

Occupied Greece during WW II

On April 6, 1941, the German army attacked Greece and on April 27 they reached Athens. Aided by the Italians and the Bulgarians the German forces remained in Greece for three and a half years. From mid-September 1944, to the end of October, mainland Greece and most of the islands were set free. A German garrison remained on the islands of Melos and Crete until May 10, 1945.

The exhibit, which takes a close look at the postal history of Occupied Greece, is arranged in the following entities:

- 2- 14 **First measures & consequences:** Restrictions on international correspondence. Withdrawal of stamps and stationery depicting Greek royalty. Gradual restoration of postal communications.
- 15- 26 **The postal rates:** Basic as well as compulsory and voluntary supplementary rates.
- 27- 34 **Postal stationery & special forms:** A selection of the official issues of postal cards, pre-paid envelopes and special forms.
- 37- 44 **German censorship & other measures:** Local German censorship. Restrictions on correspondence of the Cretan population. Censorship of Greek correspondence in Germany.
- 45- 52 **Italian censorship & other measures:** Local Italian censorship. Greek correspondence censored in Italy.
- 53- 62 **The status in the Ionian islands:** The special status on the "annexed" Ionian islands.
- 63- 64 **The status in Eastern Crete:** The postal dependence of Eastern Crete on Rhodes.
- 65- 75 **Italian military post:** Correspondence handled by the Italian "Posta Militare".
- 76- 77 **German military post:** Franked correspondence handled by the German "Feldpost".
- 78- 88 **The Bulgarian postal service:** The operation of the Bulgarian civil post offices in Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace.
- 89-100 **Mail to / from abroad:** Two specific periods of mail between Greece and a number of pro-Axis or neutral European countries, amidst various restrictions.
- 101-107 **The countdown:** The capitulation of Italy and the consequences of the retrieval of the German forces.
- 108-128 **Stumbling towards liberation:** The partisan groups, the liberation of Athens and the new government, the civil war and the capitulation of the last German garrison.

The table below is a simplified version of the thirteen periods of basic postal rates, produced by the devastating inflation. On November 11, 1944, the currency was reformed.

The 13 periods of basic postal rates													
Period starts	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	13th
	Sept. 20 1941	Jan. 1 1942	May 15 1942	Sept. 1 1942	Nov. 1 1942	Feb. 1 1943	Aug. 1 1943	Nov. 10 1943	Mar. 15 1944	July 1 1944	Aug. 15 1944	Sept. 15 1944	
Domestic rates													
Postal card:	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.
Registration:	4	5	10	15	25	50	100	200	500	4,000	50,000	200,000	5 mil.
International rates													
Postal card:	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	1000	10,000	100,000	500,000	10 mil.
Registration:	8	10	12	25	50	100	200	400	1000	10,000	100,000	500,000	10 mil.

Exhibitor's major published work: "The postal rates during WW II foreign occupation", Philotelia nos. 607-608/2001.
 "The Bulgarian occupation of Greece 1941-44", Philotelia nos. 614-616/2002.
 "Partisan stamps", Philotelia nos. 633-635/2005.
 "Returned mail during WWII", Philotelia no. 643/2007.
 "Greece 1944-45 - Stumbling towards liberation", Opus XIII, 2013.

FIRST MEASURES & CONSEQUENCES

The occupation authorities immediately prohibited international correspondence. The measure was lifted to Germany and areas on May 30, 1941, to Italy on June 21, 1941, and to selective destinations in late 1942 - early 1943. They also invalidated and withdrew from circulation all stamps and stationery depicting the Metaxas' regime and the royal dynasty. Meanwhile, a major concern of the postal service was to quickly restore the main mail routes, in a network severely damaged from the bombardments.

Temporary suspension of communications with Germany

One of the first victims of the Germans' presence in the Balkans, the depicted cover never reached its destination. It was censored in Athens, as it was supposed to during the Greek-Italian war, but was delayed due to the events in Yugoslavia and the subsequent unavailability of the railway to Central Europe. Germany attacked Greece on Apr. 6, 1941, and four days later suspended communications between the two countries. Correspondence with Germany was re-established on May 30. It is uncertain whether the handstamp "Returned due to suspension of services" was placed on the cover before or after the arrival of the Germans in Athens (April 27). "Suspension of services" actually indicated a forbidden destination, either temporarily (depicted cover) or permanently (e.g. to an Allied country).



70%



From Athens (Apr. 2, 1941) to Berlin. 1st period rates: Letter 8 D., registration 8 D. Also, social welfare 1 D.

- Dual line handstamp in purple "ΕΠΙΣΤΡΕΦΕΤΑΙ ΛΟΓΩ ΔΙΑΚΟΠΗΣ ΣΥΓΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΩΝ" [Returned due to suspension of services].

Marginal escape to abroad

During the southbound march of the German forces to Athens during April 1941, post office operations in the non-invaded areas were carried out meticulously. When the Thessaloniki-Istanbul railroad was no more operative, international correspondence was directed by boat to Egypt.

From Athens (Apr. 8, 1941)
to New York, USA,
by surface mail.

1st period rates:
Letter 8 D.

Also, social welfare 1 D.

- Since the handstamp "VIA ISTANBUL-BASRA" was not crossed out, it is fair to assume that the cover reached Thessaloniki (on its way to Istanbul) a few hours before the German Army entered the city on Apr. 9.
- Censored in Athens and Cairo.



From Athens (Apr. 13, 1941) via Cairo, Egypt, to New York, USA, following the Pacific Route.

1st period rates: Letter 8 D. Also, fourth weight airpost, 15-20 g, 300 D. (4x75), social welfare 1 D.

- The Pacific Route airpost rates (75 D./5 g) were considerably more expensive than the Atlantic Route rates (23 D./5 g).
- Censored in Athens and Cairo.

Suspension of communications with Great Britain

From Paddington, Great Britain (Mar. 12, 1941), to Athens. On its way to Greece, the cover was censored in Egypt. Meanwhile, Greece was occupied by the Axis forces. The cover received the boxed handstamp "NO SERVICE - RETURN TO SENDER" and was returned to G.B. where was censored again.

- The mechanical handstamp at Paddington missed the stamp on departure, so the stamp was cancelled on arrival to London (Nov. 10, 1941).

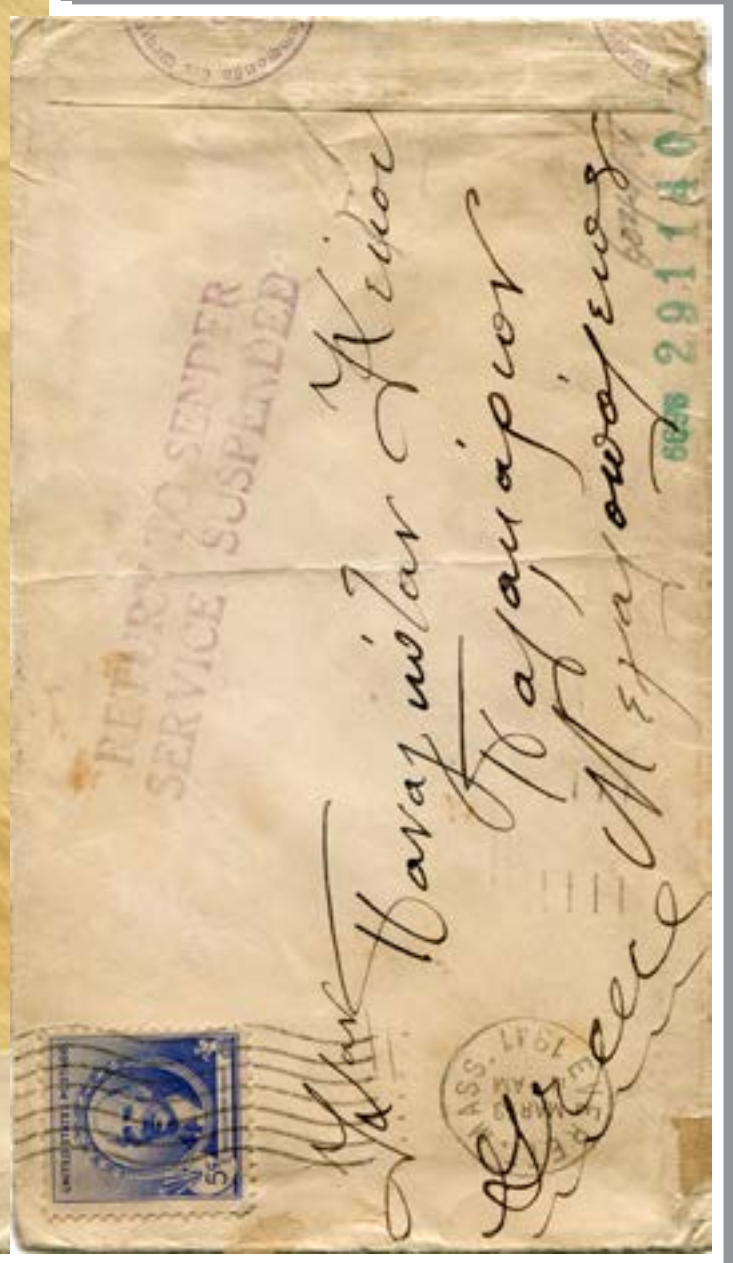
Suspension of communications with the USA

Mail connection with the neutral (at the time) USA was immediately suspended. In any case, correspondence was censored by the Germans before it was sent back.



- Two covers sent before (a) and after (b) the German invasion. American handstamp applied in New York "SERVICE SUSPENDED - RETURN TO SENDER" and "RETURN TO SENDER - SERVICE SUSPENDED" on the return leg of the covers.

- (below):
From Everet, USA (Mar. 19, 1941) to Palamari.
Returned to New York (Dec. 27, on the reverse).
- (left):
From San Francisco, USA (June 2, 1941) to Athens.
Returned to New York (Nov. 29, on the reverse).



April 27, 1941 - The invasion of Athens

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



70%



From Athens (Apr. 27, 1941) to Piraeus.

1st period rates: Postal card 2 D. Also, anti-TB rate 50 lepta.

- The "Metaxas' Youth Organization" illustrated postal cards were withdrawn on June 10, 1941, only second to the "Royal Dynasty" cards, withdrawn five days earlier.
- Compulsory payment of the anti-TB rate during Easter from Apr. 14 to 27, 1941.

Resumption of communications within the Peloponnese

From Xylokastro (May 8, 1941) to Patra.
1st period rates: Postal card 2 D. Also, social welfare 10 lepta.

- First days of mail services after the invasion of the German army to Southern Greece. The Corinth-Patra route was re-opened on May 6, 1941.

Resumption of communications between Athens and the Peloponnese

From Athens (May 9, 1941) via Kalavryta (May 12) and Mazeika (May 15) to Lefkasio.
1st period rates: Postal card 2 D. Also, social welfare 10 lepta.

- First delivery of mail from Athens to the Peloponnese.

Resumption of communications between Athens and Thessaloniki



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

1st period rates:
Postal card 2 D.

Social welfare rate is missing.

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

Resumption of communications to Germany



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

1st period rates: Letter 8 D.
Also, social welfare 1 D.

- The resumption of services to Germany was announced in the daily press on May 30.
- German censorship in Vienna.

Final days of use of the "royal" stamps & covers

Final days of use of the "royal" stamps and pre-paid postal covers without the overprint. They were invalidated on June 20, 1941. The covers were placed in circulation again on June 1, 1942, with the royal figures covered by a large grotesque overprint and new face values.



*From Athens (June 7, 1941)
to Leipzig, Germany.*

*1st period rates:
Letter 8 D.*

Also, social welfare 1 D.

- *German censorship in Vienna.*



*From Thessaloniki
(June 12, 1941)
to Muegeln,
Germany.*

*1st period rates:
Letter 8 D.
Also, second weight
airpost, 10-20 g,
16 D. (2x8),
social welfare 1 D.*

- *German censorship in Vienna.*

Bank of Greece "T.E." perfins



Bank of Greece was one of three companies registered to use perfins during the 1941 fiscal year (Apr. 1, 1941 - Mar. 31, 1942). The dramatic decline in commercial activity and the ongoing inflation later on prevented companies from using perfins throughout the Occupation period. The depicted "T.E." perfins cover is one of two examples survived, the other is of domestic mail.



50%

From Volos (June 22, 1941) to Schweinfurt, Germany.

1st period rates: Fourth weight letter, 60-80 g, 23 D. (8+3x5, but 25 D. were paid instead). Also, airpost 8 D. (no overweight was paid).

- The case of insufficient payment of airpost rates is not unique. It is attributed to the confusion of the first few days of the new rules regarding airmail to abroad.
- Italian censorship in Volos and German in Vienna.

Mail previously captured in Trieste, later released

The transportation of mail during war periods was sometimes a matter of pure chance. When the Italians were established as part of the occupation forces in Greece, they released Greek mail to the USA, previously captured in Italy. Further on, they conformed to the German orders which prohibited any postal relations between Greece and the USA.



From Corinth (Dec. 12, 1940) to New York. Received on Sept. 2, 1941, as indicated by the private handstamp. 1st period rates: Letter 8 D. Also, airpost 23 D., social welfare 1 D.

- The cover was mailed during the Greek-Italian war. Instead of the usual route via Cairo, it was sent north by rail. Captured by the Italians in Trieste, the cover remained there probably until the establishment of the Italians in Greece (June 1941), when it was released, to finally reach its destination in September. The Italians maintained excellent postal relations with the USA until the Pearl Harbor events (Dec. 7, 1941).
- Greek censorship in Corinth, Italian in Trieste.

Final days of use of the "Queens" stamps



From Thessaloniki (Sept. 20, 1941) to Athens (Sept. 22).

2nd period rates: Letter 4 D. Also, airpost 2 D., social welfare 50 lepta, Thessaloniki 20 lepta.

- Day of implementation of the 2nd period of rates and invalidation of the "Queens" stamps. Having been invalidated, the green 50 lepta was improperly cancelled.



From Agrinio (Oct. 3, 1941) to Patra.

2nd period rates:
Postal card 2.50 D.
Also, social welfare 50 lepta.

- The green 50 lepta was used fourteen days after it was invalidated.



Suspended services to neutral Switzerland

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

2nd period rates: Letter 10 D. (2 D. on the reverse). Also, airpost 8 D., social welfare 1 D. (regular stamps were used, on the reverse).

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

Suspended services to occupied Netherlands

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

2nd period rates: Letter 10 D. Also, airpost 8 D., social welfare 2 D.

- Mail to or from occupied Netherlands was suspended until October 1942.
- Handstamp "ΕΠΙΣΤΡΕΦΕΤΑΙ ΛΟΓΩ ΔΙΑΚΟΠΗΣ ΣΥΓΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΩΝ" [Returned due to suspension of services].



Invalidated "royal" pre-paid postal cover

Use of an invalidated pre-paid postal cover with the royal stamps crossed out. The missing 6-drachma of the "Historical" issue reveals the red pencil marks.



60%



From Athens (Nov. 15, 1941) to Venice, Italy.

2nd period rates: Letter 10 D. Also, airpost 5 D., social welfare (since Nov. 15, 1941) 2 D. (regular stamp was used). One stamp of the 6-drachma pair originally affixed is missing.

- Italian censorship in Venice.

THE POSTAL RATES

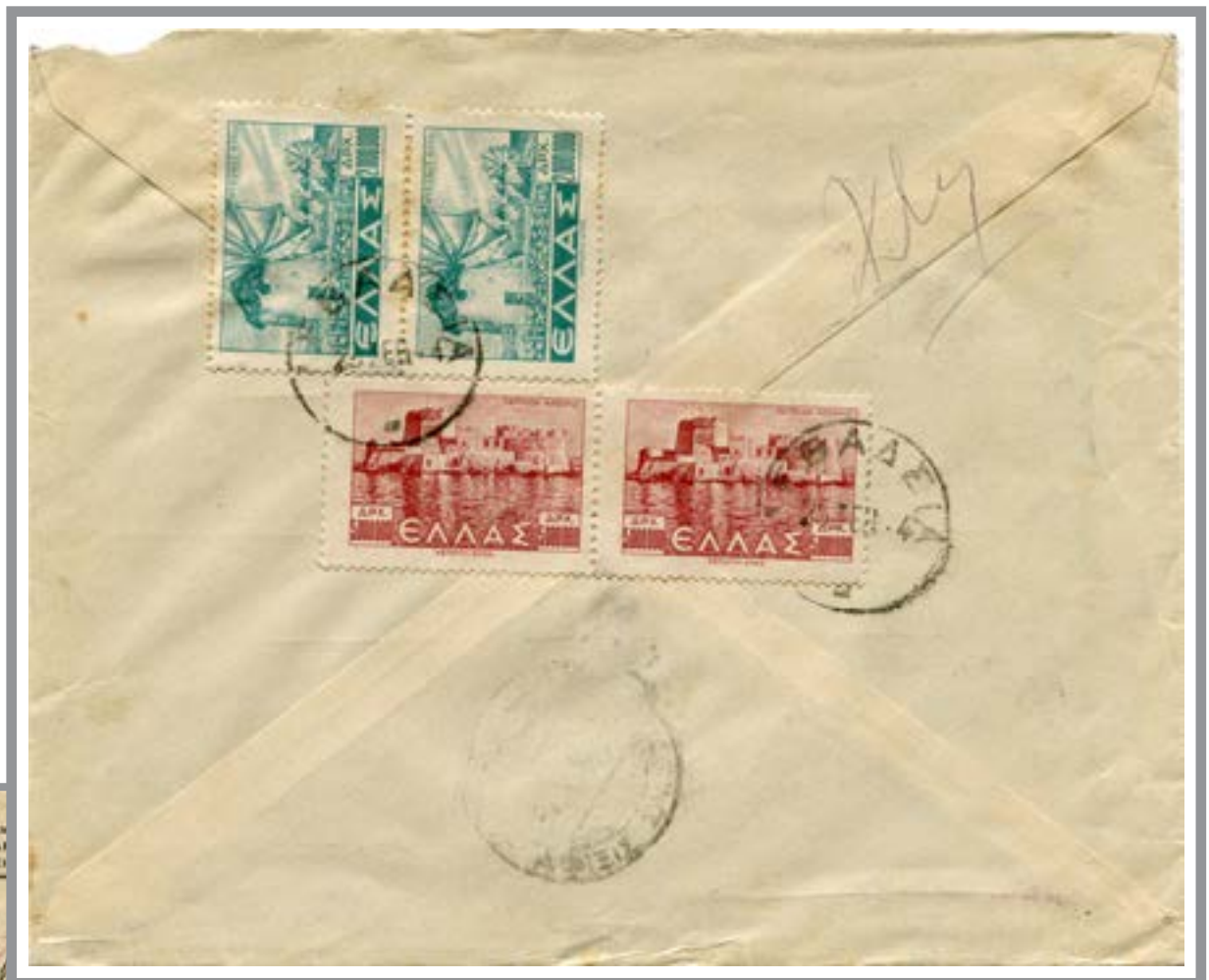
The last adjustment to the basic postal rates prior to the war took place in 1933. However, the Occupation period is a completely different story. Rates were continuously increased due to a sharply increasing inflation.

Apart from the basic rates, a number of different supplementary rates, either compulsory or voluntary, also applied in given periods, in order to raise money for various funds, i.e. social welfare, anti-tuberculosis for postal staff (anti-TB rate), Thessaloniki International Fair, child welfare, Piraeus bombardment victims, children's camps. Strictly speaking, airpost rate is a supplementary rate too.

Thirteen periods of basic rates

Since their first increase on September 20, 1941, until the monetary reform of November 11, 1944, the basic postal rates changed almost every three months. As a result, we encounter thirteen periods of basic rates during the three and a half years Greece was under occupation. To understand what inflation meant to Greece, one should consider that first weight domestic letter rate gradually increased from 3 D. to 5,000,000 D.

Rates worth millions



40%



From Levadia (Sept. 25, 1944) to Athens (Oct. 3).

13th period rates: Third weight letter, 40-60 g, 9 mil. (5+2x2), registration 5 mil.

- The final period roughly coincides with the Germans' northbound withdrawal, who used almost exclusively all communication lines.

Postage dues



70%

From Chalkis (Jan. 18, 1942) to Athens (Jan. 19).
3rd period rates: Letter 7 D., poste-restante 2 D.



From Chalkis (May 15, 1942) to Athens.
3rd period rates: Letter 7 D.
4th period rates: Poste-restante 5 D.

- The cover was posted on the day the rates changed (May 15) but paid the letter rate of the previous period.

Postage dues (cont.)



60%

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

6th period rates:
Pre-paid cover 60 D.
(30 D. were paid instead).

- The missing rate was paid double on arrival.



60%

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

7th period rates:
Pre-paid cover 120 D.,
registration 100 D.,
poste-restante 25 D.

- On arrival, the addressee could not be located and was charged by the equivalent of the poste-restante rate.



Domestic printed matter

Single frankings of the smaller values of the Occupation Views are encountered only on domestic printed matter.



Printed matter from Athens (May 27, 1943) in-town.

7th period rates: Bundle of 200 similar items, at 10 D. each.

Printed matter from Thessaloniki (Apr. 15, 1943) to Athens.

7th period rates: Newspaper wrapper 15 D.



Merchandise sample



70%



*From Amyntaio (Nov. 18, 1943) via Thessaloniki (Nov. 22) to Athens.
8th period rates: Third weight merchandise sample 450 D. (3x150, 500 D. were paid instead).
Also, flat airpost rate irrespective of weight (since Sept. 10, 1943) 20 D.*

Supplementary rates

Each supplementary rate was implemented in a different manner. For example, the airpost rate was compulsory if airmail services were needed, where the Piraeus bombardment or the children's camp rates were voluntary. The anti-TB rate was compulsory during certain periods of the year and voluntary during the rest. The child welfare rate applied during one month only, compulsory on domestic mail and voluntary on international mail. Supplementary rates also included the social welfare rate and the Thessaloniki rate.

Airpost rates

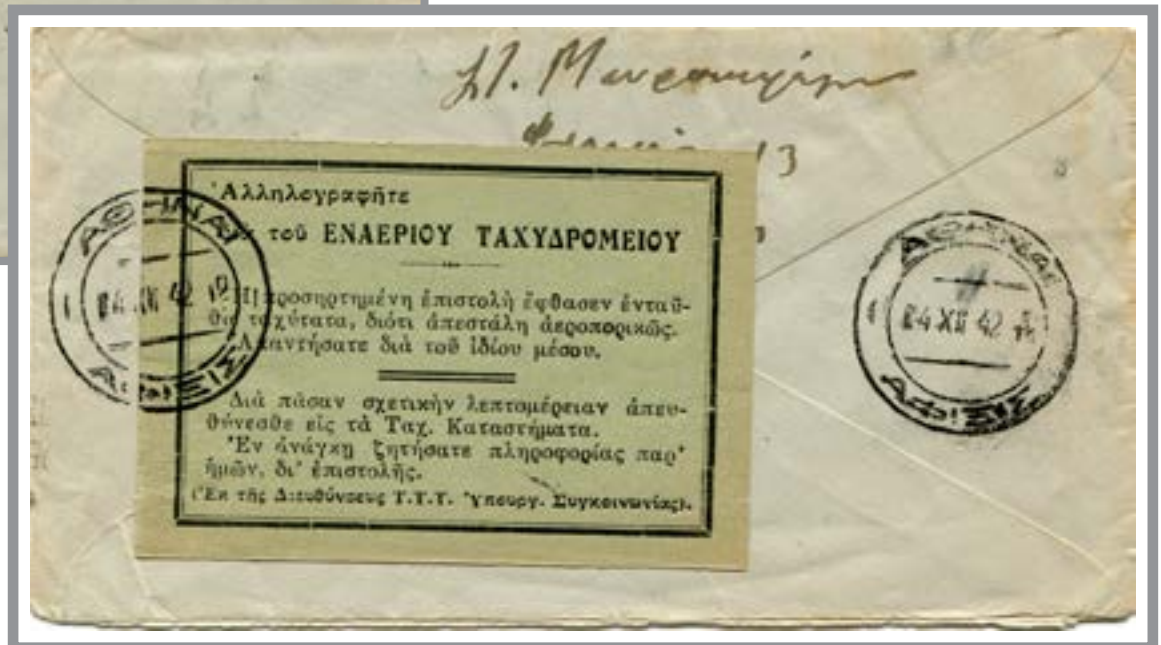
At the beginning of the Occupation period the list of airpost rates was very limited: Domestic rate 2 D., to Germany 8 D., Italy 5 D. and the Dodecanese 2 D. The first sharp increase of April 1, 1943, unified the rate to abroad at 50 D. On April 15, 1943 the domestic rate was increased for the first time to 10 D. Despite the continuous increases since then, airpost rates remained considerably "cheaper" than their basic counterparts.

Domestic airpost rate

2 D. (until Apr. 14, 1943)



70%



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

6th period rates: Letter 50 D. Also, airpost 2 D., anti-TB (since Dec. 1, 1942) 10 D., Thessaloniki (since Sept. 1, 1942) 1 D.

- The green label publicizing the use of airpost was affixed on arrival. An example of a long forgotten 1933 label, used again ten years later. It might not be coincidental that two days earlier a new government took oath in Athens, which probably chose to strongly publicize airmail correspondence.
- Implementation of anti-TB rate from Dec. 1, 1942 to Jan. 31, 1943.



Airpost rate to Germany

10 D.
(Nov. 1, 1942 - Mar. 30, 1943)

From Thessaloniki (Feb. 24, 1943) to Vienna.

7th period rates:
Third weight letter, 40-60 g, 450 D. (200+2x125).
Also, fifth weight airpost, 40-50 g, 50 D. (5x10).

- Probably a unique example of a 50 D. "little airplane" on cover.
- German censorship in Vienna.

Airpost rate to Germany

50 D.
(Apr. 1, 1943 - Sept. 9, 1943)

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

7th period rates:
Letter 200 D.
Also, airpost 50 D.

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



Airpost rate to Italy



From Athens (Jan. 8, 1942) to Milan.

3rd period rates: Third weight letter, 40-60 g, 33 D. (15+2x9), registration 12 D.

Also, fifth weight airpost, 40-50 g, 25 D. (5x5).

Airpost rate to the Dodecanese



From Athens (Oct. 31, 1941) to Rhodes.

2nd period rates:
Letter 10 D.
Also, airpost 2 D.,
social welfare 1 D.
(regular stamps
were used).

- Italian censorship in Rhodes.

Prisoner of War mail: Exempt from basic postage

POW mail was exempt from basic postage. However, when airmail was preferred, the airpost rate should be paid in full and, as of Sept. 10, 1943, with a 75% discount.



70%

From Athens (Dec. 25, 1941) via Rome (Jan. 12, 1942) to Ascoli Piceno, Italy.
Airpost rate 5 D.

- Italian censorship in Rome.



Social welfare rate

Compulsory rate since 1937 which was suspended on December 31, 1941. On November 15, 1941, the rates were increased to 50 lepta (from 10 l.) for postal cards, to 1 D. (from 50 l.) for domestic mail and to 2 D. (from 1 D.) for international mail.



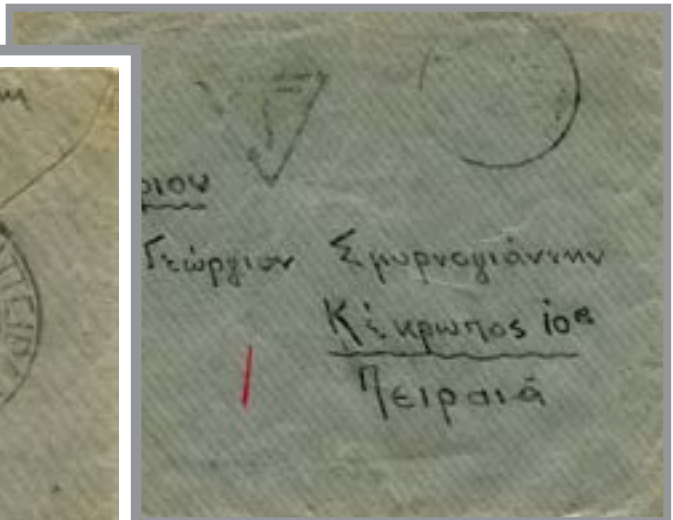
From Thiva (Nov. 15, 1941) to Athens (Nov. 17).

2nd period rates: Letter 4 D. Also, social welfare rate 1 D.

- Day of social welfare rate change.

Postal staff anti-tuberculosis fund (anti-TB rate)

Compulsory rate during the Christmas fortnight (extended to December 1 - January 31 for the last two seasons) and the Easter fortnight. Since April 1, 1944, also compulsory during the first ten days of each month.



70%

From Voula -posted in the neighbouring Glyfada post office (Dec. ??, 1943)- to Piraeus (Dec. 17).

9th period rates: Letter in-town 300 D. The unpaid anti-TB rate was collected double at destination (Dec. 18).

Child welfare rate

Special rate paid by special stamps placed in circulation for one month only, in October 1943. Their use was compulsory on domestic mail and voluntary on international mail.



60%

From Aetoliko (Oct. ??, 1943) to Athens.
8th period rates: Letter plus child welfare 200+100 D., registration 200 D.

- Regular stamps were used to pay registration fees, as appropriate.

Piraeus bombardment victims fund

The ten stamps were optionally used from June 11 to 30, 1944. An indication of the rising inflation is that the surcharge was set at 100,000 D., when the letter rate was still 4,000 D.



50%

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

10th period rates: Letter 4,000 D., registration 4,000 D. Also, bombardment rate 100,000 D.

- Manuscript "checked" with censor's signature.

Children's camp fund

The ten stamps of the Children's camp fund set were used from July 20 to November 10, 1944. The stamps comprised 50,000 D. basic rate plus 450,000 D. voluntary supplementary rate. Compared to their Piraeus bombardment counterparts, they were used considerably less.



70%



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

12th period rates: Letter 500,000 (the 50,000 of the children's camp stamp also counted).

Also, children's camp rate 450,000.

- German censorship in Vienna.

POSTAL STATIONERY & SPECIAL FORMS

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

The 1941 pre-paid cover

It was issued during the Greek-Italian war, on February 15, 1941, to be used in correspondence to Yugoslavia, Turkey and Romania only, where the reduced 6 D. "Balkan rate" instead of 8 D. applied. It became practically worthless after the German invasion and, almost forgotten, was finally withdrawn from sales on October 15, 1941.



70%



From Thessaloniki (Sept. 6, 1941) to Aachen, Germany.
1st period rates: Letter 8 D. Also, social welfare 1 D.

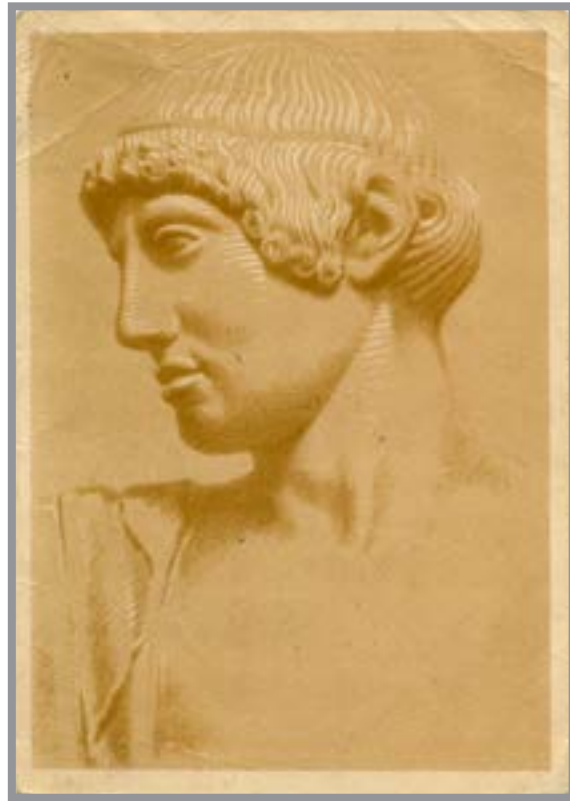
- German censorship in Vienna.

Ancient Art series: No. D5 (French caption)

A set of six illustrated postal cards (numbered D1-D6, with Greek or French captions) were placed on sale on November 15, 1941, after long delays and postponements, as the "hostile" King George's II portrait had to be substituted by the "neutral" Venus de Milo in the 2 D. imprinted stamp.

When they were introduced, they were sold at 8 D., i.e. at 6 D. premium, quite expensive, considering the great famine of 1941. Whenever the postal rates were raised, the price of the cards were raised too, so they actually never succeeded to become popular among the general public.

No wonder, that of the four cards depicted here, which are among a handful of properly used examples known to date, they were all mailed by members of the occupation forces.



70%



From Athens (Dec. 10, 1941) to Mannheim, Germany.
2nd period rates: Postal card 6 D. Also, social welfare 1 D.

- German censorship in Vienna.

Ancient Art series: No. D1 (Greek caption)



70%



From Samos (Nov. 20, 1942) to Florence, Italy. 6th period rates: Postal card 50 D.

- The imprinted 2 D. was still valid, but practically ignored after the rates change of Sept. 1, 1942.
- Italian censorship in Samos.

Ancient Art series: No. D6 (Greek and French captions)



50%

From Athens (Mar. 20, 1942) to Napoli, Italy.

3rd period rates:
Postal card 9 D.

Also, airpost to Italy 5 D.

- Italian censorship in Napoli.



50%

From Samos (Dec. 22, 1942) to Florence, Italy.

6th period rates:
Postal card 50 D.

Also, airpost 5 D.
(7 D. were paid instead).

- Italian censorship in Samos.



Telegraphic in light green (used as postal) money order form

The use of all kind of old-stock military or telegraphic money order forms became a necessity due to the inevitable paper shortage.

However, the use of alternative forms does not by itself imply scarcity. What makes these items elusive is the strict orders the p.o. employees were given, to destroy the forms after the delivery of the money orders, in order to discourage a secondary stamp trade cycle emanating from within the Post Office.



60%

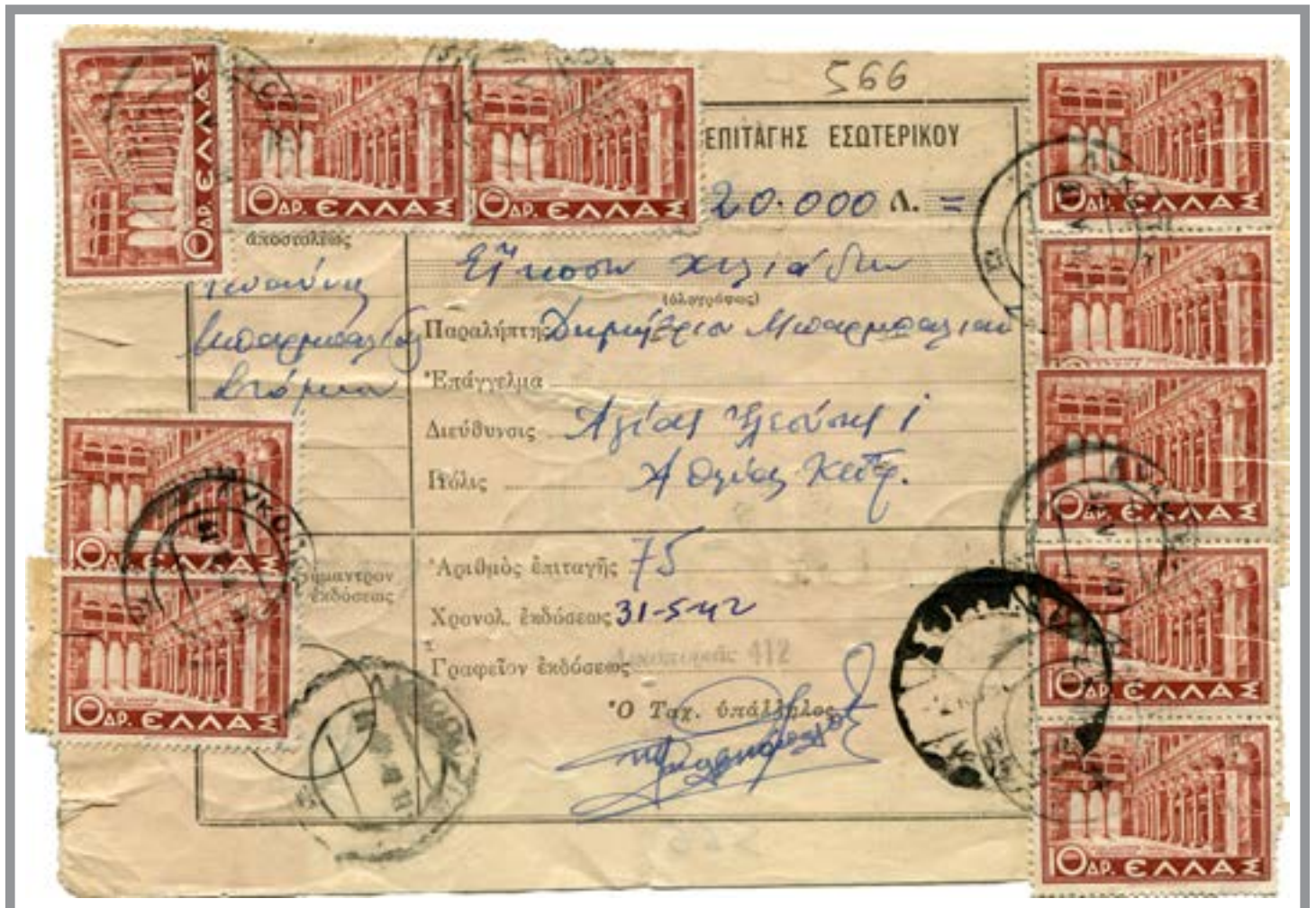


From Sykia, Chalkidiki, (Feb. 19, 1942) to Yiannitsa (Mar. 2).
3rd period rates: 120 D. for a money order valued between 12,001 and 14,000 drachmae.

Telegraphic in light red (used as postal) money order form



60%



From Lykoporia, Corinthia, (May 31, 1942) to Athens (June 2).
4th period rates: 250 D. for a money order valued between 15,001 and 20,000 drachmae.

Military (used as postal) money order form



60%

Υπολ. Α 314

ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟΝ ΣΥΓΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑΣ Τ.Τ.Τ.
Υπόψη της τμηματικής διεύθυνσης
 ΣΤΡΑΤΙΩΤΙΚΗ ΤΑΧΥΔΡΟΜΙΚΗ ΕΠΙΤΑΓΗ

ΠΟΣΟΝ ΕΠΙΤΑΓΗΣ
 Δραχ. ~~=====~~ Λ. ~~=====~~

Όνομα επώνυμον, επάγγελμα, διεύθυνση και κατοικία του αποστολέως:
*Κω/ρος Φραγμαβάνης
 Θεμ 1670 μυσσους
 78
 Αθήνας*

Αριθμ. επιταγής:
 Δραχ. **25 000** Λεπτά ~~=====~~

πληρωτέα τῷ *Σίμοσι Πέντε γιγιάδες*
 ἐνταδίο Φραγμαβάνη
 ἐνταδίο *ἐν Σπυρίδα Λοκίας*

Τίτλος τῆς αμοιβῆς ἢ ἐκπληρωτέως ἢ συμβατικῆς ἀμοιβῆς κούρας

εἰς Τ. Τ.

2704

Ἀριθ. ἐπιταγῆς **4.1311.1942**

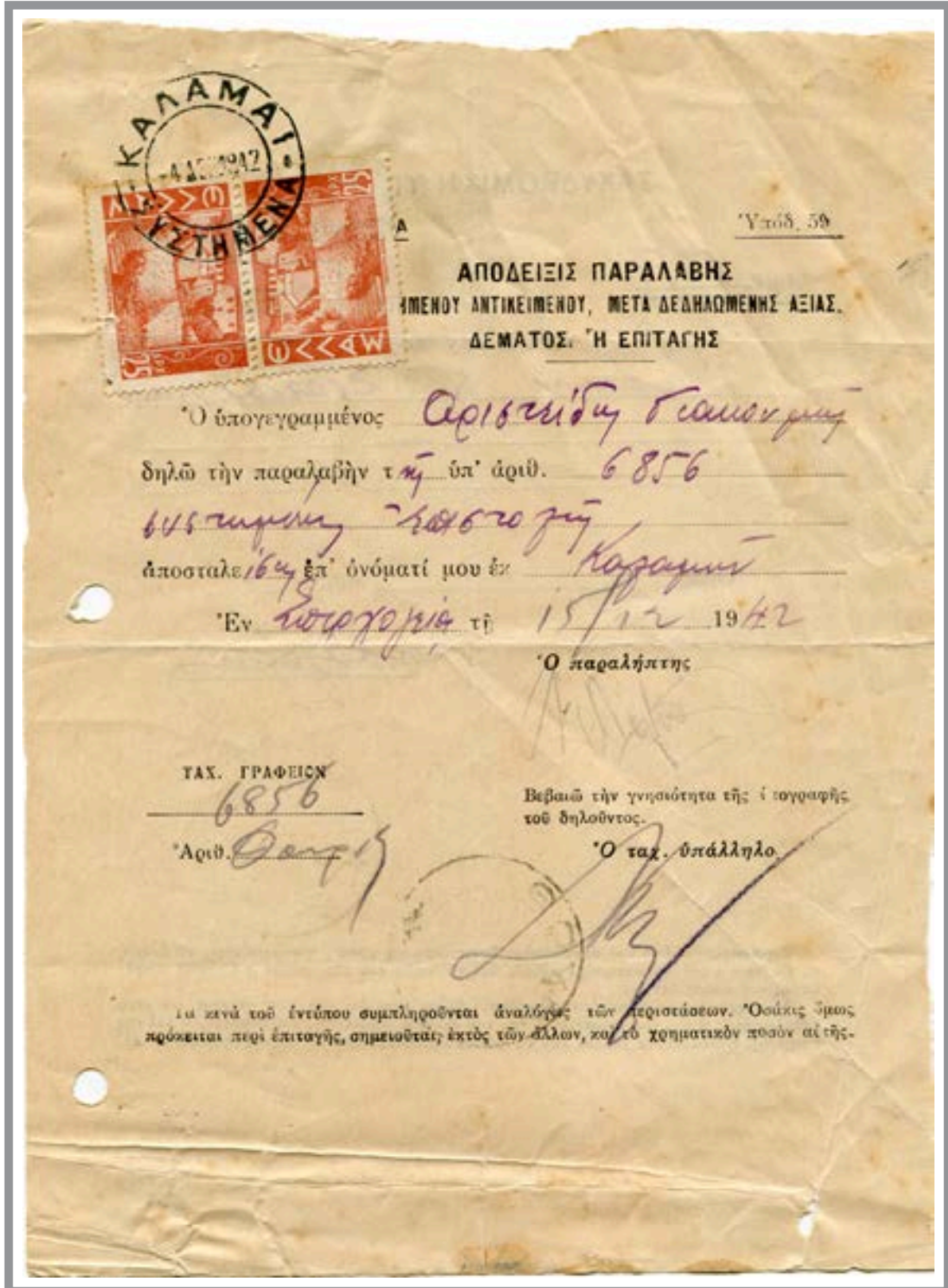
Χρονί.. **1942**

Ἀποστολῆς **ΛΕΒΙΔΟΥ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ**

Ἐπιταγῆς
 Τῆς ἐπιταγῆς

From Athens (June 24, 1942) to Stylida (June 28).
4th period rates: 350 D. for a money order valued between 20,001 and 30,000 drachmae.

Receipt for a registered letter



From Kalamata (Dec. 4, 1942), to Sperchogeia (Dec. 15), cancelled in the nearby Thoureia p.o. 6th period rates: Receipt for a registered letter 50 D.

GERMAN CENSORSHIP & OTHER MEASURES

The German army was deployed all over Greece, but they claimed absolute control of just 25% of the total territory, leaving the Italians with 60% and the Bulgarians with the remaining 15%.

In mainland Greece, the Germans held the part of Macedonia between Aliakmonas and Strymonas rivers and a narrow strip at the Greek-Turkish border. They also exclusively controlled the islands of Lemnos, Mytilene, Chios, Skyros, Melos and the prefectures of Chania, Rethymno and Herakleio in Crete.

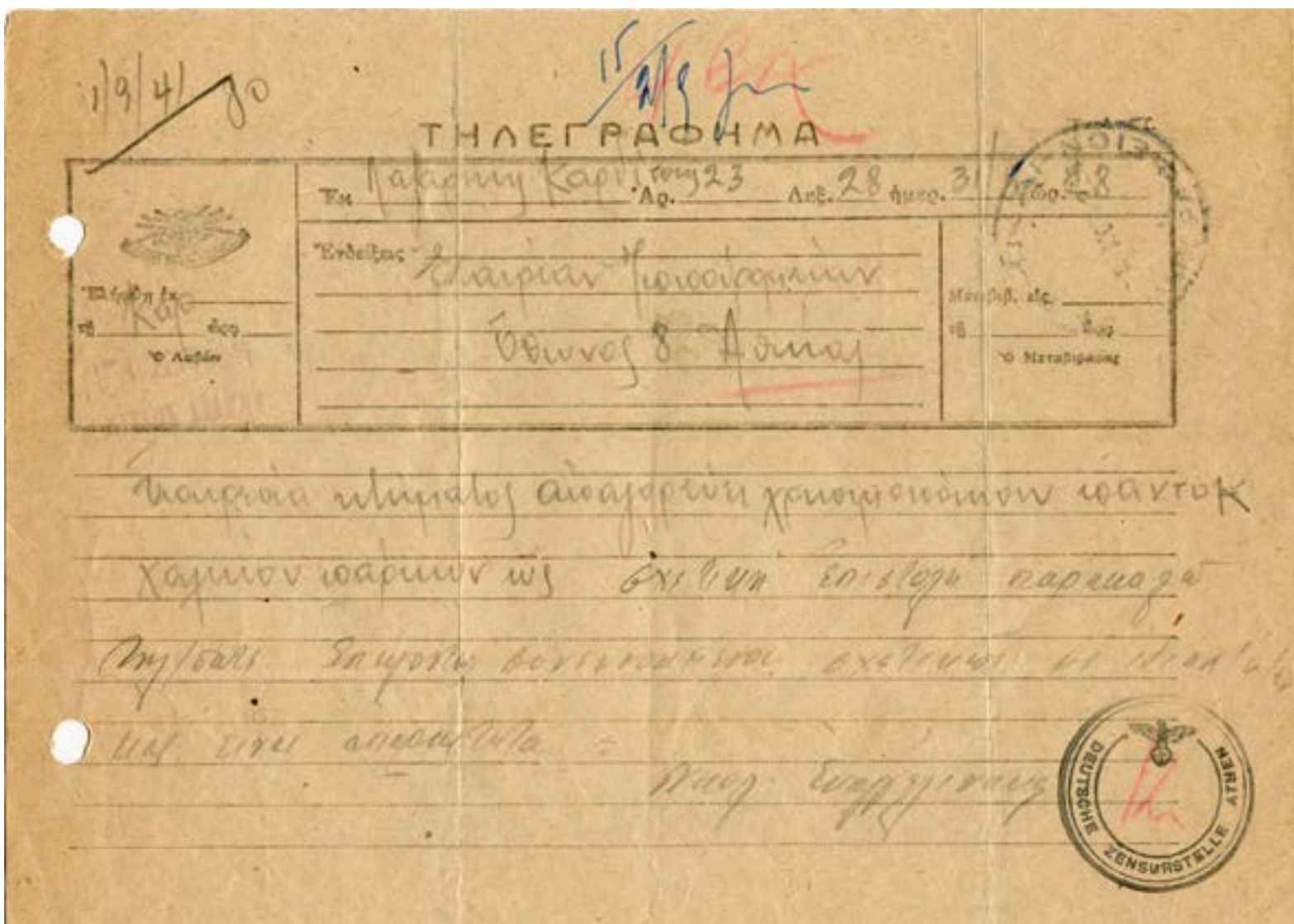
German censorship in mainland Greece was limited to the district of Epirus, after the capitulation of Italy. On the contrary, censors' offices on Lemnos, Mytilene, Chios and Crete were quite active.

Correspondence to Germany and annexed lands, which comprised the bulk of Greek international mail, was normally censored in Vienna.



Athens - Censorship on telegrams

In Athens, German censorship was applied on telegrams only.



The Evros "Neutral Zone"

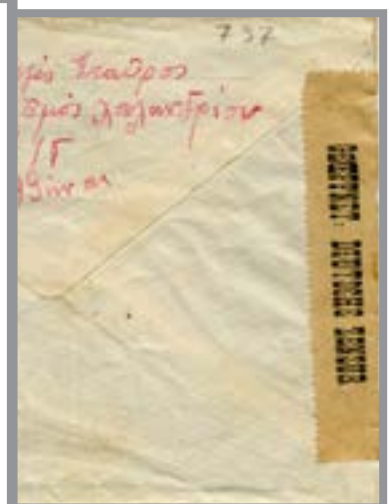
From Didymoteicho via
Thessaloniki to Patra
(17 Feb. 1943).

6th period rates: Letter 50 D.

- One of few examples of mail from Didymoteicho, the only p.o. allowed to operate in the Evros "Neutral Zone".
- The "Neutral Zone" was a 10-30 km wide strip along the Greek-Turkish border, controlled by the Germans. The rest of the Evros prefecture was controlled by the Bulgarians.
- Illegible dates of dispatch and transit postmarks. Postage suggests that the cover was dispatched between Nov. 1, 1942 and Jan. 31, 1943.
- Italian censorship in Patra.



Lemnos censorship



60%

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

4th period rates:
Pre-paid cover 15 D.

- One of few examples of civilian mail with Lemnos German censorship.

**Mytilene
censorship**

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

8th period rates:
Letter 200 D.

- German censorship in Mytilene with the dual-circle "DEUTSCHE ZENSUR MYTILENE", linear "Λ.10" and, quite unexpectedly, with the censor's name handstamp "Charilaos Chatziargyriou".



- From Mytilene (Aug. 6, 1941) to Athens.
- 1st period rates: Letter 3 D. Also, social welfare 50 lepta.
- German censorship in Mytilene.

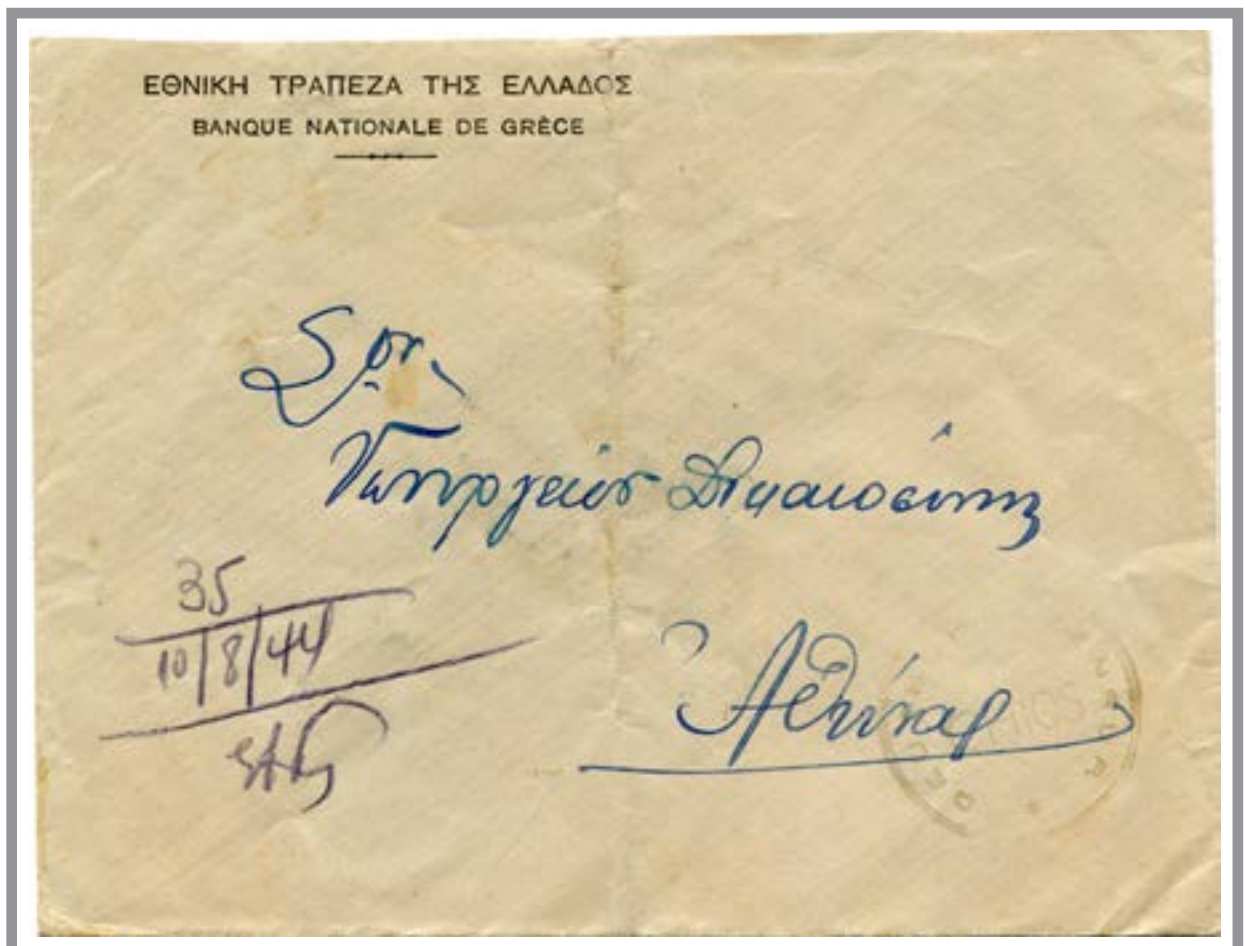
Chios censorship



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

5th period rates:
Letter 25 D.

- German censorship in Chios.



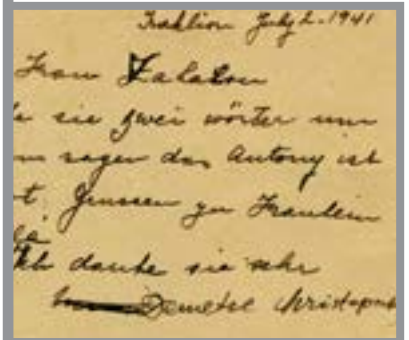
From Chios (June, 27, 1944) to Athens.

10th period rates:
Letter 4,000 D.
(on the reverse).

- German censorship in Chios.

Crete: Additional restrictions

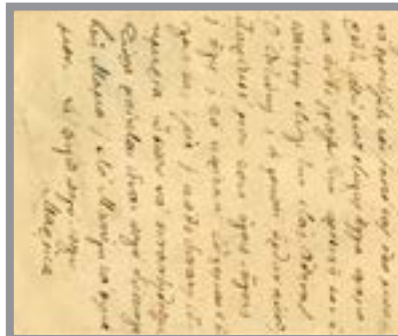
The German sector on Crete was immediately classified as "Front Zone" where, among others, three restrictions applied to civil correspondence: (i) to the end of September 1941, mail should be carried by air only, (ii) to late summer of 1942, outgoing mail should be written in German only and (iii) to the end of the Occupation, postal cards should be used in outgoing mail; Banks, Public Services, Red Cross etc. were exempt.



50%

From Herakleio (pmk. July 1, 1941, ms. July 2) via Chania (censors) to Athens. 1st period rates: Postal card 2 D. Also, airpost 2 D. Social welfare rate is missing.

- German censorship in Chania.
- Crete outgoing mail; text should be written in German only.



50%

From Volos (Aug. 27, 1941) to Fourni, Crete. 1st period rates: Postal card 2 D. Also, airpost 2 D. Social welfare rate is missing.

- Crete incoming mail; no restrictions, text could be written in either Greek or German.



*Cover mail
from German
Public Works,
Chania*

*From Chania (Nov. 1,
1941) via Herakleio
(Nov. 4) to Ierapetra.*

*2nd period rates:
Letter 4 D. Also,
social welfare 50 lepta
(regular stamp was
used, as appropriate).*

- One of the exceptions where cover mail was permitted: From "Kriegsmarine Hafenubauabteilung Kreta, Chania", i.e. "(German) war navy, department of harbour construction in Crete, Chania", to the Italian sector in Crete (Lassithi).*
- Not censored.*



*Chania censorship: Cover mail
privately (?)
transported*

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

*7th period rates:
Letter 100 D.*

- The stamps were not postmarked; they were cancelled by pencil, probably by the censors in Chania. The same censors(?) probably allowed the cover to be privately transported to Athens.*

Herakleio censorship: Cover mail



From Herakleio (Aug. 9, 1942) to Athens.

4th period rates:
Pre-printed cover 15 D.

- German censorship in Herakleio.
- Mail to the Red Cross Headquarters in Athens did not have to conform to the exclusive use of postal cards.

From Herakleio (Sept. 18, 1944) to Athens (Sept. 28).

12th instead of 13th period rates:

Third weight letter 400,000 D. (200,000 + 2x100,000).

- German censorship in Herakleio ("KREISKOMMANDATUR IRAKLION-ZENSIERT").
- Mail from the Commercial Bank of Greece.
- Second Athens postmark wrongly dated: "XI" instead of IX".



Ioannina censorship

The German army took control of the district of Epirus after the capitulation of Italy on September 8, 1943, and established censorship offices in Ioannina.



From Ioannina (Oct. 19, 1943) to Pfalzerhof, Germany.
8th period rates: Postal card 250 D. (300 D. were paid instead). Child welfare supplementary rate (voluntary on international mail) 125 D.

- The child welfare stamps were used between Oct. 1-31, 1943. Their use was compulsory on domestic mail, but voluntary on international mail.
- German censorships in Ioannina and Vienna.



70%

From Ioannina (June 27, 1944) to Athens. 10th period rates: Letter 4,000 D.

- German censorship in Ioannina with tape and the circular “(10)”. The rhomboid “7” belongs to the city postman in Athens.

Vienna censorship

Greek pieces of correspondence to and from Germany were in general censored in Vienna (insignia "g").

If, for any reason, any particular piece of mail should have been returned to the sender, then on its way back, it was censored for a second time.



70%



From Patra (Dec. 21, 1943) to Vienna (Jan. 8, 1944), returned via Thessaloniki (Jan. 25) to Patra (Jan. 30).
9th period rates: Letter 1,000 D.

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

Munchen censorship

The depicted cover was censored in the Bologna censorship office (insignia "II"), where mail was redirected instead of Rome ("I") for a few days in late October 1942. It was then sent -as if it was an Italian cover- to the Munchen censorship office ("d"), instead to the one in Vienna ("g"). Other Greek pieces of mail of the same period were directed from Bologna to Vienna as appropriate.



70%



From Athens (Oct. 23, 1942) to Schlag b. Gablonz, Germany.
5th period rates: Letter 50 D.

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

ITALIAN CENSORSHIP & OTHER MEASURES

The deployment of Italian troops covered 65% of the Greek territory and, that, until September 8, 1943, i.e. the Capitulation.

In the cases of the Ionian islands for the whole period of the Occupation and the prefecture of Lassithi in Eastern Crete until February 1942, different postal rules applied, which will be separately examined.

In the early days of the Occupation, the Italians made an unsuccessful attempt of incorporating the Aegean islands to the Italian Dodecanese, as 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 in general censored in Rome.



East Peloponnese - Corinth censorship

From Corinth (Aug. 26, 1942) to Athens (Aug. 28).
4th period rates: Visiting card small cover 5 D.

- Italian censorship in Corinth.

East Peloponnese Nafplio censorship

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

5th period rates:
Letter 25 D.,
registration 25 D.

- Use of the newer postmarks, which in 1941 substituted the oldest diamond-shape rural handstamps.
- Italian censorship in Nafplio.



North Peloponnese - Patra censorship



From Athens (Aug. 30, 1941) to Patra (Sept. 1, on the reverse).
1st period rates: Postal card 2 D. Social welfare rate is missing.

- Italian censorship in Patra.

South Peloponnese - Kythira (Cerigo) censorship



From Potamos, Kythira, telegraph office (Jan. 11, 1942) to Athens.
2nd (instead of 3rd) period rates: Postal card 2.50 D. Also, social welfare 50 l.

- The southernmost of the seven Ionian islands was not part of the "Isole Jonie" administration. The island remained under the superintendence of 59th Division Cagliari, based in Tripoli, which controlled all of South Peloponnese.
- The change in rates of Jan. 1, 1942, did not affect Kythira on time.
- Italian censorship in Kythira with dual-circle "59/3".

Cycladi - Syros, the capital



70%

From Syros (July 16, 1941) via Athens (July 17) to Prague (July ??).
1st period rates: Letter 8 D. Also, airmail (to Italy) 5 D.

- Censored by the Italians in Syros "Censura Italiana N.1." with the same handstamp of the Greek-Italian war period, after removal of the Greek coat-of-arms. Also censored by the Germans in Vienna.
- Although Naxos S.A. was among the three companies licensed to use perfins during 1941 fiscal year, it seems from the depicted and a second reported cover that they used regular stamps.

Cycladi - Thera



70%

From Thera (wrong date most likely) to Athens (Aug. 5).

1st period rates: Letter 3 D.
Also, social welfare 50 lepta.

- Italian censorship in Syros.

Cycladi - Paros



From Paros (Jan. 7, 1943)
to Athens.

6th period rates:
Letter 50 D.

Also, anti-TB 10 D.

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

Cycladi - Andros



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

6th period rates:
Letter 50 D., registration 50 D. Also, anti-TB 10 D. (use of regular stamp).

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

Sporadi - Early postal dependence on Rhodes & Samos censorship



From Rhodes (June 9, 1941) to Samos.

Letter rate 0.50 L.

- The payment of domestic postal rates between Rhodes and South-east Aegean islands was part of the early Italian plans for annexation of the islands to the Dodecanese.



70%

From Nenedes (rural route "426") via Samos (Dec. 16, 1941) to Piraeus (Feb. 5, 1942).
2nd period rates: Letter 4 D. Also, social welfare (since Nov. 15, 1941) 1 D.

- Italian censorship in Samos.

Western Greece - Casale Division censorship



Written on the island of Lefkada (Aug. 2, 1942) and posted at the nearby mainland (probably Vonitsa, the telegraphic postmark is illegible), to Athens.
4th period rates: Postal card 7 D.

- Italian censorship of 56th Casale Division (based in Agrinio).

Western Greece - Modena Division censorship



From Ioannina (Apr. 16, 1942) to Athens.
3rd period rates: Postal card 5 D.

- Italian censorship of 37th Modena Division (based in Arta).

Thessaly - Volos censorship



60%

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

6th period rates: Pre-paid cover 60 D. Also, anti-TB 10 D.

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

Brindisi checkpoint



70%

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

2nd period rates: Letter 10 D., registration 10 D. Also, airpost 2 D., social welfare 1 D. (regular stamp was used).

- Italian censorship in Rhodes.
- The Italian authorities in the Dodecanese imposed the examination of Greek registered mail -as a rule- in Brindisi. The measure lasted to early March 1942.



Rome censorship - Ufficio Censura Posta Estera I



50%

From Athens (Nov. 17, 1942) to Germany.

6th period rates:
Letter 100 D.
Also, airpost (since Nov. 1, 1942) 10 D.

- Italian censorship in Rome, censor station for Greek mail.

Bologna censorship - Ufficio Censura Posta Estera II



From Athens (Oct. 31, 1942) to Germany.

5th period rates:
Letter 50 D.

- Italian censorship in Bologna (UCPE II), instead of Rome (UCPE I) as was usually the case, for a few days at the end of October 1942.

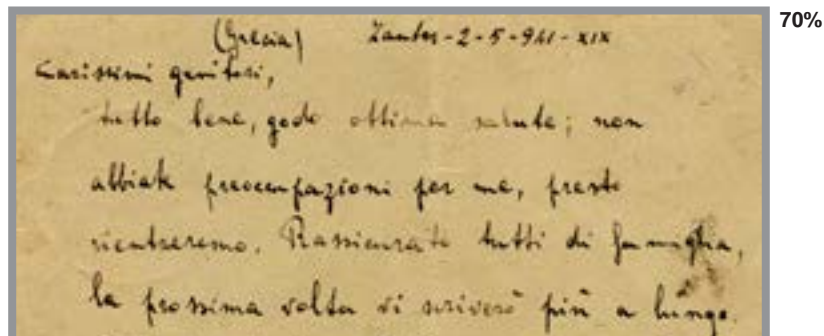
FOREIGN POSTAL SERVICES

In occupied Greece, we encounter a variety of foreign postal services in operation. Apart from the Italian and German military posts, one must consider the special political -and therefore postal- status in the Ionian islands, a similar situation but with different postal rules in Eastern Crete, the Bulgarian postal service in Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace, and, finally, the presence of the International Red Cross.

THE STATUS IN THE IONIAN ISLANDS

The Italian administration imposed a peculiar annexation status where, among others, forbid the use of Greek stamps, except the anti-TB special stamps. Italian overprints were solely used; on Greek stamps during the first three months and on Italian metropolitan stamps for the remaining period. However, the existing Greek post offices and postmarks were preserved.

Second day of occupation in Zante



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

- Mailed the next day the Italian army set foot on Zante, with the appropriate Greek stamps (2 D. domestic postal card and 10 lepta social welfare rate), the card was probably part of the first Italian mail dispatch from the island. The Greek stamps were accepted in Brindisi and no dues were imposed.
- Italian censorship in Brindisi.

"CORFU" overprints



70%

Military Money Order Form fragment from Skriperon, Corfu (Apr. 12, 1941), to a military postal sector, undelivered and returned to the sender in Skriperon (July 15).

- This little piece of paper is more than plenty to tell the whole story. Luckily enough, its reverse side reveals all the missing information. The fragment is part of a Military Money Order form, addressed to a soldier serving in the "Batallion of Epirus". By the time it was supposed to reach the front, the Greek Army has probably already signed the Armistice (Apr. 21). The money order had to be returned to the sender in Scriperon. It was carried by the postman attending the rural route "69", who collected 2 D. from the sender, flat fee for an undelivered money order, by affixing a "CORFU" overprinted stamp.



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

- Late use of "CORFU" overprints which were placed on circulation on June 5 and were supposed to be withdrawn from the p.o. counters on Aug. 12, 1941.
- Italian censorship in Corfu.



"ZANTE" overprints



70%

From Zante (Aug. 18, 1941) to Patra. Rates: Letter 3 D., social welfare 50 l. (anti-TB stamp was used instead).

- "ZANTE" overprints were used from mid-May to Aug. 31, 1941.
- Italian censorship in Zante in green ink, indicative of the first period.



"CEPHALONIA" overprints

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

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

- "CEPHALONIA" overprints were used from May 20 to Aug. 31, 1941.
- No need for censorship for an item travelling within the island.

Short-lived military censor

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

Rates: Letter 0.50 L.

- Italian military censorship in Argostoli with dual-circle handstamp "COMANDO 17o REGGIMENTO FANTERIA - ACQUI".

The military censorship of civilian mail in Argostoli appears for a limited period, late 1941 - early 1942.



Mixed franking during the 1941-42 holidays



From Corfu (Jan. 2, 1942) to Athens (Jan. 22, on the reverse). Rates: Second weight letter 1.00 L. (2x0.50), anti-TB rate 50 l.

- Compulsory payment of the anti-TB rate during Christmas and New Year's days from Dec. 23, 1941 to Jan. 6, 1942.
- Italian censorship in Corfu.



Postage dues

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

- The use of an official Hellenic Post cover was not enough to assure postage exemption. On arrival, 2.50 L. postage dues were collected.
- Italian censorship in Corfu.

From Naples to Corfu via Rhodes



60%

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

Rates: Postal card 0.30 L., airpost 0.50 L. (regular stamp was used).

- Italian censorships in Rome and Corfu.

Cephalonia rural route "48"



From Skala, Cephalonia, (rural handstamp "48") via Asprogerakas telegraph office (not cancelled, verified by the registration handstamp), Argostoli (Oct. 17, 1942) and Corfu (Oct. 27) to Athens (Nov. 5, all on the reverse).

Rates: Letter 0.50 L., registration 1.25 L.

- Italian censorship in Corfu.

Mixed franking during the 1942-43 holidays

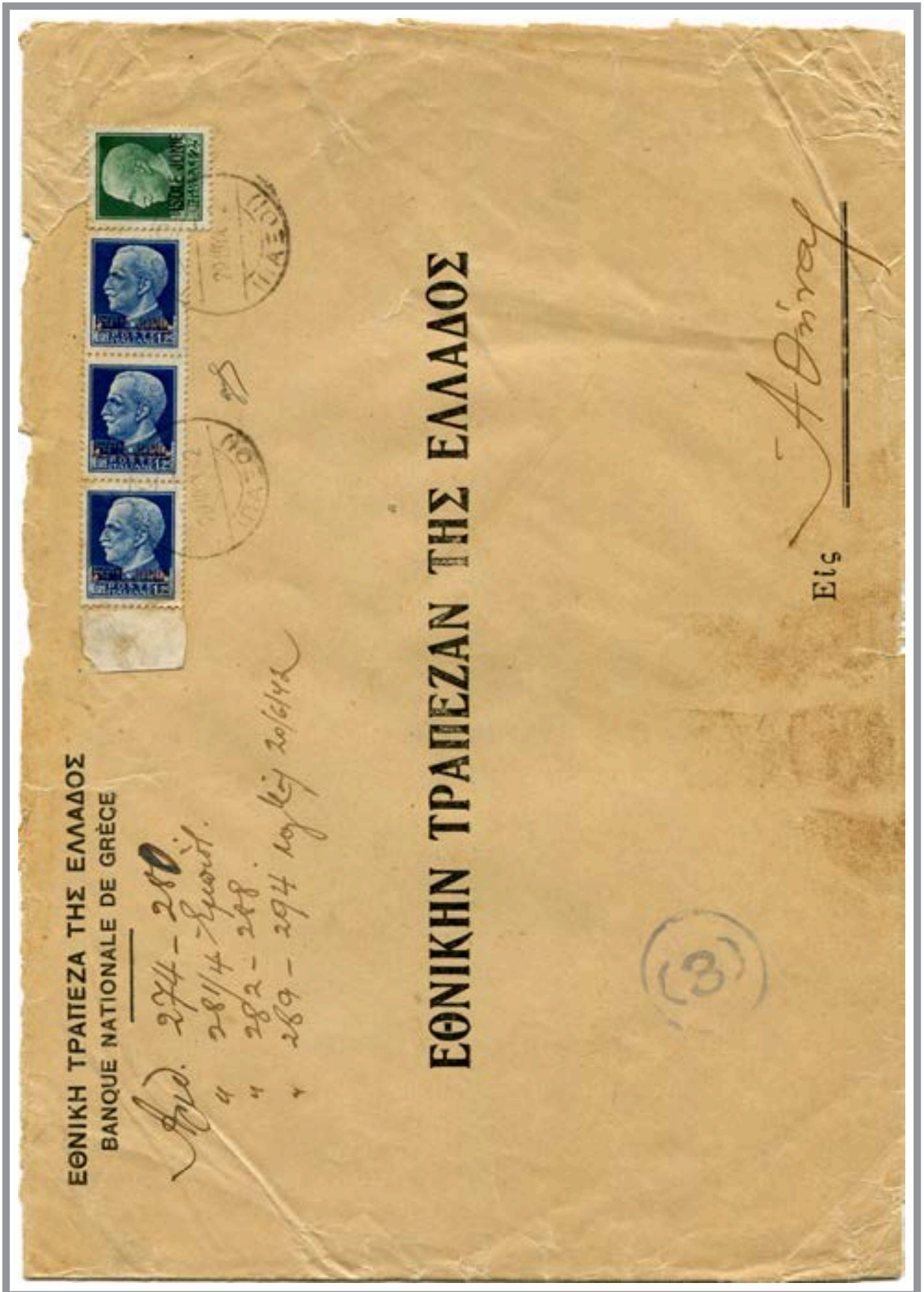


From Corfu (Dec. 31, 1942) to Athens.

Rates: Postal card 0.30 L., anti-TB 1 D.

- Compulsory payment of the anti-TB rate during Christmas and New Year's days from Dec. 23, 1942 to Jan. 6, 1943.
- Italian censorship in Corfu.

Paxoi



From Gaios, Paxoi, (June 20, 1942) via Corfu (June 26, on the reverse) to Athens.
Rates: Eighth weight letter 4.00 L. (8x0.50). Italian censorship in Corfu (on the reverse).

Ithaca



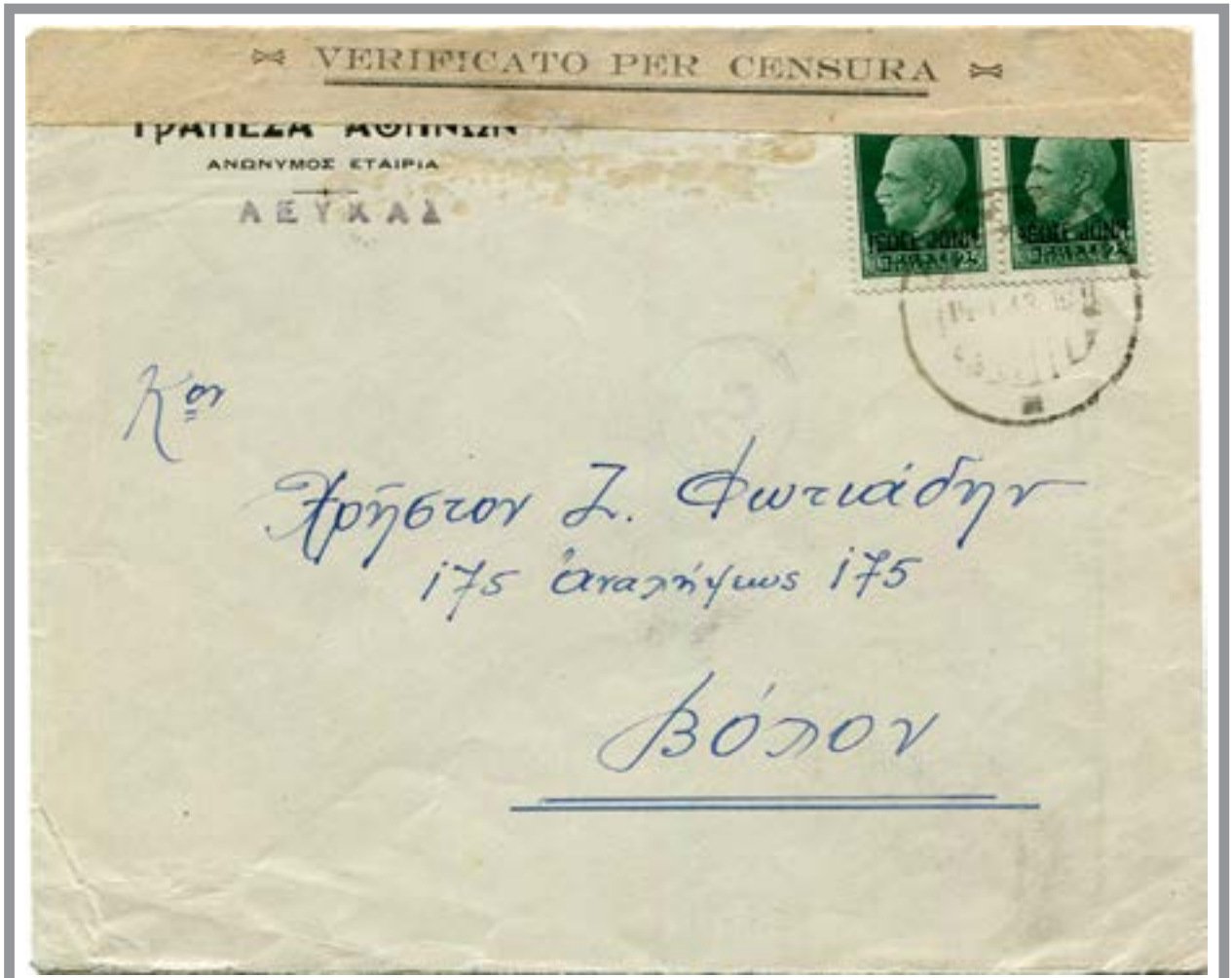
From Ithaca (Oct. 13, 1942) via Corfu (Oct. 24, on the reverse) to Athens.
Rates: Ninth weight letter 4.50 L. (9x0.50). Italian censorship in Corfu (on the reverse).

Lefkada

From Lefkada (Jan. 19, 1943) via Corfu (Feb. 11) and Piraeus (Feb. ??) to Volos (Feb. 28). Transit and arrival postmarks on the reverse.

Rates: Letter 0.50 L.

- Italian censorship in Lefkada. Also on the reverse, "AFFARI CIVILI S. MAURA / CENSURA POSTALE", dual-circle censor's handstamp.



Zante

From Zante (Feb. 9, 1943) to Athens (Feb. 25, on the reverse).

Rates: Letter 1.25 L., registration 1.50 L.

- Early application of the international rate to mainland Greece.
- Italian censorship in Zante.

Corfu to Athens with international rates

Examples of airmail items from the Ionian islands to Athens with international postage are quite frequent since early 1943.



From Corfu (Mar. 6, 1943) via Rome (the usual air route) to Athens.
Rates: Postal card 0.75 L., airpost 1.00 L.

- Use of the second Italian postal card which was overprinted for use in the Ionian islands. It is actually a reprinting of the 1942 postal card with the additional imprint "VINCEREMO".
- Italian censorships in Corfu and Rome.



60%

From Corfu (Aug. 30, 1943) to Athens.
Rates: Letter 1.25 L., registration 1.50 L.,
airpost 1.00 L.

- Italian censorship in Corfu. The handstamp "CENSURA * POSTELEGRAFICA - CIVILE" was only used during the final days of the Italians' presence in the Ionian islands.

THE STATUS IN EASTERN CRETE

The case of Eastern Crete is quite different than that of the Ionian islands. The special political status lasted only until February 1942, that is until the appointment of Greek civil administration. Until then, the post office in St. Nicholas functioned as a Rhodes' branch for both incoming and outgoing mail. The use of Greek stamps was forbidden, except for the special anti-TB stamps. The stamps in use were Italian metropolitan along with the ones issued for the Dodecanese.

St. Nicholas office



From St. Nicholas (Sept. 26, 1941) via Rhodes (Oct. 3) to Athens (Oct. 23, on the reverse).
Rates: Letter 1.25 L., airpost 0.50 L.

- The cover was postmarked in St. Nicholas, but the stamps were cancelled in Rhodes. This sort of tactics was effective from August to mid-October 1941.
- As far as basic postal rates, Greece proper was considered an international destination. The airpost rate though was identical to the domestic.
- Italian censorship in Rhodes.

Sitia office



60%



From Sitia (Aug. 14, 1941) via St. Nicholas (Aug. 16), Rhodes (Aug. 22), Vienna (censors) and Thessaloniki (Sept. 4) to Athens (Sept. 6). Rates: Letter 1.25 L.

- Local mail from Eastern Crete was first directed to St. Nicholas before it was sent to Rhodes.
- Censorships: Italian in Rhodes; 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 personal handstamp of the city-postman who delivered the cover in Athens.

ITALIAN MILITARY POST

The Italian military post [Posta Militare] took care of the official correspondence between military units. In such cases no postage was charged. It also handled private correspondence of military personnel, civil servants and civilians. If the special handstamps indicative of postage exemption were not present, correspondence should be properly prepaid. As a rule, stamps in use were Italian metropolitan and, from late April 1943, the "P.M." [Posta Militare] overprints. In rare occasions, also used were Rhodes stamps by the offices in the Aegean and the Ionian overprints by the offices in the Adriatic.

Every large military unit (a Division at least) and some smaller independent units had each their own post office with principal characteristic its P.M. number.

The Forerunners - P.M. 550 (Aegean)



From P.M. 550 Syros branch [50th Division Regina] (Aug. 11, 1941).

- Prior to the permanent establishment of the Division Cuneo and its respective P.M. 62 in Samos and P.M. 62 Sezione A in Syros, postal services in the Aegean islands were the responsibility of P.M. 550, seated in Rhodes. The "Cycladi" and "Sporadi" postmarks were used in Syros and Samos respectively until late August 1941.
- Handwritten note by the sender "Zona sprovvista di francobolli" (upper right) to claim postal exemption. The exemption was properly indicated by the rectangular handstamp "Esente da tassa autorizzazione postgen".

Taxed on arrival with or without "zona sprovvista di bollo" indication
 P.M. 2 (Corfu) & P.M. 106 (Corinth)



From P.M. 2 [33rd Division
 Acqui] (Aug. 19, 1941)
 to Verona (Aug. 28).

- Common practice by many Italian soldiers, during their first period of stay in occupied Greece, was to send personal mail back home without paying postage. The appropriate postage dues were always imposed on arrival.



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

- Postal exemption was not granted even when the indication "zona sprovvista di bollo" [zone free of postage] was clearly mentioned on the cover.

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



50%

From P.M. 62 [6th Division Cuneo] (Oct. 31, 1942)
to Milan.

Rates: Letter 0.50 L.,
airpost 0.50 L.

- Italian censorship in Samos.



From P.M. 62A [branch A of 6th Division Cuneo] (Jan. 21, 1942),
to Rhodes (Jan. 25).

Rates: Letter 0.50 L.

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



50%

From P.M. 121
[51st Division
Siena] (Feb. 4,
1942) to Rhodes.

Rates: Letter 0.50
L. (airpost stamp
was used).

- Italian censorship
in St. Nicholas,
Eastern Crete.



From P.M. 121A [branch A
of 51st Division Siena]
(May 1, 1942) to Genova.

Rates: Letter 0.50 L.,
airpost 0.50 L.

- Italian censorship in
St. Nicholas, Eastern Crete.

**"ISOLE JONIE" overprints in the Ionian sea
P.M. 82 (Zante detachment)**



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

Rates: Postcard 0.30 L. (0.50 L. were paid instead).

- "ISOLE JONIE" overprints were occasionally used on the Ionian islands. The card was sent from Zante, where a detachment of the Piemonte division was sent from Patra.
- Italian censorship in Taranto.

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



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

Rates: Letter 4 D., the equivalent of 0,50 L.

- For a short period in 1941, Greek stamps were allowed to be used occasionally in P.M. correspondence.
- Italian censorship in Asti ("AT" tape on the reverse).

"Propaganda di guerra" labels
 P.M. 38 (Athens) & P.M. 162 (Syros)



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

Rates: Letter 0.50 L.,
 airpost 0.50 L.

- Issued on August 14, 1942, the 25, 30 and 50 c. definitives, each attached to four different propaganda labels, were hardly used by the military post offices.



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

Rates: Letter 0.50 L.,
 airpost 0.50 L.

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

Registered mail
P.M. 121A (Neapolis) & P.M. 139 (Prevesa)



50%

From P.M. 121A [branch A of 51st Division Siena] (Jan. 22, 1943) to Ostiglia, Mantova (Jan. 30, on the reverse).
Rates: Letter 0.50 L., airpost 0.50 L., registration 1.25 L.

- Italian censorship in Mantova.



50%

From P.M. 139 [Superior Command of the Armed Forces in Greece] (Apr. 5, 1943) to Torino (Apr. 14, on the reverse).
Rates: Letter 0.50 L., airpost 0.50 L., registration 1.25 L.

Registered mail & "P.M." overprints
 P.M. 65 (Larissa) & P.M. 29 (Tripoli)



50%

From P.M. 65 [24th Division Pinerolo] (June 26, 1943) to Fagnano Olona, Varese (July 7).

Rates: Letter 0.50 L., airpost 0.50 L., registration 1.25 L.

- Italian censorship in Varese.



From P.M. 29 [59th Division Cagliari] (June 13, 1943) to Rome (June 18 & 19, on the reverse).

Rates: Airpost 0.50 L. (regular stamps were used). Basic and registration rates were most likely not charged to the "Tribunale Militare di Guerra F.F. A.A. Grecia - Sezione di Tripolis".

Registered mail to abroad - P.M. 17 (Corinth)

50%



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

Rates: Letter 1.25 L., registration 1.50 L., airpost 1.00 L.

- Italian censorship in Salsmagiore (International mail censor office III, which has substituted Milan office since May 1943).

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



From P.M. 202 [3rd Alpine Division Julia] (Oct. 13, 1941) to Torino. Official cover, exempt from postage, not censored.

Postal money order service - P.M. 82 (Patra)



From P.M. 82 [29th Division Piemonte] (Apr. 15, 1942) to Taranto (Apr. 28, on the reverse).
Undelivered and postmarked again (May 5, on the reverse) to be returned to the sender.

Mail to the U.S.A. - P.M. 82 (Patra)



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

Rates: Letter 1.25 L., airpost to the USA 2.75 L. (regular stamps were used).

- Italy maintained excellent postal relations with the USA until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 7, 1941.

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



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

Rates: Letter 0.50 L.,
airpost 0.50 L.
(regular stamp was used).

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

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



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

Rates: Postal card 0.50 L.

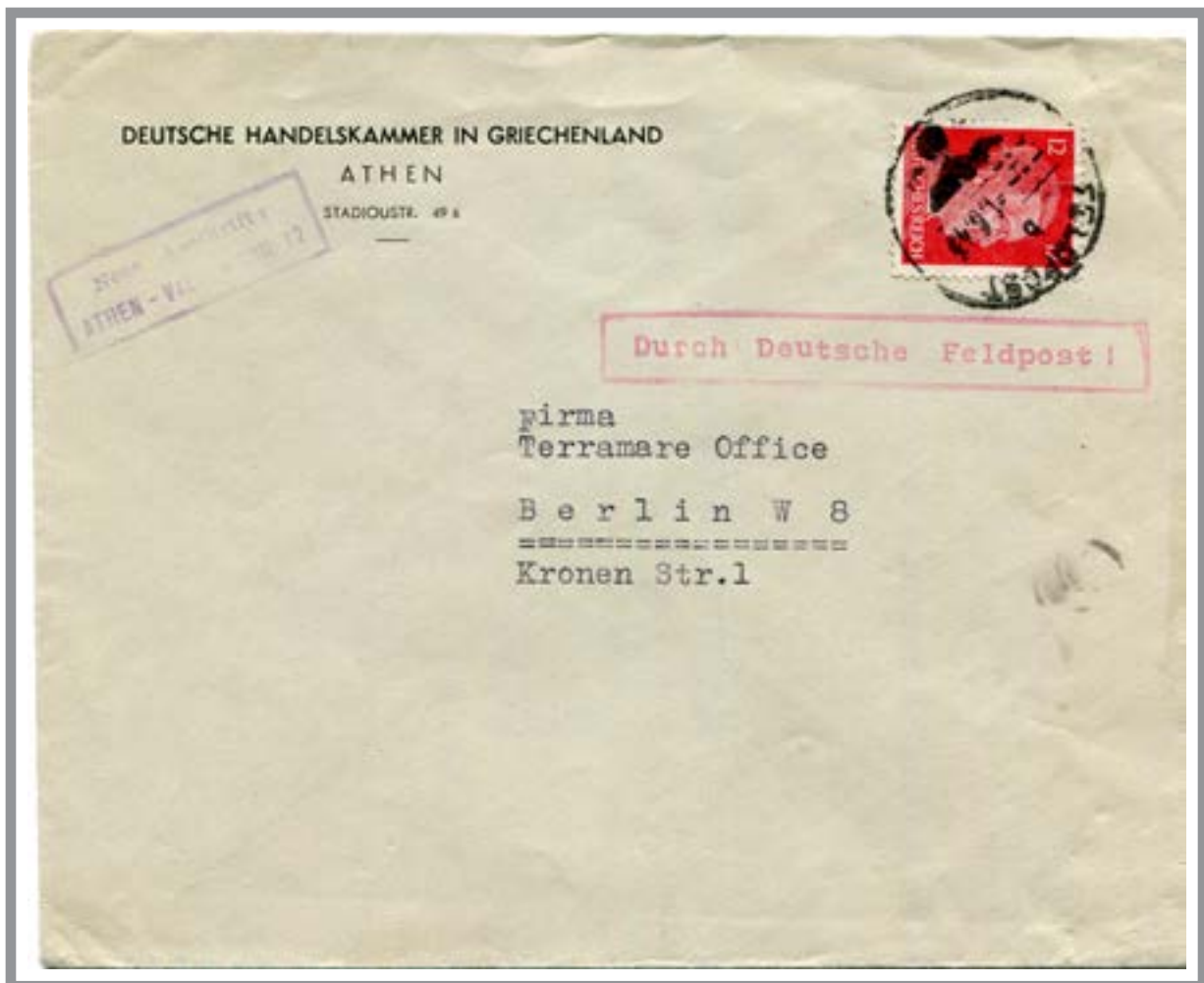
- Two days after the card was postmarked, the Armistice was signed. After fierce fighting, most of the troops of the Pinerolo division were captured by the Germans and sent to POW camps. This is a case where POWs, along with the last sackfuls of mail, were sent to Stalag X-B, in Sandbostel, near Bremen,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

GERMAN MILITARY POST (franked correspondence)

Contrary to the Italian military post, the corresponding German [Feldpost] handled almost exclusively the official and private correspondence of the military personnel. This type of correspondence was exempt from postage.

Feldpost also provided the handling of civilian mail for a few and very limited cases, as long as certain conditions were met: The indication "Durch Deutsche Feldpost" [by the German military post] should be written on the cover, along with "Ueber Luftgaupostamt..." [airpost to...], when necessary, German metropolitan stamps should be affixed and domestic (German) postal rates should be paid.

First weight letter



From Athens (June 1, 1943) to Berlin, Germany.
Rates: Letter 12 pf.

- "FELDPOST b" postmark along with the appropriate indications on the cover for its proper handling by the German military post.

Postcard



From Athens (Mar. 31, 1943) to Vienna.

Rates: Postcard 6 pf.

Second weight letter



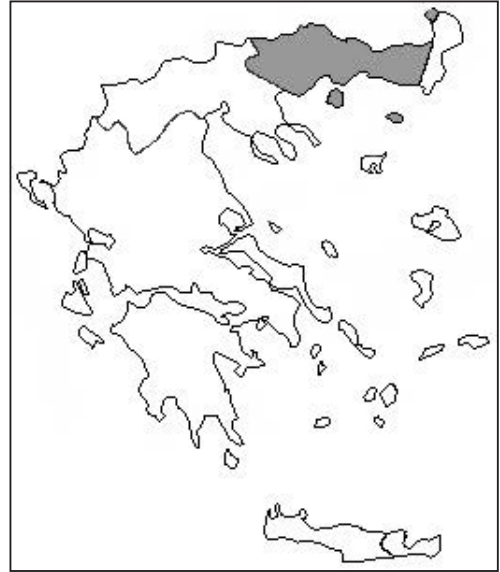
From Athens (Feb. 3, 1944) to Berlin, Germany.

Rates: Second weight letter, 20-100 g, 24 pf.

THE BULGARIAN POSTAL SERVICE

The gradual occupation of Greece by the Germans was accompanied by the simultaneous deployment of Bulgarian forces in Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace, apart from a narrow strip at Evros river along the Greek-Turkish border, which remained under German control. The largest part of the formerly Greek prefecture of Serres, the prefectures of Drama, Kavala, Xanthi and Rodopi and part of the prefecture of Evros, the town of Alexandroupoli and the island of Samothrace included, remained under control of the Bulgarian army until late October 1944.

Twenty five post offices are so far verified to have operated in the "Aegean Administration" in order to handle correspondence to and from Bulgaria, a few Axis countries, neutral territories and the occupied by the Bulgarians lands of Greece and Yugoslavia. No official means of correspondence with mainland Greece existed. Bulgarian metropolitan stamps and new Bulgarian postmarks were employed.



Mail to an "Undercover Address" in Turkey

The Tiberius family in Istanbul, Turkey, served as an undercover mail forwarder for Greeks in the new "Aegean Administration" to their relatives in camps in Turkey and Middle East. Six covers have survived to date of an estimated 600 forwarded by the family. The story was brought to light as late as 2000, by the Greek postal historian S. Bosovitch.



From Drama (Oct. 31, 1942) via Sofia (Nov. 1, on the reverse) to Istanbul, Turkey (Nov. 4, on the reverse).
Rates: Letter 4 leva, registration 7 leva.



Serres and the Strymonas (Struma) river

The valley of Strymonas (Struma) was the most fertile part of the "Aegean Administration". It attracted almost 50% of the new settler population. Besides the one in the town of Serres, eight additional post offices also operated in the surrounding villages, however not for the whole period of the occupation. Postal items from the smaller villages in all of the occupied area are quite hard to come across.



**Nea Zichni
(Ziliahovo)**
May 23, 1941



**Anghista Railway Station
(Anghista Gare)**
June 22, 1942



**Rodolivos
(Radoulevo)**
Mar. 11, 1943

Serres (Seres)



From Serres (July 1, 1942) to Sofia (July 4, on the reverse). Rates: Letter 2 leva, registration 2 leva.

Pentapoli (Sari Moussakli)



From Pentapoli (Mar. 3, 1943) via Serres (Mar. 5) to Sofia (Mar. 6, on the reverse).
Rates: Letter (since Dec. 1942) 3 leva, registration 2 leva.

- The depicted cover is probably the only postal item survived to date originating from Pentapoli.

Sidirokastro (Demir Hissar)



From Sidirokastro (Apr. 20, 1942) to Sofia (Apr. 21). Rates: Postal card 1 lev.



The plateau of Drama

The post offices in the larger towns used additional post-marks which signified the various complementary services, e.g. the one for money orders depicted here used in Drama. Four more post offices operated in smaller villages in the area.

Drama

Right: Postal money order (ПОЩЕНСКИ ЗАПИСИ, Apr. 27, 194?) sent to Kavala.

Below: Regular post (Dec. 7, 1942) to Sofia. Rates: Letter 2 leva.



Prossotsani (Prosetchene)



From Prossotsani (Aug. 2, 1944) to Lesnovo.

Rates: Postal card (from Mar. 13, 1944) 2 leva.

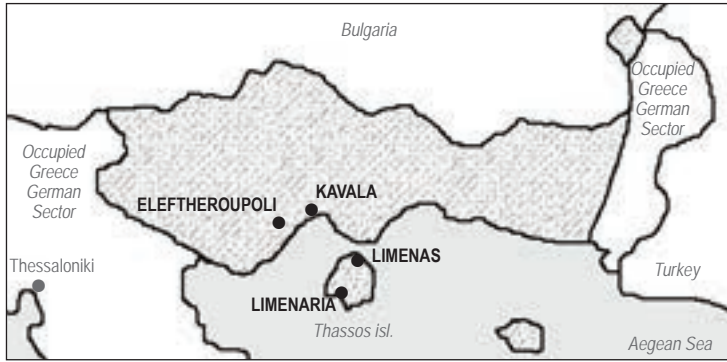
Nikiforos (Nousratli)



From Nikiforos (Nov. 2, 1943) to Germany.

Rates: Reduced POW letter rate 4 leva, registration 7 leva.

- The depicted cover is probably the only one survived to date originating from Nikiforos.
- Addressed to a Greek inmate in Stalag VIIIB, Memmingen, Germany.
- German censorship in Vienna.



The coastline of Kavala and Thassos island

Kavala and its surrounding smaller villages became Bulgaria's gateway to the Aegean Sea.

Kavala

Right: Postal money order (ПОЩЕНСКИ ЗАПИСИ, Sept. 16, 1942).

Below: Parcel post form from Sofia (Dec. 7, 1943) to Kavala (Dec. 11). Parcel rate 15 leva, compulsory supplementary rate 1 lev.



Попълнете и подпишете наставленията на обратната страна!
 ГЛАВНА ДИРЕКЦИЯ НА ПОЩИТЪ, ТЕЛЕГРАФИТЪ И ТЕЛЕФОНИТЪ

Обр. 304

ПОЩЕНСКА ДЕКЛАРАЦИЯ № 120

За частни таксувани колетни пратки, писма и кутни съ общесна стойност и наложенъ платежъ.

Подателъ: **МИКО ТОМОВЪ**
 живущъ въ **СОФИЯ-3, ул. МОРАВА 68** ул. № _____

обявявамъ, че предадохъ на мѣстната п. т. т. станция една **ОРАТНА** ценно-ценно **СЪ** обявена стойностъ **хиляда петстотинъ** лева и съ наложенъ платежъ _____ лева

за **Мл. Вощиня Антоане Микова Шолов ч. Кава̀ла**
ула Белица 6404 Силвотъ, която съдържа: **дрези**

Пратката носи следния печатъ или пломба: _____

Гр. или село **София 7 IV** 1943

Подателъ: **М. Шолов**

№ на пратката (отъ книга № 301)	Тежестъ		Събраза такса за:					Всичко
	кгр.	гр.	тежестъ	обявена стойностъ	наложенъ платежъ	доставка въ жпнл. шето	шето	
01304	1	400	15	15	15		15	15

Попълватъ се всички графа безъ съгрозия и вощавки

Приелъ чиновникъ: _____

Издано въ станцията на мѣстността на историческото ченно

Место за залепване на пощ. нарки за такситъ, събрани отъ подателя.



Eleftheroupoli
(Pravischte)

Apr. 10, 1942



Limenaria (Limenaria),
Thassos island

From Limenaria (May 21, 1943)
to Plovdiv (May 24).

Rates: Postal card 1 lev.



Limenas (Limen),
Thassos island

From Limenas (July 21, 1943)
to Sofia (July 24).

Rates: Postal card 1 lev.



Xanthi and Nestos river

Xanthi was named capital of the "Aegean Administration", although Kavala was a larger town. The villages of Stavroupoli and Paranesti are located on Nestos river.

**Xanthi (Ksanti)
Capital of the "Aegean Administration"**

Right: Cheques service
(ЧЕКОВА СЛУЖБА, Sept. 15, 1942).

Below: Regular post (May 31, 1941) to Sofia (June 2, on the reverse).
Rates: Letter 2 leva, registration 2 leva.



Stavroupoli (Krastopol)



70%

From Bourgas (Apr. 24, 1943) to Stavroupoli (Apr. 28). Reduced rate for visiting card envelope: 0.50 lev.

- Stavroupoli (Krastopol) was the location of the camp of anti-regime internees.

Paranesti Railway Station (Bouk Gare)



From Paranesti (June 12, 1943) to Sofia. Rates: Letter (since Dec. 1942) 3 leva, registration 2 leva.

- The depicted cover is probably the only postal item survived to date originating from Paranesti.



Komotini and Alexandroupoli

The easternmost part of the "Aegean Administration" was definitely less attractive to the new settlers. Probably a combination of less fertile lands along with the considerable density of muslim communities. The post offices of the depicted towns was only complemented by the one at the village of Sapes.

Alexandroupoli (Dede-Aghatche)

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

Rates: Letter 2 leva, registration 2 leva.



Komotini (Gumurdjina)

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

Rates: Letter (since Dec. 1942) 3 leva,
registration 2 leva.



Madame Diakoff

Missia II

Sofia

Rural post: М[ЕЖДУ] С[ЕЛСКИ] УЧАСТЪКЪ



From Chryssoupoli (Sarichaban) rural post (Feb. 27, 1944) via Sofia (Mar. 2, on the reverse) to Shishmanovo, Samokov area.

- Two covers of rural post attached to smaller villages are known to date. The depicted from Chryssoupoli and one from Sidirokastro (Demir Hissar).

Mail from the Independent State of Croatia (NDH)



From Zemun (Dec. 24, 1942) to Xanthi (Dec. 29). Rates: Postal card (preferred to Italy, Bulgaria etc.) 2 kuna.

- Pieces of mail between the Bulgarian occupied territory and States other than Germany are quite uncommon.
- During 1941-44, the city of Zemun belonged to the short-lived NDH.

MAIL TO /FROM ABROAD - FIRST PERIOD

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

Mail from Poland

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



60%

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

- German censorship in Vienna.



Mail from Bulgaria - Exempt or accidental?

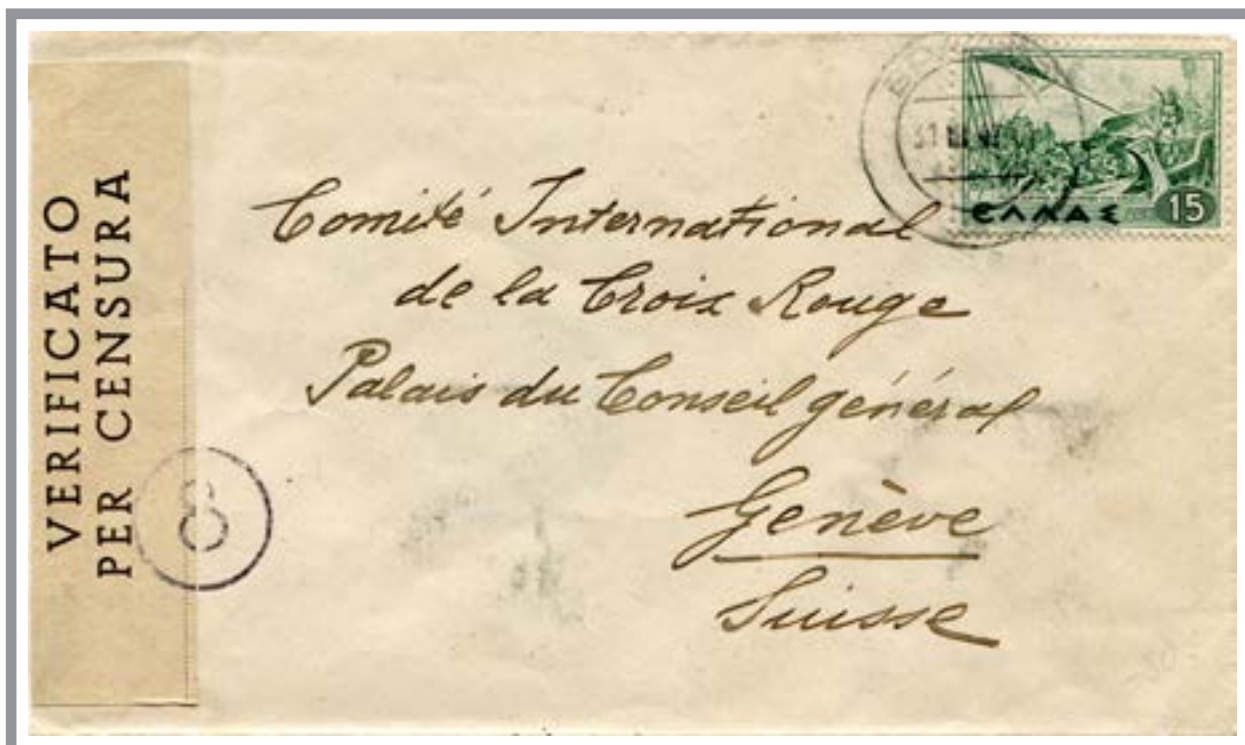
From Sofia
(Dec. 12, 1941)
to Athens (Dec. 16,
on the reverse).

Rates to Germany:
Letter 7 leva,
airpost 5 leva.

- Mail to or from Bulgaria was suspended for the whole of the Occupation period. This cover was sent from a German civilian, addressed to a German merchant in Athens. It could have been exempt, or altogether accidental.
- German censorship in Vienna.

*Mail to Switzerland - Transition period in Eastern Crete*

In February 1942, postal operations in Eastern Crete were transferred from the Italian to the Greek authorities. Greek mail to Switzerland, previously allowed under the Italians in Crete, was at that time strictly forbidden, the address of the I.C.R.C. being no exception.



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

3rd period rates:
Letter 15 D.

- Italian censor-ship in St. Nicholas.

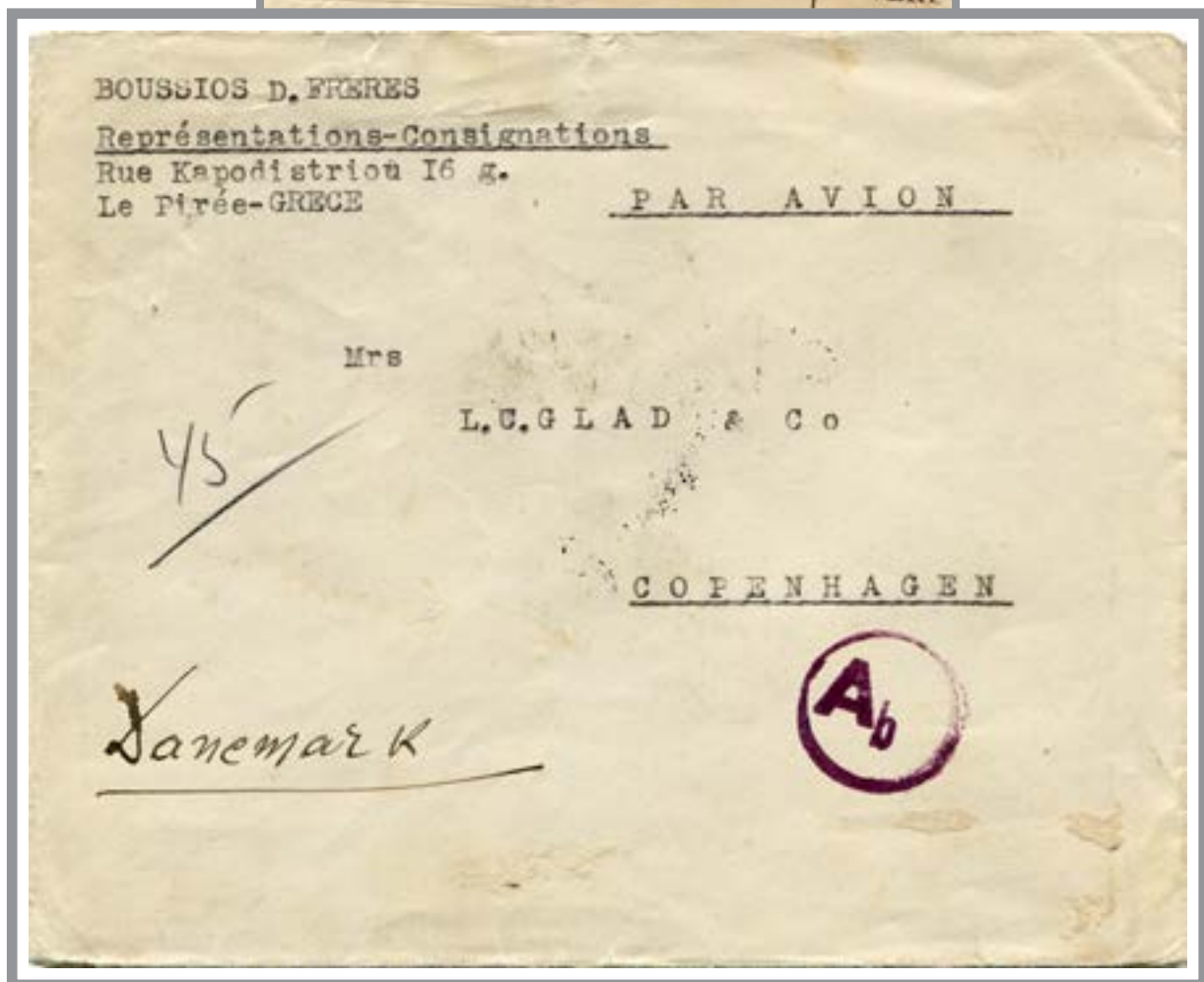
MAIL TO/FROM ABROAD - SECOND PERIOD

From October to December 1942, and then again from April 1943 onwards, postal communications with a number of neutral, pro-Axis or occupied countries was re-established. Because of the prolonged commercial inactivity and the general hardship in Greece, pieces of mail to or from countries other than Italy (until the Capitulation), Germany, or their annexed territories, are hard to run across.

Mail to Denmark



60%



From Piraeus (Dec. 1942) to Copenhagen.

6th period rates (on the reverse): Letter 100 D. Also, airpost (since Nov. 1, 1942) 10 D.

- Censorships: Italian in Rome (on the reverse); German in Berlin (Danish mail censor station).

Mail from Albania

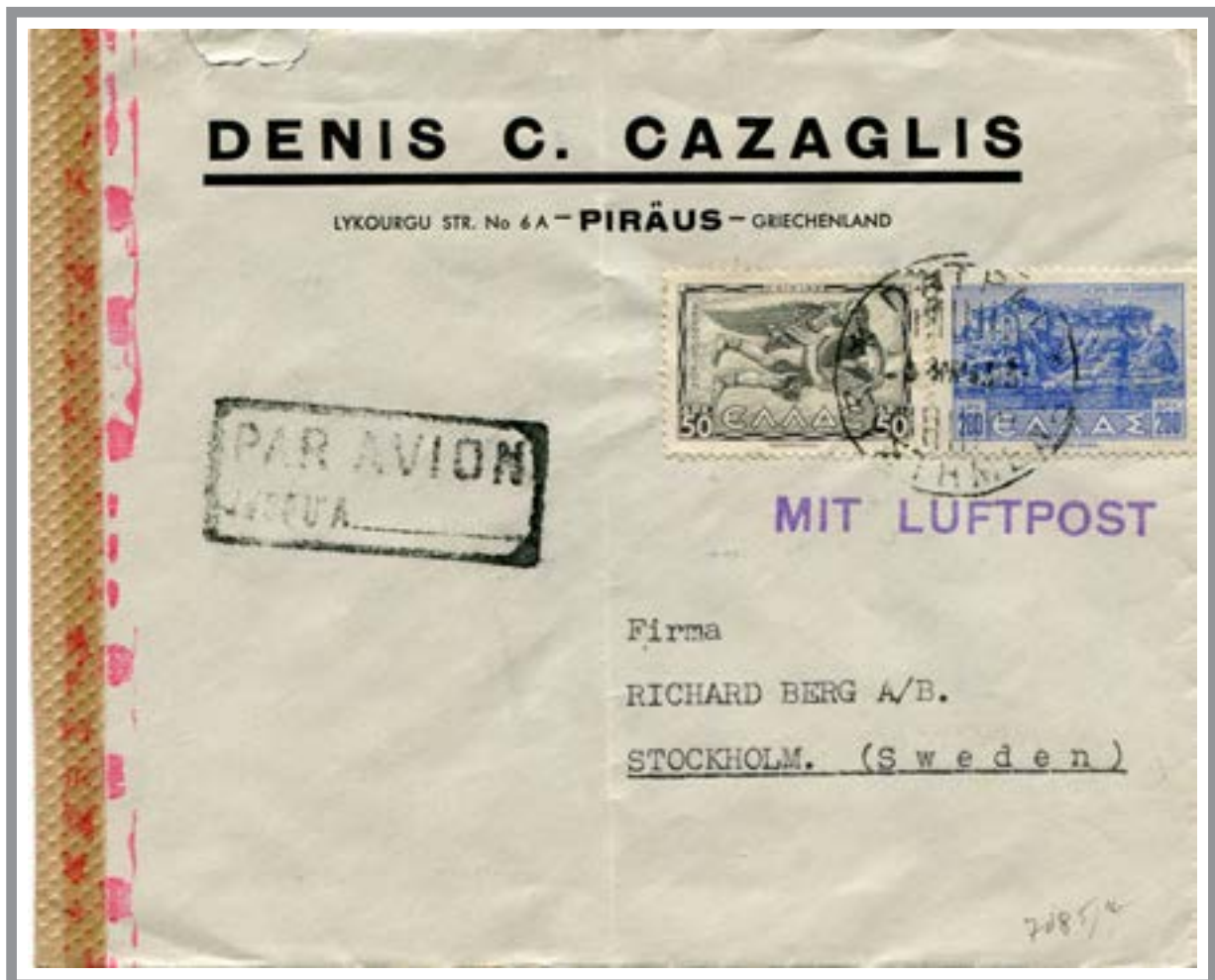


From Fier, Albania
(Jan. 8, 1943), to Athens.

Rates: Postal card
15 qindarka (cents).

- Mail to / from Albania was in fact allowed as early as March 1, 1942, when flights from Athens via Corfu to Rome made a stop over in Tirana.
- Italian censorship in Albania.

Mail to Sweden



From Patra (Apr. 6, 1943) to Stockholm. 7th period rates: Letter 200 D. Also, airpost (since Apr. 1, 1943) 50 D.

- Censorships: Italian in Athens; German in Vienna.

Mail to Portugal



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

7th period rates:
Postal card 125 D. Also, air-post (since Apr. 1, 1943) 50 D.

Mail from Spain



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

Rates: Letter 75 c.

- Censorships: Spanish in Madrid; German in Munchen (Spanish outgoing mail censor station).

Mail from and to Vichy France



50%

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

Rates: Letter 4 F.

- Censorships: German in Frankfurt (censor station for mail from Southern France); Italian in Athens.



50%

From Athens (Apr. 5, 1944) to France.

10th period rates:
Letter 10,000 D.

- German censorships in Vienna (mechanical "g") and Frankfurt (red handstamp "Ae").



Mail from and to Belgium



From Antwerp (Apr. 21, 1943) to Athens (June 15, on the reverse). Rates: Letter 2 F., registration 2 F.

- Censorships: German in Munchen (Belgian mail censor station); Italian in Athens.



From Athens (June 8, 1943) to Brussels. 7th period rates: Postal card 125 D.

- Censorships: Italian in Athens; German in Vienna.

Mail to the Netherlands

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

7th period rates:
Letter 200 D.

Also, airpost (since
Apr. 1, 1943) 50 D.

- German censorship in Vienna.



50%

Mail to Luxemburg

From Athens
(Aug. 7, 1944)
to Luxemburg.

11th period rates:
Letter 100,000 D,
express 100,000 D.

- German censorship in Vienna.

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HAMBURG 1 - BERLIN NW 40
Filiale TRIESTE

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 TELEGRAMMI:
 WALLSCHIFF - TRIESTE

FERNSPRECHER:
 5403, 9446, privat: 5011
 TELEGRAMME:
 WALLSCHIFF - TRIESTE

HERRN DR. DELIS

Trieste, den ⁱⁱ 27. Oktober 1943.
 PIAZZA VENEZIA N. 7

Firma
 "Athani" A.G.
 Athenes



Ba/MF
 Uns. Pos. 20.072
 Betr.: div. div. 32 + 17 Korbflaschen Ameisensäure.

[Handwritten signature]
 I.V.

Beilagen Nr. 802



Eingeschrieben - versichert per Lit. 200.-

7190/3287

6. 10. 43. Valentini trieste



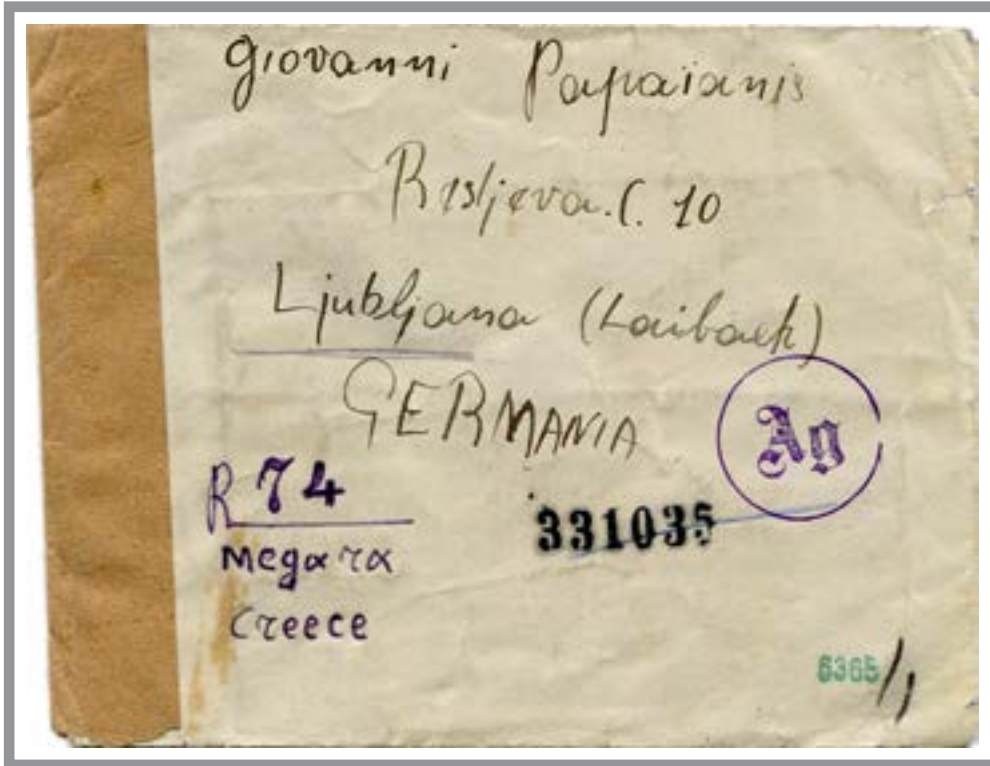
Mail from the Adriatic Zone (Adriatische Küstenland)

The provinces of Udine, Gorizia, Trieste, Pula, Fiume and Ljubljana did not comprise part of the Italian Social Republic (R.S.I.), formed in 1943. Being a region of extreme importance for Hitler, the area formed the autonomous "Adriatic Zone" [Adriatische Küstenland], on October 1, 1943.

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

- Censorship handstamps by the Germans in Trieste, similar to the ones used by the Italians before the capitulation. Also, German censorship in Vienna.

Mail to the Adriatic Zone (Adriatische Küstenland)



60%

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

10th period rates:
 Letter 10,000 D., registration 10,000 D.

- German censorship in Vienna.

Mail from Croatia



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

- German censorship in Vienna.

Mail from Bulgaria - Suspension lifted on behalf of the General

Mail between Bulgaria and Greece was suspended. The depicted cover is addressed to Alexander Löhr, German General and High Commander of Southeast Europe [Oberbefehlshaber im Südosten]. To avoid any complications with the Bulgarian postal system, two lines have been added to Löhr's address in Bulgarian "София, Гърция" [Thessaloniki, Greece].



70%



From Botevgrad, Bulgaria (Aug. 24, 1943) via Sofia (Aug. 25) and Vienna (censors) to Thessaloniki (Sept. 7).
Rates: Letter 7 leva, airpost (pre-war period rate) 3 leva.

- The note "registered" in Bulgarian and the registration handstamp were crossed out, when the postal clerk realized that mail registration rules presume at least the cooperation between two postal systems.
- German censorship in Vienna.

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



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

10th period rates in Greece: Postal card 6,000 D.

Rates in Romania: Postal card 12 lei (mechanical cancellation), compulsory additional rate 2 lei (stamp).

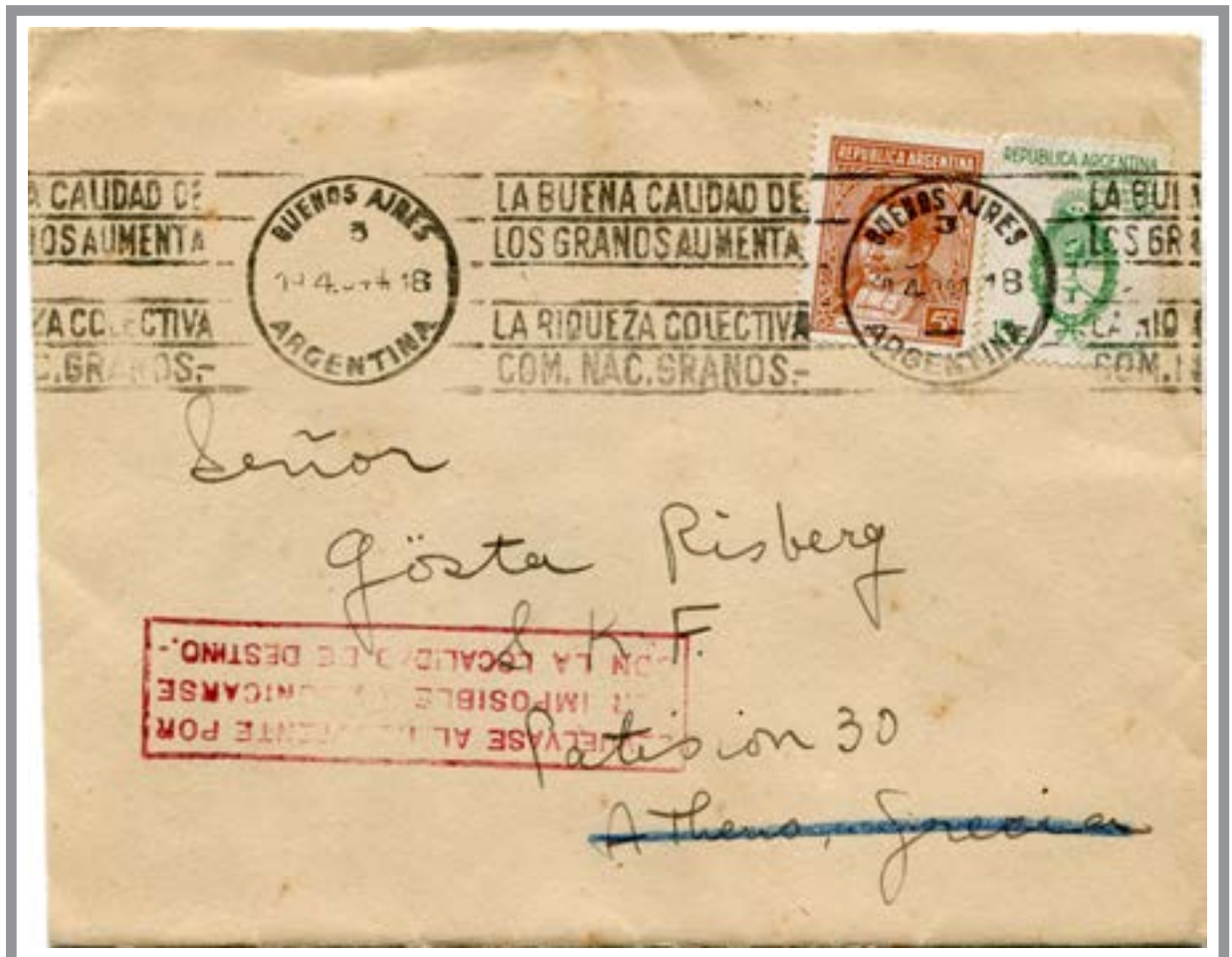
- Not accepted by the Thessaloniki post office, as correspondence between the two countries was suspended. The postcard was properly charged and finally mailed from Bucharest (June 29) to final destination.

Mail from Argentina - Remained suspended

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

Rates: Letter 20 c.

- The red boxed handstamp reads: "DEVUÉLVASE AL REMITENTE POR SER IMPOSIBLE COMUNICARSE CON LA LOCALIDAD DE DESTINO", i.e. "Return to sender since it is impossible to communicate with destination address".



THE COUNTDOWN

The capitulation of the Italian army on September 8, 1943, marked the countdown to the end of WW II. However, it took a long thirteen months for the German army to retrieve from the Greek mainland.

Mail to Albania suspended

From Athens (Sept. 11, 1943) to Georgoutsates, Albania.

8th period rates:
Postal card 250 D.

Also, airpost
(since Sept. 10, 1943) 100 D.

- "Returned due to suspension of services" handstamp.



Mail to Italy suspended

From Athens (Sept. 29, 1943) to Trieste.

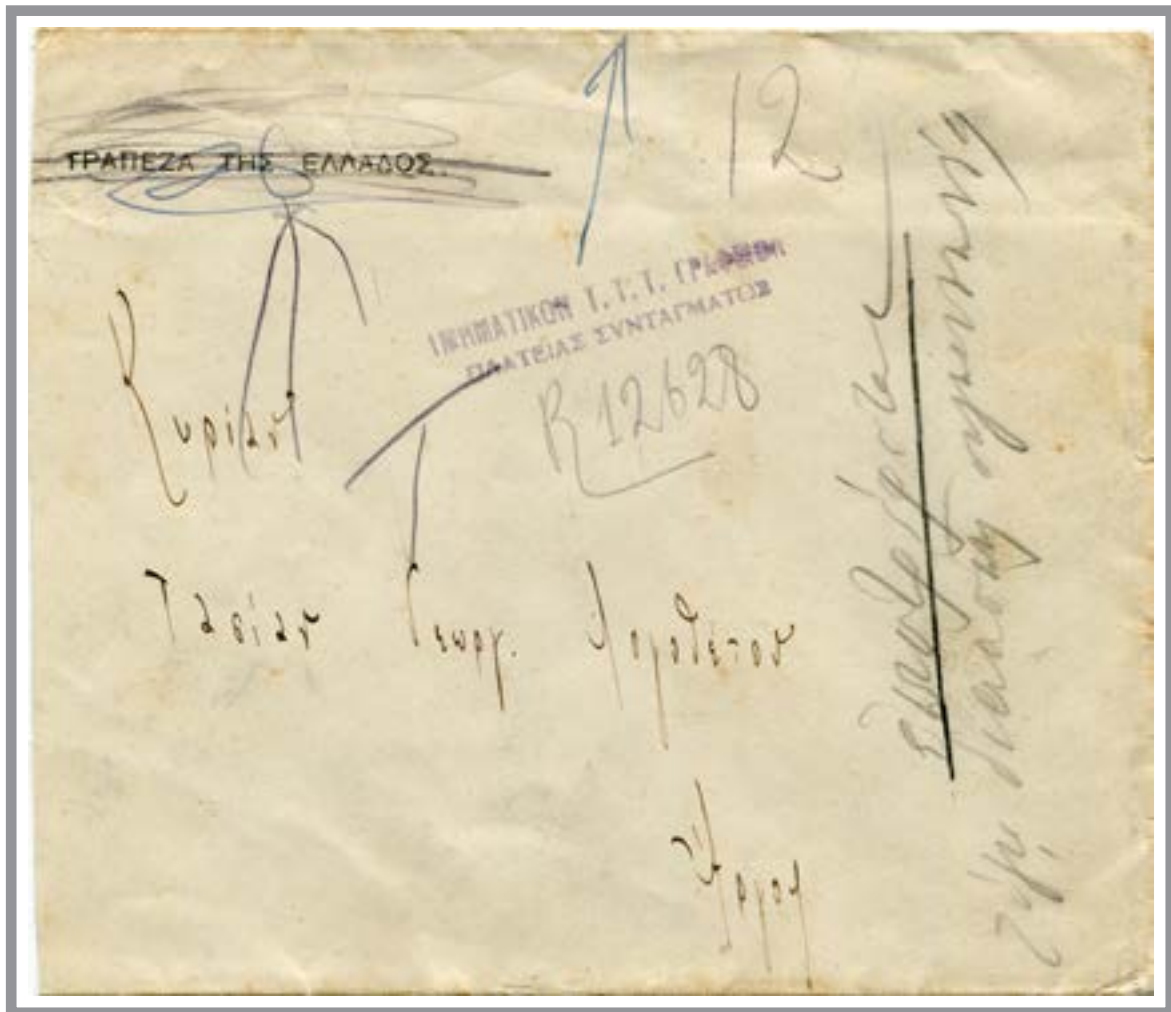
8th period rates:
Letter 400 D. (two 100 D. stamps are missing).

- "Returned due to suspension of services" handstamp.

Suspension of communications in the Peloponnese



60%



From Athens (May 18, 1944) to Argos. 10th period rates: Letter 4,000 D., registration 4,000 D.

- Pencil note on the cover: "Returned due to suspension of services". Due to intense partisan activities in the Peloponnese, an order was issued which prohibited "... any postal or telegraphic communication, as well as communication by telephone...". The order was signed on May 19 by the German High Command in the area.

The liberation of Brussels

On its way to Brussels, the cover was held and handstamped "Retour" to be returned to the sender, because in the meantime the city had fallen to the Allies (September 3, 1944).



60%



From Thessaloniki (Aug. 27, 1944) to Brussels. Returned to Thessaloniki (Oct. 10).
12th period rates: Letter 500,000 D.

- Postage for express mail was not paid and the handstamp "EXPRES" was crossed out by pencil.
- Censored in Vienna twice, accounting for the two legs of the trip.

The liberation of Bulgaria (Sept. 7, 1944) - Final day of air services in Greece



40%

Final day of domestic flights

From Thessaloniki (Sept. 7, 1944) to Athens (Sept. 8).

12th period of rates: Letter 200,000 D., registration 200,000 D., express 200,000 D. Also, airpost (since Aug. 15) 100,000 D., anti-TB rate (since July 1, valid for the first ten days of each month) 25,000 D.



40%

Final day of international flights

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

12th period rates: Letter 500,000 D.

- German censorship in Vienna.

Permanent suspension of international mail

- "Returned due to suspension of services" handstamp. The postmark Sept. 24, 1944, on the first cover marks the decision for permanent suspension.



40%



From Athens (Sept. 11, 1944) to Zlin, Germany. The cover was not dispatched. On Sept. 24, it was postmarked for a second time, before it was returned to the sender.

12th period rates:
Letter 500,000 D.,
express 500,000 D.

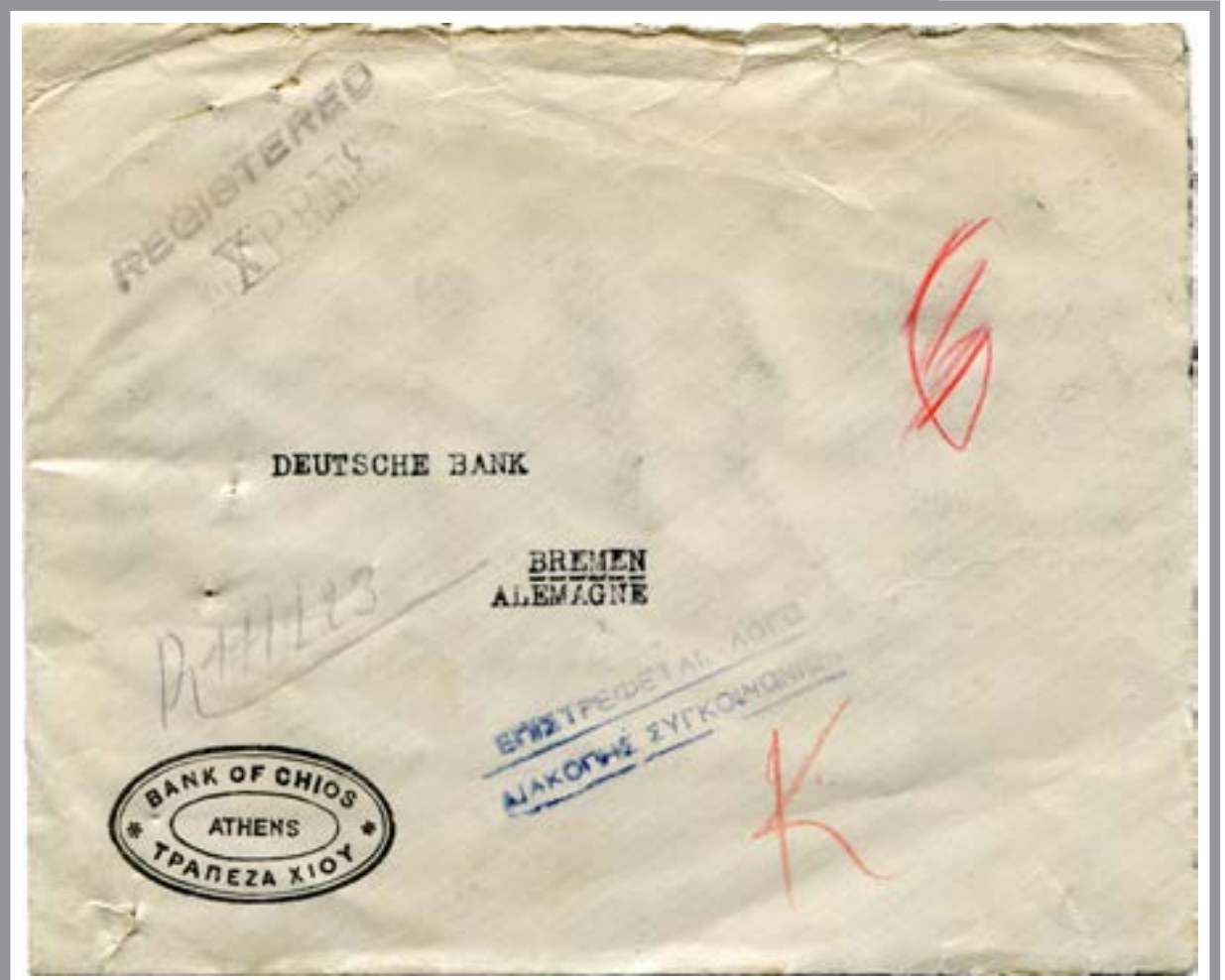
From Athens (Sept. 14, 1944) to Bremen, Germany. The cover was never dispatched.

12th period rates:
Letter 500,000 D.,
registr. 500,000 D.,
express 500,000 D.

- Last day of the 12th period rates.



40%



Communication problems in Crete



40%

From Rethymno (Sept. 19, 1944) to Chania (Sept. 22).

12th instead of 13th period rates: Second weight letter 300,000 D. (200,000+100,000). Also, children's camp voluntary rate 450,000 D.

- Crete was not notified on time for the new rates of Sept. 15.
- The 50,000 part of the children's camp stamp counted (correctly) towards total postage.



From Rethymno (Sept. 27, 1944) to Spili, Crete.

13th period rates: Letter 5 mil.

- On Sept. 27, the postal clerk seems to be aware of the new rates, but has no new stamps to sell. So, he writes in red ink: "5,000,000 D. paid 27-6-44". Wrong month indication: "6" instead of "9".

Mail suspended between Athens and Thessaloniki

On October 2, 1944, the day the first cover reached Athens, correspondence between Athens and Thessaloniki was suspended, as the manuscript shows on the second cover. Suspension lasted to end of October, when the German army concluded its northbound withdrawal.



40%

First cover (top):
From Thessaloniki
(Sept. 26, 1944) postmarked
three times in Athens
(Oct. 2, 3 & 5).

Second cover (bottom):
From Thessaloniki (Oct. 2,
1944), destination Athens,
never travelled. Manuscript
in Greek: "Returned, lack of
transportation".



13th period rates:

Letter 5 mil. Also, airpost
rate 1 mil.

On the second cover only,
anti-TB rate, compulsory
during the first ten days of
each month, 25,000 D.
(since July 1).

- The 1 mil. airpost rate was
meaningless, considering
that air services were sus-
pended earlier, on Sept. 8.



40%

STUMBLING TOWARDS LIBERATION

The northbound withdrawal of the occupation army began in early September 1944. On October 12 they evacuated Athens and by November 2 the last detachment crossed the border to Yugoslavia. Liberated Greece was trying to stand to her feet. She remained amputated though. The German army was still in control of the south Aegean Sea, keeping forces in Crete, Melos and the formerly Italian Dodecanese. In December, the Second Round of the Civil War broke up. Until May 1945, three consecutive governments have taken oath, a Viceroy has replaced the King and the drama of post-war Greece has just started.

In Europe, the curtain fell on May 10, 1945, when the German Command surrendered in villa "Ariadne" in Herakleio, Crete. A few months later, on September 2, the signatures of the Japanese on the deck of USS Missouri officially ended World War II.

To better illustrate what happened in Greece during the final eight months of WW II, this chapter is sub-divided into four parts:

- A. **The partisans:** Their assumption of power in most of rural Greece.
- B. **The government:** First steps to get organized in and around Athens.
- C. **Winners and losers:** From the December events to the establishment of the new State.
- D. **Epilogue:** The final days of World War II in Greece.

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 (Sept. 20) and Agrinio (Oct. 7) and by EDES in Lefkada (Sept. 19) and Prevesa (Oct. 17). The stamps were later considered illegal by the newborn Athens government.

Local partisan stamps of Lesvos travelling abroad



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

12th instead of 13th period rates: Letter 500,000 D. (600,000 D. were paid instead).

- The British detachment, which had landed on Lesvos in early October and remained on the island for a few days, offered to carry local mail to abroad via Smyrne, Turkey (manuscript "SM" in blue). The depicted cover is one of three or four examples reported.
- Partisan censorship in Mytilene (inverted linear "Λ...") and Egyptian in Cairo.

Local partisan stamps of Lefkada



From Lefkada
(Oct. 13, 1944) to
Athens (illegible)
with dual franking:

(A) Occupation
stamps (12th
instead of 13th
period rates):
Letter 200,000
D., registration
200,000 D. Also,
anti-TB rate (since
July 1) 25,000 D.

(B) Partisan
stamps (13th
period rates):
Letter 5 mil., regis-
tration 5 mil.

- Two different frankings, in compliance with the different political regimes at the two ends of the communication line.
- Overprinted quantity of the depicted 5 mil. on 5,000 was 250 examples only.

Local partisan stamps of Prevesa



70%



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

(A) Occupation stamps (12th instead of 13th period rates): Letter 200,000 D.

(B) Partisan stamps (13th period rates): Letter 5 mil.

- Same dual franking as in the case of Lefkada. The partisan stamp was razor-cut on arrival in Athens, since by that time all partisan stamps were considered illegal by the central government.

The first handstamp of EAM partisans in Alexandroupoli



70%



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

12th period rates: Letter 200,000 D., registration 200,000 D., express 200,000 D. Also, airpost (since Aug. 15) 100,000 D.

- 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 ΑΛΕΞΕΠΟΛΕΩΣ" (in purple), the first handstamp (only recently identified) used by the partisans in Evros. On its way back, it was censored by the partisans in Thessaloniki (red linear handstamp).

B. The government

The first free postwar government in Greece, military supported by the British, took oath on October 23, 1944. They had to deal with a devastated economy in all respects, including practically unavaivable communication lines. Very quickly, on December 3, the distrust between the government and the EAM partisans unfolded to the Second Round of the Civil War.

10 days' postal cards: Re-establishment of communication with the Allied World

The suspension of communications to international destinations was lifted on November 1, 1944, provided postal cards were used only. For ten days, until the monetary reform of November 11, these cards were mailed with the last high inflation occupation stamps and postal rates, both counted in millions.

Mailed two days earlier

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

13th period rates:
Postal card 6 mil.

- The card was mailed two days earlier than the official lifting of the suspension. On Oct. 31 it was cancelled again to be returned to the sender, though it was not. It seems that the sender's inside information was secure.
- British censorship on arrival.



A long trip to Gold Coast

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

13th period rates:
Postal card 6 mil.

- Censored by the British (on the reverse).
- A trip that lasted almost five months.

10 days' postal cards: Returned to the sender

The relevant mandate was explicit: (a) Mail to relatives only, no commercial correspondence of any sort was supposed to be accepted. (b) The cards should be plain, with no illustrations whatsoever.



From Athens (Nov. 8, 1944) to Melbourne, Australia.

13th period rates:
Postal card 6 mil.

- Blue pencil note in Greek: "Returned - Improper", because of the commercial nature of the text. The sender, a renowned stamp dealer, was contacting stamp dealers and philatelic societies abroad in order to re-establish his pre-war commercial contacts. Postmarked to be returned on Nov. 17.



From Athens (Nov. 8, 1944) to Los Angeles, California, USA. 13th period rates: Postal card 6 mil.

- This card had the misfortune to be illustrated. It was returned to the sender with the indications in Greek "returned" and "non-illustrated postal cards are accepted" (red pencil notes).

The monetary reform of November 11, 1944

On November 11, 1944, the “new drachma” was placed in circulation, equivalent to 50 billion occupation drachmae. On that day, all remaining occupation stamps were withdrawn from sales. They were replaced by three denominations of the 1937 Historical set from stock, overprinted this time with “ΔΡΑΧΜΑΙ ΝΕΑΙ” [new drachmae].

The new postal rates were adjusted to the pre-war period values, but they did not last long. A consequence of the new round of inflation was the increase in postal rates twice in a short period of time: on February 1, and April 1, 1945.

Basic postal rates after the monetary reform			
	Nov. 11 1944	Feb. 1 1945	Apr. 1 1945
Domestic rates			
Postal card:	2	3	7
Letter:	3	5	10
Registration:	4	5	10
International rates			
Postal card:	5	8	15
Letter:	8*	12	25
Registration:	8	12	25

* Cover mail to abroad was at the time prohibited. The prohibition was lifted on March 6, 1945.



From Athens (Nov. 13, 1944) to Cairo, Egypt. Rates since Nov. 11, 1944: Postal card 5 D.

- Third day of circulation of the “new drachmae” and implementation of the new currency rates.
- A closer look under the new stamps reveals a layer of the older occupation stamps. This card is one of the prestamped postal cards that the post office had prepared in order to meet the demand by its customers, when card mail to abroad was permitted a few days earlier, on November 1.
- Egyptian censorship on arrival.



The absence of government from rural Greece

The new government's measures and reforms did not have much effect outside the capital. Most of rural Greece was administered by local partisan groups, with a local sense of law implementation. Kalamata, for example, is a rare case of mail censorship, which remained in effect for a few weeks only, mid-October to mid-November 1944.



70%

From Athens (Nov. 15, 1944) to Kalamata.
Rates since Nov. 11, 1944: Letter 3 D.

- EAM partisans censorship in Kalamata.

The absence of government from island Greece

In other parts of remote Greece, postal rates were paid with stamps already devalued and withdrawn, since no "new drachmae" were sent in time. In the case of Samos, due to the island's isolation from the mainland, the September occupation stamps were not sent at all.

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

12th period rates:
Postal card 300,000 D.
(500,000 D. were paid instead,
i.e. the letter rate).

- The card was taxed on arrival in Athens (triangular "T") and required to pay 15 gold centimes (15¢) on arrival to destination. It seems that the USPS did not impose any postage dues.

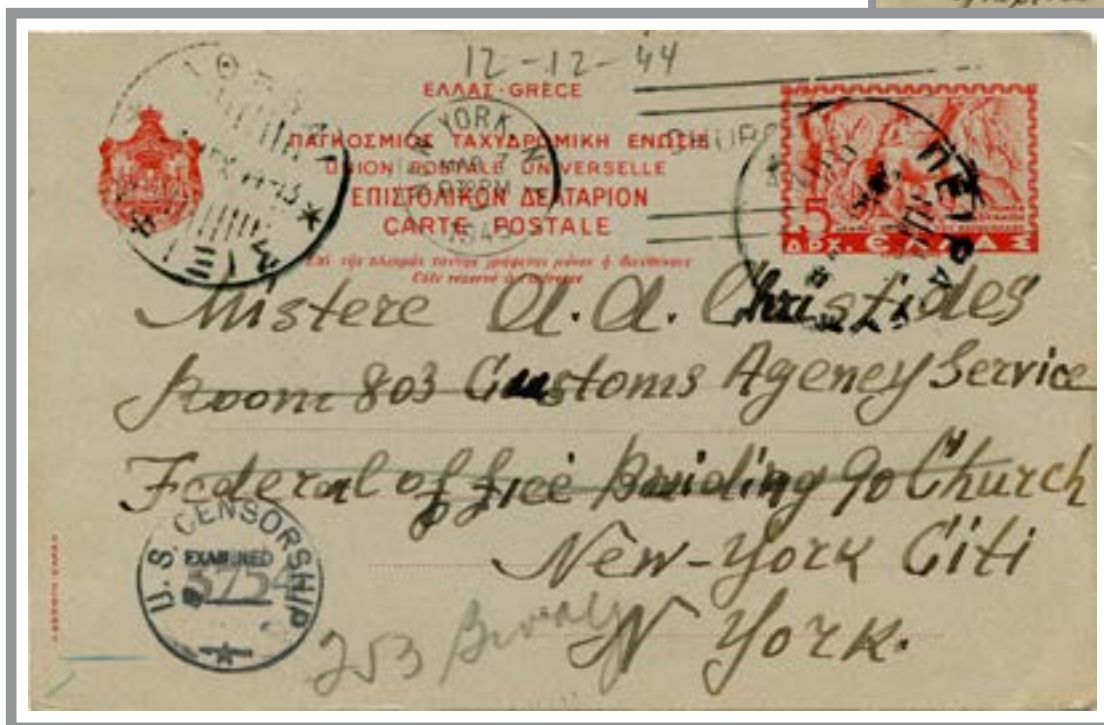


Identical twins

The sender thought it is wiser to write two identical postal cards, to increase the probability of one reaching its destination. The cards were cancelled in Athens on December 3, 1944, the day the Second Round of the Civil War broke up in the capital.



60%



60%

From Piraeus (Dec. 2, 1944) via Athens (Dec. 3) to New York (Mar. 7, 1945). Rates since Nov. 11, 1944: Postal card 5 D.

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

C. Winners and losers

The Second Round of the Civil War broke up on December 3, 1944, when EAM partisans clashed in Athens with the joint governmental and British forces. An armistice was called on January 11, 1945, and the winners (government) imposed the disarmament of the losers (partisans) on February 12 (Treaty of Varkiza). It took an additional month or so for the government forces to gradually assume positions all over the country. Meanwhile, central censorship in Athens was set up and cover mail to selected destinations abroad was re-established.

Thessaloniki under EAM partisans' control

Since October 30, 1944, the day the last German garrison left Thessaloniki, the city was taken by EAM partisans, despite the presence of a substantial number of British troops. For a few weeks, starting with the December fightings until the departure of the partisans from Thessaloniki (January 17, 1945), correspondence was censored by the partisans (red linear handstamp in Greek "ΛΟΓΟΚΡΙΣΙΑ ΕΛΑΣ" [ELAS censorship]).



70%



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

Rates since Nov. 11, 1944: Second weight letter 5 D. (3+2), registration 4 D.

- The "ΑΕΡΟΠΟΡΙΚΩΣ" [Air Mail] indication is of no significance. Mail at that time was sent by sea. Road, rail and air communication between Athens and Thessaloniki were re-established much later.



**Crete on its own:
Herakleio prefecture**

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

13th period rates: Letter 5 mil.

- Use of the 5,000,000 D. denomination of part V of the Landscapes issue, two months after its official withdrawal. The monetary reform did not mean much to Crete. Small quantities of the new currency were sent to the island and a few "new drachmae" stamps followed at the end of March. Although the Germans were continuously retrieving westwards, to Chania, the whole of the island was practically still isolated from the mainland.

**Crete on its own:
Rethymno prefecture**

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

- The letter was posted with no stamps on, due to their unavailability, as noted on the cover. The handwritten inscription of the postal clerk



reads in Greek: "Due to lack of stamps, double rate should be collected 9-2-945" followed by his signature. The handstamp "T" emphasizes the obligation for the proper dues to be collected. An exaggeration on the part of the post office clerk, who punishes a civilian in a case where the latter bears no responsibility at all.

First days of Greek censorship

The postal card to Russia (top), mailed on February 21, 1945, misses the Greek censor mark, the one to Cyprus (bottom), on February 25, does not. It is therefore safe to assume that postwar Greek censorship first appeared any time between February 22 and 25.



From Athens (Feb. 21, 1945) via Cairo and Moscow (June 23) to Adhazia (July 5). Rates since Feb. 1, 1945: Postal card 8 D. (one 50 lepta stamp is missing).

- Egyptian (octagonal handstamp) and Russian (dual-circle) censorships.

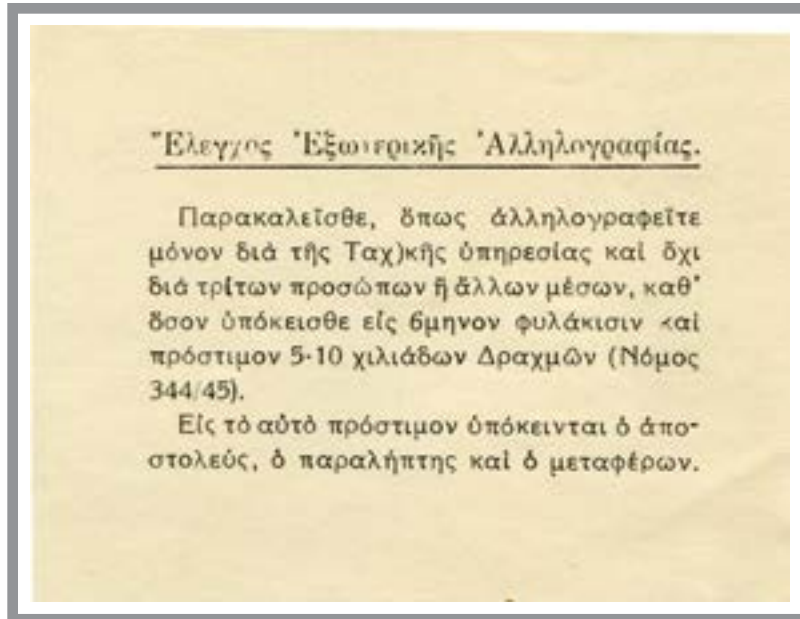


From Athens (Feb. 25, 1945) to Larnaca, Cyprus. Rates since Feb. 1, 1945: Postal card 8 D.

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

First day of cover mail to abroad

A few days after the establishment of censorship offices, the suspension of sending cover mail to abroad was lifted (March 6, 1945). At roughly the same time, a note was released to postal customers reminding them that they should correspond via the Postal Service only.



“International correspondence control: Please, make sure you send your mail via the Postal Service only and not via third parties or other means, since the penalty is six months imprisonment and 5-10,000 drachmas fine (Law 344/45). Same applies equally to sender, addressee and the bearer.”



From Athens (Mar. 6, 1945) to Minneapolis, MN, USA. Rates since Feb. 1, 1945: Letter 12 D.

- First day of cover mail to abroad after the liberation. The news were announced in the daily Press.
- Greek and American censorships.

Local partisan stamps of Serres (Eastern Macedonia)

On January 1, 1945, i.e. before the armistice, EAM partisans in Serres placed into circulation stamp-like-labels with the value indication in Bulgarian leva (the currency in use since the time of the Bulgarian administration). A small number of postal items has survived to date, the fewer posted in February and the rest in March.



From Serres (Feb. 1?, 1945) to Thessaloniki (Feb. 19).
Rates since Feb. 1, 1945: Letter 5 D.

- When the EAM partisans vacated Thessaloniki on January 17, government forces immediately assumed power. Under the new regime, post office clerks were ordered to ignore all partisan-originated stamps. This particular cover was charged with 10 D. postage dues, i.e. double the basic rate, by affixing two 5 D. stamps, cancelled by the "ΕΙΣΠΡΑΚΤΕΟΝ" [postage due] linear handstamp.

Local partisan stamps of Alexandroupoli (Thrace)

They were issued on January 22, 1945, i.e. after the armistice but before the "Treaty of Varkiza", by EAM partisans in Alexandroupoli. Similarly to the case of Serres, their face value is also in leva and the non-philatelic postal items survived to date are also very few. The life of partisan stamps in Serres and Alexandroupoli ended, when they were replaced by the "new drachmae" stamps in late March.



70%



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

- The cover bears two stamps, 5 leva basic rate and 5 leva for registration. On the cover's arrival in Athens, the partisan stamps were supposed to be destroyed on sight, so they were both razor-cut. In addition, 15 D. postage dues were collected (handwritten "Π.Τ. Δρχ. 15"): 10 D. for double the basic rate, as appropriate, and 5 D. for registration.

D. Epilogue

Following the end of the Second Round of the Civil War, the arrival of the new stamps in remote areas of Greece is a clear indication of the arrival of the new government, new currency, new legislation etc. Meanwhile, communication difficulties are well documented on postal items, consequences of the final battles in parts of Europe and in western Crete.

The “new drachmae” in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace

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

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

Rates since
Feb. 1, 1945:
Letter 5 D.

- The “Serres Telegraph Office” was the only postmark in Serres that survived the Bulgarian occupation.



From Alexandroupoli
(Apr. ??, 1945)
via Athens (May 3)
to New York.
Rates since Apr. 1,
1945: Letter 25 D.

- Stamped with the pre-war postmark “Alexandroupoli - Registered”, one of a few postmarks that survived the closure of Greek post offices, during the Bulgarian occupation of the area.
- Censorships: Greek in Athens; American in New York.

The "New drachmae" in Crete

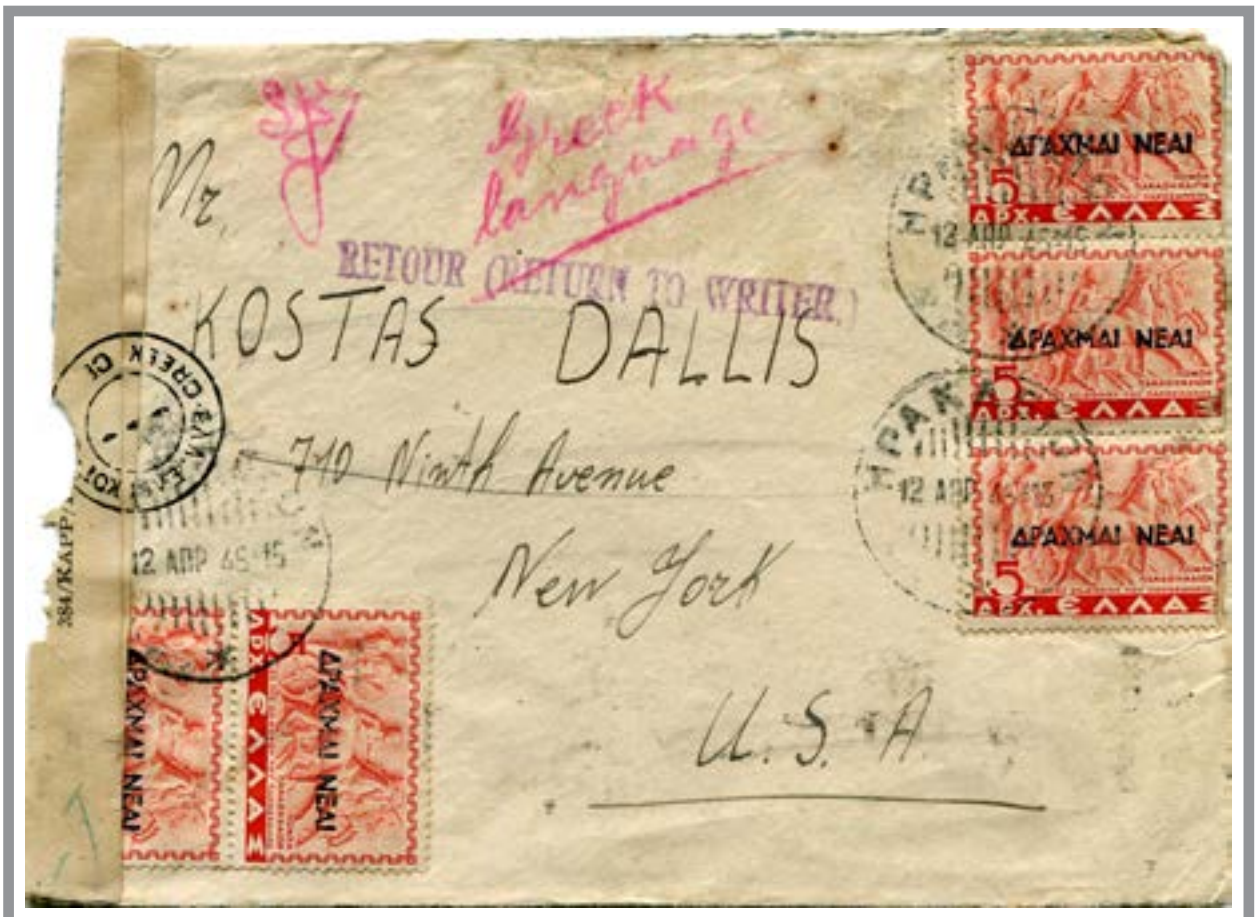
Crete remained isolated from the mainland, as the Germans still held in Chania and were regularly patrolling the north coast of the island. "New drachmae" stamps and money arrived in late March 1945. The items depicted are rare examples of early mail from Crete.



From Herakleio, Crete (Mar. 22) to New York.

Rates since Feb. 1, 1945:
Postal card 8 D.

- The earliest reported item from Crete bearing the new currency stamps.
- Censorships: Greek in Athens; American in New York.



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

Rates since Apr. 1, 1945: Letter 25 D.

- Censorship in Athens.

Re-establishment of communication with Italy

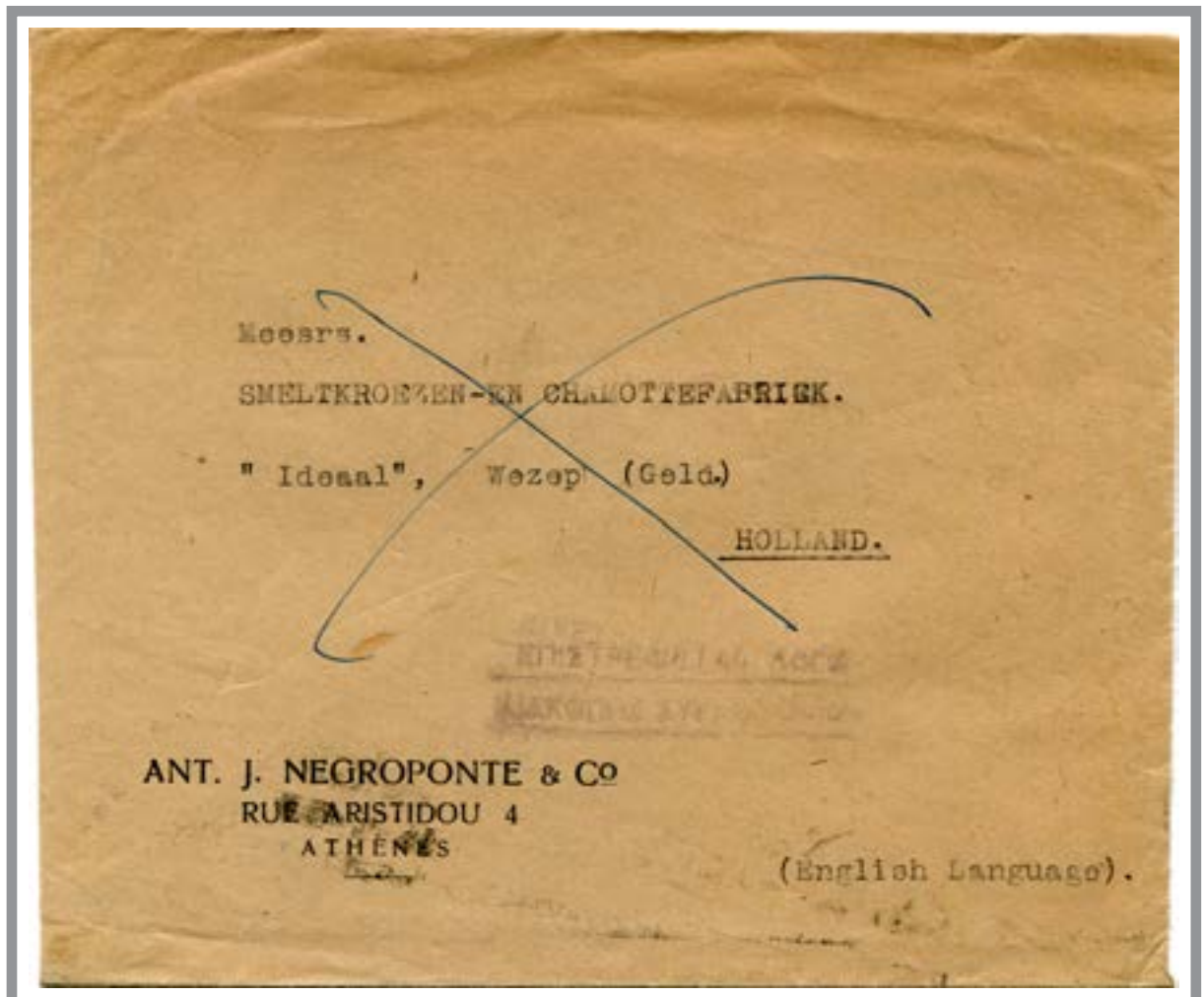


From Patra (Apr. 11, 1945)
to Catania, Italy.

Rates since Apr. 1, 1945:
Postal card 15 D.

- In the reverse we read in Greek: "...we wanted to write to you but it was not permitted. We just read in the newspapers that it is free to send cards to Italy and we immediately write...".
- Censorships: Greek in Athens; Italian in Catania.

Still no communication with the Netherlands



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

Rates since Apr. 1,
1945: Letter 25 D.
(on the reverse).

- The cover was hand-stamped with the dual-line "Returned due to suspension of services" (in Greek). In April, the war was still on in a wide front in the Netherlands. The German army capitulation in Amsterdam was signed as late as May 5, 1945.

Crete: Disrupted communication lines to Chania

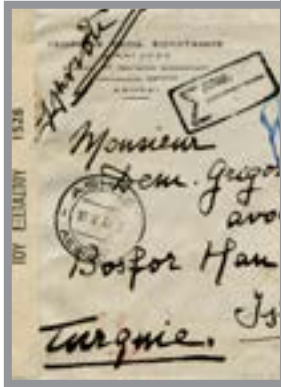


Franchise folded letter containing public service correspondence from St. Nicholas (Apr. 5, 1945) via Herakleio (Apr. 6) and Rethymno (Apr. 7) to Chania (May 14).

- The letter, posted in St. Nicholas, reached Herakleio the following day, Rethymno a day after, but Chania a month later. During the final month of the war in Crete, the suburbs of Chania had become the theatre of fierce fighting between Greek partisans and the last German garrison. The letter finally reached its destination after the Germans' capitulation (May 10).



The special cancellation for the end of WW II (May 8-10, 1945)



40%

From Athens (May 10, 1945, on the reverse) to Istanbul, Turkey (May 18).

Rates since Apr. 1, 1945: Letter 25 D., registration 25 D.

- War operations in Continental Europe ceased at 23:01 CET on May 8. However, in Greece the war officially ended on May 10.



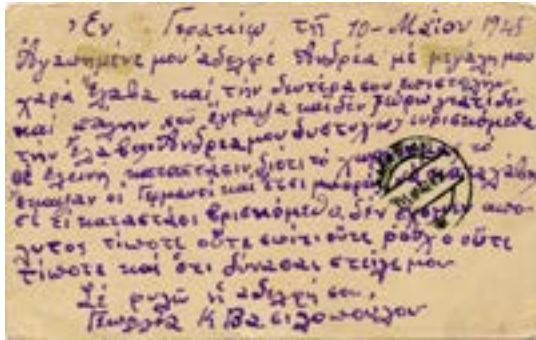
Repatriated after four years in exile



From Athens (Feb. 9, 1941) to London. Post-marked to be sent back (May 8, 1941), held in G.B. and finally returned to Greece four years later (June 5, 1945).

1st period rates: Letter 8 D., Also, social welfare 1 D.

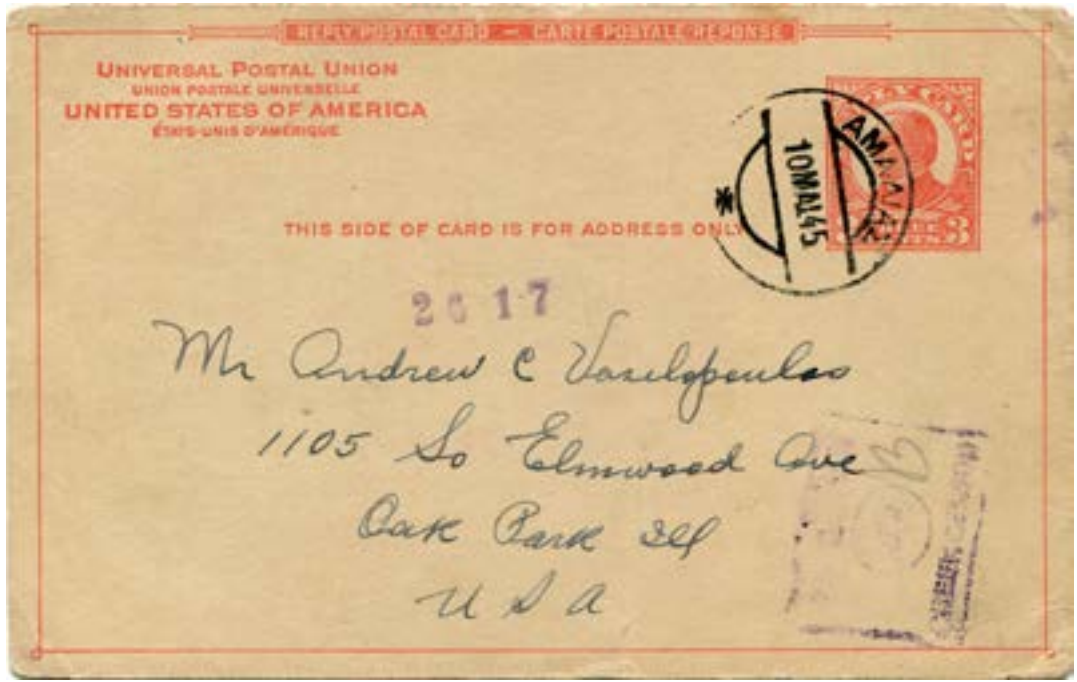
- The addressee was not located and the cover was cancelled (dual-circle "ST. JOHN'S WOOD S.O. N.W.8") to be returned (linear "RETOUR"). Because of the suspension of communications between Greece and G.B., the cover came home after the end of the war, in June 1945 (mechanical "ΑΘΗΝΑΙ-ΑΦΙΕΙΣ" [Athens-Arrival]).



Ἐν Γερακίῳ τῆς 10-Μαΐου 1945
ἀδελφὲ μου ἀδελφε Ἀνδρέα με πηλάζῃ μου
χάρᾳ ἡγάθα καὶ τὴν ἀδελφὴ σου ἀγαπῶσα
καὶ ἀγαπῶν μου ἐγράψα καὶ δὲν ἴδωμαι πάλιν
τὴν ἀδελφὴν σου ἀδελφὴ μου ἀδελφὴ μου ἀδελφὴ μου
ὅτι ἐξαιτῶ ἀποστολῆς ἰδὲ τοῦ ἡμετέρου
ἐπιστολῶν οἱ Γερμανοὶ καὶ ἐπὶ μισροῦ καὶ ἰσχυροῦ
εἰς καταστροφῆς ἐπισημόνως ὅτι ἐξαιτῶ ἀπο-
στολῆς τίποτε οὔτε ἐπιπέρι οὐδὲ παρὸν οὔτε
τίποτε καὶ ὅτι ἀδελφὴ σου ἀδελφὴ μου
Ἐν φιλήσει ἡ ἀδελφὴ σου,
Γερακίον 4 Μαΐου 1945

50%

*"Gerakion, May 10, 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,
send whatever you can...
I kiss you, your sister,
Georgia C. Vasilopoulos"*



Reply part of a US double postal card (received in Amalias on May 4, 1945) sent back to the USA on May 10, 1945, the day of the official ending of the war in Greece.