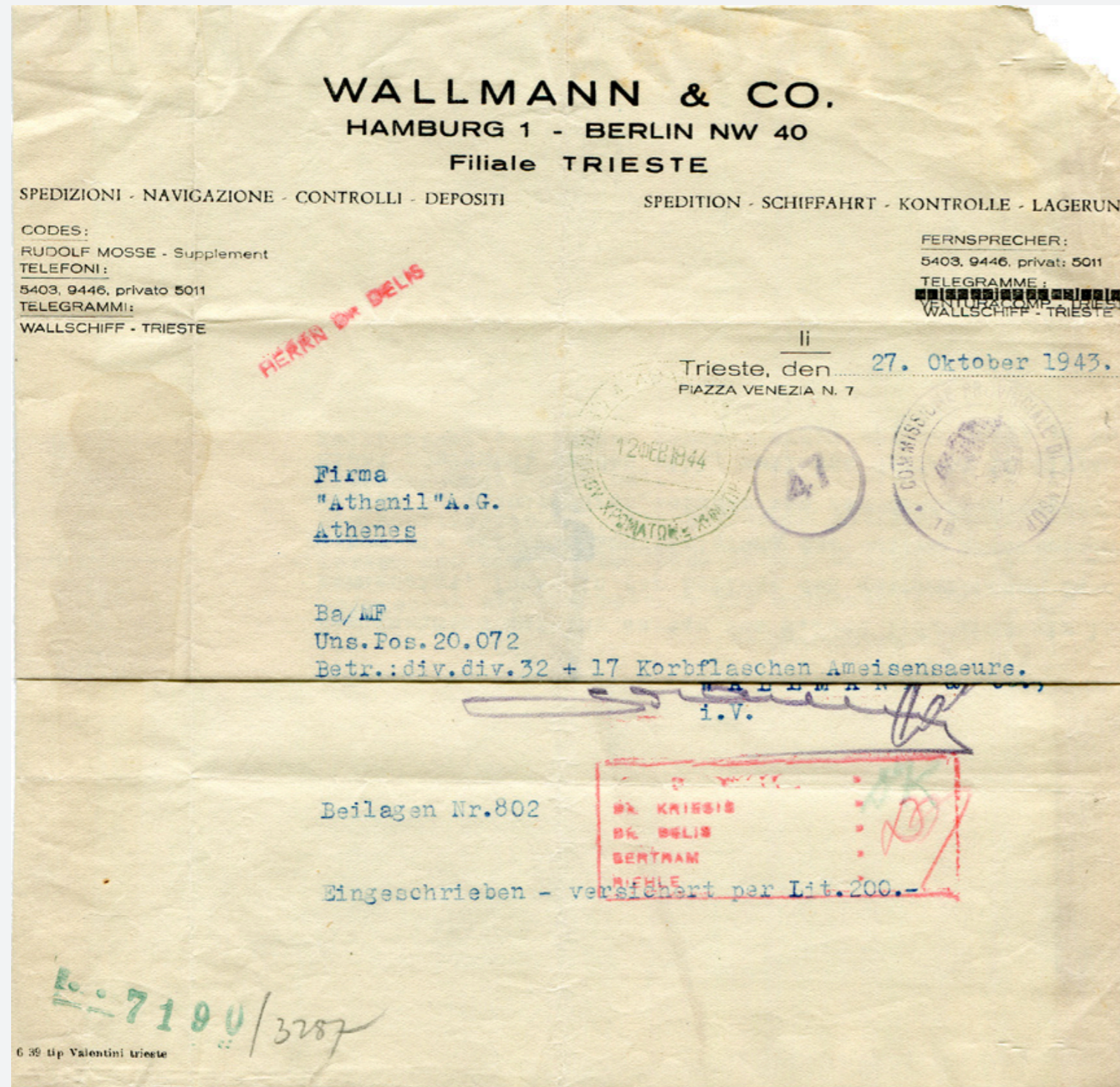


From Athens (7 Aug. 1944) to Luxembourg.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 100,000D and express 100,000D, both from 1 July to 14 Aug. 1944; total 200,000D.

- Censored in Vienna (insignia *g* on the mechanical franking).

Mail from the Operational Zone of the Adriatic Littoral

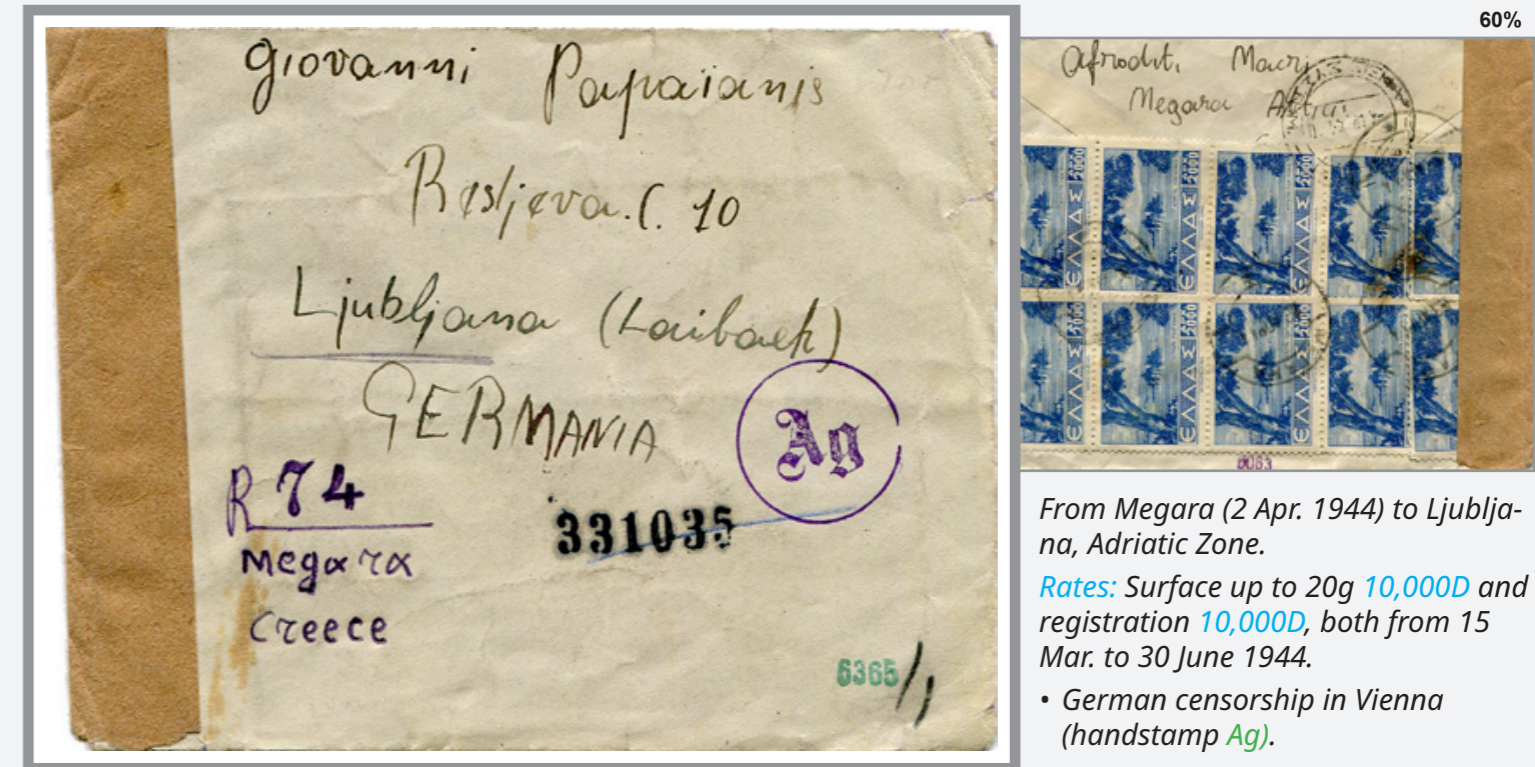


Letter from Trieste (27 Oct. 1943) to Athens (12 Feb. 1944). Despatch and arrival dates derived from the text.

- The provinces of Udine, Gorizia, Trieste, Pula, Fiume, and Ljubljana were not part of the Italian Social Republic (RSI), established in 1943. Given the region's strategic importance to Germany, it was designated the autonomous *Adriatisches Küstenland* [Adriatic Littoral] on 1 October 1943.
- Censorship handstamps used in Trieste closely resembled those previously employed by the Italians before the capitulation. Also censored in Vienna (green mark).



Mail to the Operational Zone of the Adriatic Littoral



From Megara (2 Apr. 1944) to Ljubljana, Adriatic Zone.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 10,000D and registration 10,000D, both from 15 Mar. to 30 June 1944.

- German censorship in Vienna (handstamp *Ag*).

Mail from Croatia (NDH)



From Zagreb, NDH (3 Mar. 1944), to Athens (11 Mar., on the reverse).

Rates: surface up to 20g 5 kune (Kn); registration 9 Kn; airmail up to 10g 3.50 Kn; total 17.50 Kn.

- Censored in Vienna (insignia *g* on the sealing tape).

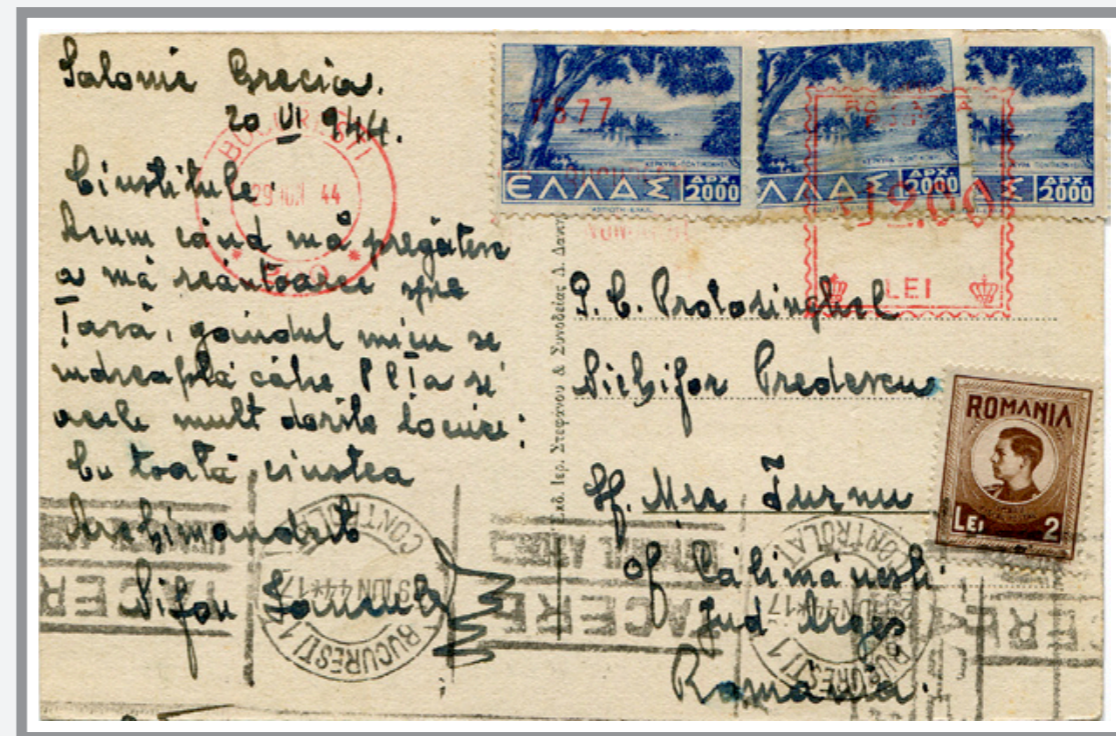
Mail from Bulgaria – Suspension lifted on behalf of the General

Postal relations between Bulgaria and Greece had been suspended. The depicted cover is addressed to Alexander Löhr, a German General and Überbefehlshaber im Südosten [High Commander of Southeast Europe]. To avoid complications with the Bulgarian postal system, two lines were added to Löhr's address in Bulgarian: Солунъ, Гърция [Thessaloniki, Greece].



70%

Mail to Romania – Suspended at the time, posted from Bucharest



Written in Thessaloniki (20 June 1944) and sent to Romania.

Rates in Greece: Postcard surface 6,000D.

Rates in Romania: Postcard surface 12 lei by mechanical franking; compulsory additional rate 2 lei paid with a regular stamp.

- Not accepted by the Thessaloniki post office, as postal relations between the two countries had been suspended. The postcard was correctly charged and ultimately mailed from Bucharest on 29 June to the final destination.

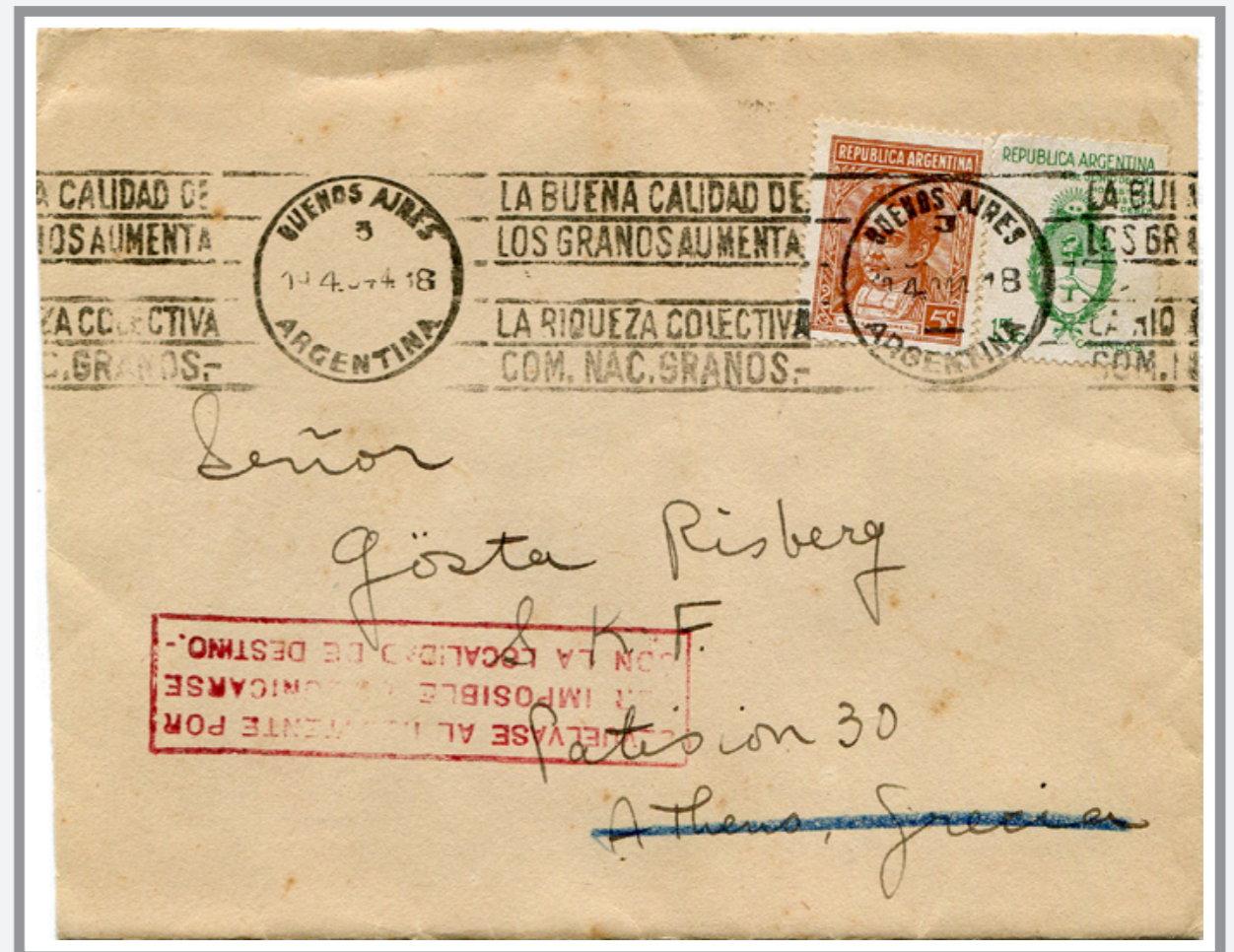
Mail from Argentina remained suspended



From Botevgrad, Bulgaria (24 Aug. 1943), via Sofia (25 Aug.) and Vienna (censors) to Thessaloniki (7 Sep.).

Rates: Surface up to 20g 7лв; airmail (pre-war period rate) up to 10g 3лв; total 10лв.

- The manuscript *препоръчано* [registered] and the registration handstamp were crossed out when the postal clerk realised that basic registration procedures required cooperation between the two postal systems.
- Censored in Vienna (insignia **g** on the sealing tape).



From Buenos Aires, Argentina (19 Apr. 1944), destined for Athens. Undelivered.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 20 centavos.

- The red boxed handstamp reads: **DEUÉLVASE AL REMITENTE POR SER IMPOSIBLE COMUNICARSE CON LA LOCALIDAD DE DESTINO**, [Return to sender since it is impossible to communicate with destination address].

12. THE COUNTDOWN

The capitulation of the Italian army on September 8, 1943, marked the beginning of the end of WWII. However, it would take a further thirteen months before the German army withdrew from the Greek mainland.



Mail to Albania suspended

From Athens (11 Sep. 1943) to Jorgucat, Albania. Undelivered.

Rates: Postcard surface 250D from 1 Aug. to 9 Nov. 1943; air-mail 100D from 10 Sep. to 30 Nov. 1943; total 350D.

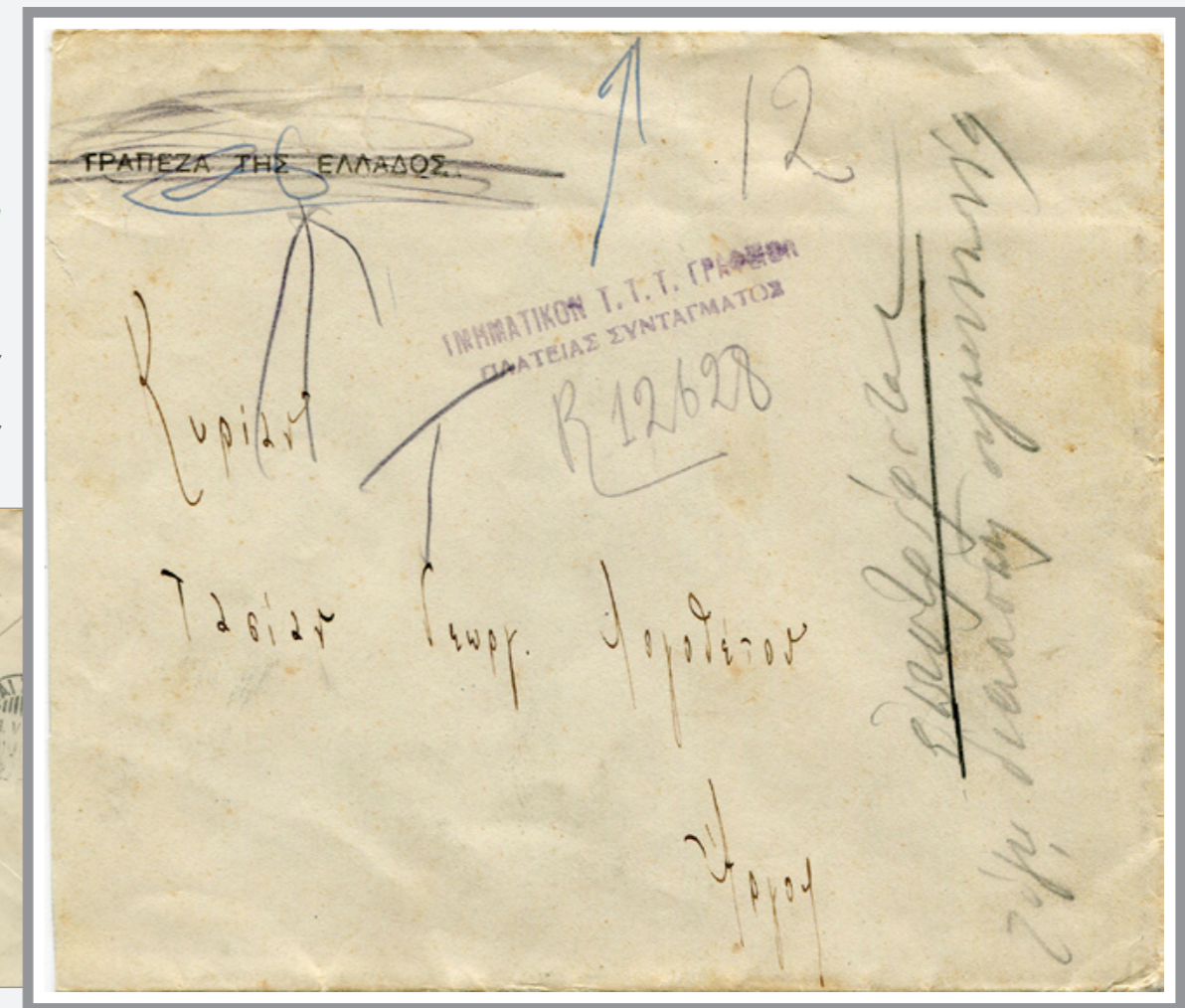
- Returned due to suspension of services handstamp in Greek.

Suspension of communications in the Peloponnese

From Athens (8 May 1944) to Argos.

Rates: Letter up to 20g 4,000D; registration 4,000D; total 8,000D.

- Pencil note in Greek: Returned due to suspension of services. Due to intensified partisan activities in the Peloponnese, an order issued on 19 May prohibited '... any postal or telegraphic communication, as well as communication by telephone...'



Mail to Italy suspended

From Athens (29 Sep. 1943) to Trieste. Undelivered. Rates: Surface up to 20g 400D; missing 2x100D stamps. Returned due to suspension of services handstamp in Greek.

Brussels liberated by the Allies

From Thessaloniki (27 Aug. 1944) to Brussels. Returned to Thessaloniki (10 Oct.).

Rates: Surface up to 20g 500,000D.

- On its way to Brussels, the cover was intercepted and handstamped *Retour*, as the city had fallen to the Allies in the meantime (3 Sep.).
- The *EXPRES* handstamp was crossed out, as express postage had not been paid.
- Censored twice in Vienna, reflecting both legs of its attempted journey.



7 Sep. 1944: Bulgaria is liberated by the Red Army



Final day of domestic flights

From Thessaloniki (7 Sep. 1944) to Athens (8 Sep).

Rates: Surface up to 20g 200,000D, registration 200,000D and express 200,000D, all from 15 Aug. to 14 Sep. 1944; airmail 100,000D; anti-TB rate 25,000D valid for the first ten days of each month.

Permanent suspension of international mail



From Athens (11 Sep. 1944) destined for Zlin, Germany. Undelivered.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 500,000D and express 500,000D, both from 15 Aug. to 14 Sep. 1944.

- Returned due to suspension of services in Greek.
- The additional postmark dated 24 Sep. 1944 substantiates the decision for permanent suspension.

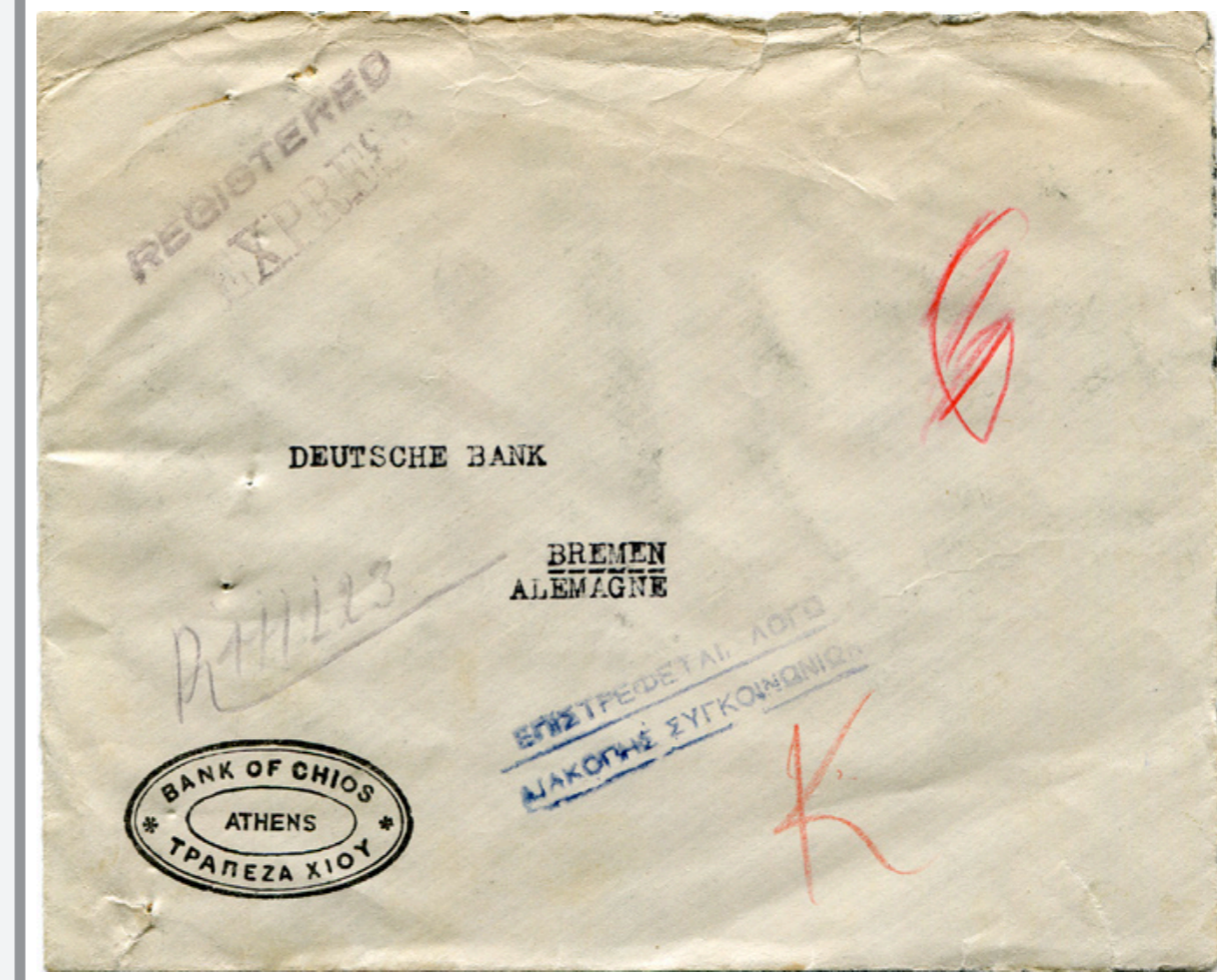


Final day of international flights

From Athens (7 Sep. 1944) to Wuppertal-Wichlinghausen, Germany.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 500,000D from 15 Aug. to 14 Sep. 1944.

- German censorship in Vienna.



From Athens (14 Sep. 1944) destined for Bremen, Germany. Undelivered.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 500,000D, registr. 500,000D and express 500,000D, all from 15 Aug. to 14 Sep. 1944.

- Returned due to suspension of services handstamp in Greek.

Communication issues in Crete



From Rethymno (19 Sep. 1944) to Chania (22 Sep.).

Earlier occupation-era stamps, and rates valid from 15 Aug. to 14 Sep. 1944: 2nd weight surface 20–40g 300,000D (200,000D+100,000D); optional children's camp fund rate 450,000D.

- The new stamps and rates introduced on 15 Sep. did not reach Crete in time.
- The 50,000D part of the children's camp fund stamp was correctly counted towards the total postage.



From Rethymno (27 Sep. 1944) to Spili village, Crete.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 5,000,000D.

- On 27 Sep., the postal clerk appeared to be aware of the new rates but, lacking the new stamps, wrote in red ink in Greek: 5,000,000D paid 27-6-44 and signed. He erroneously wrote 6 instead of 9 for September.

Mail suspended between Athens and Thessaloniki

On 2 Oct. 1944, when the cover at the top right reached Athens, postal services between Athens and Thessaloniki had been suspended, confirmed by the manuscript in Greek on the second cover, *Returned, lack of transportation*. The suspension remained in effect until the end of October, when the Wehrmacht completed its northbound withdrawal.



40%

Top right: From Thessaloniki (26 Sep. 1944) to Athens (2, 3 and 5 Oct.).

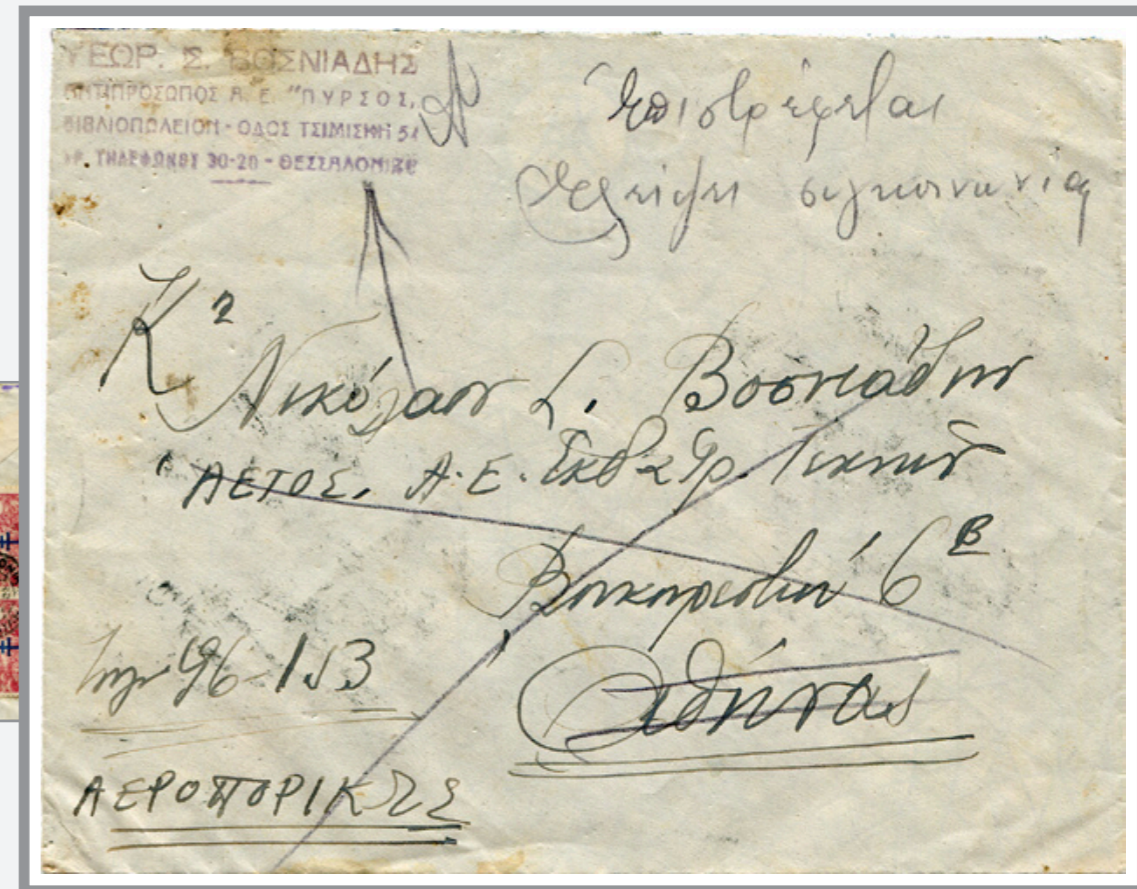
Bottom right: From Thessaloniki (2 Oct. 1944), destined for Athens. Undelivered. Manuscript in Greek: *Returned, lack of transportation*.

Rates on both covers: Surface up to 20g 5,000,000D; airmail up to 15g 1,000,000D. Additionally, on the cover at the bottom, anti-TB rate, compulsory during the first ten days of each month, 25,000D.

- The airmail rate was irrelevant, considering that air services were suspended from 8 Sep.



40%



13. STUMBLING TOWARDS LIBERATION

The northbound withdrawal of the Wehrmacht began in September 1944. On 12 Oct., they evacuated Athens, and the last detachment crossed the border into Yugoslavia by 2 Nov. Liberated Greece was struggling to regain its footing but remained effectively amputated. The German army still controlled the southern Aegean, with forces stationed in Crete, Melos, and the formerly Italian Dodecanese. In December, the Second Round of the Civil War broke out. Until May 1945, three successive governments were sworn in, a Viceroy replaced the King, and the drama of post-war Greece had only just begun.

In Greece, the curtain fell on 10 May 1945, when the German Command formally surrendered at Villa Ariadne in Heraklion, Crete. A few months later, on 2 Sep., the Japanese signed the act of surrender aboard the *USS Missouri*, marking the end of WWII.

To better illustrate the developments in Greece during the final eight months of the war, this chapter is divided into three sections:

- a. The partisans: Their assumption of power in most of rural Greece.
- b. The government: Initial steps towards organisation in and around Athens.
- c. Epilogue: The final days of WWII in Greece.

13.a. THE PARTISANS

As soon as the Germans withdrew, EAM and EDES partisans assumed power locally, according to territorial rights already granted by the government-in-exile. Stamps were issued by EAM in Lesvos (20 Sep. 1944) and Agrinio (7 Oct.), and by EDES in Lefkada (19 Sep.) and Prevesa (17 Oct.). These stamps were later declared illegal by the government in Athens.

Local partisan stamps of Lesvos travelling abroad



From Mytilene (14 Oct. 1944) to Cairo (24 Mar. 1945).

Earlier occupation-era stamps, and rates valid from 15 Aug. to 14 Sep. 1944: Surface up to 20g 500,000D, overpaid at 600,000D.

- The British detachment on Lesvos offered to carry local mail abroad via Smyrna, Turkey (manuscript SM). The cover depicted is one of four recorded examples.
- Partisan censorship in Mytilene (inverted linear Λ.) and Egyptian in Cairo.

From Lefkada (13 Oct. 1944) to Athens (illegible postmark) with two different frankings:

(a) Earlier occupation-era stamps and rates valid from 15 Aug. to 14 Sep. 1944: Surface up to 20g 200,000D and registration 200,000D. Also, anti-TB rate 25,000 from 1 July 1944.

(b) Partisan stamps, and rates valid from 15 Sep. to 10 Nov. 1944: Surface up to 20g 5,000,000D and registration 5,000,000D.

- Two different frankings, reflecting the different regimes at each end of the communication line.
- The over-printed run of the depicted 5,000,000D on 5,000D was limited to just 250 examples.

Local partisan stamps of Lefkada



Local partisan stamps of Prevesa



70%

Local partisan handstamp of Evros



70%



From Prevesa (10 Nov. 1944) to Athens (25 Nov.) with two different frankings:

- (a) Earlier occupation-era stamps, with rates valid from 15 Aug. to 14 Sep. 1944: Surface up to 20g 200,000D.
- (b) Partisan stamp, with rates valid from 15 Sep. to 10 Nov. 1944: Surface up to 20g 5,000,000D.
- A similar dual franking to that seen in the case of Lefkada. The partisan stamp was razor-cut upon arrival in Athens, as by that time all partisan stamps were considered illegal by the central government.

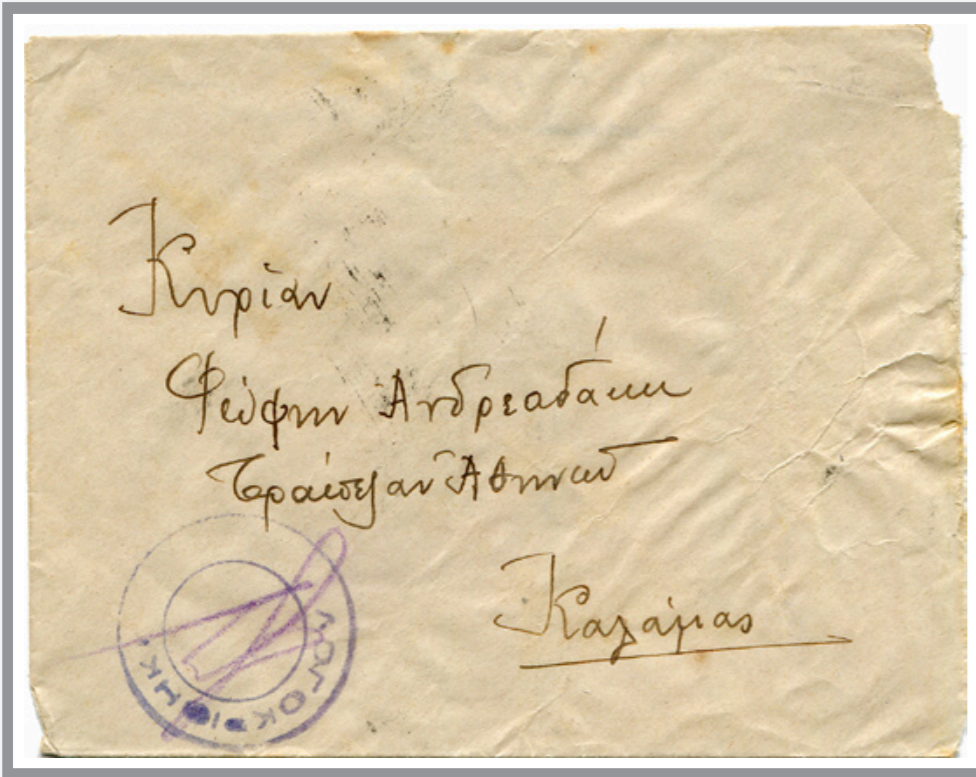


From Athens (31 Aug. 1944) via Thessaloniki (2 Sep.), possible arrival at destination in Didymoteicho, then back to Alexandroupoli, re-addressed to Drama, back to Thessaloniki (20 Dec.) and, finally, returned to the sender in Athens (19 Jan. 1945).

- Rates: Surface up to 20g 200,000D, registration 200,000D and express 200,000D, all from 15 Aug. to 14 Sep. 1944; airmail 100,000D from 15 Aug. 1944; total; 700,000D.
- By the time the cover arrived in Alexandroupoli or Didymoteicho, EAM partisans had already replaced the former German authorities. It was cancelled in Alexandroupoli with ΤΤΤ ΑΛΕΞΠΟΛΕΩΣ [Alexandroupoli Post], the first handstamp used by the partisans in the Evros region. On its return journey, it was censored by the partisans in Thessaloniki with a red ΛΟΓΟΚΡΙΣΙΑ ΕΛΛΑΣ [ELAS censorship].

The absence of government in rural Greece

The new government's measures and reforms had little impact beyond the capital. Most of rural Greece was administered by local partisan groups, each enforcing the law in its own way. Kalamata, for example, was a rare case where mail censorship remained in effect for a few weeks, from mid-October to mid-November 1944.



60%

From Athens (15 Nov. 1944) to Kalamata.

Rates: Surface up to 20g 3D from 11 Nov. 1944 to 31 Jan. 1945.

- Censored by left-wing EAM partisans in Kalamata.

Thessaloniki under EAM partisans' control

Since 30 Oct. 1944, the day the last German garrison left Thessaloniki, the city had been taken over by EAM partisans—despite the presence of a substantial number of British troops. For several weeks, from the December fighting until the partisans' departure on 17 Jan. 1945, mail was censored by the partisans using a red linear handstamp in Greek: ΛΟΓΟΚΡΙΣΙΑ ΕΛΑΣ [ELAS censorship].



70%

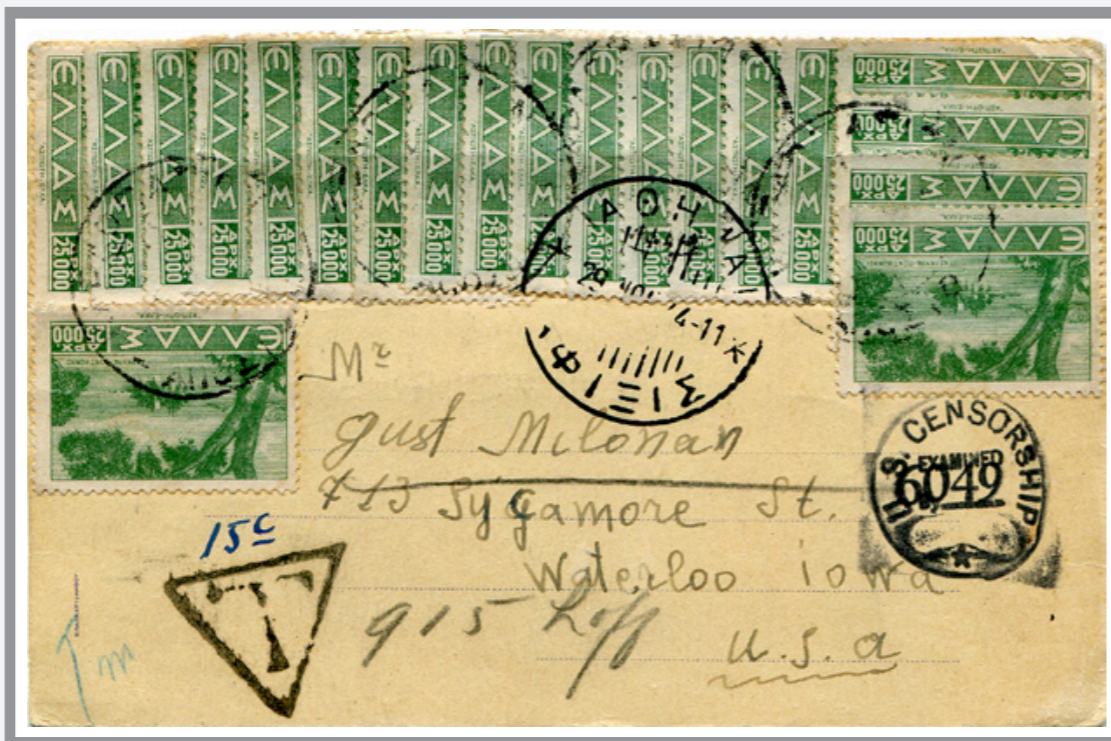
The absence of government in the Greek islands

In other parts of remote Greece, such as the islands, postal rates were paid with stamps that had already been devalued and withdrawn, as no New Drachmas arrived in time. In the case of Samos, due to the island's isolation from the mainland, the stamps denominated in the millions, issued in September, were never sent at all, let alone the November overprints.

From Samos (19 Nov. 1944) via Athens (Nov. 29) to Waterloo, IA, USA.

Earlier occupation-era stamps and rates valid from 15 Aug. to 14 Sep. 1944: Postcard surface 300,000D, overpaid at 500,000D, i.e., the letter surface rate.

- The postcard was taxed upon arrival in Athens (triangular T) and required payment of 15 gold centimes (15¢). Apparently, the USPS did not charge any postage dues.



From Thessaloniki (11 Dec. 1944) to Athens (17 Dec.).

Rates: 2nd weight surface 20-40g 5D (3D+2D) and registration 4D, both from 11 Nov. 1944 to 31 Jan. 1945; total 9D.

- The ΑΕΡΟΠΟΡΙΚΩΣ [Air Mail] indication is irrelevant, as mail at that time was transported by sea. Road, rail and air links between Athens and Thessaloniki were re-established much later.

Local partisan stamps of Serres (Eastern Macedonia)

On 1 Jan. 1945, shortly before the armistice, EAM partisans in Serres issued several stamp-like labels with face value indicated in Bulgarian leva, the currency in use under the preceding Bulgarian administration. A handful of postal items bearing the Serres labels have survived to date, with a few posted in February and the rest in March.



From Serres (Feb. 1945) to Thessaloniki (19 Feb.).

Rates: Surface up to 20g 5D from 1 Feb. to 31 Mar. 1945.

- After the EAM partisans had vacated Thessaloniki on 17 Jan. 1945, the government personnel who replaced them instructed post office employees to disregard any stamps issued by the partisans. The depicted cover was charged 10D in postage dues, i.e., double the 'missing' rate, paid by two valid 5D stamps cancelled with an ΕΙΣΠΡΑΚΤΕΟΝ [postage due] linear handstamp.

Local partisan stamps of Alexandroupoli (Thrace)

They were issued on 22 Jan. 1945 by EAM partisans in Alexandroupoli after the armistice but before the Treaty of Varkiza. Similarly to the case of Serres, their face value was denominated in leva, and very few non-philatelic postal items bearing these stamps have survived to date. The use of partisan stamps in both Serres and Alexandroupoli ended when they were replaced by the New Drachma stamps in late March.



70%



From Alexandroupoli to Athens (29 Mar. 1945) and then to Peristeri (31 Mar.).

Rates: Surface up to 20g 5D and registration 5D, both from 1 Feb. to 31 Mar. 1945; total 10D, paid at 10λε.

- The cover bears two 5λε stamps, one for the surface rate and one for registration; total 10λε. Upon arrival in Athens, both partisan stamps were destroyed with a razor. In addition, 15D in postage dues were collected, as indicated by the manuscript Π.Τ. Δρχ. 15, i.e., 10D for double the surface rate plus 5D for registration.

13.b. THE GOVERNMENT

The first postwar government in Greece was sworn in on 23 Oct. 1944. It faced a devastated economy, including non-functional communication lines.

The suspension of international communications was lifted on 1 Nov. 1944. For ten days, until the monetary reform of 11 Nov., mail was despatched with the last inflationary stamps and postal rates, both denominated in millions of drachmas.

Tensions escalated quickly, and, on 3 Dec., distrust between the government and EAM partisans erupted into the Second Round of the Civil War.

Mailed two days earlier



From Athens (30 Oct. 1944) to Richmond, UK (23 Jan. 1945).

Rates: Postcard surface 6,000,000D from 1 to 10 Nov. 1944.

- The card was mailed two days before the official lifting of the suspension. On 31 Oct., it was cancelled for return to the sender but was never actually sent back. It appears the sender had access to reliable inside information.

- British censorship upon arrival.

A postcard's five-month journey to the Gold Coast



From Athens (3 Nov. 1944) to Farkwa, Gold Coast (Ghana today, 24 Mar. 1945), redirected to Awaso village.

Rates: Postcard surface 6,000,000D from 1 to 10 Nov. 1944.

- Censored by the British (on the reverse).

Unacceptable postcards

The relevant mandate was explicit: (a) postcards only, (b) mail to relatives only, no commercial correspondence whatsoever, and (c) the postcards should not be illustrated.

From Athens (8 Nov. 1944), destined for Melbourne, Australia. Undelivered.

Rates: Postcard surface 6,000,000D from 1 to 10 Nov. 1944.

- Blue pencil note in Greek: *Returned/Improper*, due to the commercial nature of the text. The sender, a renowned stamp dealer, was contacting a fellow dealer abroad to re-establish his pre-war commercial connection. Postmarked for return on 17 Nov.



From Athens (8 Nov. 1944), destined for Los Angeles, CA, USA. Undelivered.

Rates: Postcard surface 6,000,000D from 1 to 10 Nov. 1944.

- Because of its illustration, the postcard was returned to the sender with a manuscript note in Greek and in red pencil stating: *Returned and Non-illustrated postcards are accepted.*

The monetary reform of 11 November 1944

On 11 Nov. 1944, the New Drachma was introduced, valued at 50 billion occupation drachmas. On the same day, all remaining occupation-era stamps were withdrawn from sale. They were replaced by three denominations from the 1937 Historical set, overprinted with ΔΡΑΧΜΑΙ ΝΕΑΙ [New Drachmas].

Postal rates were adjusted to pre-war values but proved short-lived. A new wave of inflation led to two postal rate increases within a short period—on 1 Feb. and 1 Apr. 1945.

Surface postal rates after the monetary reform			
	11 Nov. 1944	1 Feb. 1945	1 Apr. 1945
Domestic rates (in drachmas)			
Postcard:	2	3	7
Letter:	3	5	10
Registration:	4	5	10
International rates (in drachmas)			
Postcard:	5	8	15
Letter:	8 *	12	25
Registration:	8	12	25

* Cover mail to abroad was prohibited. The prohibition was lifted on 6 Mar. 1945.

Identical twins

The sender thought it wiser to write two identical postcards to increase the likelihood of at least one reaching its destination. The postcards were cancelled in Athens on 3 Dec. 1944, the day the Second Round of the Civil War broke out in the capital.

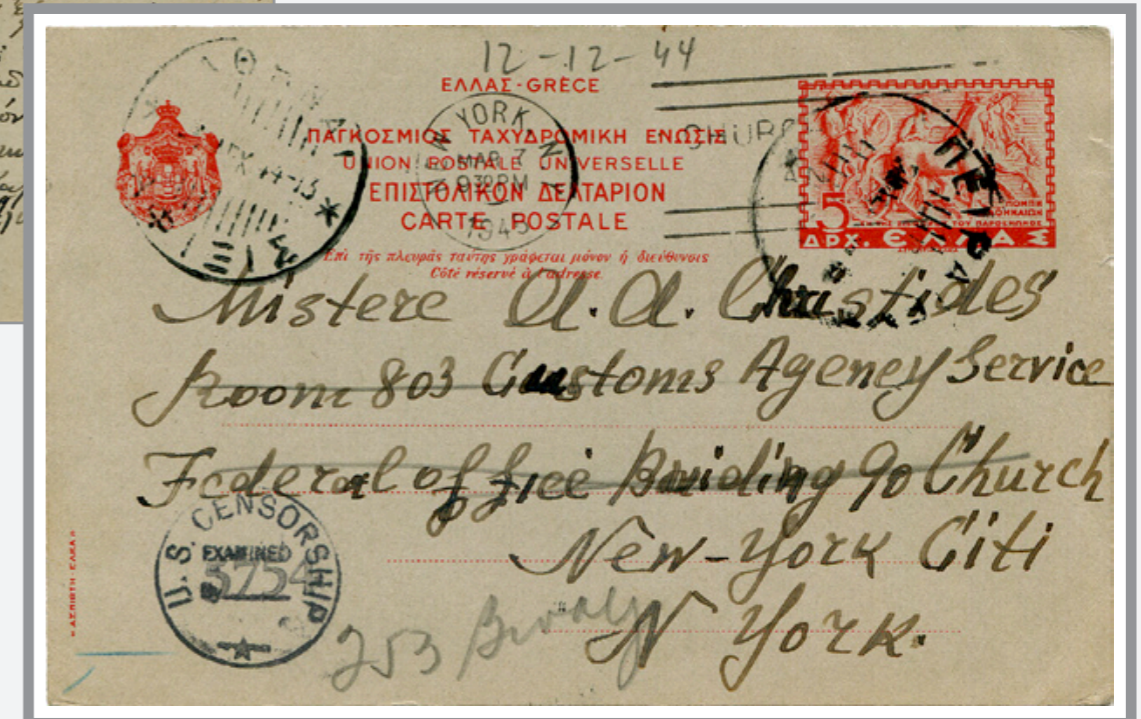


From Athens (13 Nov. 1944) to Cairo, Egypt.

Rates: Postcard surface 5D from 11 Nov. 1944 to 31 Jan. 1945.

- Third day of implementation of the new currency and new rates.
- A closer look beneath the new stamps reveals a layer of older occupation-era stamps. This is one of the prestamped postcards released by the post office to meet demand when international mail was permitted a few days earlier, on 1 Nov. 1944.
- Censored upon arrival in Cairo, Egypt.

300%



From Piraeus (2 Dec. 1944) via Athens (3 Dec.) to New York, NY, USA (7 Mar. 1945).

Rates: Postcard surface 5D from 11 Nov. 1944 to 31 Jan. 1945.

- The cards travelled together and were censored in New York by the same official.

First days of Greek censorship

The postcard to Russia (top), mailed on 21 Feb. 1945, was not censored, whereas the one to Cyprus (bottom), posted on 25 Feb., was. It is therefore reasonable to assume that post-war Greek censorship came into effect at some point between 22 and 25 Feb. 1945.



From Athens (21 Feb. 1945) via Cairo and Moscow (23 June) to Adhazia (5 July).

Rates: postcard surface 8D from 1 Feb. to 31 Mar. 1945; one 50λ stamp is missing.

- Censored in Egypt (purple handstamp) and the Soviet Union (black dual-circle hanstamp).



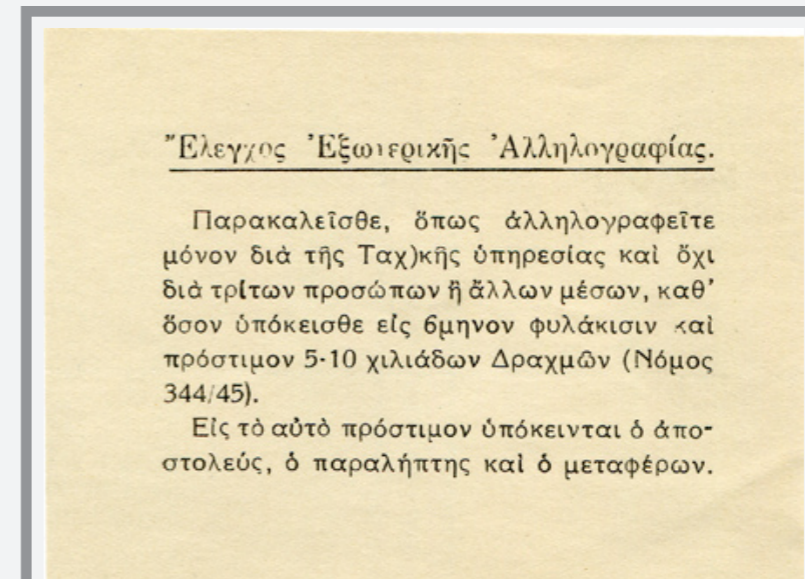
From Athens (25 Feb. 1945) to Larnaca, Cyprus.

Rates: Postcard surface 8D from 1 Feb. to 31 Mar. 1945.

- Greek (rectangular handstamp) and British (octagonal handstamp) censorships.

First day of cover mail sent abroad

On 6 Mar. 1945, a few days after the establishment of censorship, the suspension on sending cover mail to foreign destinations was lifted. At around the same time, the Gellenic Post sent the following notice to its customers: 'International correspondence control: Please, ensure that you send your mail exclusively via the Hellenic Post and not through third parties or other means, as the penalty is six months' imprisonment and a fine of 5-10,000 drachmas (Law 344/45). The same applies equally to the sender, addressee and bearer.'



From Athens (6 Mar. 1945) to Minneapolis, MN, USA.

Rates: Surface to 20g 12D from 1 Feb. to 31 Mar. 1945.

- First day of cover mail sent abroad after the liberation. The news was announced in the daily press.
- Greek and American censorships.

Crete on its own: Heraklion prefecture



From Heraklion (4 Jan. 1945) to Aghios Vassilios village, Crete.

Earlier occupation-era stamps and rates valid from 15 Sep. to 31 Oct. 1944: Surface to 20g **5,000,000D**.

- Here is an example of the 5,000,000D stamp from part V of the Landscapes issue, used two months after its official withdrawal. The monetary reform had little impact in Crete. Only small quantities of the new currency were sent to the island, and a limited supply of New Drachma stamps followed at the end of March. Although the Germans were continuously retreating westward to Chania, the whole island remained practically isolated from mainland Greece.

Crete on its own: Rethymno prefecture



From Rethymno (9 Feb. 1945) via Heraklion (13 Feb., on the reverse) to Athens.

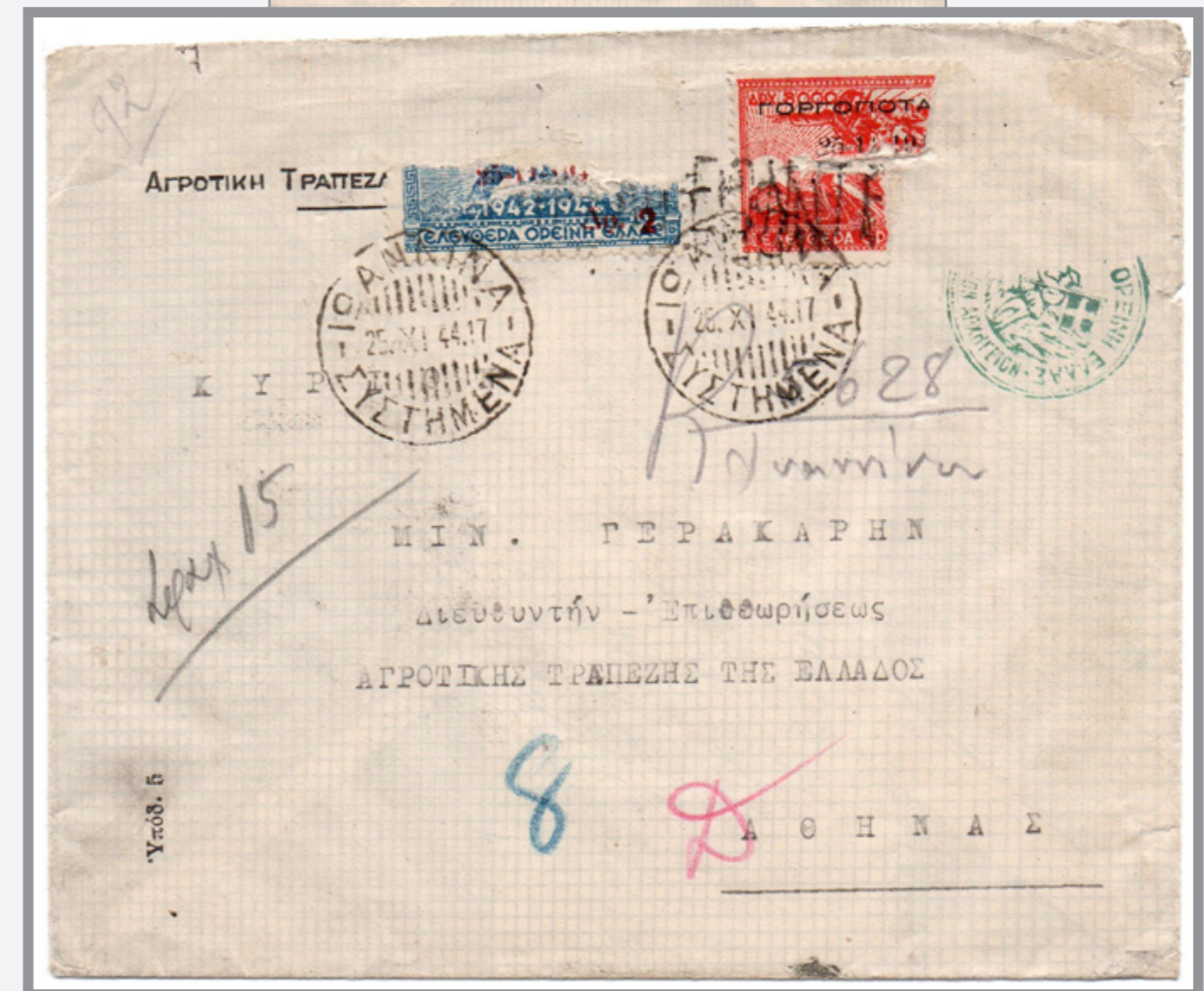
- The letter was posted without stamps due to their unavailability, as noted on the cover by the postal clerk's message, translated as: **Due to the lack of stamps, a double rate should be collected, 9-2-945,** followed by his signature. The **T** handstamp emphasises that postage dues should be collected, an overreaction by a postal clerk, effectively penalising a civilian in a situation for which they bore no responsibility.

The charity stamps of Ioannina

The charity stamps were issued in Ioannina on 25 November, under the supervision of the government representative of Epirus, to commemorate the second anniversary of a joint partisan operation that blew up the Gorgopotamos railway bridge. The stamps were used exclusively on the anniversary day, and the proceeds from their sale were donated to assist war victims.



60%



From Ioannina (25 Nov. 1944) to Athens (16 Apr. 1945) after a five-month delay
Rates applicable exclusively for this issue: Domestic letter **6D**; registration **4D**; total **10D**.

- Despite the fact that the stamps were issued under the approval of the government representative, upon the cover's arrival in Athens, they were deemed illegal and destroyed with a razor. In addition, **15D** postage dues were collected, as indicated from the manuscript **Δραχ 15**; **10D** for double the surface rate plus **5D** for registration.

13.c. EPILOGUE

The Second Round of the Civil War broke out on 3 Dec. 1944, when EAM partisans clashed in Athens with the joint governmental and British forces. An armistice was called on 11 Jan. 1945, and the defeated (partisans) were disarmed on 12 Feb., a consequence of the Treaty of Varkiza. It took another month for the government to gradually assume control across the country.

The arrival of new stamps in remote areas of Greece marked the establishment of the new government, new currency, new legislation, and more. Meanwhile, communication setbacks, resulting from the final battles in parts of Europe, including western Crete, are well documented on postal items. The war officially ended in Greece on 10 May 1945.

The New Drachma in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace

The new stamps arrived in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace in late March 1945, when government authorities replaced the EAM partisans.

The New Drachma in Crete

For many months, Crete remained isolated from mainland Greece, as the Wehrmacht still held positions in Chania and regularly patrolled the island's north coast. New currency and new stamps arrived in Crete in late March 1945. The items depicted are rare examples of early mail from the island.



From Serres (26 Mar. 1945) via Thessaloniki (30 Mar., on the reverse) to Athens (1 Apr. 1945, on the reverse).

Rates: Surface to 20g 5D from 1 Feb. to 31 Mar. 1945.

The **ΤΗΛΕΓΡΑΦΕΙΟΝ ΣΕΡΡΩΝ** [Serres Telegraph Office] postmark was the only one at the local post office that survived the Bulgarian occupation.

From Heraklion (22 Mar.) to New York, NY, USA.

Rates: Postcard surface 5D from 1 Feb. to 31 Mar. 1945.

- This is most likely the earliest reported item from Crete bearing stamps denominated in the new currency.
- Censorships: Greek in Athens and American in New York.



From Alexandroupoli (Apr. 1945) via Athens (3 May) to New York, NY, USA.

Rates: Surface to 20g 25D from 1 Apr. 1945.

- The **ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥΠΟΛΙΣ ΣΥΣΤΗΜΕΝΑ** [Alexandroupoli registered] postmark was the only one at the local post office that survived the Bulgarian occupation.
- Censorships: Greek in Athens and American in New York.

From Heraklion (12 Apr. 1945) via Athens (14 Apr., on the reverse) to New York, NY, USA (5 July, on the reverse), returned to Heraklion (28 Aug., on the reverse).

Rates: Surface to 20g 25D from 1 Apr. 1945.

- Censorship in Athens.



Crete: Disrupted communication lines to Chania

Re-establishment of communication with Italy

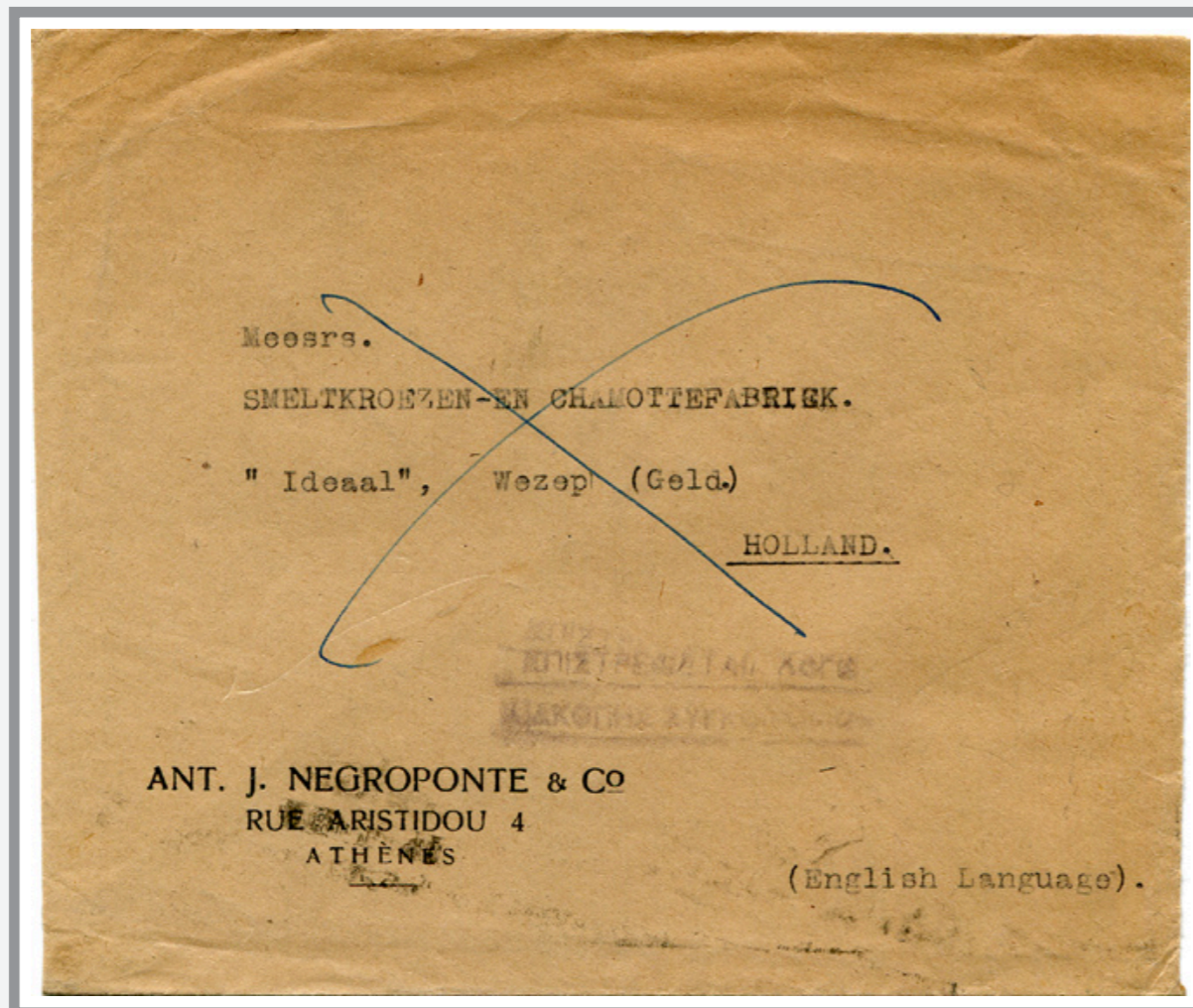


From Patra (11 Apr. 1945) to Catania, Italy.

Rates: Postcard surface 15D from 1 Apr. 1945.

- On the reverse, we read in Greek: '...we wished to write to you but it was not possible. We just read in the newspapers that sending cards to Italy is now permitted, so we are writing immediately...'
- The recipient was unknown at the address indicated, and the postcard was marked to be returned (SCONOSCIUTO DAL PORTALETTIERE and AL MITTENTE handstamps).
- Censorships: Greek in Athens and Italian in Catania.

Still no communication with the Netherlands



From Athens (16 Apr. 1945, on the reverse), destined for Wezep, Netherlands.

Rates: Surface to 20g 25D from 1 Apr. 1945 (a stamp on the reverse).

- Handstamped ΕΠΙΣΤΡΕΦΕΤΑΙ ΛΟΓΩ ΔΙΑΚΟΠΗΣ ΣΥΓΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΩΝ [Returned due to the suspension of services]. In April, the war was still ongoing, spreading across a wide front in the Netherlands. The Wehrmacht's capitulation in Amsterdam was not signed until 5 May 1945.



Postage-free folded postcard containing public service correspondence from St Nicholas (5 Apr. 1945) via Heraklion (6 Apr.) and Rethymno (7 Apr.) to Chania (14 May).



- The card, posted in St Nicholas, reached Heraklion the following day and Rethymno the day after; it did not arrive in Chania until a month later. During the final month of the war in Crete, the suburbs of Chania became the theatre of fierce fighting between Greek partisans and the last German garrison. The letter finally reached its destination after the Wehrmacht's capitulation on 10 May.



60%

A special handstamp for the end of WWII in Europe
From Athens (9 May 1945) to Missolonghi (12 May).
Rates: Surface up to 20g **10D** and registration **10D**, both from 1 Apr. 1945; anti-TB rate **2D**; total **12D**.
• This special handstamp was used at the Athens P.O. on 9 and 10 May.

Repatriated after four years in exile

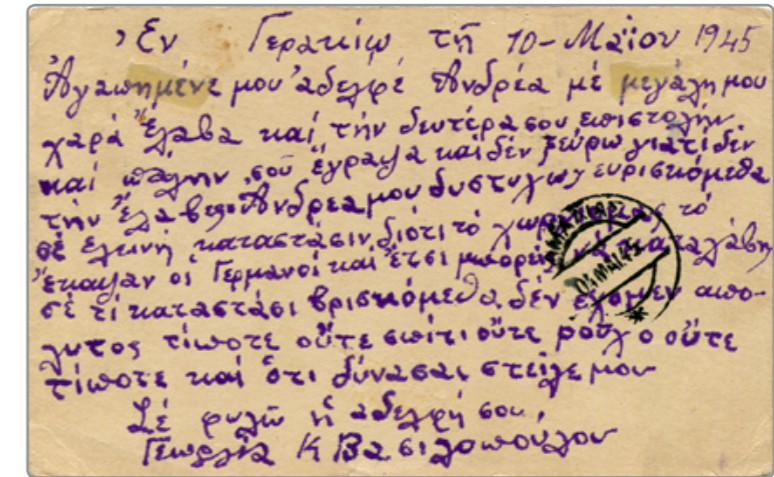


60%

From Athens (9 Feb. 1941) to London, UK. Postmarked to be returned (8 May 1941), held in the UK, and returned to Greece four years later (5 June 1945).

Rates: Preprinted cover **8D+1D** to 20 June 1941.

- The addressee could not be located, so the cover was cancelled with a dual-circle **ST JOHN'S WOOD S.O. N.W.8** and a linear **RETOUR** for return. Due to the suspension of communications between Greece and the UK during the war, the cover was returned home four years later, receiving a mechanical **ΑΘΗΝΑΙ-ΑΦΙΞΙΣ** [Athens-Arrival] postmark.
- Censorships: Greek in Athens and British in London, both during the first leg of the cover's journey.



70%

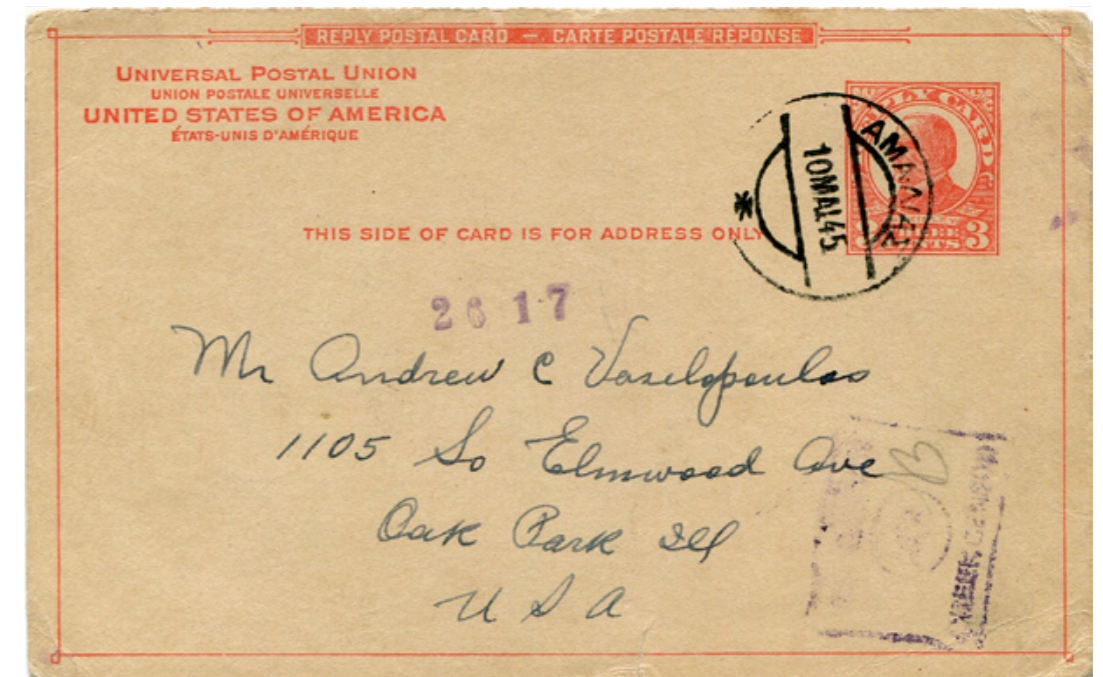
Gerakion, 10 May 1945

Dear brother Andrew,

...we are unfortunately in a miserable situation because our village was burnt down...

...we have absolutely nothing, no house, no clothes, nothing. Please send whatever you can...

I kiss you, your sister,
Georgia C. Vasilopoulos



Reply part of a US double postcard (received in Amalias on 4 May 1945) sent back to the USA on 10 May 1945, the day the war officially ended in Greece.