

BALKANFILA

YEARBOOK 2025

a Balkanfila
Working Group
Publication



BALKANFILA YEARBOOK 2025

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The first Balkanfila Yearbook is on its way!

In 1965, the Bulgarian Philatelic Association decided to organise a philatelic exhibition called "Balkanfila". The invitation was addressed to Balkan countries, and all Philatelic federations enthusiastically accepted this idea (Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Turkey, and Yugoslavia took part). It was decided to hold a similar exhibition every two years, each time in a different country, with the intention that all countries would take turns hosting the event.

Balkanfila exhibitions were regular until 1991. Sixteen years later, in 2007, the Turkish Philatelic Association took on the organisation of Balkanfila XIV, with great success and great promise for the future.

Balkanfila is probably the oldest regional philatelic association in Europe and the largest. Today, it has 13 members (of course, because all the newly formed countries of the former Yugoslavia are part of it, plus Moldova and Cyprus as traditional guests). More on the Balkanfila web-site www.balkanfila.eu, run by Francis Ambrus.

Regional exhibitions have better long-term prospects than continental-type exhibitions due to more manageable organisation and financing. However, if we take into account the historical and consequently postal connections from the past, the region has much more interconnected fabric.

The initiative of our Greek friends to prepare the Balkanfila Yearbook and introduce ourselves to the broader world and each other, our daily contribution to world philately was therefore warmly received at the last, XXth Balkanfila exhibition in Thessaloniki last November.

Through this digital Yearbook, in addition to exhibitions, we are building our relationships by presenting our contribution to the wider philatelic environment. Perhaps not every member managed to contribute; however, judging by the success of the first Yearbook, we will undoubtedly decide to prepare the next one in the not-too-distant future. We certainly have not yet presented everything worthy of attention.

Thanks to all the authors for their contributions, and to the editor Christois Gikas for his careful preparation in editing the final product – The Balkanfila Yearbook 2025.

Good luck, Balkanfila!

Igor Pirc, Balkanfila Secretary

Foreword

Last November during Balkanfila XX in Thessaloniki, a proposal was made and approved to publish an Annual Balkanfila Yearbook, creating a platform to showcase philatelic research and knowledge to a broader audience.

This inaugural volume features seventeen articles that present readers with diverse philatelic materials, enriching their understanding of postal communications throughout the Balkan region. These items illuminate how mail services reflected every aspect of Balkan life during both peaceful periods and times of upheaval.

The authors contributing to this collective work deserve our fullest recognition. As the driving force behind this Balkanfila Working Group publication, the authors have managed to transform an ambitious vision into reality.

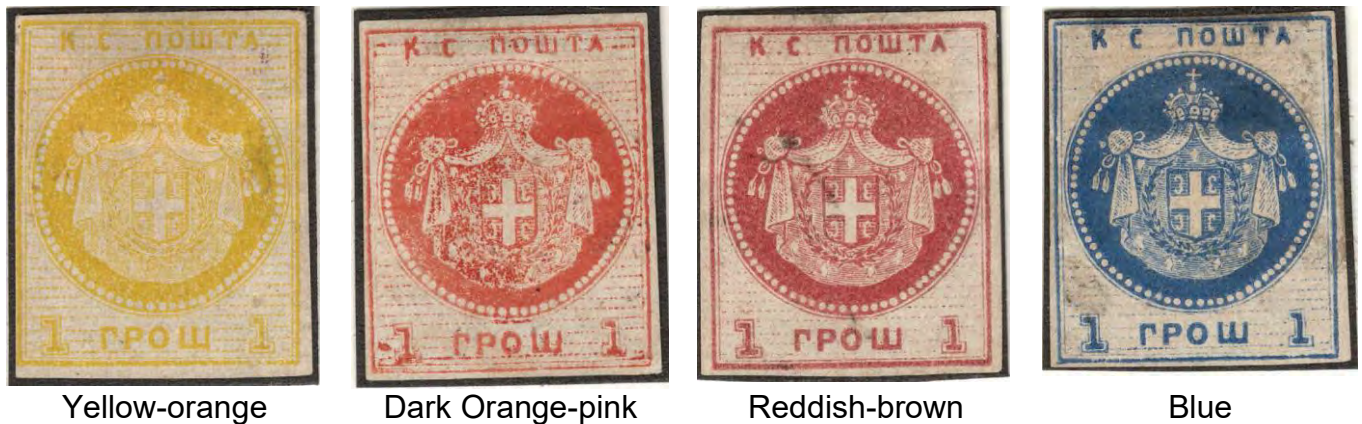
Christos Gikas

The first Serbian Postage Stamps 1866

by Svetislav D. Jelić and Vladimir Milić

The Essays

Four of the essays in question were discovered by Mr Edwin Müller in 1959 when the A. Weiss essay collection was auctioned in the US. The letter referred to above from the State Printers in Belgrade was subsequently found in the Serbian State Archive in that city in 1971. This letter fully legitimized the essays already known twelve years before its discovery.



The only known set of essays, discovered by Mr Edwin Müller at the auction of the A. Weiss assay collection in the US in 1959.

The four essays produced by the State Printers in Belgrade in August or September 1865 were produced by very fine lithography. The colours are Yellow-orange, Dark Orange-pink, Reddish-brown and Blue. The essays are fine lithographic work created from etched metal plates. This is clear from the fine detail of the etching and the number of white pearls in the national coat of arms. There are 79, instead of 77 as on the newspaper stamps subsequently issued.

The essay shows the Serbian Coat of Arms on a round, coloured medallion surrounded by the pearls in question. At the top appears the legend "K. C. ПОШТА" (Princely Serbian Posts) and at the bottom the value designation 1 ГРОШ 1 (Grosh). This value designation shows that the essays were intended for all values, of postage stamps as well. As we shall see in due course, only the essays for the one para and two para newspaper stamps were approved.

The Minister of Finance noted on the back of the letter mentioned above from the State Printers: "Wait for the new Posts Act and instructions from the Minister of Internal Affairs". This takes us to a step further towards the issue of Postage stamps.

Design description

The original dies and blocks for these stamps were produced by the State Printers in Belgrade in April 1866. The original die was cut in wood and 12 blocks each per value were cast in type metal by the stereotype process. The stamps were then printed in letter press in small Sheets of 12, with three horizontal rows of four stamps each.

The stamps take the form of a tall oblong 17½ x 22 mm in size. The motif is the Serbian coat-of-arms on a coloured background in circular form. The whole is surrounded with a wreath of 77 white pearls. The legend at the top reads "K. C. ПОШТА" (Princely Serbian Post) and the value appears at the bottom "1 ПАРА 1" or "2 ПАРЕ 2". The background consists of 24 horizontal broken lines,

11 in the upper half of the stamp and 13 in the lower. The image as a whole is framed in two continuous lines of which the outer is the thicker.

The broken horizontal lines of the background have been discussed at great length in philatelic literature because certain researchers doubted whether these lines were originally broken. The reason for the entire debate was apparently that the writers had too little material at their disposal, lacking whole original sheets in particular. An examination of over 50 whole original sheets of the various printings and countless individual items clearly reveals that the lines on the original die were cut in broken form, i.e. dotted.

The coalescence of the dotted lines is attributable to over-inking of the printing plates and the use of an ink mix that was not of the best quality. Added to this is the fact that each of the 12 blocks of each value was produced by very simple methods, so that not all blocks took exactly the same form. Amongst the various stamps in the same original sheet we can therefore see both finely printed and also blurred impressions, on all printings of both values.

The Newspaper Stamps with Coat-of-Arms Design: A Comprehensive Historical Overview

The rediscovery of documentation in 1971 related to the first issue of Serbian postage stamps marked a pivotal milestone in the study of philately in Serbia. The meticulous efforts of Serbian philatelist Miodrag Vuković were instrumental in this revelation. Vuković devoted countless hours to investigating and studying the documents he unearthed in Serbian archives, which shed new light on the production processes and classifications of these significant stamps.

The evidence uncovered indicates that there were actually four distinct printings of the newspaper stamps featuring the coat-of-arms design, challenging the previously accepted classification that recognized only three printings. This article presents a detailed chronological account of these four printings, highlighting the historical context, production processes, and distribution of the stamps.

Different First Serbian Postage Stamps Printings

The First Printing

Date of Order:

The initial order for the newspaper stamps was placed on 8 April 1866. Stevan Rajčević, the head of the State Printers in Belgrade, traveled to Vienna seeking to procure letter and newspaper stamps.

Challenges Faced:

Rajčević encountered several obstacles, including bureaucratic delays imposed by the Austrian authorities. As it became increasingly clear that the Vienna-produced stamps would not arrive in time for the projected issue date of 1 May 1866, the Serbian government sought alternative solutions.

Local Production Initiative:

To ensure that newspaper stamps would be available by the target date, the Minister of Finance took swift action, ordering the stamps to be produced locally at the State Printers in Belgrade. At

the time, the printers only possessed basic assay materials, meaning that the original die and blocks had to be produced hastily.

Final Order Confirmation:

By a letter dated 25 April 1866, the Minister of Finance finalized the order and communicated with the Internal Affairs Minister regarding the impending production. Consequently, a circular was issued to all post offices, stating that the letter post stamps were not yet ready, and cash would need to be collected for letter postage.

Production Details:

The Committee responsible for overseeing the printing confirmed the completion of the initial printing run, which included:

- 1,944 stamps of 2 para in a dull green color on dove-blue paper.
- 2,040 stamps of 1 para in a yellowish-green color on bright pink paper.



1 PARA (1st Printing) - known only as singles



2 PARA - Only sheet reconstruction extant shades (known only as singles)

Distribution:

The distribution of these stamps was conducted swiftly

- Belgrade Post Office received 1,500 of the 1 para stamps and 1,404 of the 2 para stamps.
- The border post offices of Kladovo and Aleksinac also received limited quantities.

Market Availability:

The newspaper stamps were officially made available for use on 1 May 1866, allowing the postal service to function despite the initial setbacks.

The Second Printing

Request for Additional Production:

On 11 May 1866, due to the rapid depletion of the initial stock, the Minister of Internal Affairs reported a shortage and requested the printing of an additional 18,000 stamps of both denominations.

Production Commencement:

The second printing commenced promptly at 8 a.m. on 13 May 1866, under the supervision of the appointed Committee.

Print Details:

This second run produced:

- 18,360 stamps of 1 para
- 18,300 stamps of 2 para.



1 PARA (2nd Printing) – light bronze-green complete original sheet



2 PARA (2nd Printing) – red-brown/lavender complete original sheet

Distribution:

Once completed, the stamps were immediately distributed as follows:

- Belgrade Post Office: 17,300 of the 1 para and 17,340 of the 2 para stamps.
- Aleksinac Post Office: 1,000 of the 1 para and 1,020 of the 2 para stamps.
- Kladovo Post Office: Did not receive any stamps during this printing.

Availability:

Both values of the second printing were confirmed to be on sale by 22 May 1866, ensuring that public demand was promptly met.

The Third Printing

New Order:

By mid-July 1866, the Ministry of Internal Affairs ordered another printing of newspaper stamps due to continuing high demand.

Production Period:

This third printing occurred between 21 July and 12 August 1866, featuring a new design that showcased the portrait of Prince Michael III Obrenović.

Change in Regulations:



1 PARA (3rd Printing) – dark-green on pale rose reconstructed of 4x3 sheet



2 PARA (3rd Printing) – chocolate-brown on violet-grey complete original sheet

The release of these new stamps was postponed due to the Posts Act, which required that any change in stamp design be announced three months in advance. To comply with these regulations, the Ministry ordered a further printing of the original coat-of-arms design:

- 6,000 stamps of 1 para
- 10,000 stamps of 2 para.

Completion Report:

The printing was completed on 14 November 1866, adhering to the original design and color scheme used in the first and second printings.

The Fourth Printing

Further Demand:

A report from the State Printers, dated 5 December 1866, indicated the need for a further 10,000 stamps of 1 para in the old style. This request was approved immediately by the Minister of Internal Affairs.

Production Completion:

The fourth printing was completed on 14 December 1866 under the supervision of the same Committee responsible for the third printing.



1 PARA (4th Printing) – Deep Green on Rose-violet paper complete sheet

Availability and Historical Debate:

While it is generally assumed that these stamps were issued immediately after production, some philatelic scholars have questioned whether the stamps from this printing were ever officially released. Despite the absence of definitive documentary proof, no substantial evidence exists to refute their issuance.

Transition to the Prince Michael III Obrenović Design

The next series of newspaper stamps, featuring the portrait of Prince Michael III Obrenović, was printed between July and August 1866. However, due to the regulatory requirement for advance notice, these new stamps were not placed on sale until 11 March 1867—three months after the completion of the fourth printing of the coat-of-arms design.

Conclusion

The discovery of new documentation in 1971, driven by the research of Miodrag Vuković, revolutionized the understanding of early Serbian newspaper stamps. This comprehensive account confirms four separate printings of the coat-of-arms design between April and December 1866, reshaping the historical narrative and enriching the legacy of Serbian philately.

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- Text prepared by Svetislav D. Jelić and Vladimir Milić, based on Miodrag R. Vuković, Mirko R. Rašić and Dr. Velizar M. Kardosch articles
 - Pictures used form Predrag Antić collection

The Philatelic Face of the 10th Anniversary of the Republic *in memory of the late Salih Kuyaş**

by Mehmet Akan

We held and recorded a series of interviews with Mr. Timur Kuran at his philately store in Atlas Passage in İstanbul, about Salih Kuyaş (1923–2005), who made a significant contribution to the improvement of Turkish philately through his collections of great variety in 2002.

During this question and answer sessions he said; “Look, what I will show you!” and took out an album. In the album there were the stamps of the 10th Anniversary of the Republic and their use. Salih Bey cued up in the line before the Beyoğlu Post Office and purchased these stamps, when he was 10 years old in 1933. He recalled how he was surprised by the outstanding celebrations and the way they were carried through, where İstanbul was sparkling despite Türkiye’s very limited financial resources.

Within the 10th Anniversary collection of Salih Bey, there were samples of the use of those stamps in Anatolia. All the more amazing is that most of those samples were stamped on paper as commemorative issues that we call philatelic material. I was amazed with such a collection organized by an advanced philatelist like Kuyaş. Kuyaş told me that he had been depositing offers on the 10th Anniversary materials in almost every auction and he did not find it in his heart for the cheap sale of these stamps. I believe he felt my amazement and said “Mehmet, you reserach on this emission, it is very interesting”. In the course of time I have developed a passion on the 10th Anniversary stamp and their postal implementations, which I had not considered before. It became inevitable for me to write about this emission at the 100th Anniversary of the Republic

STAMPS



Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 4

Ali Nusret Pulhan in his catalogue informs us that the stamps are a 7-value series consisting of 1½, 2, 3, 6, 12½, 25 and 50 kuruş, issued on 29.10.1923. 300.000 copies were issued on paper sheets where fiscal stamps used to be issued in İstanbul Stamp Printhouse. There are critics about the designs, prints, paper and sizes in different philatelic studies. (picture 1) Before they were issued different drafts were designed. (picture 2). Unrecognized specimen are known. The graphics of issued stamps were ordered.

by People's Party and assigned to Münir Bey, an artist in Ankara. Factory chimneys, machine wheels, wheatear are displayed in the works, emphasizing the progress and modernisation in agriculture and industry. There are recognized proof stamps. (picture 3) The one with 3 kuruş value has different proofs of colour, while the one with 6 kuruş value has different proofs of design. (Furthermore, there are large-size drawings. Pulhan states that stamps with numbers of 1110, 1111, 1112 have been (picture 4) recognized as)

RENK DENEMELERİ

3 kuruş , 6 kuruş



picture 3

As you dive deeper into the issue novelty appears: The serie was in the circulation only on 29–30 and 31 October 1933. Since these days were official holidays expenditure was very little and only 26.000 series were sold in three days..

As the serie was out of circulation as of 31 October, the postal administration was left with 274.000 series in stock. 5.000 series were distributed among PTT workers and the remaining stocks were exterminated before an official board supervision.

DOMESTIC POSTAL RATES

Novelty keeps going: During the 3-day long circulation domestic postal fees were dropped by 50%. On that date the fees for local post cards, local letter, domestic post card and domestic letter were 3 kuruş, 4 kuruş, 4 kuruş and 6 kuruş respectively. (picture 5,6,7,8)



Picturel 5: The Implementation of the 10th Year Discount on Postcard – A postcard sent rom Ankara to İstanbul on 30 October 1933 was charged off-price with 1 ½ kuruş-value stamp like a local tariff, rather than 2 kuruş-value stamp for regular tariff. The script on the card is written by a student who came to Ankara for the celebrations. The school mentioned in the text as out of the city is Çankaya Primary School between Foreign Minister's Resident and Primeminester İnönü House.



Picture 6: The Implementation of the 10th Year Discount on Postcard – The postcard sent from Ankara to Milas on 29 October 1933, was charged off-price with 2 kuruş-value stamp instead of 4 kuruş-value stamp for domestic tariff.



Picture 7: The Implementation of the 10th Year Discount on Letter – A letter, posted within Ankara on 30 October 1933, was charged off-price with 2 kuruş-value stamp instead of 4 kuruş-value stamp for local tariff. Kızılay aid stamp with a 1 kuruş value was also imprinted since the day was an official holiday.



Picture 8: The Implementation of the 10th Year Discount on letter – The letter sent from Eskişehir to Ankara on 30 October 1933 was charged off-price with 3 kuruş-value stamp instead of 6 kuruş-value stamp for domestic tariff. Kızılay aid stamp with a 1 kuruş value was also imprinted since the day was an official holiday



Picture 8-a: Fantasy application of the Xth year discount to the Letter.
6 krş stamp was cut and made into 3 krş.

The issue becomes more complicated. There was no change in service fees while domestic tariffs were reduced by 50%. This enables collectioners of tariffs to observe extraordinary materials. (picture 9,10)



picture 9: The Implementation of the 10th Year Discount on Registered Letter – The registered letter sent from Ankara to İstanbul on 30 October 1933 was charged off-price with 3 kuruş-value stamp instead of 6 kuruş-value stamp for domestic tariff. No discount was made from certified registered fee of 6 kuruş. Total sum of the postal fee was 9 kuruş. Toplam 9 kuruş. Kızılay aid stamp with a 1 kuruş value was also imprinted since the day was an official holiday



picture 10: The Implementation of 6 Kuruş General Delivery (Poste Restant) Fee – The letter arrived in Atina on 10 October 1933 from İstanbul was charged with 6 kuruş general delivery fee. There was no discount because the general delivery fee is a service fee

INTERNATIONAL RATES

There has been no change in the international postal rates for postcards and letters.
(pictures 11,12,13)



Picture 11: The Implementation of the 10th Year Foreign Fee on Postcard. The postcard sent from Ankara to Montreux/Switzerland on 30 October 1933 was charged with 7 ½ kuruş–value stamp. This is the regular foreign postcard delivery, no discount was implemented.



Picture 12: The Implementation of the 10th Year Foreign Fee on Postal Formule – The postal form was sent to Le Havre/France from Ankara on 30 October 1933, was charged with 7 ½ kuruş–value stamp. This is the regular imprinted stamp tariff without any discount.



Picture 13: The Implementation of the 10th Year Foreign Fee on Letter: The letter sent from Beşiktaş/İstanbul to Baghdad/Iraq on 30 October 1933 was charged with 12 ½ kuruş–value stamp. This is the regular foreign letter tariff without any discount.

PICTURE POST CARDS

I would like to briefly refer to a very interesting postcard emission issued for the 10th Anniversary as FIP defined postcards as philatelic materials and qualified them within the Postcard Class for official exhibitions. It is the 4-card Revolutions serie, which is jointly issued in commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of the Republic by four charity organizations based in Ankara; Türk Tayyare Cemiyeti, Türk Maarif Cemiyeti, Hilali Ahmer Cemiyeti ve Evladı Şuheda Cemiyeti. (visuals 15,16,17) They were designed by Master İhap Hulusi.

Sales revenue was equally shared. It is recognized that they were sold at Ankara Post Office. (visual 14). In other cities, most probably, they were sold at the branches of each charity organization. In my opinion, they are key components of both postcard and open class collections.



Picture



picture





Picture 16



In this work, I shared all recognized postal rates samples. This topic might be a very good fit for "Narrow Theme Exhibits" However, it is all but impossible to bring together such specific materials. Apart from the samples I shared from my own collection, there are samples from the collections of Selçuk Akar, Emre Utku, Murat Hazinedaroğlu and Serdar Yazgan, . It shows that such a collection of "Narrow Theme Exhibits" is only probable when four of us come together

Reference:

Referans Pulhan, Ali Nusret. *Pulhan Türk Pulları Kataloğu*, 1974. İstanbul: Pulhan Yayınları, 1973.
Akan Mehmet, Kuran Timur. *Türkiye’de Postanın Mikro Tarihi*.2019 İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları. Akan Mehmet, Akar Selçuk, Utku Emre & Turgut Turhan, .1920–1950 *Türkiye Posta Tarifeleri*: Türk Filareli Akademisi Yayınları



*December 17, 2002, Istanbul Beyoğlu Atlas Passage, the day of the interview.
From left to right Mehmet Akan, Salih Kuyaş, Timur Kuran.*

*Salih Kuyaş

“ (1923–2005) who made enormous contributions to the advancement of Turkish philately through various collections that he formed, at his philatelic store in Istanbul’s Atlas Arcade in 2002. Beginning in the 1970s he was considered among the world’s leading experts of Ottoman and Turkish stamps as well as stationery. He was a member of the European Academy of Philately and the Royal Philatelic Society of London. He served as president of the Istanbul Philatelic Society and the Federation of Turkish Philatelic Associations. Through a store located first at Meşrutiyet Avenue and then at Beyoğlu’s Atlas Arcade, he combined a professional career in the stamp trade with amateur philately. He holds a unique place among the Turkish stamp dealers of his era through the priority he gave to training new collectors, to the efforts he spent toward this end, and his sharing of his deep philatelic knowledge with collectors.”¹

¹ Akan, M., & Kuran, T. (2019). *Türkiye’de postanın mikrotarihi (1920–2015) Cilt I: 1920–1950*. Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları. <https://www.iskulttur.com.tr/turkiyede-postanin-mikrotarihi-1920-2015-cilt-i-1920-1950.aspx>

PARLIAMENT – THE FIRST STAMP OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

by Bojan Bračič

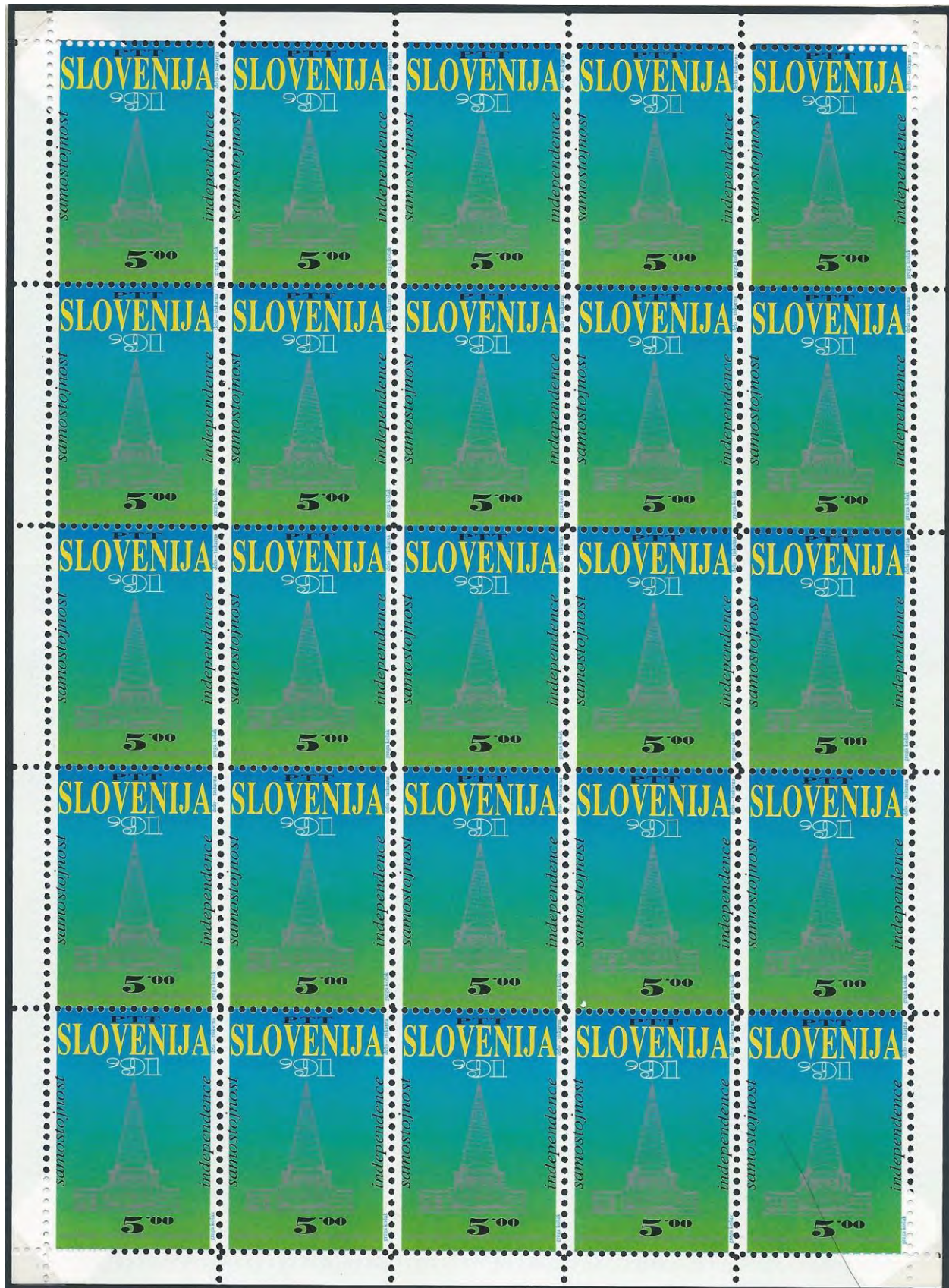
The Republic of Slovenia became an independent state by a decision of the National Assembly on 25 June 1991. Preparations for this had been underway for some time, practically since the announcement of the results of the plebiscite, which was held on 26 December 1990. The postal and telecommunications sector was also preparing for the implementation of the plebiscite decision, where they were aware that various things would have to be taken care of so that life in the new state would not be too disruptive to the everyday rhythm of life, including appropriate postage stamps. Various ways of marking paid postage were considered, from overprinting existing stamps to marking paid postage without stamps. Finally, the decision was made to print a new stamp.



At its 77th session, on 9 May 1991, the Executive Council of the Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia adopted a resolution on the intention to issue a commemorative postage stamp to mark the independence and establishment of Slovenian statehood. A special commission was appointed for this purpose, consisting of representatives of the Republic Secretariat for Transport and Communications, the Republic Secretariat for Culture, the Republic Secretariat for Information, the Joint PTT Company of Slovenia and the Association of Slovenian Art Designers. The latter prepared an internal call for applications from its members, to which five candidates responded. B.A. Grega Košak, architect, was selected.

According to his idea, the stamp is not only a commemorative symbol, but also communication with the world and its issuance coincides with Slovenia's entry into Europe. The stamp features three colors, from bottom to top: ecological green, then green-blue (a symbol of a new morning) and the blue color of the EU. The stamp features a motif of the Slovenian Parliament on a multi-colored background – a competition design by architect Jože Plečnik from 1947. The stamp was named Parliament after this design.

1. Image of the stamp



The stamps were printed in sheets of 25 pieces at the Delo Printing House with a circulation of two million stamps. They were printed in the utmost secrecy on a Saturday and Sunday in May 1991, mostly at night, with only a few workers. Although the printing house had no experience with printing stamps, there were no major problems.

The following printing errors were found:

In part of the printing, there is a black dot on the letter p in the word independence.

2. Error – dot on the letter p



Only silver color was printed. Three sheets were found, one of which is now in the archives of the Slovenian Post Office, the other stamps are on the philatelic market.

3. Error – stamp with only silver color



By analogy, there are also three sheets of stamps without the printing of the draft parliament in silver, but there is no exact information about this.

"Dancing silver". Because silver was printed separately as the fifth color, there were some shifts in the design of the parliament, which was shifted either to the right (the top of the parliament is under the number 1 instead of the number 9), or vertically (different distances between the number 5.00 and the base of the parliament).

4. Different position of the Parliament



There were several problems with the perforation, as no printing house in Slovenia had the appropriate equipment. In order to keep everything secret, a solution was found in a small Austrian printing house near Sall Feldn (Zell am See district, Salzburg province), which provided linear perforation. Transport there and back was illegal over the Jezersko pass. The perforation was not at the appropriate height and many errors were found.

5. Displaced and missing perforations



Perforation moved in vertical line. Stamps in the first column are wider for 2 mm.



Double vertical perforation



Perforation misses in two lower lines.



Vertical perforation is moved 1 mm to the right. Double perforation on right margin.



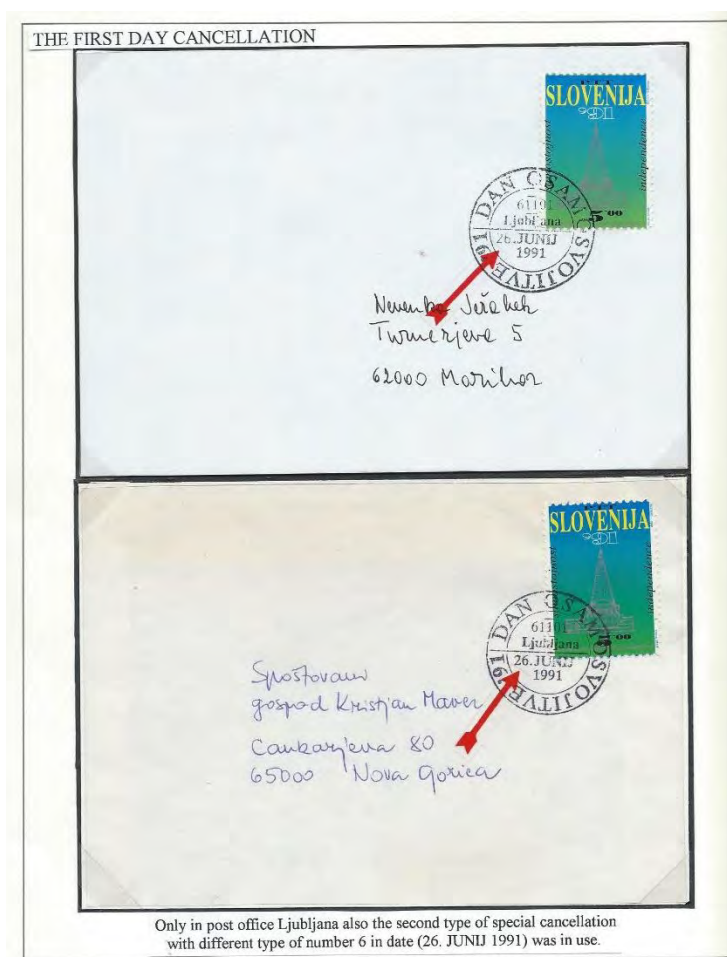
Perforation moved down for 1 mm.



Perforation moved down only in lower line; stamp is 1 mm higher.

At its session on 13 June 1991, the Executive Council of the Republic of Slovenia decided that the stamp would be issued on 26 June, the day after the proclamation of the independent state of the Republic of Slovenia. The Philatelic Society of PTT Slovenia prepared a commemorative cover and commemorative postage stamps were used at post offices in nine postal centers in Slovenia. The Ljubljana post office used two slightly different stamps. The difference is in the number 6 in the date.

6. Commemorative stamp

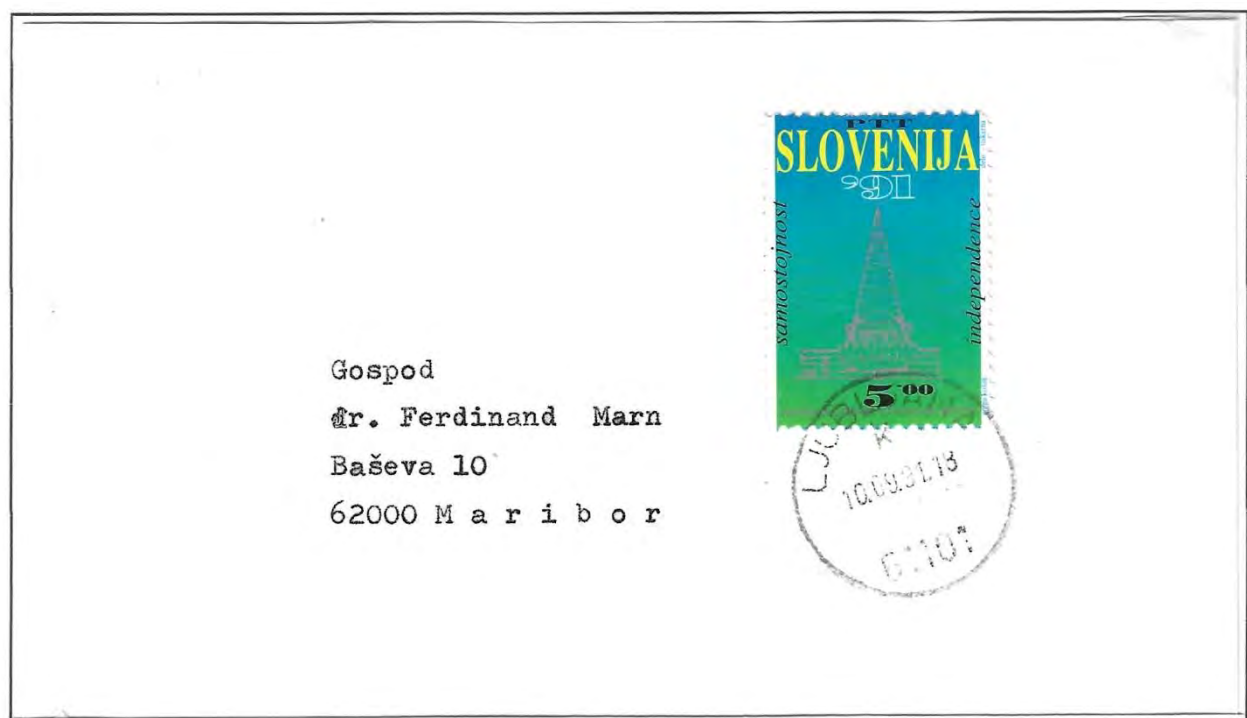


The face value of the stamp was set at 5.00 of a currency that was not yet defined at the time. At the time of the stamp's issue, the Yugoslav dinar (YUD) was in use, which was replaced by the new Slovenian tolar (SIT) on 8 October 1991 at an exchange rate of 1:1. The currency change had no effect on the use of the stamp.

At the time of the stamp's issue, a tariff was in force that had been in effect since 30 April 1991. According to this tariff, the postage for a standard letter was 4.00 YUD and for a non-standard letter up to 20 g in domestic traffic 4.50 YUD. An increase in postage was expected, which actually occurred five months later, on 1 October 1991 (according to some sources on 8 October), when the postage for a non-standard first-class mass letter in domestic traffic was raised to 5.00 SIT.

Following the Brijuni Declaration and the decision of international observers, the stamp was withdrawn from sale on July 14. "Parliament" was returned to official use on October 8, 1991, two days after the end of the moratorium. Since the stamps were already among the people, they appeared on postal items even during the moratorium.

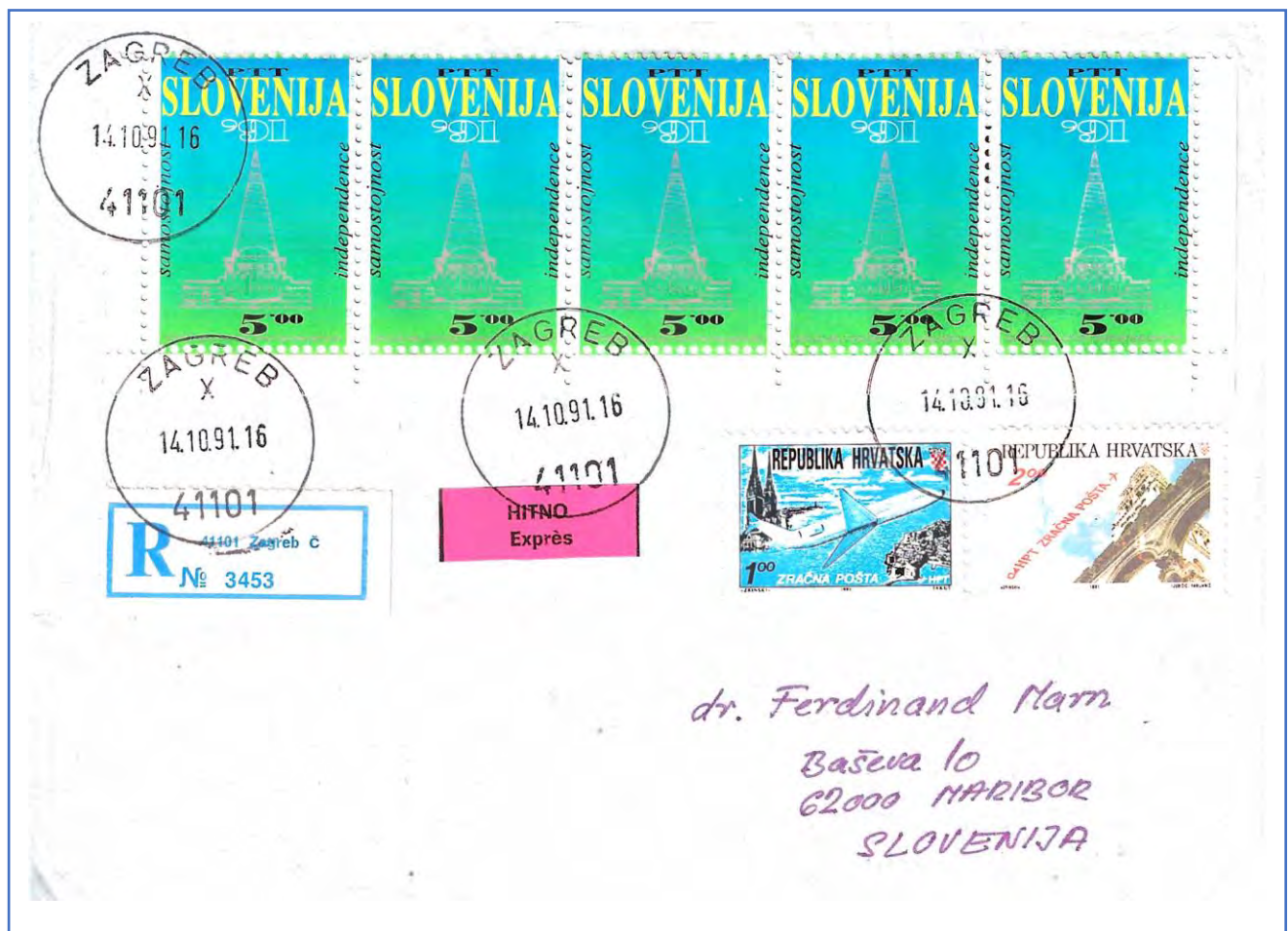
7. Example of a letter with the Parliament from the time of the moratorium



Due to the opposition of the Association of Yugoslav PTT Companies from Belgrade, the post offices in the individual republics that then made up Yugoslavia returned to Ljubljana all items from Slovenia on which the new Slovenian stamp was affixed. Therefore, on July 31, 1991, the Slovenian Post Office asked the Croatian Post Office to accept all items from

Slovenia that would be equipped with the new stamp as correctly franked. The Croatian Post Office agreed. However, some employees of the Croatian Post Office misunderstood this decision; they believed that "Parliament" was also valid for marking paid postage in Croatia. This resulted in some items sent from Croatia bearing a Slovenian postage stamp. The Croatian Post officially cancelled this on 12 March 1992. The "Parliament" stamp was in use in Slovenia until 31 December 2007.

8. An example of the use of "Parliament" in Croatia



Evlâd-ı Şüheda Tax. (Tax for War Orphans)

by Dr. M. Levent Acar

In Evladi Suheda Tax' which was applied on postal items during 1st. World War has always taken attention of historians. In this article, our main goal is to explain the reader 'Evlad-ı Suheda Tax' with different examples on money order receipts, registration receipts, picture of postcards, stationary postcards and envelopes.

Ahmet Sukru Bey who was both minister of education and Postal, telegraph and Telephone (PTT), did a great contribution to issue a decree about tax money which would be spent for the education of orphans whose parents were martyrs. The budget was constituted from the revenues of minister of PTT with and additional tax on charge of Postal and Telegraph without spending extra Money from the budget of ministry. Due to this decree, which was issued on March 1915, the collected tax money was spent for housing and education of war orphans. The main purposes of this act were to providing a safe future to orphans. In consequence of not collecting enough money with additional taxes which was taken under the name of '**Evlâd-ı Şüheda Tax**' were applied on tobacco and alcoholic beverages too. (1)

10 Para for postcards and letters

20 Para for registered letters,

1 Kuruş for valuable letters,

1 Kuruş for every 5 Kuruş of telegrams Evlâd-ı Şüheda tax stamp has become mandatory.

1915-Since the Evlâd-ı Şüheda Tax Stamps were not yet printed, the 1914 London edition series stamps with values of 2,5 and 10 Paras were used for that Purposes.



1. A Letter From Bursa to Dersaâdet Sirkeci sent on 16 June 1915 was charged 1 Kuruş letter rate and two 5 Para stamps for Evlâd-ı Şüheda Tax. Earliest known use of the fee added to the tariff.



2. A letter From Fatih to Hadımköy sent on 19 June 1915 was charged 1 Kuruş letter rate and five 2 Para stamps for Evlad-ı Şüheda Tax.



3. The Picture postcard adressed to Mrs. İbrahim Paşa from Edirne to Bebek at İstanbul sent on 22 July 1915. 20 Para postcard charge and 10 Para stamp for Evlad-ı Şüheda Tax.

In some documents, seals were used to indicate that a payment other than the tariff was made. We also see these seals later on in the cancellations of the Evlâd-ı Şüheda Tax stamps.

I have identified 6 different examples of these seals.

LA1. It contains the phrase "Twenty Para for war Orphan's Tax"

[illegible]

'Twenty Para Evlad-ı Şüheda tax' sealed for the parcel containing printed material sent from the Okçular to Mosul on September 5, 1915

LA2 Bir Kuruş Evlad-ı Şüheda Vergisi Alınmıştır.'

[illegible]

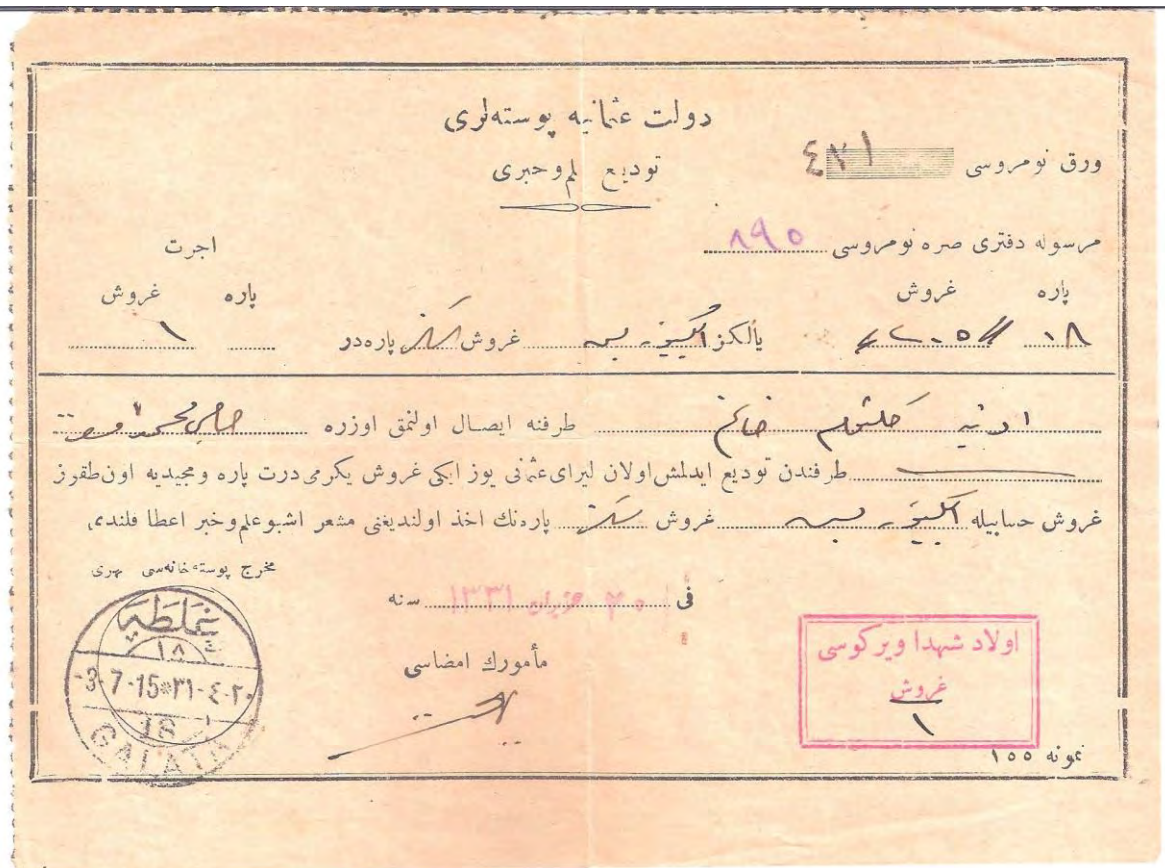
*A Payment receipt from Dersaadet to Uzunköprü.
(Thanks to Mr. Hakan Yılmaz's collection)*

LA3. Evlâd-ı Şüheda ianesi (Grantment) Seal.



'Evlad-ı Şuheda İanesi ' seal on the receipt for a package worth 100 Kuruş sent from Istanbul to Amasya

LA4. On Red Seal Evlâd-ı Şühedâ Tax in a Rectangular Frame....Kuruş (4)



A Payment receipt From Galata to Ünye (Thanks to Mr. Turhan Turgut's collection)

LA5. On Seal '.....Para Evlâd-ı Şühedâ Vergisi alınmıştır'. (....Para for Evlâd-ı Şühedâ Tax)

دولت عثمانیه پسته‌لری
تودیع علم و خبری

ورق نومروسی ۴۳۹

مرسوله دفتری صره نومروسی ۱۷۹

پاره ۱۰ غروش ۲۰ پاره ۲۰ پاره ۲۰

پالکز اوج بیغیخه غروش ۲۰۷۸

ایستاده مه مائی حنیف فیدین طرفنه ایصال اولمق اوزره ابرکون

طرفندن تودیع ایملش اولان لیرای عثمانی یوز ایکی غروش یکرمی درت پاره و مجیدیه اون طقوز

غروش حسابیه اوج بیغیخه غروش پاره ناک اخذ اولندیغنی مشعر اشبو علم و خبر اعطا قلندی

سنه ۱۲۸۱

مأمورک امضاسی

2-11-15-11-11-11

EREN KÖY

A Payment receipt from Erenköy to Ilgın

LA6. On Seal 'Bir Kuruş Evlâd-ı Şühedâ Vergisi alınmıştır' is writing.

دولت عثمانیه پسته‌لری
تودیع علم و خبری

ورق نومروسی ۴۴۳

مرسوله دفتری صره نومروسی ۱۷۹

پاره ۲۰ غروش ۲۰ پاره ۲۰ پاره ۲۰

پالکز اوج بیغیخه غروش ۲۰۷۸

ایستاده مه مائی حنیف فیدین طرفنه ایصال اولمق اوزره ابرکون

طرفندن تودیع ایملش اولان لیرای عثمانی یوز ایکی غروش یکرمی درت پاره و مجیدیه اون طقوز

غروش حسابیه اوج بیغیخه غروش پاره ناک اخذ اولندیغنی مشعر اشبو علم و خبر اعطا قلندی

سنه ۱۲۸۱

مأمورک امضاسی

2-3-15-11-11-11

BROUSSE

مطبعة عامره

نمونه ۶۳۶

A Payment receipt from Bursa to

Kadıköy

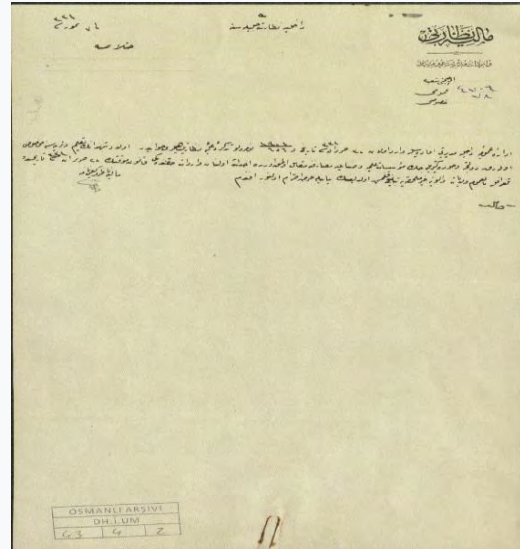
In addition to the seal, there are also documents stating that an extra 'Evlâd-ı Şüheda' fee is charged.

According to this archive document sent from the Ministry of Finance to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, it was notified to the annexed province by telegram on July 11, 1915.

Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA) Dahiliye(DH) İdare-i

Umumiye (İ.Um) Kutu(K):43 Gömlek(G):4

Sıra(S):2



The production of the cigarette paper licensed under the name of 'Evlâd-ı Şüheda' was stopped by a court decision on the grounds that there was no right to use this name.



From this example showing the 'Evlad-ı Şüheda tax ' collected on tobacco, it is understood that 10 para Evlad-ı Şüheda tax was collected on a 25 gram tobacco package.

(Thanks to Mr. Mehmet AKAN for sharing his collection)

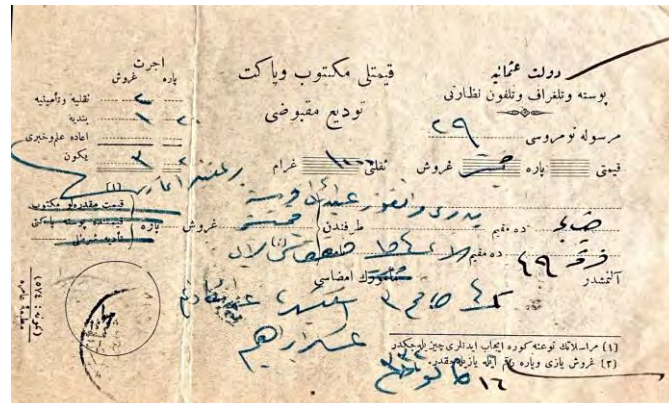
With this app together with the Ministry of PTT, the phrase "Evlâd-ı Şüheda Tax" in the crscent.

He prepared a surcharge bearing the six-pointed star, bearing the date 1331 in the middle, and by applying this surcharge to some old stamps in the Ministry warehouses.

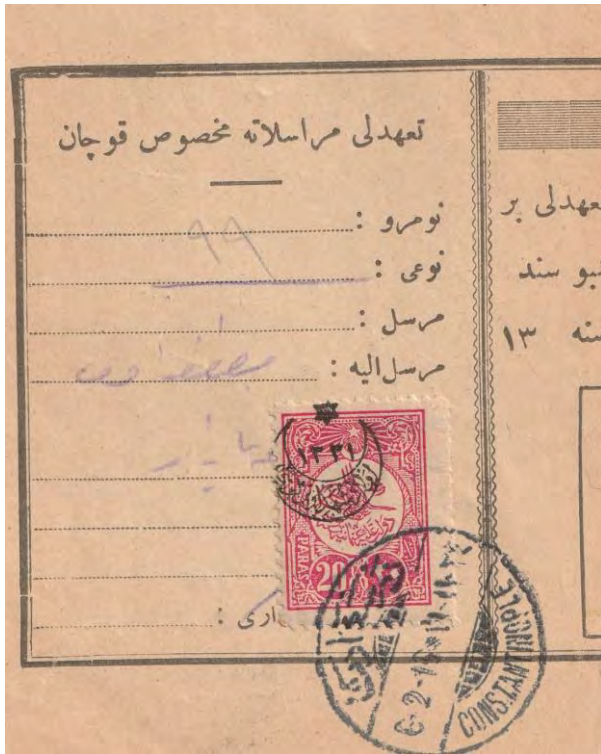




From Kargı to Üsküdar Doğancılar An additional 10 Para Evlâd-ı Şüheda tax stamp was used on the 1914 postal stationery with 20 Para reply sent on 6 October 1915, in addition to the domestic postcard tariff.



A stamp was used for the 1 kuruş Evlad-ı Şüheda tax stamps for the package weighing 1000 grams, which was sent from Çatalca to the 49th Division 104th Caucasian Regiment Platoon 3 in Eskişehir. (Thanks to Mr. Mehmet Günyeli's collection)



Registration post receipt from Istanbul



Money transfer Form From Uluborlu to Istanbul

Ottoman empire entered war in late 1914. A postal censorship began in November 1914, postal cards known as 'open correspondence documents' came to be considered more practical than letters. Within a few weeks, the postal administration in İstanbul was deluged with messages from post offices located across the Empire, indicated that their card stocks were depleted and requesting the immediate shipment of news stocks. (2) Due to explosion in the demand for cards, by early 1915 the PTT's card stocks were depleted. A first response was to distribute the demonetized postal cards in its stockrooms to post offices without any alteration, for use as postal formulas (3). As of 14 April 1915, it became legal use postal stationary impressed with a demonetized stamp, provided the applicable rate was paid in full through postally valid adhesives. The Ottoman postal administration's permission to use demonetized postal stationary as formular cards was rescinded in October 1916.



On March 13, 1916 20 para postage and 10 para Evlad-ı Şüheda tax stamp on the 1905 Stationary Postcard sent from Pozantı to Ankara Mihriyar Mahallesi.

1916

When these stamps ran out in 1916, the stamps in the warehouses were put into circulation. By using older stamps, this time the star was Arsacid like the others, provided that it was five-pointed. On February 29, 1916 (February 16, 1331) the phrase 'Evlâd-ı Şüheda Tax' and the 1331 Five-pointed Star surcharge were printed on 22 types of stamps.

In order to meet the need for 10 Para stamps, four of the 'Evlâd-ı Şuheda Tax ' Stamps were printed with a new 10 Para surcharge.





For the Pictured Postcard sent from Paşakapısı to Bebek, two 5-para stamps for intercity tariff and 10 Para 'Evlad-ı Şuheda Vergisi' stamp were used for taxes.

1917

The decree, which was reconsidered in March 1917, was enacted with an article added to the General Balance Law. Accordingly, 1 Kuruş would be charged for every 5 Kuruş and fractions of a telegraph for which a fee of 5 Kuruş or more was required, 10 kuruş for every lira and fraction thereof in addition to the fees charged for internal telegraph transfers, 1 kuruş in addition to the fees charged for internal postal transfers and letters and postal packages for which a value was determined, 20 kuruş for all registered mail, 10 kuruş for all domestic military letters and correspondence reports, the money collected would be deposited directly into the bank and its spending would be subject to the decision of the Council of Ministers.



The British occupied Baghdad in March 1917. The phrase 'Baghdad is under British occupation' was overprinted on Ottoman Postage Stamps to show the changes in government through the Sir Percy Cox processes. A black surcharge was also applied to cover the phrase 'Evlâd-ı Şuheda tax'. This blackout was made to give the impression that the British were supporting the children of those who died against them.

Thanks to Mr. Akthem Al-Manaseer for sharing his collection.



A stamp worth 10 para depicting a soldier saying goodbye to his children and entrusting them to his wife was printed on February 20, 1917. This stamp was used for the Martyrs' Child Tax along with the postal tariff stamps and was also used alone in places where the other stamps were out of stock.



In addition to the 20 para Coast tariff letter fee sent from Okçular to Lapseki, 10 para Evlad-ı Şüheda tax stamp was used.



For the card with a message of less than five words, sent from Bursa to Istanbul on December 3, 1917, a single stamp worth 10 para was used, after a printing tariff of 5 para and a Evlad-ı Şüheda tax of 5 para were collected.



For the 500 kuruş money transfer sent from Alucra to Ankara Koyunpazarı on 22 October 1917, 60 Para transfer fee and 15 Para Evlad-ı Şüheda tax were collected. It was collected with one full and one half Evlad-ı Şüheda stamp.

The stamp depicting a soldier saying goodbye to his children and entrusting them to his wife was printed in red as 20 Para, but before it had a chance to be used, it was stamped as 10 Para and put into circulation on 21 September 1917.



The envelope was sent from Ordu to Trabzon on July 16, 1918, and was purchased with 20 Para for postage and 10 Para for Evlad-ı Şüheda tax, along with 3 surcharged 10 para Evlad-ı Şüheda Stamp



With 10 Para 1917 Evlad-ı Şüheda Stamp, sent from Beirut to Dersaadet Galata on February 2, 1918, the image of the Maiden's Tower, 20 Para on a stationary postcard,



Although the inscription 'Evlad-ı Şüheda' seen on the 25 and 50 Kuruş value stamps of the PTT surcharge series printed in 1917 suggest that it served this purpose , no information has been found to provide evidence on this subject.



The existence of a fee other than tariff for its use in postal services suggests this.
Thanks to Mr. Hakan Yılmaz for sharing his collection

The stamp series printed in Vienna in the last months of 1917 and 1918 met the need during the war. Stamps of the series worth 10 para and 20 para and the Stationary Postcard of 1917 were used in the tariff for the purpose of Evlad-ı Şüheda tax



For the postionary card sent from Istanbul to Inebolu on 14 November 1918, 20 Para were used as card postage and 10 Para stamps of the Vienna edition series were used as for the purpose of Evlad-ı Şüheda Tax.



Besides the 20 Para Vienna edition series stamp for sent from Bursa to Zonguldak Kozlu on September 20, 1918, the 10 Para Maiden's Tower Illustrated 1917 Postal Stationary was used for the purpose of Evlad-ı Şüheda tax.

1919

Evlâd-ı Şüheda Tax was abolished with the “Decree on the Increase of Internal Postal and Telegraph Fees” issued on February 2, 1919. With the law on the increase of postal and telegraph fees passed on February 6, 1919.



We can see that the stamps issued for her Evlâd-ı Şüheda were used as regular postage stamps even in 1924.

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Post Offices in the Ottoman Empire

A Brief Overview

by Emmanuel Georgoudakis

Head of the Exhibition Dpt.

of the Philatelic and Postal Museum of Greece

Preface

This brief overview of Postal Services in the Levant reflects the significance of the Postal Services in themselves as measures of social and political evolution. They reflect the organizational level of a State, its ambitions, its foreign relations, commercial or political, as well as its national goals and self-image, especially through the postage stamps iconography.

This small pamphlet is only a reminder of the importance of Postal Services as the only means of communication in a turbulent era when everything was dependent more on the organization quality rather than technological innovation.



The Greek Postal Service (1834–1881)

Greek Post Offices in the Ottoman Empire have been active since 1834 as simple postal distributors but without the right to cash in postal revenue, as this was paid by the recipient. It operated as part of the Greek Consulate by its employees, until 1857, when it became a proper Post Office. During this first period the letters were sent to Syros and Piraeus. The correspondence was sent by clipper-ships, then (1835–1837) the State steamship ANATOLI and then mostly French and Austrian steamships. The Greek Postal Service operated until 1881. The closing of the ottoman post offices in the newly annexed by Greece region of Thessaly, backfired, and led to the closure of all Greek post offices in the Ottoman Empire. The Greek Postal Service was reestablished again in 1919 with the Greek Expedition in Asia Minor (see resp. chapter).



*The Greek Consulate in Smyrna
where the Greek Post Office
was operating.*

B. Molko 1910

Levantine Heritage Foundation



*Greek letter of the year 1869. Stamp
with 40 lepta Large Hermes Head.
Information on the cost of carriage
horses and their shipment to Greece.*

ΦTM-20291-221

2. The Austrian Postal Service (1721–1914)

After the Ottoman defeat in the hands of the Polish King Jan Sobiesky outside of Vienna in 1683, the Ottoman Empire allowed to the Austrians certain privileges, due to the Capitulations. In 1721 the first Austrian post office was active in Galata (Constantinople), so that, until 1914, the number of the Austrian post offices in the Levant reached the number of 65. Their postage stamps were the same as in Austria except for their value which was in Soldi or Paras and Piastres, the latter ones sometimes as overprint. After the Hungarian Revolution, Austria changes in 1848, as Dual Monarchy of Austria–Hungary. A main instrument for the correspondence transportation was the Austrian steamship company, the Austrian Lloyd (est. 1833), with its own cancellation stamp. With the outbreak of the WW I the Ottomans take the opportunity to dissolve all foreign privileges, the European post offices as well.



Postcard showing the counters of the Austrian Post Office in Smyrna.



Letter from Smyrna to Greece, 1882, stamp with the head of Franz-Josef I
with the face value of 10 soldi.

The letter informs on the closure of the Greek Post Offices in the Ottoman Empire.

ΦΤΜ-404-109



Bank letter from Smyrna to Athens, 1911.
Austrian stamps of 30 paras and 2 piastres
with the head of Franz-Josef I (1908 issue)

ΦΤΜ-404-131

3. The British Postal Service (1832–1914, 1919–1922)

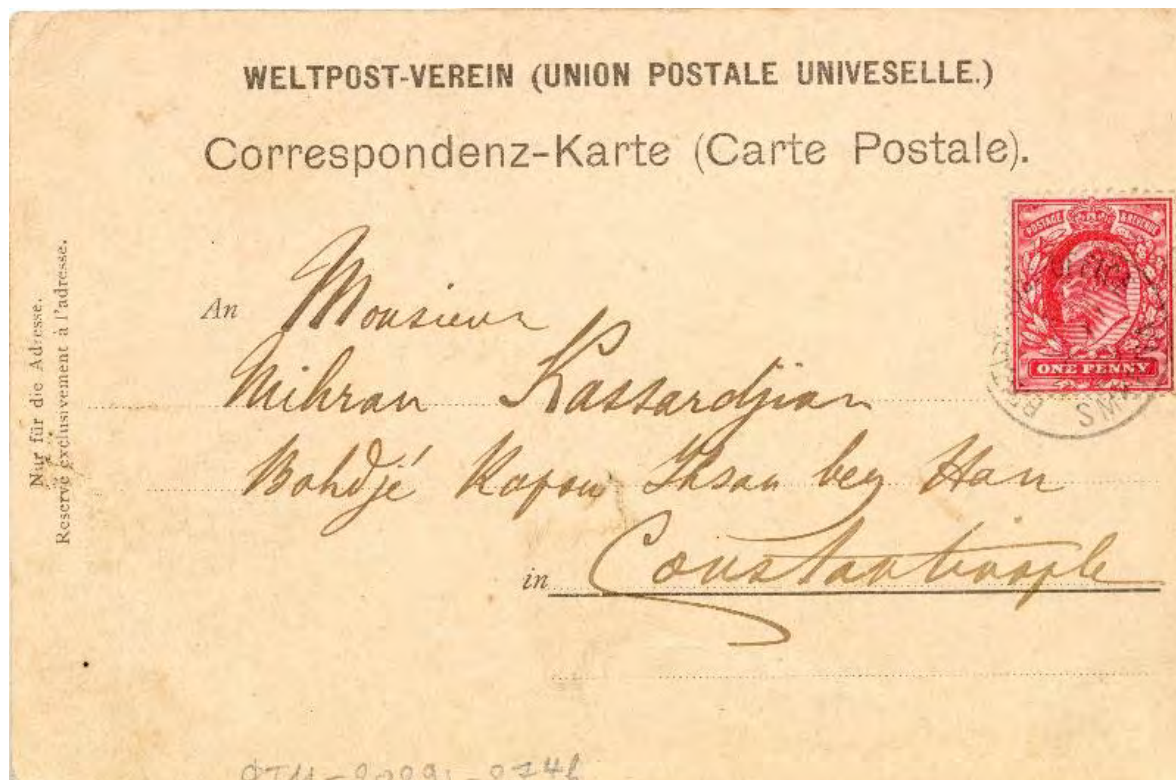
The first steps of the British Postal Service were confined as service of the British consulates since 1832 and for the next 25 years. The first British post office opened only in 1857 in Constantinople, in 1872 Smyrna, 1873 Beirut and Thessaloniki in 1900. All in all, 10 British post office have been operating until 1914 in the Levant.

The British stamps were overprinted in ottoman values in 1885, because of the ottoman currency devaluation which resulted to the reselling of British stamps in England but bought in the East. Later they were overprinted with the word *LEVANT*.

The British post offices closed in 1914 like all foreign ones, but they reopened in some areas like Smyrna and Constantinople between 1919–1922.



The British Consulate and the Post Office destroyed after the great fire of Smyrna.



Postcard from Smyrna to Constantinople, 1903.

One Pence stamp with the head of Edward VII (1903 issue).

The harbor of Smyrna, clipper ships and steamships, tramway and camels.

ΦTM-20291-274β

4. The French Postal Service (1812–1914)

The very first French post office in the Levant was Military Postal Service of Napoleon in Egypt, with the *Coptic* and *Greek Legions*. Although France was among the first European Powers to sign the Capitulations thus acquiring privileges in the Ottoman Empire (1740) it established its first post offices only in 1812.

France reached a peak of 30 post offices in the Levant, with some of them issuing their own stamps, like the one in Kavala, or overprinted like the one in Vathy, in Samos island.

Consolidating the stamp use, the French post offices initially used the standard issues of France valued in francs. In 1885 they were overprinted with the value in piastres, but in 1905 a new issue was printed with the legend *LEVANT* instead of *République Française*.

The last French post office in the Ottoman Empire was operating in Constantinople 1921 – 1923.



Postcard from Smyrna
to Athens, 1905.

Two stamps of the 5 centimes
bearing the legend Levant.

The postcard shows
the northern part of
the Smyrna quays,
Bella Vista
with the tramway.

It has been sent
for collecting purposes.

ΦΤΜ-20291-252α



5. The Russian Postal Service (1774–1914)

The Russian Postal Service started very modestly in its consulate in of Constantinople in 1774 after the treaty of *Küçük Kaynarca*. In 1779 a ship line connected Constantinople and Kherson and another one begun by land through Bucharest in 1781. Since 1851, the Russian steamship company ROPIT (РОПИТ) undertook the task of the transporting the mail through Odessa. A large part of it, was correspondence of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchates of the East, whose Primates were all seated in Constantinople and not in their traditional sees, since they were administrating large estates, donated by the czars in lands under Russian domination or sphere of influence. The first russian stamps for the Ottoman lands were issued in 1863 and were followed by others issues in the type of postage due stamps. The special issues stopped since 1900 and regular russian stamps were used which were overprinted in ottoman para/piastres value and since 1909 with its respective location, e. g. Mont Athos – 20 para.



*Letter from Smyrna to Athens through ROPIT, 1913.
Russian stamps for the anniversary of the 300 years
of the Romanoff Dynasty (1913 issue).*

ΦΤΜ-20291-210



*Postcard from Smyrna to Athens via ROPIT, 1906.
Russian postage stamp showing the coat of arms.
2 kopecks face value with a ten paras overprint.*

The Ottoman Water Supply Factory of Smyrna.

ΦΤΜ-20291-209

6. The German Postal Service (1870–1914)

The first German post office opened in Constantinople in 1870, using the regular German stamp issues and since 1884 with overprinted face value in paras/piastres, probably for reasons related to the devaluation of the ottoman currency.

Since 1905 the overprint was gothic script (Frakturschrift) which was the usual ductus of the Latin alphabet until WW II.

Three years later, in 1908, stamps with diagonal overprint in French currency were issued, to avoid exploitation of the currency value differences.

Only 7 German post Offices were operating in the Ottoman Empire until 1914, three of them located in Constantinople.



The German Post Office in Smyrna.

Levantine Heritage Foundation



*Greetings Postcard
for the New Year 1889, sent by the
German Post Office in Constantinople.*

7. The Italian Postal Service (1873–1911, 1912–1914, 1919–1923)

After *Risorgimento*, the Unification of Italy in 1870, the newly established State, was pursuing a place among the Great Powers, so, Italy established post offices in the Ottoman Empire between 1873–1923. They were located mostly in the regions of Epirus and Albania, trying to check the Austrian influence in the Adriatic Sea.

A short interruption followed in 1911/1912 because of the Italian conquest of Libya, and again in 1914, with the closure of all foreign post offices in the Ottoman Empire. They reopened in the areas occupied by the Entente between 1919–1923.

The usual postage stamps were employed, overprinted with the face values in ottoman currency as well as the place. Noteworthy is the effort to establish an air mail service in 1923 from Turkey to Paris via Bucharest, but due to the disagreement with French on the one hand and the political and military developments in Asia Minor, the plan was cancelled, although postage stamps have been issued.



*Registered letter from Smyrna to Brussels, 1914
Stamps with the Head of the Italian King Vittorio Emanuele III
in the face value of 5 centesimi.*



Yavuz Corapcioglu koleksiyonu

The old and the new Italian (1920–1922) Post Office in Smyrna.

Levantine Heritage Foundation

8. The Egyptian Postal Service (1843–1865, 1865–1881)

Muhammad Ali, the Albanian viceroy (Khedive) of Ottoman Egypt, became the first de facto independent ruler of modern Egypt. In his effort to modernize Egypt he unsuccessfully tried to establish the first State postal service, so he then bailed out in 1865 the private mail company Posta Europea (est. in 1843), opening offices in Constantinople and 1866 in Smyrna.

The Egyptian postal service gradually gained in importance, especially through the Khedivieh Steam Navigation company, which many ports between Alexandria and Constantinople with 8 steamships.

The first postage stamps were issued in 1866, without any special edition for the Egyptian post offices in the Ottoman Empire proper. In 1881 the Khedive agreed with the Sultan to concede its 20 post offices to the Ottoman Empire.



Letter sent from Greece to Mytilene (Lesvos)
through the Egyptian Postal Service, 1872.

Still discerning the cancellation stamp inscription:
P(oste). V(ize). R(eali) Egiziane

9. The Ottoman Postal Service (since 1860 in European model)

The Ottoman Postal Service was the decadent heir of the ancient postal traditions, which was continued through the Middle Ages. That means that until 1860 the Ottoman Postal Service was organized primarily on land routes and mainly for State correspondence. The postal stations (menzils) offered paid services to the travelers, even by providing even “fresh” horses, or mounted mailmen as road guides (tatars). Just in Constantinople there were 300 tatars and every regional governor ca. 50.

Since 1860, the Ottoman postal service is reorganized along European models, partly through the Greek company *Liannos Co.*, because of the need for employees able to read the Latin alphabet.

Of course, gradually, the problem of the alphabet reading skills was solved for the most part, but even at the beginning of the 20th c. there were specific post offices which were in a position, to accept telegrams in French or in Latin characters. In 1862–1863 the first postage stamps were issued, but very soon an Armenian in Constantinople was given the task of printing the stamps, in 1868, due to the much lower cost compared to France. Since 1875, when the Ottoman Empire became member of the UPU, stamp legends were written not only in the Arabic alphabet but in European languages, too.



The ottoman cruiser Hamidiye, named after the Sultan Abdülhamid II.

Postage stamps of 2 piastres/Kurush (1914 issue).

The second stamp with the red overprint commemorates the dissolution of the Capitulations, which led to the closure of all foreign post offices.

The third one with the red star overprint was used for international mail.



*Envelope of a letter sent from Smyrna to Chios (Scio)
through the Ottoman Postal Service, 1887.*

Business envelope of a Greek steam mill company of Smyrna

*Stamp of the 1880–1884 issue, 20 paras face value and quadratic cancellation stamp
(Izmir in Arabic–Ottoman script).*

ΦΤΜ-20290-5

10. The Postal Service of the Greek Expedition in Asia Minor (1919–1922)

By the end of the WW I in May 1919, the Greek Army disembarks in Smyrna, with the aim to compel Mustafa Kemal to accept the Paris Peace Treaty, but practically to materialize the historical claims of Greece on Asia Minor.

The structure of the Ottoman postal service was retained in the occupied territory of Smyrna, up to the point that the Greek Army replaced the Muslim personnel with Greek, for fears of espionage.

All postal services were put under the military administration, except for the foreign ones who resumed work after ceasing in 1914.

The Greek occupied regions were organized in 22 postal sectors and 5 subsectors. The center of all was Postal Sector 902 in Smyrna and a detachment of the 533–Air Squadron was responsible for urgent mail. Even the 4 railroad (2 British, 2 French) companies had 2 postal offices in their trains. Their mainly Greek personnel compelled them to cooperate with the Greek Army. For a short time, temporary postage stamps were printed and used until the arrival of stamps from Greece.

On 13.08.1922 the Turkish counterattack broke the Greek Front which collapsed almost immediately. The postal service had received orders to stop and reverse any shipment towards the Front, thus sending back more than 2000 mail bags. Of the 27 Postal Sectors and Subsectors only two were lost, saving all their treasuries except for three.

The saved personnel were reassigned and reorganized very quickly in the coming weeks in Northern Greece for the newly formed Expedition Army in Thrace.



*Postcard showing the Harbor of Smyrna with the Greek Navy approaching to disembark the Greek Army, 1919
Part of a postcard series issued by the Jewish brothers Padova.*



*Envelop cancelled with the stamp of the Aydin Post & Telegraph Office
of the Greek Administration of Smyrna.*

1919 reprint stamps of the original 1911 issue, Hermes and Iris, 5 and 25 lepta respectively.

ΦΤΜ-404-189



*Envelope part with ottoman stamps and cancellations
from the town of Kozan (Sis) near Adana.*

*It may be part of correspondence related to the fate of the Greek POWs,
since the purple stamp belongs to the Greek Committee
for the Inspection of the Greek POWs, 1922.*

Ottoman stamps of the 20 paras face value (1917/1918 Austrian issue)

ΦΤΜ-404-199

FOREIGN POST OFFICES in THESSALONIKI :

BRIEF HISTORY and PHILATELIC RARITIES

by George Thomareis

Austrian post office

The Austrian consular office in Thessaloniki, which had been operating since the end of the 18th century, evolved, in the 1830s, to a regular post office, much better organized than before. From 1833, it was using the first ever postmark used on letters in Thessaloniki, the linear SALONICH.

The Austrian p.o. of Thessaloniki (as well as the French one) will have a continuous presence until the end of 1914, when the new Greek administration forbade the continuation of the operation of the foreign post offices in the city.

The Austrian p.o. originally used the Double Headed Eagle issued stamps, the coat of arms of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, in Lombardo-Venetian currency (Soldi), while from the end of the 1860's the Francis Joseph stamp issues. The Lombardo-Venetian stamps were used also by the Austrian Lloyd Agency.

The only known letter posted from Thessaloniki, franked with 10 Soldi Coat of Arms stamps perf.14



*Thessaloniki 1864 (Nov. 10): Entire folded letter posted via Vienna (Nov.30) to Udine (ar.Dec.2).
Prepaid postal rate 40 Soldi Coat of Arms: strip of 3 + 1
Postal rate: 40 Soldi: 20 Levant rate + 15 to Wien + 5 Local Vienna to Udine service*

The oldest known letter with a post office postmark posted from Thessaloniki

50%



Thessaloniki, Nov. 6 1833, to Vienna.

The letter traveled by land, via Serbia and was disinfected in Semlin (19 Nov 1833).

Arrival Wien 27 November.

Postal Rate: 2 Pia (=8 Kr), manuscript on reverse, paid by the sender,

11 Kr charged in Austria.

Austrian Lloyd agency

Austrian Lloyd shipping founded in 1835 in Trieste. It signed the first contract to transport mail to all the ports called in by its ships in 1837. Soon established postal agencies at every Mediterranean port, mainly where there were no official Austrian post offices. The company was careful not to compete the official Austrian post offices. Austrian Lloyd played an important role in the operation of the Austrian postal services in the Levant.

The Austrian Lloyd agency in Thessaloniki was not very active, probably due to the presence of the official Austrian p.o. that was very well organized and very efficient.

The only known, till now, double weight letter of the (probably inactive) Austrian Lloyd agency of Thessaloniki, Franked by 1864 Coat of Arms issue in Soldi, perf. 10.5



*Thessaloniki 1865 (Jun. 19): Entire folded letter to Constantinople (arr. Jun.26).
Prepaid postal rate: 15 + 5 Soldi DHE perf.10.5*

***Postal rate:** 20 Soldi double weight letter rate for between the Ottoman ports: after the unification of the 1866 Levant rates, only 10 Soldi should have been paid to Lloyd.*

The Greek p.o. in Ottoman Thessaloniki

December 1835: Greek p.o. was founded in Thessaloniki.

Correspondence was transported from Thessaloniki to Greece (and vice versa), twice a month, by horse riders, via Fourka Derven or Taratsa – near Lamia, where the Greek borders were. Until 1845 this mail service was very important for the Greek Postal Service, because the Greek mail to Europe was handed over to the Austrian p.o. of Thessaloniki, in order to be forwarded via Semlin to Europe. After 1845 the Greek mail was transported by ship to Thessaloniki and elsewhere. All letters postmarked exclusively by the Greek postmarks “ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ (ΤΟΥΡΚΙΑ)” and “ΕΛΛΑΣ ΔΙΑ ΛΑΜΙΑΣ”.

The Greek p.o. used the Large Hermes Heads issue stamps. The operation of the Greek p.o. was affected from the Greek–Ottoman relations e.g. the period of 1866–1869, the Ottoman administration forbade the operation of the Greek p.o. due to the Greek support to the Cretan revolt.

Letter franked LHH of the 1st Athens Provisional issue



Thessaloniki 1862 (Aug.30): Entire folded letter to Athens via Piraeus (ar.Sept.10)

Prepaid postal rate 2x20 Lepta + 2x5 Lepta LHH Athens 1st Provisional issue.

Postal rate: 50 Lepta single rate to abroad.

POSTAL FRAUD

The only known to me cover from Thessaloniki using Revenue stamps to cheat the Post

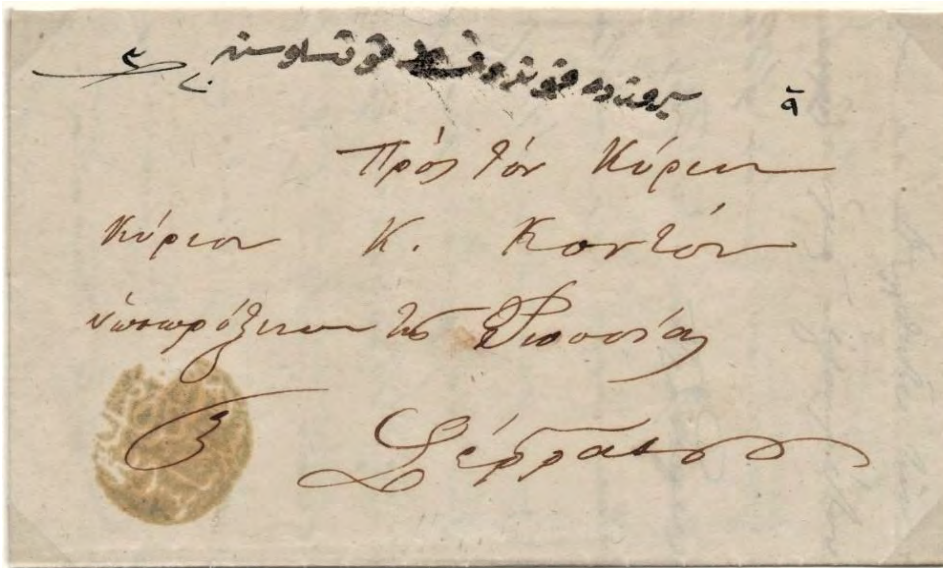


Thessaloniki 1925 (Mar. 26): Cover posted to Kazaklar (Tyrnavos, Thessaly), franked with 110 L. Revenue stamps of the Greek Administration period. The postman realized the fraud (or, perhaps, the mistake) and charged the envelope with a postage due of 2.00 Dr payable by the recipient.

The Ottoman p.o.

At the early period of the Ottoman post (1840–1860), the mail was forwarded by Tatar horsemen. The first Ottoman postmarks were in negative arabic script form and are saved mainly on postal receipt or delivery documents. The Ottoman p.o. was the last one, out of the four major post offices of Thessaloniki, to circulate stamps. The Duloz stamps were issued in the late 1860's. For unknown reasons, the first Ottoman issue of Tughra stamps was never used in Thessaloniki.

One of the 2 known letters bearing the negative AN CANIBI POSTAHANESI SELANIK



*Thessaloniki 1860
(Jan. 11): Entire folded
letter to the vice-consul of
Russia at Serres (ar. Jan. 13)
Athens via Piraeus
(ar. Sept. 10)*

Postal rate: 20 Para for 3
Dirhems (9.92 g.) &
distance to 16 hours long.

The French p.o.

From the middle of 1830's, the French Administration of the Postes organized the Naval Postal Service of the Levant, connecting Marseille to all major ports of the Eastern Mediterranean sea.

The French p.o. of Thessaloniki, opened for business officially in June 1856. The postal service was assigned to "Messageries Imperiales" and was successful. The French p.o. will be an important and continuously postal service for the city till 1914.

The first p.o. that used stamps was the French one, from 1857. The first stamps circulated were the Napoleon Empereur issue imperforated – french issues of the 2nd period of the French Empire under Napoleon III. The postal code of the French p.o. of Thessaloniki was dotted 4012 for the 1857 to 1862 period, but from 1863 replaced by the dotted 5095.

A tête-bêche pair of 20c. in vertical strip of 4,
of the 1862-71 Napoleon Emp. issue perf. on letter of 1865



Thessaloniki 1865 (Sept.25): Entire folded letter to Milano (ar.Oct.16) via Dardanelles (tr.Sept.29) & Naples (tr.Oct.12).

Postal rate: 80 cents. From 1861 to 1865 the postal rate from the Levant to Italy was 80c. for 7 ½ g. Tête-bêche pair; Pair of stamps, one of which is inverted at 180 degrees, due to failed placement of the clichés. The tête-bêche pairs of the first French issues are considered as great philatelic rarities.

The Egyptian p.o.

The Egyptian p.o. of Thessaloniki operated for a short period, from Jul.1870 to Feb.1872. It used the 1st & the 2nd issue of the Egyptian stamps. The circular postmark read in Italian the name of Thessaloniki, erroneously as SALONICCHI. Due to the intense competition of the Ottoman, Austrian, French & Greek post offices that operated in Thessaloniki, the Egyptian p.o. did not get enough mail volume and closed down after only 1 ½ years of operation. Only two covers and a few stamps tied by SALONICCHI have survived today.

The stamp of 5 Pia is the only known tied by the Egyptian p.o. of Thessaloniki



The Russian p.o.

In 1858, after the Crimean war, the Russian Steamer & Commerce Co. (ROPHT) signed a contract to the Russian government to provide postal services to the Black sea ports, to Aegean ports and to the Eastern Mediterranean ports. Up to 1863, ROPHT post offices were operational at 11 ports including the Thessaloniki port. But for a large period of 30+ years (1858–1892), there are no postal items, besides 3 or 4 stamps, originating from the Russian p.o. of Thessaloniki. In my opinion, this is an indication that until 1892 the postal services of the Russian p.o. were very limited (if existed at all). After 1872, the Russian p.o. operated normally, but never became competitive to the other post offices. \it used stamps issued by ROPHT, stamps of the Russian Levant (dominated in Paras & Piastres) and a special issue for Thessaloniki of Russian stamps overprinted Salonique.

Parcel post form of the Russian p.o. franked 22 Piastres

15 Dec 1910

Приложение къ циркуляру отъ 12-20

COUPON — КУПОНЪ
Peut être détaché par
Можетъ быть отрезанъ
la destination
адресатомъ

Тимбръ ду bureau d'origine:
Штемпель почтового
учреждения подачи:

RUSSIE.
РОССІЯ.

Bulletin d'expédition
Сопроводительный адресъ.

Сі-joinт
При семъ.
Valeur assurée
Объявленная цѣнность:
Montant du
Сумма таможеннаго
remboursement
платежа:
А.
(Наименованіе получателя).

Nombre de déclarations en douane
(число) таможенныхъ деклараций

Nom et domicile de
Панменованіе и мѣсто
Гэкспедітеур:
жительства отправителя

(Lieu de destination):
(Мѣсто назначенія):
(rue et n°)
(улица или №)

Poids:
Вѣсъ:
Acheminement:
Путь:

Тим. Анд. Ю-Р. О-ва Поч. Дѣла, въ Одессѣ.

*Thessaloniki 1910
(Dec.5): Parcel Post
form for a parcel
posted to Jaffa
(arr.Dec.15)*

*Postal rate: 22 Piastres
for parcel of 31,2 Kg.*

The Italian p.o.

The Italian government for years pressed the Ottoman government to accept the reoperation of the Italian post offices in Constantinople and in Smyrna (closed down in 1883 due to increased tensions in the Italo–Ottoman relations), and the establishment of 3 new Italian post offices into the Ottoman Empire: in Thessaloniki, Avlona and in Jerusalem. The High Gate was denied and only after the display of Naval power in 1907, (by three squadrons of the Italian fleet), was finally granted the permission. The Italian p.o. inaugurated on May.26,1908 and it was the last p.o. of the great western powers that operated in Thessaloniki the all 19th ce. until 1914.

The only known until today usage of the extremely rare
double cds with bridge, on registered cover.



Thessaloniki 1913 (Jan.16):
Registered cover to Milano
(arr. Jan.21)

Postal rate: 40 Paras single rate to
Italy + 1 Piastre registration fee

The British p.o.

The British Chamber of Commerce in Constantinople and local powerful financial groups, including the banker Allatini, convinced the Ottoman government to permit another British p.o. in the Ottoman empire.

The British p.o. of Thessaloniki, inaugurated in May.1900 and it was the last British p.o. to operate in the Ottoman Empire. It used stamps of 3 Kings: Victoria, Edward, George V, and three type of postmarks BRITISH POST OFFICE A, B, C. (not ascertained if they different counters or annexes.)

The only known acknowledge of delivery of a registered letter of the British p.o.

Postmasters—No. 68.
Administration des Postes de la Grande Bretagne.
Post Office of the United Kingdom.

AVIS DE RÉCEPTION
ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF DELIVERY

Enregistré en valeur déclarée au bureau
registered or insured at the Office

d'un objet recommandé } *Lettre* } (1)
of a Registered Article }
d'une lettre avec valeur déclarée de }
of a letter insured for } Numéro ()
d'un colis postal avec valeur déclarée de }
of a parcel insured for } No.

de } *Poste Anglaise-Salonique* } (on the) *28. Novembre 1903* } (2)
of }
et adressé à } *M^r Luciani Agostino* } (at) *Verona (Italie)*
and addressed to }

Le soussigné (qu'un objet recommandé
déclare } qu'un lettre avec valeur déclarée } à l'adresse susmentionnée
The undersigned acknowledges that { a registered article } addressed as above
et provenant de } *M^r D. Kondoropoulos* } a été dûment
and sent by (to) } *De Salonique (Turquie)* } (was duly

livré le } _____ } 190 .
delivered on the }
du destinataire : } Signature (s) }
of the addressee: } *[Signature]* }
du Chef de Bureau distributeur : }
of the Postmaster of the Delivering Office: }

1. Nature de l'objet (lettre, échantillon, imprimé, colis postal, etc.)
2. Nature de l'article (lettre, échantillon, imprimé, papier, parol, etc.)
3. Bureau d'origine, numéro : date de dépôt à ce bureau.
4. L'office et adresse, numéro : date de dépôt à cet office.
5. Nom et adresse du Destinataire.
6. Nom et adresse de l'expéditeur.
7. Nature des objets de l'envoi.
8. Nature de l'objet (lettre, échantillon, imprimé, colis postal, etc.)
9. Nature de l'article (lettre, échantillon, imprimé, papier, parol, etc.)
10. Bureau d'origine, numéro : date de dépôt à ce bureau.
11. L'office et adresse, numéro : date de dépôt à cet office.
12. Nom et adresse du Destinataire.
13. Nom et adresse de l'expéditeur.
14. Nature des objets de l'envoi.

A remplir par le bureau d'origine.
To be filled up by the Office of origin.

Nota.—Cet avis doit être signé par le destinataire ou, si les règlements du pays de destination le permettent, par le chef du bureau distributeur, et lorsque l'avis est donné par le bureau distributeur le destinataire doit désigner la nature de l'objet de l'envoi. Nota.—This acknowledgment must be signed by the addressee, or, if the postal regulations of the country of destination allow, by the Postmaster of the Delivering Office, and when it is made such by the Delivering Office the addressee should furnish the name and address of his sender. It must then be put in an envelope and sent, as registered, by the first Mail, to the Office at which the article referred to was posted.

Remarque.—Cette formule s'emploie pour l'objet recommandé ou avec valeur déclarée dans le cas où on doit

Posted from Thessaloniki to Verona (dep.Nov.28,1903)

The Bulgarian and the Serbian post offices

With the outbreak of the 1st Balkan war, the Greek and the Bulgarian armies began a road race aimed at capturing Thessaloniki. The Greek army entered Thessaloniki on Oct.26,1912, while the Bulgarian army under General Todoroff reached the hills of Panorama village on Oct.27,1912. Bulgarians demanded from the Greek administration, at first that some of their units to enter and camp inside the city and secondly the permission to operate a Bulgarian p.o. Since the Balkan Alliance was maintained and no border arrangements had been made, permission granted to Bulgarians as also to the Serbs.

Bulgarians operated a regular civilian p.o. in Thessaloniki from November of 1912. The Bulgarian p.o., in contrast to the very careful behavior of the administration of the Greek p.o., used Bulgarian metropolitan stamps and postal stationery, as opposed to the international practice and legislation. Bulgarian p.o. closed down on Jul.17,1913 on the beginning of the 2nd Balkan war.

The Serbian p.o. operated in Thessaloniki from the spring to the summer of 1913, when 2nd Balkan War started. Since Serbs had no interest in the city, the Serbian p.o. hardly operated at all. Three or four posted items saved today just to certify its operation.

[An historical cover: A unique combination of post offices and dates and the only known usage of the Bulgarian p.o. of Thessaloniki with stamps affixed and cancelled on arrival.](#)

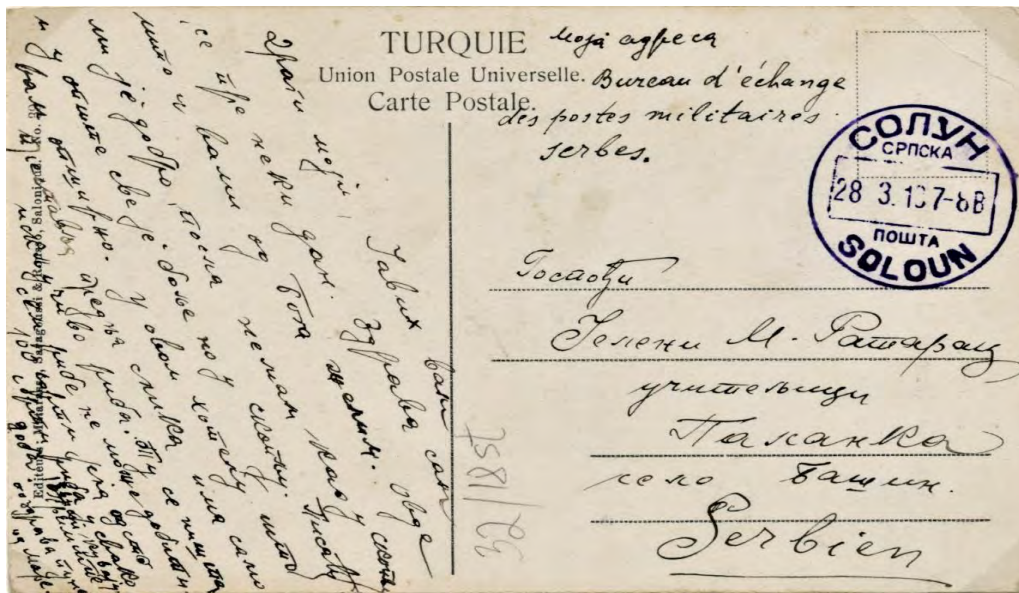


Cover deposited on Nov.22,1912 and posted on Nov.23, from the newly occupied by Bulgarians, Ottoman p.o. of Xanthi.

Canceled by the Ottoman postmark XANTHI, without bulgarian stamps (or the stamps affixed but not canceled). Bulgarians had just occupied the city of Xanthi.

Cover forwarded to Thessaloniki to the operational Bulgarian p.o. where stamps for 25 Ct. were affixed? and canceled SOLOUN (ar.Nov.27,1912). (Domestic postal rate + Registered fee)

and a Picture Postcard posted from the Serbian p.o. – Extremely scarce.



Thessaloniki 1913 (Mar.28): Postcard posted to Serbia.

OCCUPIED CITY – EDİRNE

by **Mehmet Edip Ağaoğulları**

Edirne, capital of Thrace, was one of the most important cities in Türkiye-in-Europe located northwestern part of the country having borders with Bulgaria and Greece with a population of 180,000 nowadays.

In the ancient times, the Thracian settlement known as Uscudama or Odrysa was named Orestias by the Greeks until the town came under the Roman rule in 124 AD. The Roman emperor Hadrian expanded the town into a city, gave it a strong fortification and renamed it to Hadrianopolis. Owing to its strategic importance, the city had been the site of many memorable battles and often changed hands in the last 2500 years and finally came under Ottoman rule in 1360s when Ottoman sultan Murad I invaded Thrace transforming Adrianople into the Ottoman capital of Edirne until the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Edirne had then become a bulwark protecting the approaches to Constantinople. During the decline of the Ottoman Empire in the 18th and early 19th century, Edirne experienced sieges and occupations by Russian, Bulgarian and Greek forces until the Ottoman Empire became the Republic of Turkey in 1923.

In the 18th century, foreign countries maintained courier services through their official missions in the Ottoman Empire transporting mail between those countries and Constantinople. The couriers carrying the mail from foreign embassies in Constantinople to the borders of their respective countries, had to cross Thrace and Adrianople was an important relay-station on this route. Some of these services developed into public mail services, used to transmit mail to Europe. The Ottoman Empire itself did not maintain a regular mail service until 1840, when a service was established between Constantinople and other major cities in the country. Adrianople/Edirne holds a significant place in the postal history of Türkiye being the first post office to operate postal service with Constantinople/İstanbul.

1. OTTOMAN POST OFFICE

In the prephilatelic period, Edirne post office used Arabic "An canib-i posta-i Edirne" circular negative seals from 1840 until 1863 when the Ottoman Empire issued its first adhesive postage stamps (Fig.1). As from 1863, the post office first used a rectangle of dots with Arabic "Edirne" in the centre, then several types of circular postmarks with same inscription and later many types of bilingual circular and octogonal postmarks.



Fig.1 1855 prephilatelic entire letter sent to Istanbul showing all Arabic "**AN CANIB-I POSTA-I EDİRNE 1278**" negative seal. Since the distance between Edirne and Istanbul was 44 postal route hours and the weight of the letter was 3 dirhems (9.9 grams), it was shown on the letter by hand writing that the postal fee of 40 paras = 1 piastre had been paid.

2. LEVANT POST OFFICE

Starting from the first half of the 18th century, nine countries had negotiated capitulations or treaties with the Ottomans, which granted various extraterritorial rights in exchange for trade opportunities. Such agreements permitted Austria, France, Russia, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Greece, Poland and Romania to maintain consulate courier services and then post offices in the Ottoman Empire. It is probable that the Austrian Consulate in Edirne began to give mail to these couriers well before the creation of an official Consular post office in 1856. Owing to the absence of any foreign competition, the Austrian post office of Edirne held a practical monopoly of all mail going, not only abroad, but also to the other towns of the Ottoman Empire where the Austrian post offices were in operation (Fig.2).



Fig.2 1868 entire letter sent from Edirne to Lyon, France bearing pair of 15 soldi and 10 soldi Lombardy and Venetia stamps tied by "ADRIANOPEL" postmarks.

Together with four other secondary Lloyd-operated agencies in small ports, the Austrian post office of Edirne was closed on 30 April, 1909, as a gesture of goodwill to the Ottoman Government. World War I forced the closure of all the Levant post offices on 13 October, 1914. After the war, only the Allied Forces post office in Istanbul reopened, operating from August 1921 to July 1923. Although there was not a French post office operating in Edirne, the mail from Edirne to France transported via the French post office of Istanbul (Fig.3).



Fig.3 1861 entire letter sent from Edirne via the French post office of Istanbul to France by traveling onboard of French mail vessel "TAMISE" bearing unperforated 40+10 = total of 50 centimes stamps tied by dotted anchor postmarks.

3. BULGARIAN POST OFFICE

During the First Balkan War, Edirne was briefly occupied by the Bulgarian 2nd Army following the siege of the city for more than five months. The occupation began on 26 March 1913 (Julian calender=13 March 1913) and ended on 21 July 1913 during the Second Balkan War. The occupants took over the Ottoman post office and operated it as Bulgarian post office. This used ordinary stamps of Bulgaria, cancelling them at first with the existing Ottoman bilingual (Arabic/French) "ANDRINOPLE" circular date postmarks, then as from May with bilingual (Bulgarian cyrillic/French) "ODRIN" single-circle date postmarks (Fig.4).



Fig.4 Picture postcard bearing 5 st. stamp tied by bilingual **"ANDRINOPE"** postmark and alongside showing bilingual **"BALIKPAZARI"** postmark with dates March 13th, 1913 - the first day of the Bulgarian occupation. The card then used in mail from Edirne to Sliven showing bilingual **"ODRIN"** postmark dated April 22nd, 1913.

4. INTERALLIED ADMINISTRATION OF THRACE POST OFFICE

After the Second Balkan War, Bulgaria was forced to agree to a truce losing the territories in Macedonia and Dobruja Province, but awarded much of the territory in Western Thrace. At the end of World War 1 in 1918, being defeated by Entente forces, Bulgaria retreated from the area in Western Thrace, while "inter-allied" forces assumed control. General Charpy of France was appointed the Governor of Western Thrace on 22 October, 1919 until Greece annexed the Thrace region on 20 May, 1920 as per San Remo conference which gathered the leaders of the main allies (except the U.S.) of the Entente powers. During this period, the post offices in this area including Edirne post office used "Thrace Interalliee" overprinted ordinary stamps of Bulgaria, cancelling them with bilingual (Bulgarian Cyrillic/French) single-circle date postmark (Fig.5).



Fig.5 1920 registered cover sent from the Interallied Administration of Thrace post office in Edirne to Gumulcine bearing total of 75 st. stamps tied by bilingual **"ODRIN"** postmarks.

5. GREEK POST OFFICE

In the aftermath of World War 1, Edirne was ceded to Greece by the treaty of Sevres and occupied by the Greek army for more than two years from 25 July, 1920 to 25 November 1922. During the Greek occupation, Greek post Office of Edirne used at first overprinted Ottoman stamps, later the "Dioikisis Thrakis" overprints on stamps of Greece, cancelling them with Ottoman bilingual "ANDRINOPLE" circular date postmarks, later with Greek double circle types (Fig.6 & Fig.7).



Fig.6 1920 cover sent from the Greek Ministry of Defence in Athens to a person in Edirne during the Greek occupation. This rare cover had been censored by the French occupation Forces and then taxed by pair of 20 lepta = total 40 lepta "Dioikisis Dutikis Trakis = Administration of Western Thrace" overprinted Greek stamps at the Greek post office in Edirne before being handed over to the receiver. (The postal fee was paid on arrival because the cover had been sent from a government office to a private person).



Fig.7 1920 cover sent from Edirne to Istanbul during the Greek occupation bearing 25 lepta "Ipati Armostia Trakis" overprinted Ottoman stamp tied by bilingual "ANDRINOPLE 4" Ottoman postmark.

6. LIBERATION OF EDİRNE

The Greek occupation of Edirne was ended on 25 November 1922 when the Turkish Nationalist Movement troops entered the city as per the Armistice of Mudanya after the Greek defeat at the end of the Greco-Turkish War, also known as the Western Front of the larger Turkish War of Independence in 1922 (Fig.8).



Fig.8 26 Tesrin-i sani 1338 = November 26th, 1922 picture postcard commemorating the day Edirne was liberated by the Turkish National Movement Forces. The French and Greek stamps were cancelled by their post offices in the last day of operation and the Turkish stamp was cancelled by special **"EDİRNE HATIRA-İ HALAS"** negative seal commemorating the Liberation Day.

On 24 July, 1923, the Edirne suburb of Karaağaç/Orestias which was situated on the right bank of the river Meriç/Evros/Maritza, was released to Turkey as part of the war reparations in accordance with the Treaty of Lausanne which was signed on 23 April, 1923 and became the frontier line to Greece and last railway stop to Europe (Fig.9).



Fig.9 1923 cover sent from French Military post office of Karaağaç to Istanbul bearing pairs of 15+10 centimes stamps tied by **"TRESOR ET POSTES 530-A"** postmarks dated 21.4.1922. One of few recorded covers.

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Routes & Rates of the British Post Office in Smyrna 1872–76

by Alexios Papadopoulos

This article focuses on the routes and rates of the mail posted in the British Post Office at Smyrna for the early short period from its opening in December 1872 until 1876 when the General Postal Union rates were in effect (at least for most countries). It is largely based on information published in Richard Malim's British Levant Study Paper (SP) 7 (revised Part1 section A) of the Great Britain Overprints Society and Jane & Michael Moubray's "British Letter Mail to Overseas Destinations 1840–75" (Second Edition, 2017 Royal Philatelic Society London). Items shown here are from my collection, except fig. 1 (ex Mike Fulford collection).

When the British Post Office opened in Smyrna in December 1872 the sender had a number of options to choose from:

<i>Destination</i>	<i>Via</i>	<i>Rate</i>
Gibraltar or Malta	Egypt Italy	4d per ¼ oz 5d per ¼ oz
Great Britain	<i>Marseilles (French Packet)</i> 12/72 – 30/6/75 1/7/75 – 31/12/75 1/1/76 –	8d per ½ oz 6d per ½ oz 2½d per ½ oz (UPU rates)
Great Britain	<i>Vienna</i> Constantinople, Varna and ➤ Route 1 in Summer ➤ Route 5 in Winter 12/72 – 31/4/73 1/5/73 – 30/6/75 1/7/75 –	6d per ½ oz 5d per ½ oz 2½d per ½ oz (UPU rates)
Great Britain	<i>Vienna</i> Route 3 in Winter (Austrian Packet to Trieste)	Rates as above

The route numbers in the table refer to the details given in SP7. Routes 2 and 4 are not mentioned here as they were abandoned before the opening of the Smyrna PO. In brief:

- Route 1 (also known as the 'Summer' route): to Constantinople and via Austrian Packet to Varna, Rustchuck by river to Basiasch and rail to Vienna, Munich, Cologne, Aachen, Brussels and Ostend.
- Route 3: Austrian Packet to Trieste
- Route 5: via Bucharest, Czernowitz, Debreczen, Budapest, Vienna.

Mail from the BPO Smyrna for the early pre-GPU period is scarce. I have yet to record a cover addressed to Gibraltar or Malta. All recorded covers are addressed to Great Britain except very few covers to USA paying 7d (5d via Vienna plus 2d transatlantic surcharge) or 10d (8d via Marseilles plus 2d transatlantic surcharge – fig. 1). No registered or printed matter mail is recorded for the period 1872–76, and not a single cover for December 1872.



fig. 1

[‘Via Marseilles’ \(French Packet\) Mail](#)

This was a more costly service than that via Vienna and it was offered throughout the year; it did not depend on weather conditions. I only have ever seen covers paying the 8d rate per ½ oz. An example of the 8d rate is illustrated in fig. 2. Dated MR 7 73 is the earliest recorded cover from the BPO Smyrna. The 6d rate applicable for only six months 1/7 – 31/12/75 (the period in which the French did not apply the GPU uniform rates) must be very elusive, I would very much like to receive information if anyone knows of an example. On 1/1/76 France applied the GPU rates and the rate fell sharply to 2 ½d. The example shown in fig. 3 is dated JY 28 76.



fig. 2



fig. 3

'Via Vienna' Mail

This is not as straightforward as the Marseilles route. There was only one summer route (Route 1 as described above), but the winter routes are now two (Routes 3 and 5). The first dates for making up (in London) of summer and winter mails for Constantinople (and from thereon to Smyrna) when sent through Vienna:

- A. Winter 16/12/1872 (Routes 3, 5)
- B. Summer 7/4/1873 (Route 1)
 - Ba.* Abruptly altered on 7/8/1873 to Route 3
- C. Winter ?/11/1873 (Routes 3, 5)
- D. Summer 7/4/1874 (Route 1)
- E. Winter 2/11/1874 (Routes 3, 5)
- F. Summer 20/4/1875 (Route 1)

The reason for the sudden change of route (*Ba*) is the outbreak of cholera epidemic on Danube in the Summer of 1873, so the mails were diverted away from the contaminated area using the winter route via Trieste – now called the *Trieste Summer Emergency Route*. Listing D above shows that the summer route for 1874 switched back to the usual Route 1.

Fig. 4 shows an example of the Emergency route dated AU 9 73.



fig. 4

Two other covers are known of this rare 'abnormal' route posted from Constantinople AU 15 73 to Liverpool (my collection) and SP 5 73 to Maidenhead (ex Malim collection).



Figs. 5 and 6 show examples of C and D respectively.

All these examples pay the 5d per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz rate. The short-lived 6d rate (12/72 – 4/73) is not recorded.



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

As a tailpiece, fig. 7 shows an example of a very early implementation of the GPU reduced 2 ½ d uniform rate.



Fig. 7

It is dated JY 3 75, the third day of the GPU rates and the third day of issue of the GB 2 ½ d stamp. It is addressed to the USA, and it was obviously sent on the route avoiding France, as then it would have to pay more due to the 1/7 - 31/12/75 period. To the best of my knowledge, this is the earliest reported Transatlantic cover paying the uniform GPU rate, not just from British Levant, but worldwide.

AUXILIARY MILITARY POST OFFICES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA DURING THE AUSTRO–HUNGARIAN OCCUPATION (1878–1918)

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Translated into English by:
Omer Merzić

A Brief Overview of the History of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1463–1878)

It is well-known that Bosnia and Herzegovina fell under Ottoman rule in 1463 through the swift campaign of Mehmed II the Conqueror, and in 1482, Herzegovina also fell. It was not until the 18th century, after the wars between the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy and the weakening of Ottoman power, that autonomist sentiments among the Bosnian population toward Constantinople began to grow. Several armed uprisings by Bosnian nobles were crushed by the Ottomans. Unsuccessful reforms further exacerbated agrarian relations and led to a series of peasant uprisings in the 19th century. The Herzegovina Uprising of 1875 spread to the Bosnian Krajina, and by 1876, Serbia and Montenegro were drawn into the conflict, followed by Russia the next year. With the Treaty of San Stefano, Bosnia and Herzegovina was granted autonomy. However, at the Congress of Berlin (July 13, 1878), the provisions of the Treaty of San Stefano were revised, granting Austria–Hungary the right to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina. On July 29, 1878, the Austro–Hungarian army crossed the border into Bosnia and Herzegovina. This date marks the beginning of the philatelic history of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with all earlier periods considered pre-philatelic.

A Brief Overview of the Postal History of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1878–1918)

Occupying forces, during their advance, immediately organized a military postal service with mobile offices, initially serving exclusively the needs of the army (for the army, corps, divisions, and field posts).

On August 6, 1878, the first postal establishment was opened in Mostar as FELDPOST–EXPOSITUR No.18, and on August 10, 1878, the first field post office was opened in Grab as ETAPEN POSTAMT 1. Subsequent orders aimed at improving postal services followed (such as permitting parcel delivery, financial transactions, allowing civilians to use field post services, ensuring that trains with postal carriages accepted letters and manually cancelled stamps). On July 1, 1879, the first Bosnian–Herzegovinian postage stamps were issued, followed by permissions for accepting private registered letters, sending limited amounts of money, newspapers, and parcels. Mobile postal offices were converted into permanent military post offices, postcards and postal envelopes were introduced, and telegraph stations were opened.

Initially, postal traffic was carried out by horses, later by horse-drawn postal vehicles, and eventually by automobiles. With the construction of an extensive railway network, postal services became faster and more efficient.

In 1883, the previously established Directorate of Military Telegraphs merged with the Directorate of Military Post into the “K.K. Militar-Post-und Telegraphen-Direction” under the command of the General Headquarters in Sarajevo, specifically the 5th Department of the Ministry of War in Vienna.

During the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, postal traffic was divided into six postal regions (Banja Luka, Bihać, Mostar, Sarajevo, Travnik, Tuzla) plus the Sandžak.



Example: Postal area Mostar

A total of 156 military post offices were opened, located in every military garrison and all district centres (except Bjelemić), along with approximately 170 auxiliary military post offices (detailed information on these offices and their numbers follows in the text). This postal system functioned until the dissolution of the Monarchy, after which, on October 27, 1918, the postal service of Bosnia and Herzegovina came under the jurisdiction of the newly proclaimed State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs, later renamed the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes.

AUXILIARY MILITARY POST OFFICES

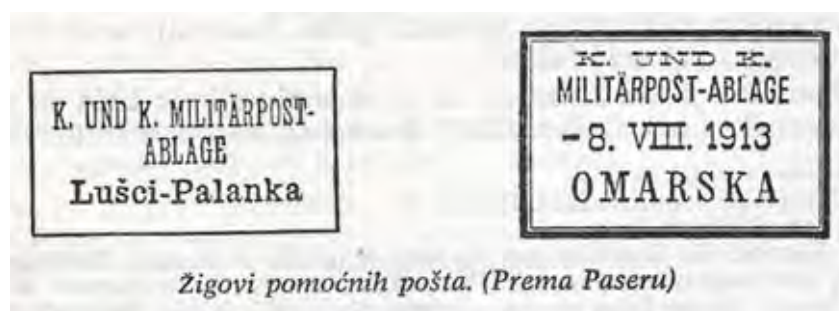
As mentioned in the introduction, a total of 156 military post offices were opened in Bosnia and Herzegovina, located in district centres, major railway stations, and larger settlements of foreign colonists.

A new law from 1907 on the organization of rural municipalities included the modernization and expansion of the postal network. To meet the needs of the rural population in villages and small towns, the Monarchy established auxiliary military post offices at small railway stations and postal points (inns, roadside stations, newly established settlements due to the exploitation of mines and forests, and road intersections serving nearby villages).

Postal agencies served as auxiliary branches of main post offices, offering limited postal services:

- Sale of postage stamps and postal stationery
- Acceptance and despatch of ordinary letters, postcards and telegrams
- Collection of mail from posting boxes
- Acceptance and despatch of registered and value declared mail, money orders and parcels up to a limited value
- Acceptance of savings deposits and delivery of saving passbooks (following the start of operations of the Postal Saving Bank on 17.07.1911).

To confirm the receipt of shipments, rectangular rubber stamps with or without dates were used, bearing the inscription K. und K. MILITÄRPOST ABLAGE along with the name of the postal agency.



Source: Milan Ljiljak, "Pošta, telegraf i telefon u Bosni i Hercegovini"

This basic classification of auxiliary military post offices types (with and without dates) was also used by Zvonimir Pillauer in his book *Poštanski manipulativni žigovi Bosne i Hercegovine 1878–1918*.

Unlike postal stamps imported from Austria, Auxiliary Post Office stamps were made by local engravers, leading to variations in dimensions, letter size and type, and the format of the month (Roman or Arabic numerals). Berislav Sekelj, in his book *Poštanska povijest Bosne i Hercegovine 1878–1918*, categorized these auxiliary military post offices stamps into groups: Without date – A (types A1 and A2) and With date – B (types B1, B2, B3, B4).

A 1 – Žig bez datuma - naziv mjesta ispisan velikim ili malim slovima, u antiqua ili grotesk tipu			
A1 - mala slova	A1 - velika slova antiqua	A1 - velika slova grotesk	A2
A 2 – Žig bez datuma, ali sa crticom (–) iza Militär - naziv mjesta ispisan malim slovima, u grotesk tipu			
B 1 – Žig s datumom, mjesec ispisan rimskim brojevima - naziv mjesta ispisan velikim ili malim slovima, u antiqua ili grotesk tipu			
B1 - velika slova	B1 - mala slova	B2 - mala slova	B2 - velika slova
B 2 – Žig s datumom, mjesec ispisan rimskim brojevima, ali sa crticom (–) iza Militär - naziv mjesta ispisan velikim ili malim slovima, u antiqua tipu			
B 3 – Žig s datumom, mjesec ispisan arapskim brojevima - naziv mjesta ispisan velikim slovima, u antiqua tipu			
	B3	B4 - mala slova	B4 - velika slova
B 4 – Žig s datumom, mjesec ispisan slovima - naziv mjesta ispisan velikim ili malim slovima, u antiqua ili grotesk tipu			

Source: Berislav Sekelj "Poštanska povijest Bosne i Hercegovine 1878–1918"

On October 1, 1907. the first auxiliary post office was opened in Windthorst (postal district Banja Luka, head post office Bos. Gradiška), a settlement of German settlers.



1911, Picture postcard sent from auxiliary post office Windthorst to Bos. Gradiška (head post office), franking with 5 Heller (correct rate for domestic traffic), cancelled with double round postal cancel with bridge K.UND K./BOS.GRADIŠKA/25.4.11, (type Mb), further sent to Kähren.

TOTAL NUMBER OF AUXILIARY MILITARY POST OFFICES OPENED DURING THE OCCUPATION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The literature used in the preparation of this work provides different figures for the total number of military auxiliary post offices opened during the occupation period. For example:

Ljiljak mentions 166 (with 153 postal agencies in the textual description),

Pillauer lists 169 postal agencies,

Sekelj records 165 postal agencies.

While Pillauer treats Bos. Blatnica/Blatnica, Bos. Dubočac/Dubočac, and Bos. Petrovo selo/Petrovoselo as different locations, Sekelj considers them as the same places.

Auxiliary post offices Blatnica & Bos. Blatnica

Zvonimir Pillauer in "Manipulative postal cancels of Bosnia and Herzegovina 1878-1918", in the list of auxiliary post offices, mentions two post offices; Blatnica and Bos. Blatnica. Berislav Sekelj in his Handbook and Catalogue "Postal History Bosnia and Herzegovina 1878 – 1918" states that it is the same auxiliary post office. Furthermore, both postcards are FRANKED at the auxiliary post office itself. The two picture postcard images below (photocopies of front side 1 & 2) confirm that it is one and the same post office.

Auxiliary post office/MP Ablage **Blatnica-A1** rectangle cancellation without date in violet color.
Auxiliary post office was open 16.6.1909
Head post office - TESLIĆ
Postal district – BANJALUKA



1910 Picture postcard sent from Auxiliary post office Blatnica to Teslić (head post office), franking with 5 Heller (correct rate for domestic traffic), cancelled with double round postal cancel K. UND K. MILIT. POST / TESLIĆ/3.7.10 (type D3), further sent to Podmelec.



Reduced photocopy of front side - 1

Auxiliary post office/MP Ablage **Bos. Blatnica-B1** rectangle cancellation with date 23.VIII.1912 in violet color.
Auxiliary post office was open 16.6.1909
Head post office - TESLIĆ
Postal district – BANJALUKA



1912 Picture postcard sent from Auxiliary post office Bos. Blatnica to Teslić (head post office), franking with 5 Heller (correct rate for domestic traffic), cancelled with double round postal cancel K. UND K. MILIT. POST / TESLIĆ/23.8.12 (type D3), further sent to N. Österreich.



Reduced photocopy of front side - 2

6-7/80

Two postcards are shown with the exact same images and the name Blatnica. On the back of one postcard, the cancel **Blatnica – Type A1** is printed, while on the other, it is **Bos. Blatnica – Type B1**. Both postcards were forwarded to the same head post office in Teslić and then to their final destinations. **This proves that Blatnica and Bos. Blatnica are the same place**, and it is believed that the same applies to Bos. Dubočac/Dubočac and Bos. Petrovo selo/Petrovoselo.

COLORS OF AUXILIARY MILITARY POST OFFICES CANCELS

Among collectors and researchers of auxiliary post offices in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the occupation period, it is generally believed that purple/violet was the primary color used for cancellation, while other colours (black, blue, red, brown, green...) were used when purple was unavailable.

It is reliably known that only red ink was used for cancellation at the auxiliary post office **Brčko–Ausstellung–Type B1** during the twenty-day philatelic exhibition in Brčko (September 10, 1912 – September 30, 1912).



1912, Picture postcard franking with 5 Heller (correct rate for domestic traffic), cancelled with **red cancel** of auxiliary post office Brčko–Ausstellung and sent to Donja Tuzla.

Auxiliary post office **Sv. Filomena–Type B1**, rectangle cancellation with date 29.V.1913 in **violet color**.



1913, Letter card 10 Heller “Jajce i Pliva” for domestic traffic and Germany, sent from Auxiliary Post Office Sv. Filomena to Gradačac (head post office), cancelled with double round cancel K.UND K. MILIT.POST/GRADAČAC/29.5.13 (type D3), further sent to Germany.

Auxiliary Post Office **Sv. Filomena–Tip B2**, rectangle cancellation with date 8.XI.1915 in **green color**



1912, Postal Money Order (cutting out) to the value of ?K sent from Auxiliary Deposit Post Office Sv. Filomena to Gradačac, franking with 2x10 Heller and cancelled in Gradačac (head post office) with post office cancel double round K. UND K. MILIT. POST/GRADAČAC/ 8.XII.15 (type Mao), further sent to Odžak, arrival cancels on back side K. UND K. MILIT. POST/ ODŽAK /12.XII.15, (type Ma).

At the moment, this is the only known example of the post office of St. Filomena cancelled with a **green color**.

Auxiliary Post Office **HADŽIĆI**–Type **B1**, rectangle cancellation with date 28.XII.1914 in **blue color**



1914, Letter sent from auxiliary post office Hadžići to Pazarić (head post office), registered and franked with 10+25 Heller on back side (correct rate for domestic traffic), cancelled with double round postal cancel with bridge K.UND K. MILIT. POST/ PAZARIĆ/29.XII.14 (type Mao), further sent to Arad, censor cancel, arrival cancel Arad on back side.

Auxiliary post office **HAN BEGOV**–Tip **B4**, rectangle cancellation with date 28. FEB 1917 in **black color**



1917 Letter sent from auxiliary post office Han Begov to Žepče (Head Post Office), franked with 3x5 Heller (correct rate for domestic traffic), cancelled with single round postal office cancel K.UND K. MILIT. POST/ ŽEPČE/28.2.17 (type K2), further sent to Graz, red censor cancel Žepče.

AUXILIARY MILITARY POST OFFICES – CORRECTION OF AN ERROR

The auxiliary post office Ocrkavlje was previously identified by Kühner and Passer as being located in Herzegovina. The village of Ocrkavlje is indeed situated on the Konjic–Bjelemić road, which is why this postal agency was included in the Mostar postal area.

However, there is also a village named Ocrkavlje located on the Foča–Kalinovik road, at the junction leading to Jeleč.



Location according to Kühner and Passer



Actual location



1913, Picture postcard franked with 2x5 Heller (correct rate for domestic traffic), sent from Auxiliary post office Ocrkavlje to Foča (head post office), cancelled with K. UND K. MILIT. POST/FOČA (type M**), further sent to Klagenfurt.

At this moment, it is the only known example that confirms that the Ocrkavlje Post Office belonged to the main post office of Foča in the Sarajevo postal area and not in the Mostar postal area.

AUXILIARY MILITARY POST OFFICES – RARITIES (RARE ITEMS)

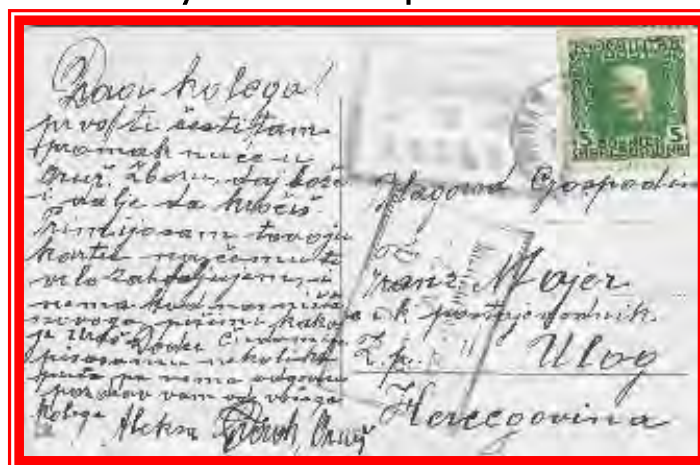
In the aforementioned literature, alongside the name and type of postal agency, you may sometimes encounter phrases like "according to Minkus," "according to Pillauer," "according to Passer," or "seen." This indicates that the postal agency in question is rare. One such example is the Široki Brijeg postal agency – Type A1. In Sekelj's book *Poštanska povijest Bosne i Hercegovine 1878–1918*, the postal agency Široki Brijeg is noted with the phrase "according to Pillauer."



1911, Postal stationery 5Heller "Karadžoz džamija" for domestic traffic, sent from Auxiliary post office Široki brijeg to Mostar (head post office), cancelled with K. UND K. MILIT. POSTAMT/MOSTAR/21.10.1911 (type D3), further sent to Leipzig.

This is the only example of the post office "Shiroki Brijeg" that the author of this paper has seen during his many years of dealing with philately.

Two Auxiliary Post Offices on one postcard
This is the only known example in this combination



1913, Picture postcard franked with 5 Heller (correct rate for domestic traffic), sent from Auxiliary post office Kozluk 05.V.1913 to Zvornik (head post office), cancelled with single round postal cancel K. UND K. MILIT. POST XX/ZVORNIK/5. V.1913 (type K2) and sent to Ulog, arrival cancel Auxiliary post office Ulog 7.V.1913

The Serbs in Greece

by George Sotiropoulos

The Serbian Exodus: A Forgotten Chapter in Greek Wartime Postal History

In the tumultuous landscape of early 20th century European politics, few stories capture the intersection of military strategy, humanitarian crisis, and bureaucratic ingenuity quite like the Serbian exodus to Corfu during World War I. This remarkable episode not only represents a critical moment in military history but also provides philatelists with a fascinating glimpse into improvised postal systems born of necessity and diplomatic complexity.

The Path to Displacement: Historical Context

Following the Treaty of Berlin (1878), Austria–Hungary occupied the Ottoman provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, formally annexing them in 1908. This annexation created persistent diplomatic tensions and friction between Serbia and Austria–Hungary. The powder keg finally ignited on June 28, 1914, when Archduke Franz–Ferdinand, heir to the Austro–Hungarian throne, and his wife Sophia were assassinated during an official visit to Sarajevo by Gavrilo Princip—a nineteen-year-old student suffering from tuberculosis who has been extensively studied by historians.

This assassination prompted Austria–Hungary's declaration of war against Serbia, triggering a cascade of alliances that plunged Europe into the First World War. After a year of fierce fighting, Belgrade fell to enemy forces on October 8, 1915, marking a devastating turning point for Serbian resistance.

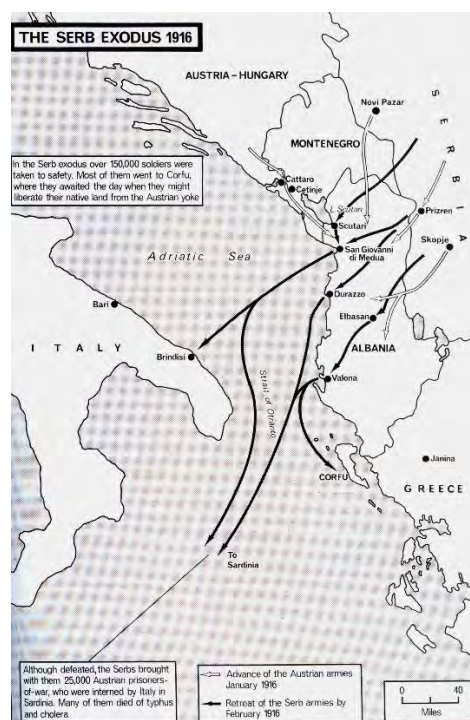


Fig. 1: Detailed map showing the retreat of the Serbs through Albania as far as Sarajevo.

The consecutive victories of Austrian, Hungarian, German, and Bulgarian forces compelled the Serbian army and their Montenegrin allies into a general retreat through the treacherous Albanian terrain. Exhausted and decimated, the surviving soldiers and civilian refugees eventually reached coastal cities including Scutari, San Giovanni di Medua, Durazzo, and Valona, as depicted in Figure 1. Initially, the French government independently evacuated a small contingent of defeated Serbs to France and Tunisia on December 25, 1915.



Fig. 2: The arrival of a Serbian horse-drawn supply convoy at the port of Durazzo.



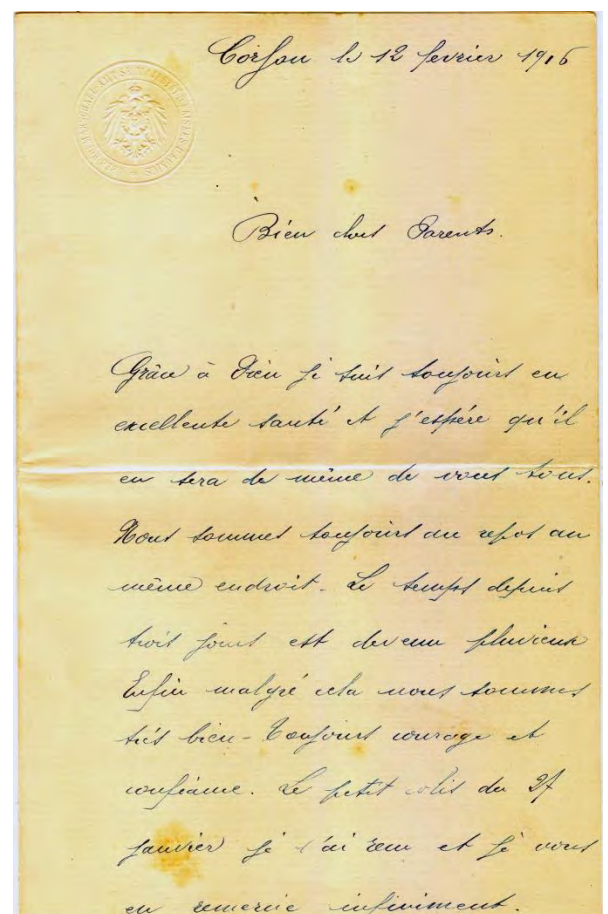
Fig. 3: Serb refugees boarding the transport ship Armenia at Durazzo.

Subsequently, French authorities organized a comprehensive "reception base" on the Greek island of Corfu, dispatching a powerful naval squadron on January 11, 1916, to facilitate the transfer of the weary Serbian forces. The first French military units to arrive on Corfu belonged to the 6th Alpine Battalion of Hunters on Foot (6ème Bataillon des Chasseurs Alpains), which operated under the military postal designation Tresor et Postes 512.



Fig. 4: Envelope mailed from Corfu, TP 512, on 2.12.1916, by G. Galli of the 6th Alpine Battalion to his parents in Nice.

Fig. 5: In the enclosed letter, the young, educated French soldier writes amongst others things, "...this sheet of paper is from the Achilleion Palace, the tower of William II. It is the stationery used by the Emperor when he was located on Corfu. I enclose one more blank sheet and ask that you keep both". Indeed, the stationery paper, of excellent quality for its era, bears in its upper left-hand corner the embossed royal coat of arms and around its edge the words, OBER HOFMARSCHALL-AMT SR. MAJESTÄT D. KAISERS U KÖNIGS [The Office of the Supreme Aide-de-camp of His Majesty the King and Emperor].



A Delicate Diplomatic Balance

It's worth noting that the Allied governments succeeded in obtaining Greece's consent to use Corfu as a safe haven for Serbian refugees despite Greece's neutral status under Prime Minister Stephanos Skouloudis. Italy had declined to accommodate the Serbs as they were still negotiating their entry into the Entente alliance and their participation in the war—negotiations that would partially bear fruit the following year.

However, historians widely consider the Allies' request for permission from the Greek government as largely ceremonial. The precedent had been established just months earlier in October 1915 when Allied forces disembarked in Thessaloniki following the unsuccessful Gallipoli campaign. The political realities of the era afforded Greece very limited room for diplomatic maneuvering against the major powers.

British organizations, including the Serbian Relief Fund and the British Adriatic Mission, collaborated with French authorities to establish settlements for Serbian soldiers, officials, and refugees across the island.



Fig. 6: Serbian postal stationery produced by Aspiotis Bros on Corfu as a special issue, mailed via the English military mail FPO/W4 on 30.7.1916 to London. Passed by English censor. The printed matter rate of 10 para was at times accepted, as was the case here, and at other times not.

Approximately 120,000 Serbs—including 110,000 combat personnel—were dispersed throughout various locations on Corfu, including makeshift camps, reception centers, and medical facilities at Mesongi, Strongyli, Ipsos, Kastanies, Vido, and the Achilleion palace. By spring 1916, the Serbian forces had recuperated sufficiently to resume military operations. Their gradual sea transport to Thessaloniki commenced in mid-April, with the objective of reinforcing the Army of the East (Armée d'Orient) under French General Maurice Sarrail on the eastern front.

Postal Innovation Under Duress

The extended Serbian presence on Corfu gave rise to a remarkably complex postal system reflecting the unusual circumstances of a government and military in exile. During their stay, the Serbs utilized three distinct postal channels: (a) the Greek civilian postal service, (b) the French military postal service Trésor et Postes 512, and (c) their own ministerial "Cabinet Post Office." Additionally, Serbian authorities implemented their own censorship protocols for correspondence.

Greek Civilian Postal Service

Almost immediately after settling on Corfu, Serbian military personnel sought to establish communication with their families through international humanitarian organizations, particularly the Red Cross in Geneva and the International Bureau of Missing Persons in Zurich. They soon began utilizing the Greek civilian postal infrastructure for this purpose.



Fig. 7: Cover mailed on Corfu on 20.4.1916, by Stefan Pujitch of the Danube Brigade, to the Red Cross in Geneva, apparently with a claim for tracing a missing person. Postage rate of 50 l. for foreign registered mail and an additional fee in support of the Greek Red Cross (Royal Decree of 9.12.1915, Government Gazette 73A/18.2.1915). In the upper left-hand corner of the cover a three-line, boxed, private handstamp has been applied reading, *Vendu par: L'AGENCE INTERNATIONALE DES PRISONNIERS DE GUERRE* [Sold by the International Prisoners of War Bureau]. Indeed, the Swiss humanitarian organization sold its accumulated correspondence with the purpose of collecting revenue to contribute to its work.



Fig. 8: Cover mailed on Corfu on 15.4.1916, by Boza Sreckovitch of the Artillery Corps, to the Office of Missing Persons in Zurich. The postage of 50 l. paid the rate for foreign registered mail, not censored upon departure. The tape and seal were applied by censor in Italy, through which the mail transited to reach Switzerland.

Curiously, philatelic evidence suggests that all Serbian mail was processed exclusively through the main post office in Corfu town, despite the existence of five additional postal facilities operating throughout the island (Karousades, Kastellanoi, Lefkimi, Potamos, and Skripero). Another intriguing observation is that registered correspondence from this period exhibits no indicators of Serbian censorship, suggesting that these items were likely submitted unsealed at the post office. Serbian refugees and military personnel also made use of Greek postal stationery for their correspondence needs.



Fig. 9 (left) & 10 (right): These are two Greek postal cards, mailed by Serbs on Corfu on 6.6.1916 and 30.4.1916 respectively, to Switzerland. The postage of 10 l. paid the rate for a postal card sent abroad. In the first, the sender writes, via Switzerland, to a relative located "...in Serbian territory under Bulgarian military occupation". Passed by Serbian censor, as well as Italian censor in Milan because of its transmission through Italy. In the second, the sender Dragoliub Stefanovitch, a Captain of the Danube Brigade, appeals to the Bureau for the Retrieval of Missing Persons in Zurich; not censored upon departure but bearing the French censorship marking OUVERT / par l'AUTORITE MILITAIRE / 301 applied in Marseille. By comparing the two postal cards, we can conclude that there was no systematic censorship of the mail by the Serbs upon departure, in contrast to the Italian and French authorities which always imposed censorship of the mails transiting their countries.

French Military Postal Service

The chaotic nature of the Serbian retreat through Albania had apparently prevented them from preserving essential postal materials, including stamps and cancellation devices. The French military postal sector 512 consequently assumed responsibility for handling the majority of Serbian international correspondence originating from Corfu.

A particularly interesting aspect for philatelic researchers is the relationship between the French and Serbian postal operations. Records indicate that French postal personnel assigned to sector 512 applied inconsistent rates to Serbian mail, sometimes charging domestic postage rates and other times implementing international tariffs.

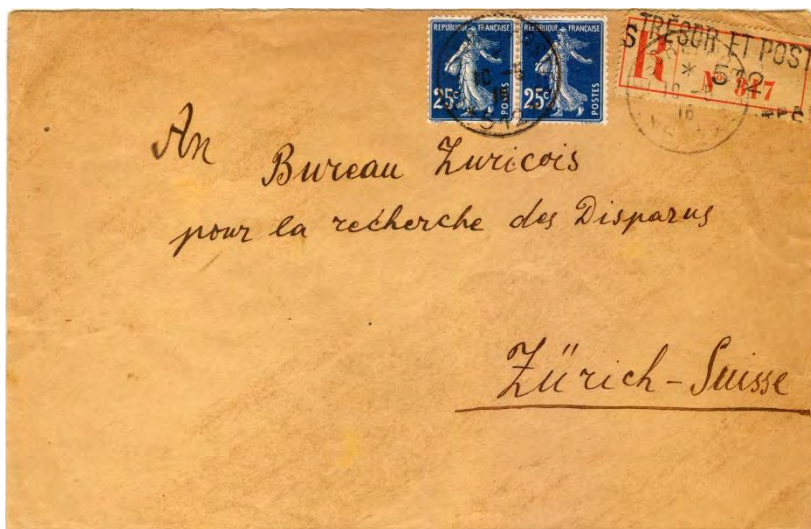


Fig. 11 (top) & 12 (bottom):

In the first case we have a cover mailed from Corfu on 10.5.1916, by Milan Josipovitch, soldier of the 3rd Cavalry Battalion, to the Office of Missing Persons in Zurich, uncensored. Registered international postage rate of 50 c.



In the second case, we have a cover mailed from Corfu on 29.9.1916 by Artillery Lieutenant V. Popovitch to a bookseller in Paris, without censorship. Registered domestic postage rate of 35 c.

An especially noteworthy development in this postal saga was the pivotal role played by the Swiss business family Vögeli in facilitating communications between displaced Serbs and their families in occupied Serbia. Christian Vögeli, who had served as Swiss Consul in Serbia before the war, and his wife Katarina established themselves temporarily in the small Swiss village of Weesen near the Austrian border. This location became an essential

processing center for mail services supporting the communication needs of displaced Serbs.



Fig. 13: Cover mailed from Corfu on 14.8.1916 to Christian Vögeli, Consul in Weesen in Switzerland, passed by Serbian censor.

First weight international postage rate, 25c.

The Serbian "Cabinet Post Office".

The Establishment and operation of the Serbian "Cabinet Post Office"

The establishment of the Serbian parliament, government ministries, and administrative apparatus on Corfu necessitated the creation of a dedicated Serbian postal facility. Implementing this postal service presented significant challenges, as the utilization of French stamps supplied by the French Post Office and their cancellation with a handstamp bearing the name "Serbia" raised obvious diplomatic complications.



Fig. 14: Illustrated postal card, souvenir of the Serbian Parliament on Corfu, October 1916.

The eventual solution involved a specially designed cancellation device featuring Cyrillic text reading "Cabinet Post Office" along its perimeter. This distinctive handstamp featured a bridge design across its diameter and measured 18x28 mm (fig. 15). Additionally, authorities approved the creation of a metal indicative handstamp in French reading "POSTES SERBES," measuring 3x43 mm (fig. 16). Two slightly different variants of this handstamp exist with minor distinguishing characteristics.



fig. 15

POSTES SERBES

fig. 16

In theory, this handstamp signified (fig. 17, 18, 19) that the postage fee for Serbian correspondence had been properly paid, distinguishing it from mail that Serbs had submitted directly to the French Post Office. However, French archival records provide insufficient clarity regarding the mechanism by which French stamps were supplied to Serbian postal authorities—whether they were provided gratis, purchased outright, or acquired on credit alongside other essential supplies such as medical materials.



Fig. 17: Registered governmental cover, with Serbian registration handstamp R/884 of the Ministry of Finance of the Kingdom of Serbia, posted on Corfu on 3.7.1917, to the Consulate General of Serbia in Geneva. International registered post age rate of 50 c. and POSTES SERBES handstamp.

Returning to the contributions of the Vögeli family, historical evidence confirms that Katarina Vögeli sold a substantial quantity of "empty" covers to collectors long after the conclusion of hostilities. This practice explains the presence in philatelic markets of covers bearing unusually high postage rates for second or third weight categories, as these envelopes had originally contained multiple postcards that were subsequently forwarded accordingly by the Vögelis.



Fig. 18: Registered governmental cover, with Serbian registration handstamp R/15 of the Ministry of Interior of the Kingdom of Serbia, posted on Corfu on 10.4.1918, to Katarina Vögeli, obviously for further transmission. It was passed by Serbian censor only. International registered postage rate of 50 c. and POSTES SERBES handstamp.



Fig. 19: Cover mailed from Corfu on 14.6.1918, by Bojidar Djeritch, professor at the Serbian High School on Corfu, to a Serb lawyer in Geneva. Serbian censorship imposed upon departure, and Italian censor (sealed with censorship tape) due to its transit through Italy. First weight international postage rate of 25 c. and POSTES SERBES handstamp.

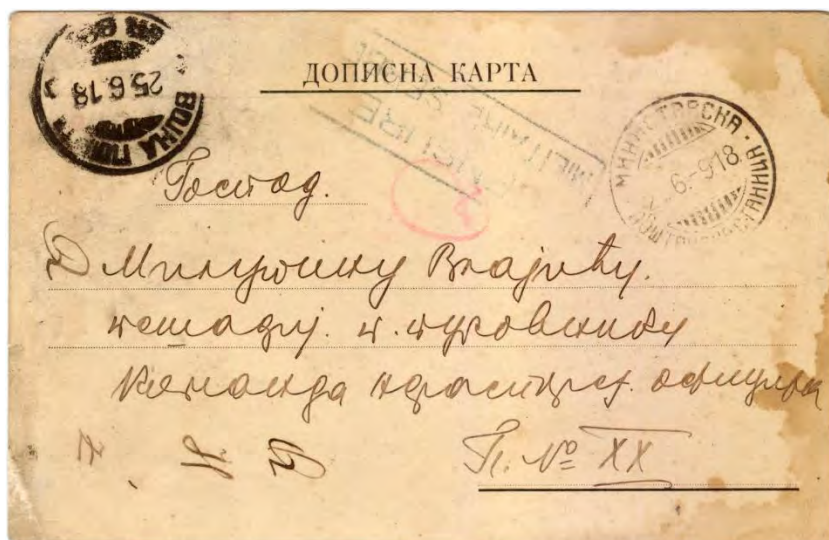
Monsieur
 Drag. ⁽⁴⁴⁹⁾ ~~Amendkovitch,~~
 avocat serbe
 Case 4489 Servette
Genève
 Suisse

VERIFICATO
 PER CENSURA
 MILANO
 15 MAR 1904

POSTES SERBES
 REPUBLIQUE FRANCAISE
 10c
 15c

CENSURE
 MILANO
 15 MAR 1904

VERIFICATO



МИНИСТАРСТВО 19. VI. 1918. ВЕРМИНISTÈRE
ПРОСВЕТЕ И ЦРКВЕНИХ ПОСЛОВА DE L'INSTRUCTION PUBLIQUE ET DES CULTES

Господин. Г. Воротнич, Јасеном вањс
често од 11. VI. 1918. било ми је радно дејство
попуњено од 27. VI. 1918. ; отади да она два
расписа илуст. дејства. Ви чак се и црква
уредно. Чак да вам на дејствима урну
дејства чему, као и са објектима да брзо.
За ту му јавиш. За најновије са
расписивањем, само маја, 1918. год.
и то да ми одговори, а лира одговора да
је једнако. Било је једнако и црква и са
Француску. - Егзархат вас поштом
Радоје М. Црквић



Fig. 22: Registered cover with Serbian registration handstamp R/628, posted on Corfu on 20.7.1917 to Katarina Vögeli in Weesen in Switzerland. Serbian censorship upon departure. International second weight registered postage rate of 65 c. and POSTES SERBES handstamp.

Philatelic Questionable Practices

As the war approached its conclusion, particularly as Bulgaria neared capitulation on September 29, 1918, opportunistic dealers managed to overprint entire sheets of French stamps with the phrase "POSTES SERBES" and dispatch them to Corfu, apparently in collaboration with local postal employees. Amid the general celebration following the cessation of hostilities, even Greek stamps were subjected to unauthorized overprinting with the same designation, resulting in numerous dubious "philatelic souvenirs."



Fig. 23 & 24: No comment!

The ultimate manifestation of this philatelic impropriety was the eventual inclusion of these spurious issues in the otherwise reputable international catalog Yvert et Tellier, lending them an undeserved veneer of legitimacy that persists in some collecting circles today.

Serbian Censorship Operations on Corfu.

The Serbian authorities implemented four distinct types of censorship markings during their time on Corfu, adding another dimension of complexity to this already intricate postal history narrative.



Fig. 25: [Figure title not provided in original text]

As this fascinating episode in Greek postal history drew to a close, an illustrated postal card mailed from Corfu to France on February 22, 1917, captured the waning Serbian presence: "...there is no one left on Corfu other than the Serbian Prime Minister and three ministers; all others are in Thessaloniki. The army is no longer here, just those convalescing..."

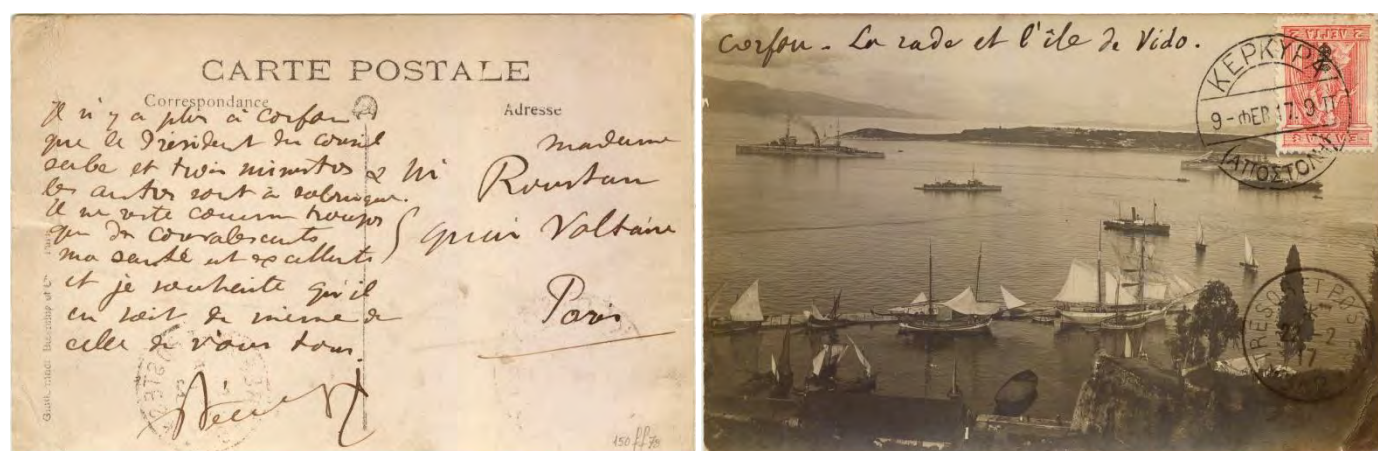


Fig. 26: [Figure title not provided in original text]

On November 18, 1918, the armistice that formally concluded the First World War was signed near the small French town of Rethondes in the Compiègne forest. The conflict had exacted an immense toll in human lives and material destruction.

Epilogue

This extraordinary chapter in postal history not only documents a critical humanitarian operation during one of history's most devastating conflicts but also showcases the resilience and administrative ingenuity of a government in exile. For philatelists and historians alike, the Serbian postal presence on Corfu represents a unique convergence of military necessity, diplomatic complexity, and philatelic innovation—a testament to the enduring human need for communication even in the most desperate circumstances.

Note

For historical clarity, all dates referenced in this account correspond to the new style (Gregorian) calendar, which at that time was 13 days ahead of the old style (Julian) calendar still in use throughout Greece.

Greek Bibliography

*This article was based on author's original article: "The Serbs in Corfu during WWI"
first published in Philotelia no685 – 686, p.69–75 & 183–191*

G. Chapier, "The stamps of the Serbian Post Office on Corfu", Philotelia no. 329/1955, p. 13.

N. Zafeirakopoulos, "The Serbian Post Office on Corfu", Philotelia no. 483/1980, p. 117

Optional Use of Additional Domestic Airmail Service in Turkish Foreign Airmails

by Emre Utku

Abstract

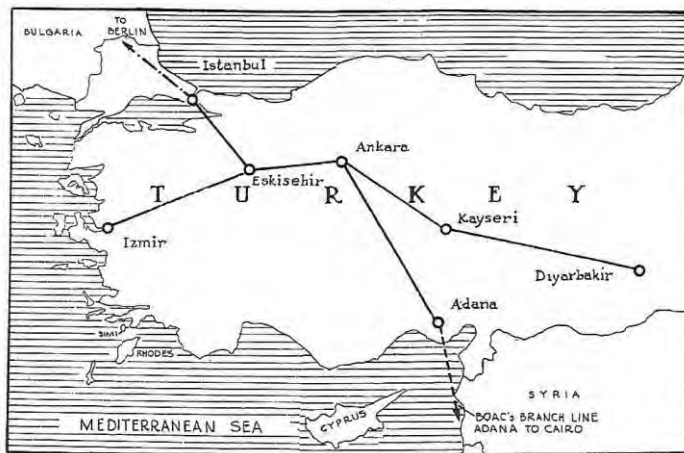
In 1934, Turkish Post began to offer an optional domestic airmail service to carry foreign destination mails that were sent from Ankara travelling via Istanbul. If the sender wished to pay extra for the additional domestic airline fee, foreign mails were carried from Ankara to Istanbul with airmail, instead of surface mail, to be then travelled to their destinations abroad. In later years, this optional service had been extended to other cities in Türkiye where domestic airline service were provided. Optional use of domestic airmail service in Turkish foreign destination mails remained in place until **1950's**. This article reveals the use of this Turkish postal service for the first time.

Background

CFRNA (Compagnie Franco-Roumaine de Navigation Aérienne) founded in 1920, then changed its name to CIDNA (Compagnie Internationale de Navigation Aérienne) in 1925, began to provide first domestic and international airmail services (Postes Aériennes) in Türkiye in 1924. Although CIDNA's international airmail services continued in the following years (along with other airline compagnies later on, such as Aeroespresso, Luft Hansa), their domestic airmail services stopped by the end of 1924. There were no domestic airmail services until after Devlet Hava Meydanları İşletmeleri (The State Airports Enterprise) and Devlet Hava Yolları İşletmeleri (State Airlines Enterprise) were established in 1933, to begin providing domestic airline services in Türkiye in 1934 and onwards.

Turkish domestic airmail rates between 1934 and 1959		
Period	Domestic airmail rate (20 gr)	Notes
27 May 1934 - 6 September 1936	7,5 kr	(5 kr airmail fee, 2,5 kr Carrier's charge)
6 September 1936 - 14 May 1942	4,5 kr	(3 kr airmail fee, 1,5 kr Carrier's charge)
14 May 1942 - 1 March 1944	7,5 kr	
1 March 1944 - 1 July 1948	6 kr	
1 July 1948 - 15 June 1959	5 kr	

Reference : Postal Rates of Republic of Turkey 1920 - 1950, by Mehmet Akan, Selçuk Akar, Turhan Turgut RDP FRPSL, Emre Utku - p 230,

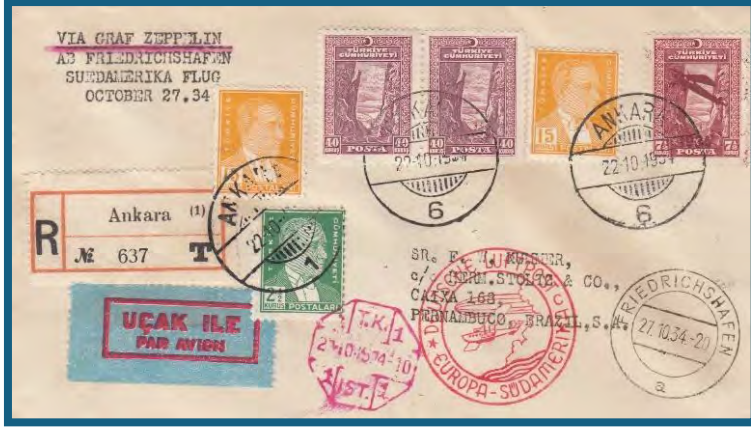


Turkish State Airports (Devlet Hava Meydanları) and routes of Turkish State Airlines (Devlet Hava Yolları) during World War II

(Source: Airmail Operations during World War II, Thomas H. Boyle Jr., p.555, Figure 241)

Examples of optional use of additional domestic airmail service in Turkish foreign destination mails

EXHIBIT 1A



Both Zeppelin letters sent from Türkiye to Pernambuco Brazil, have the same departure date; 22 October 1934. The one sent from Ankara (in Exhibit 1A) was carried from Ankara to Istanbul by airmail as additional 7.5 **kuruş** domestic airmail rate fee properly applied with 7.5 **kuruş** value stamp of the first "1934 Turkish airmail issue", bearing airplane overprint.

EXHIBIT 1B (*)



In 1934, it was compulsory to use only airmail issue stamps for domestic airmail surtax. This requirement was soon abandoned a couple of years later, consequently ordinary postage stamps could also be used for airmail fee and airmail stamps could be used as ordinary postage stamps.

(*) Cover in Exhibit 1B from Selçuk Akar's collection

EXHIBIT 1A VS EXHIBIT 1B		Departure Date	Foreign Letter Rate	Foreign Registration Fee	Türkiye to Brazil Zeppelin Rate	Domestic Airmail Rate	Total Postage Paid
1A	Registered Zeppelin letter sent to Brazil from Ankara via Istanbul, also carried with domestic airmail from Ankara to Istanbul	22.10.1934	12,5 kuruş	17,5 kuruş	82,5 kuruş	7,5 kuruş	120 kuruş
1B	Zeppelin letter sent to Brazil from Istanbul	22.10.1934	12,5 kuruş		82,5 kuruş		95 kuruş

EXHIBIT 2A



Both letters sent from Türkiye to Germany by airmail, the one in Exhibit 2A from Ankara on 7 July 1937, the one in Exhibit 2B from Istanbul on 18 June 1939. Airmail rate from Türkiye to Germany is 12 kuruş at both dates.

The letter sent from Ankara, bearing writings *Par Avion Yust. Istanbul* and *Jusqu'a Istanbul avion*, meaning that the letter carried by air from Ankara to Istanbul. Total postage of 29 kuruş includes 4,5 kuruş domestic airmail fee in addition to 12,5 kuruş foreign letter fee and 12 kuruş airmail fee to Germany.

EXHIBIT 2B



	EXHIBIT 2A VS EXHIBIT 2B	Departure Date	Foreign Letter Rate	Türkiye to Germany Airmail Rate	Domestic Airmail Rate	Total Postage Paid
2A	Airmail letter to Germany sent from Ankara, also carried with domestic airmail from Ankara to Istanbul	7.07.1937	12,5 kuruş	12 kuruş	4,5 kuruş	29 kuruş
2B	Airmail letter to Germany sent from Istanbul	4.02.1937	12,5 kuruş	12 kuruş		24,5 kuruş

EXHIBIT 3A



Both letters were sent to USA from Istanbul (from Istanbul American College / Robert College in Bebek) by airmail; the one in Exhibit 3A on 25 September 1942 and the other in Exhibit 3B on 24 October 1942. Airmail rate from Türkiye to USA at both dates is 75 kr (per 10 gr) and both letters followed the Adana, Cairo, Lagos route.

EXHIBIT 3B (**)



The letter in Exhibit 3A, bears post officer's handwriting in red in Turkish **"Adana'ya kadar uçakile"** meaning that it was carried by domestic airmail from Istanbul to Adana, before it took Cairo Lagos route. Total postage of 92,5 kuruş includes 7,5 kuruş domestic airmail fee in addition to 10 kuruş foreign letter fee and 75 kuruş airmail fee to USA.

(**) Cover in Exhibit 3B from Ozan Kuntay's collection

EXHIBIT 3A VS EXHIBIT 3B		Departure Date	Foreign Letter Rate	Türkiye to USA Airmail Rate	Domestic Airmail Rate	Total Postage Paid
3A	Airmail letter to USA sent from Istanbul via Adana, also carried with domestic airmail from Istanbul	25.09.1942	10 kuruş	75 kuruş	7,5 kuruş	92,5 kuruş
3B	Airmail letter to USA sent from Istanbul via Adana, carried with domestic surface mail from Istanbul to Adana	24.10.1942	10 kuruş	75 kuruş		85 kuruş

EXHIBIT 4A



Both letters were sent to USA by airmail; the one in Exhibit 4A on 11 April 1947 and the other in Exhibit 4B on 17 May 1947. Airmail rate from Türkiye to USA at both dates is 60 kr (per 10 gr) and followed Istanbul-London-Ireland-USA route with Pan American World Airways.

The letter in Exhibit 4A, was also carried from Adana to Istanbul with domestic airmail as **additional 6 kuruş** domestic airmail was paid. Total postage of **86 kuruş** includes 6 kuruş domestic airmail fee in addition to 20 kuruş foreign letter fee and 60 kuruş airmail fee to USA.

EXHIBIT 4B

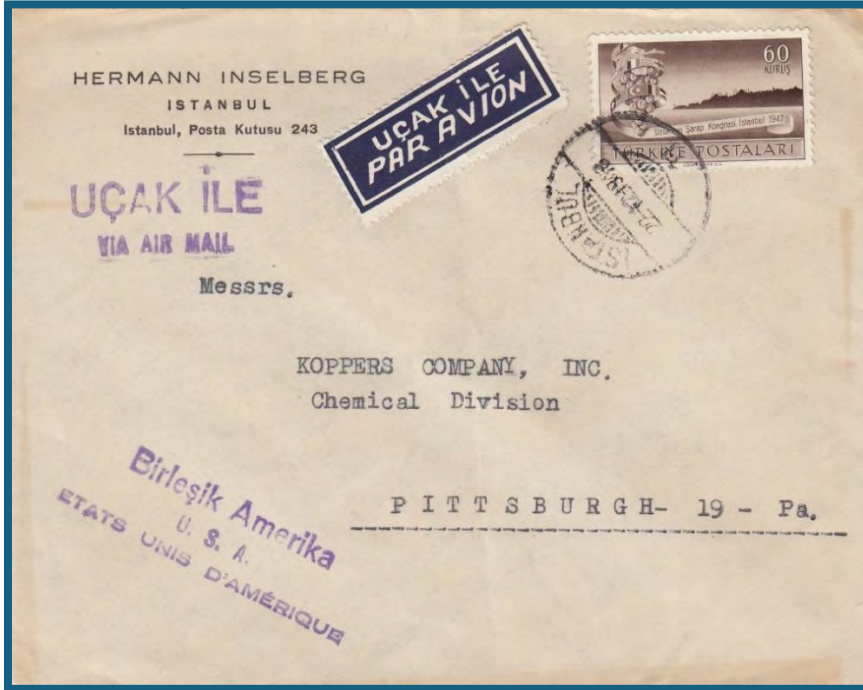


	EXHIBIT 4A VS EXHIBIT 4B	Departure Date	Foreign Letter Rate	Türkiye to USA Airmail Rate	Domestic Airmail Rate	Total Postage Paid
4A	Airmail letter to USA sent from Adana via Istanbul, also carried with domestic airmail from Adana to Istanbul	11.04.1947	20 kuruş	60 kuruş	6 kuruş	86 kuruş
4B	Airmail letter to USA sent from Istanbul	17.05.1947	20 kuruş	60 kuruş		80 kuruş

EXHIBIT 5A



EXHIBIT 5B



Both letters were sent to USA by airmail; the one in Exhibit 5A on 21 May 1948 and the other in Exhibit 5B on 22 December 1948. Airmail rate from Türkiye to USA at both dates is 40 kr (per 10gr).

The letter in Exhibit 5A, was also carried from Kozan (Adana) to Istanbul with domestic airmail as **additional 6 kuruş** domestic airmail was paid. Total **postage of 106 kuruş** includes 6 kuruş domestic airmail fee in addition to 20 kuruş foreign letter fee, 40 kuruş registration fee and 40 kuruş airmail fee to USA.

	EXHIBIT 5A VS EXHIBIT 5B	Departure Date	Foreign Letter Rate	Foreign Registration Fee	Türkiye to USA Airmail Rate	Domestic Airmail Rate	Total Postage Paid
5A	Registered airmail letter to USA sent from Kozan (Adana) via Istanbul, also carried with domestic airmail from Adana to Istanbul	21.05.1948	20 kuruş	60 kuruş	40 kuruş	6 kuruş	106 kuruş
5B	Airmail letter to USA sent from Istanbul	22.12.1948	20 kuruş		40 kuruş		60 kuruş

EXHIBIT 6A



Both letters were sent to USA by airmail; the one in Exhibit 6A on 1 June 1950 and the other in Exhibit 5B on 18 October 1949. Airmail rate from Türkiye to USA at both dates is 40 kr (per 10 gr).

The letter in Exhibit 6A, was also carried from Ankara to Istanbul with domestic airmail as additional 6 kuruş domestic airmail was paid. Total postage of 65 kuruş includes 5 kuruş domestic airmail fee in addition to 20 kuruş foreign letter fee and 40 kuruş airmail fee to USA.

EXHIBIT 6B



EXHIBIT 6A VS EXHIBIT 6B		Departure Date	Foreign Letter Rate	Türkiye to USA Airmail Rate	Domestic Airmail Rate	Total Postage Paid
6A	Airmail letter to USA sent from Ankara via Istanbul, also carried with domestic airmail from Ankara to Istanbul	1.06.1950	20 kuruş	40 kuruş	5 kuruş	65 kuruş
6B	Airmail letter to USA sent from Istanbul	18.10.1949	20 kuruş	40 kuruş		60 kuruş

EXHIBIT 7A



Both letters were sent to from Izmir to Switzerland by airmail; the one in Exhibit 7A on 18 March 1949 and the other in Exhibit 7B on 30 August 1950. Airmail rate from Türkiye to Switzerland at both dates is 20 kr (per 20 gr).

The letter in Exhibit 7A, was also carried from Izmir to Istanbul with domestic airmail as additional 5 kuruş domestic airmail fee was paid. Total postage of 45 kuruş includes 5 kuruş domestic airmail rate in addition to 20 kuruş foreign letter fee and 20 kuruş airmail fee to Switzerland.

These examples show that the use of additional domestic airmail service in Turkish foreign destination mails were optional, not compulsory.

EXHIBIT 7B



EXHIBIT 7A VS EXHIBIT 7B		Departure Date	Foreign Letter Rate	Türkiye to Switzerland Airmail Rate	Domestic Airmail Rate	Total Postage Paid
7A	Airmail letter to Switzerland sent from Izmir via Istanbul, also carried with domestic airmail from Izmir to Istanbul	18.03.1949	20 kuruş	20 kuruş	5 kuruş	45 kuruş
7B	Airmail letter to Switzerland sent from Izmir via Istanbul, carried with domestic surface mail from Izmir to Istanbul	30.08.1950	20 kuruş	20 kuruş		40 kuruş

Note: Letter in Exhibit 7 was sent on August 30th, Turkish Victory Day. Additional 1 kuruş Red Crescent and 1 kuruş Aviation Defence Tax stamps were properly applied, as their use was compulsory on that day.

References:

Foreign letter & registration rates: *Postal Rates of Republic of Turkey 1920 - 1950*, by Mehmet Akan, Selçuk Akar, Turhan Turgut RDP FRPSL, Emre Utku - p 164, Table III.1.1 & p 190 Table III.1.1

THE FIRST BULGARIAN POSTAL STATIONERY CARDS

by Orlin Todorov, Nikolay Penev

The idea of a “correspondence” or postal stationery card belongs to the Austrian economist Emanuel Alexander Herrmann (1839–1902), who is also considered to be its inventor. On January 26, 1869, he publishes an article with the title: “About a novel means of postal correspondence” in Austria’s leading newspaper “Neue Freie Presse”. There, he proposed the idea of printing envelope-sized cards with a printed 2-Kreuzer postage stamp, allowing text of no more than 20 words, to be used with a lower postal rate for a postal service. Austria-Hungary's Postmaster-General Vincenz Baron Maly von Vevanovic took up the idea and on 1 October 1869, the "Correspondence Card" was officially introduced in Austria by ministerial order, thus marking the birth of the postal stationery card. The 20-word maximum was dropped. Four years later, in 1873, the Austro-Hungarian Postal Administration printed and put in use the first postal stationery card, meant for the post offices in The Levant. Thus, Herrmann’s invention reached the Bulgarian cities of Sofia, Varna, Ruse, Plovdiv and Vidin for the first time. Such postal stationery cards are likely to have reached the Bulgarian ports along the Danube River, in which there were postal agencies of the Austrian Steamship Company, DDSG, at the time. All these facts show that the Bulgarians became familiar with this innovation long before the Liberation from Ottoman rule.



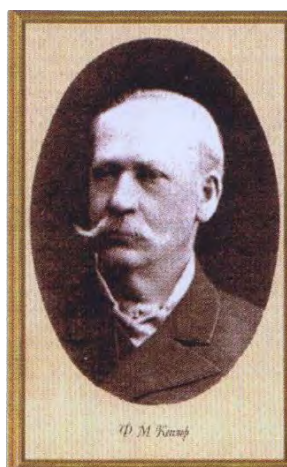
*09.03.1877. A postcard with tax mark 5 sld. (issued in 1873) from Vidin to Vienna.
Transit cancel Orsova and arrival cancel Wien/15.03.
Collection Orlin Todorov.*

The first Bulgarian postal stationery cards were printed in the State Securities Printing Works, „Экспедиция заготовления государственных бумаг”, in Saint Petersburg, Russia. The printing was bi-coloured – black for the text, and red/carmine – for the coat of arms and the frame. There are no address lines. The text is in Bulgarian, and at the top, there is a text in French. The size of the postal stationery card is 140 x 90 mm, but wider and longer cards are recorded (with a difference of no more than 4–5 mm). Several shades of the red/carmine colour are known from the different printings over the years. Several printing plates were used, with different sizes of the frame (128 x 78.5 mm, 128 x 79 mm, x 78 mm, 128.5 x 78.5 mm, 128.5 x 79 mm, 129 x 79.5 mm) and a difference in the distance between the text „ОТВОРЕНО ПИСМО” and the text „На тая страна...” (50 mm, 50.5 mm, 51 mm). Postal stationery cards with partial double printing of the text at the bottom are known. All these varieties are trivial and frequent and, for this reason, are not included in the catalogues. They are also not of collectors’ interest.

By analogy, it can be assumed that the designer of the card was Georgi Yakovlev Kirkov (1848– 1929), a Bulgarian scientist and director of the State Printing House in Sofia. He is credited with the design of the first Bulgarian stamps. In the same line of thought, a presumption can be made that the engraver of the postal stationery card is the engraver of the first Bulgarian stamps (and author of the first Russian stamp) – Franz Michael Kepler, the senior engraver at the Russian State Securities Printing Works (ЭЗГБ) in Saint Petersburg.



Georgi Yakovlev Kirkov (1848–1929)



Franz Michael Kepler

The face value of the postal stationery card is 10 centimes, which was the postal rate for open letters at that time. In the period from 15.12.1879 to 10.04.1881, the inland and the international rate for postal stationery cards was the same – 10 centimes. After 10.04.1881, the postal rates changed to 5 stotinki for domestic, while the international rate remained the same, 10 stotinki. The currency was also changed from centimes to, the newly introduced Bulgarian currency, of stotinki. From then on, the postal stationery card was valid only for international use with a value of 10 stotinki (instead of 10 centimes). Documents, showing the quantity of the issued postal cards, are unknown to the authors.

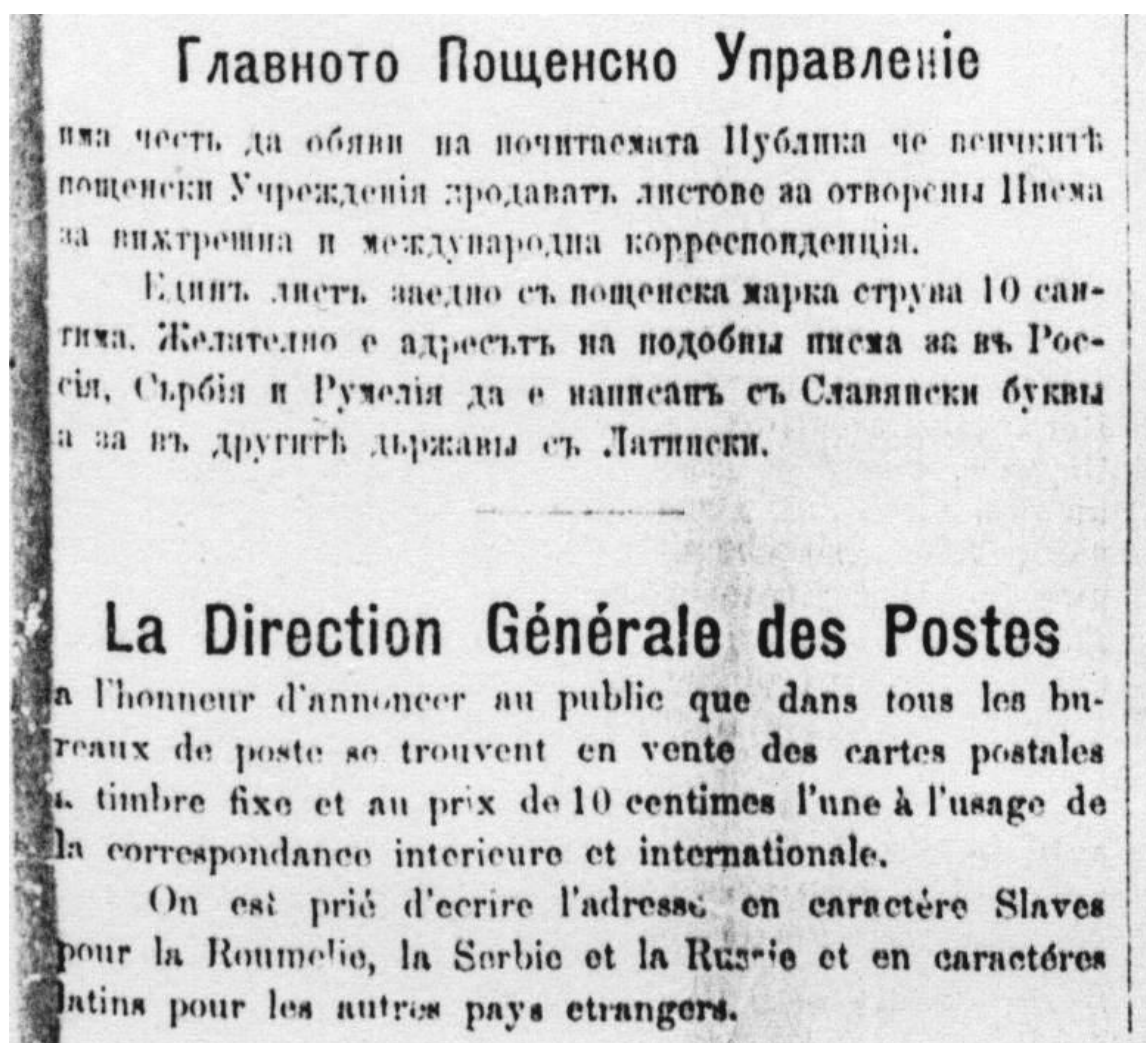
Earl Galitz writes in his notes (without indicating any sources) that 360,000 pieces were ordered in 1879, but only 10,000 were delivered in Bulgaria, by the end of November 1879. According to the authors, the above statement is logical and it's possible to be true. Prof. Nikola Madjarov notes a possible total quantity of 80 – 100,000. This assumption, in the authors' opinion, can't be true and the total quantity should be much more than 100,000. This point of view is supported by several facts. First of all, the cards were used exclusively during the first 10 years, and in parallel with other cards almost 14 years after that. Against this background, a quantity of 100,000 pieces is too low. According to the "Comparative Statistics for the Telegraph-Postal Services" (published in the „Collection of Telegraph and Postal Documents", 5/1895), for the first five months of 1881 (before the introduction of the new 5 stotinki postal cards at the end of May), 13,975 inland postal cards were sent, and during the period of 1881– 1885, another 113,336 international postal cards were sent from Bulgaria. Adding to these figures the postal cards, sent from December 1879 to the end of 1880 (an estimated number, as no statistics for the period, has been found), and we can deduct that by the end of 1885, at least 150,000 "Centimes" postal stationery cards were used in Bulgaria. Until 1889 (when the new 10 stotinki postal stationery card came into use), 201,420 international postcards were sent from Bulgaria. After 1889, the "Centimes" postal stationery cards continued to be used in parallel with the later issues, which is evident from known used postal stationery cards. All these facts lead us to believe that the quantity of the issued postal stationery cards is between 400,000 and 500,000 pieces.

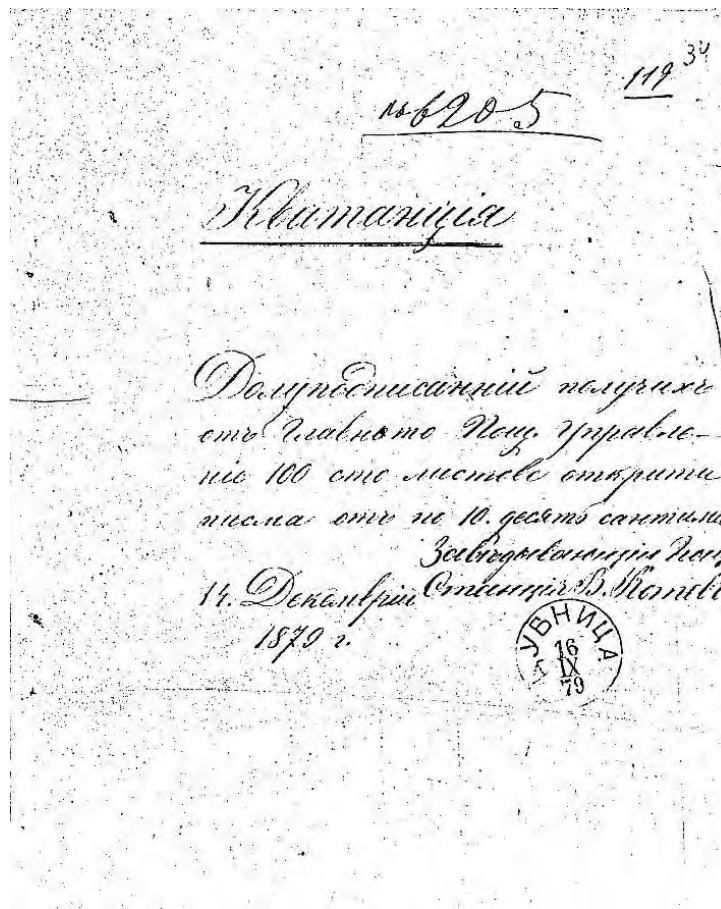
The first Bulgarian postal stationery cards came into use on 5 December 1879. This was announced by a special notice published in the newspapers: *„The Central Post Office has the honour to announce to the honourable public that all post offices are selling open letter sheets for domestic and international correspondence. One sheet together with a postage stamp costs 10 centimes. It is desirable that the address of such letters to Russia, Serbia and Rumelia be written in Slavic letters, and for other countries in Latin."* On that same date, the postal stationery cards were first used only in Sofia. The other post offices received them about ten days later. For example, the post office in Doupnitza received the postal stationery cards on 14 December 1879. The first quantities received by the post offices in December 1879 are as follow: Varna, Russe and Sofia – 1,000 pieces each, Vidin, Gabrovo, Lom Palanka, Nikopol, Pleven, Razgrad, Rahovo, Svishtov, Tutrakan, Tarnovo, and Shoumen – 400 pieces each, Balchik, Belogradchik, Berkovitza, Breznik, Vratza, Oryahovitza, Doupnitza, Eski Djoumaya, Elena, Kyustendil, Lovech, Lyaskovetz, Orhanie, Osman Pazar, Radomir, Samokov, Sevlievo, Silistra, Trin, H. O. Pazardjik – 100 pieces each. After 1 October 1885, the Bulgarian postal stationery cards (including the "Centimes") began to be used by the post offices in South Bulgaria.

On 26 February 1902, the Directorate of Telegraphs and Post sent a Circular letter No. 44/5910 to the post offices. It reads, *"Because the Finance Ministry has failed to print the new cards, the old ones remain in force until a second order is issued. Do not change*

them. Please, produce notices with this information and display them along the streets⁴... Once the new cards are sent to the finance treasuries, you will be informed about the withdrawal from use of the old ones." It's not clear when and how the exact date of withdrawal of the old cards was announced. In the „Collection of Telegraph and Postal Documents”, there are no subsequent documents published about this matter. The new postal stationery cards were put into use no later than May 1902, evident from known used cards. However, there are old postcards used until the beginning of 1903, and they have not been marked by the Postal Administration as non-valid or unpaid.

A notice in the press from 05.12.1879 with information about putting in use of the first Bulgarian postcard. Archive of Dr. Georgi Popov, Germany.





A receipt from the postmaster of the Dounitza post office, acknowledging the receipt of 100 pieces of 10 centimes postal stationery cards. The document above shows that the other post offices received the postcards about ten days later than Sofia. Archive of Andrey Penchev.



05.12.1879. First day of use. A postcard from Sofia to Darmstadt, Germany. First type postmark "Sofia" in Bulgarian. On the same day the postcard is put in use only in the Sofia post office. The other post offices receive the cards later. The only recorded item and the most important rarity of the Bulgarian classic postal stationeries.

Collections: ex Erik Hvidberg Hansen, Orlin Todorov.



07.12.1879. A postcard from Sofia to Karlsruhe, Germany. One of the earliest recorded uses.

Collection: ex Earl Galitz.



30.12.1879. A postcard from Sevlievo to Sofia. In the period 05.12.1879–10.04.1881 the rate for inland and international card is the same – 10 centimes. After that, the inland rate is reduced to 5 st. Inland postcards from this early period are very rare.

Collection: ex Earl Galitz.



12.08.1880. A postcard from Lom palanka to Balchik. First type Bulgarian postmark of Lom palanka. Russian type transit postmark "РУЩУКЪ". Postcards with Russian type postmarks are very rare.

Collections: ex Erik Hvidberg Hansen, Orlin Todorov.



05.11.1880. A postcard from Osman Pazar to Dryanovo. First type Bulgarian postmark with wrong text „Осман-Назар“ instead of „Осман-Пазар“. The postmark is used only several days and after that it is changed with another one with a corrected text. The represented postcard is probably the only known copy of the wrong postmark.

Collection: ex Earl Galitz.



06.05.1881. A postcard from Russe to Shumen. Second type bilingual postmarks. Although, after 10.04.1881 the inland rate is reduced to 5 st., the cards of 10 centimes are still in use for the country. This was due to the delay of the 5 st. cards and their putting in use later during the same month.

Collections: ex Roberto Sciaky, Orlin Todorov.



15.01.1884. A postcard from Sofia to Plovdiv (Eastern Roumelia). Before the Unification of 1885, the rate for Eastern Roumelia is an international rate – 10 st. (centimes).

Hand-written note of the post-officer: "Disappeared, without leaving an address" and a mark "RETOUR".

Collection Orlin Todorov.



21.08.1880. A postcard from Russe to Kronshtadt, Russia. In Russe, two types of postmarks are used – first type Bulgarian postmark and Russian type.

The two types used two different calendars – the Julian and the Gregorian. Russe is a border post office and used both calendars for marking.

Collection: ex Earl Galitz.



07.04.1881. A postcard from Lovech to Finland.

The Lovech postmark and the transit one from Russe are very early uses of the second bilingual type.

Collection Orlin Todorov.



05.07.1894. A postcard from The Royal Palace in Sofia to London, UK. The first postmark of the Royal mail in Bulgaria. The postcard is redirected to Glasgow. Private perfin "PL" of Paul Leverkus, a Director of the Royal Zoo in Sofia. "PL" is the only known perfin on Bulgarian postal stationeries. About ten postcards are recorded.

Collection Orlin Todorov.



15.11.1885. A postcard from Plovdiv to Brussels, Belgium. East-Roumelian postmark with lines. From October 1, 1885 the Bulgarian postal stationeries are put in use in South Bulgaria (ex Eastern Roumelia).

Collection Orlin Todorov.



21.09.1886. A postcard from Sliven to Constantinople, Turkey. Turkish mark "T" and 20 para tax stamp. Turkey still do not recognize the Unification of Eastern Roumelia and Principality of Bulgaria, and because of that the Turkish Postal Administration do not recognize letters and postcards sent from South-Bulgarian post offices.

Collections: ex Roberto Sciaky, Orlin Todorov.



08.03.1887. A postcard from Plovdiv to the island of Tasmania, Australia. Late use of the Eastern- Roumelian type postmark of Plovdiv. The only recorded card sent to this overseas destination.

Collections: ex John E. Du Pont, Orlin Todorov.



25.01.1891. A postcard from Karlovo to Tunis, Tunisia. About ten postcards sent to Africa are recorded.

Collection ex Erik Hvidberg Hansen.



04.09.1895. Registered postcard from Vratza to Montreal, Canada. Additional franking – 25 st. Large lion stamp. Only two registered postcards sent to North America are recorded.

Collection ex Erik Hvidberg Hansen.



12.05.1890. Registered postcard from Sofia to Buenos Aires, Argentina. Additional franking – 25 st. Small lion stamp. Probably the only known registered postcard sent to South America.

Collections: ex John E. Du Pont, Orlin Todorov.



19.05.1895. Registered postcard from Karlovo to Lyon, France. Additional franking – 25 st. Small lion stamp. Until the end of XIX century, registered postcard service is used very limited and such cards from the first issue are very scarce.

Collections: ex Erik Hvidberg Hansen, Orlin Todorov.



23.10.1884. Postcard from Svishtov to Constantinople, Turkey. Postmark "Danube traveling post office № 2". TPO cancellations are put in use for first time in Bulgaria in 1884. The postcard is sent from Svishtov to Russe by steamship, from Russe to Varna by train, and to Constantinople again by steamship.

Collection: Orlin Todorov.



25.07.1895. A postcard from the railway station of Slivnitza to London, UK. The first railway postmark of Slivnitza used for a very short time.

Collection: ex Earl Galitz.



12.11.1899. A postcard from the village of Shiroka Laka, Hvoyna district to USA. Rural postmark of the second section in Hvoyna district. The district is formed from remote mountain villages and exists only for three years.

Collection: Orlin Todorov.

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2. Private archive of Andrey Penchev.
3. Private archive of Nikolay Mandrovsky, Russia.
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5. Private archive of Earl Galitz, USA.
6. Private archive of Erik Hvidberg Hansen, Denmark.
7. Private archive of Prof. Nikola Madjarov.
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9. Private archive of Nikolay Penev.
10. Private archive of Ivan Metchev.
11. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emanuel_Herrmann
12. Telegraph and Postal Magazine, book 5/1895, Sofia, 1895.
13. Telegraph and Postal Magazine, book 1–2/1902, Sofia, 1902.

THE FIRST GREEK POSTAL STATIONERY CARD 1876–1883

by Athanasios Paschos

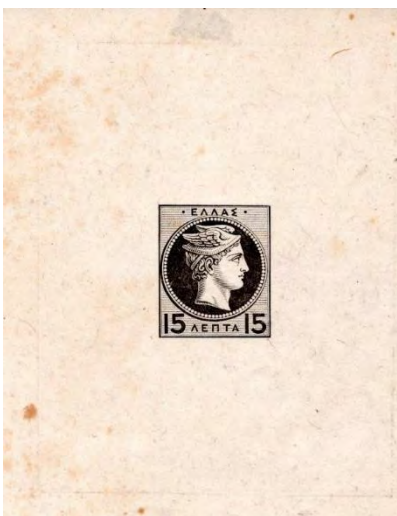
On September 23, 1875¹, King George I of Greece signed the decree in Corfu for the first official Greek Postal Stationery Card. The decree was published in the Government Gazette (issue 56/A') on October 13, 1875.

The Hellenic Postal Service commissioned Albert Barre to create a typographic plate for printing these postal cards, which he agreed to do. Barre, the Chief Engraver, used the same medallion mold from the 1861 "Large Hermes Head" stamps to replicate the Hermes image on the postal cards. The plate was produced under his supervision by Charles Deriey's company in Paris, located at 6 & 12 Notre-Dame-des-Champs Street, using the "galvanoplasty" method. The plate contained twenty-four clichés arranged in a 4x6 format. Two spare clichés were also manufactured which would be used in the event of an accident.

The first Greek postal stationery cards, with a face value of 15 lepta (international postal rate), were printed in Paris on April 13 and 14, 1876 (Gregorian calendar) by the company "J. Clave & Co, Saint-Benoit 13 Street, Paris" on 1,000 sheets. Each sheet had dimensions of 652x497 mm. The inscriptions, frame, and the "Large Hermes Head" stamp on the card were printed in Prussian blue. The card measured 139x80mm.

The printing was done on sheets of white, smooth, and glossy paper, with the printed stamp displaying high quality. The medallion was complete, evenly inked, with a solid impression of the background behind Hermes' head. The shading lines on Hermes' face and the thin horizontal lines forming the laid background of the stamp were sharp and clear.

On April 19, 1876, the typographic plate and 1,000 printed sheets—each containing twenty-four postal cards—were sent to Athens. **The total issue amounted to 24,000 cards.**



FINAL DIE PROOF, of the effigy of 15 lepta postal stationery cards, greenish-black on "laid baton" paper².

Seven items, so far, have been recorded in greenish-black and black colors, on paper of various sizes.

¹ Greece during the period under consideration was not still using the Julian Calendar but the Gregorian Calendar. In order to match the former with the latter Calendar is necessary to add 12 days to the former up to 31 December 1899.

² All illustrated material belongs to the collection of the author of the article.



15 lepta postal card issued 1876 for international use, marginal **ESSAY** with line at right, cut from the sheet of postal cards with scissors.

Only one complete sheet is known to date



It was exhibited at the National Philatelic Exhibition "Philotelia 2005" from the catalogue of which the photograph is taken

Two different dies were used to make the printing plate of 24 postal cards. The only difference between them is the length of the line beneath the word CORRESPONDENCE

Type I: 14.5 mm

CARTE-CORRESPONDANCE



Positions in sheet: 5, 7, 9, 10, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 24

Type II: 16 mm

CARTE-CORRESPONDANCE



Positions in sheet: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15, 18 and 23

μονον

etre

The words "τίθεται", "μόνον", "ἐπιγραφή", "entre", and "mise" sometimes appear without accents. These errors (missing accents) do not occur in a fixed position on the sheet and were caused by uneven pressure from the printing plate, not plate flaws.

In general, no errors are encountered in this issue

The postal stationery card were officially released in Greece on May 10/22, 1876

The oldest known date of use to date is May 11/23, 1876



Posted from ΑΘΗΝΑΙ 11/23.5.1876 (Athens) second day of issue –
UNIQUE KNOWN so far, to BERLIN 30.5.1876 Germany



Posted from ΣΥΡΑ 3/15.10.1876 (Syra), with cancel "PD", via KEPKYPA
5/17.10.1876 (Corfu, Ionian Islands) to MARSEILLE 21.10.1876 France



Posted from [ΚΕΡΚΥΡΑ 12/24.5.1877](#) (Corfu), with maritime cancel [PIROSCAFI POSTALI AUSTRIACI](#), via [BRINDISI 25.5.1877](#) to Venetia Italy



KARL WILBERG
ATHEN 24. XI 1877

*Private text (repiquage)
printed on the back of
a postal stationery card
is by German
bookseller and Consul
of German in Athens
Carl Wilberg
(1829–1882)*

Posted from [ΑΘΗΝΑΙ 12/24.11.1877](#) (Athens), via GREECE MOD.
MAR. PARIS 30.11.1877 to BRUXELLES 1.12.1877 Belgium
and [Return](#) to *K. Wilberg* Athens Greece



Posted from [SYPA 9/21.12.1878](#) (Syra), with cancel “PD”,
via TRIEST 26.12.1878, to WIEN 28.12.1878 Austria



Posted from [IOAKH 24.3/5.4.1879](#) (Ithaki, Ionian Islands),
via GRECE ST MIGUEL 2 14.4.1879 to Paris France

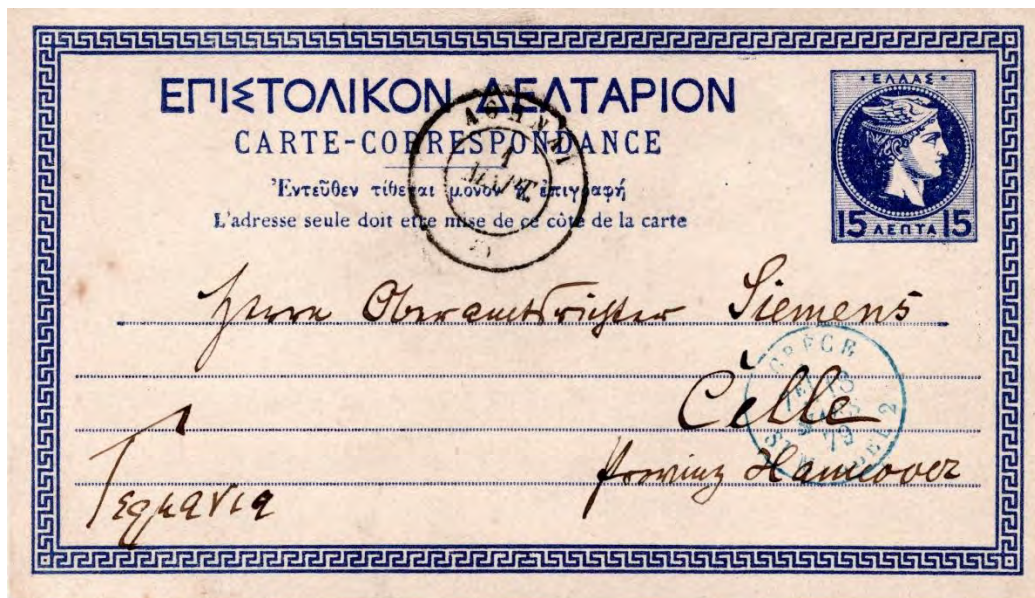


Posted from [ΜΕΣΟΛΟΓΓΙΟΝ 11/23.5.1883](#) (Messologi) [Very late date](#),
via ΠΑΤΡΑΙ 11/23.5.1883 (Patrai) to BRUXELLES 28.5.1883 Belgium

In June 1878, the print run from Paris began to run out. The typographic plate was located in Athens, so the printing of new postal cards began on white, rough cardboard. However, the Greek technicians were not specialized, and as a result, the printing was not successful. The depth of the medallion appeared with white spots, the horizontal lines around the medallion were broken, and the shading lines on the face were uneven in thickness and extended. Over time, the wear on the plate increased, so the initially heavy prints gradually worsened and became coarser towards the end of the period. They were printed in colors ranging from light to dark ultramarine.



15 lepta postal stationery cards printed in Athens after June 1878 for international use
in [different shades](#)



Posted from [ΑΘΗΝΑΙ 1/13.3.1879](#) (Athens), via GRECE – ST. MICHEL 2
18.3.1879 France to Hannover Germany



Posted from [ΑΘΗΝΑΙ 26.6/8.7.1880](#) (Athens), with maritime cancel
[PIROSCAFI POSTALI ITALIANI](#) to AUSGABE-LEIPZIG 14.7.1880 Germany



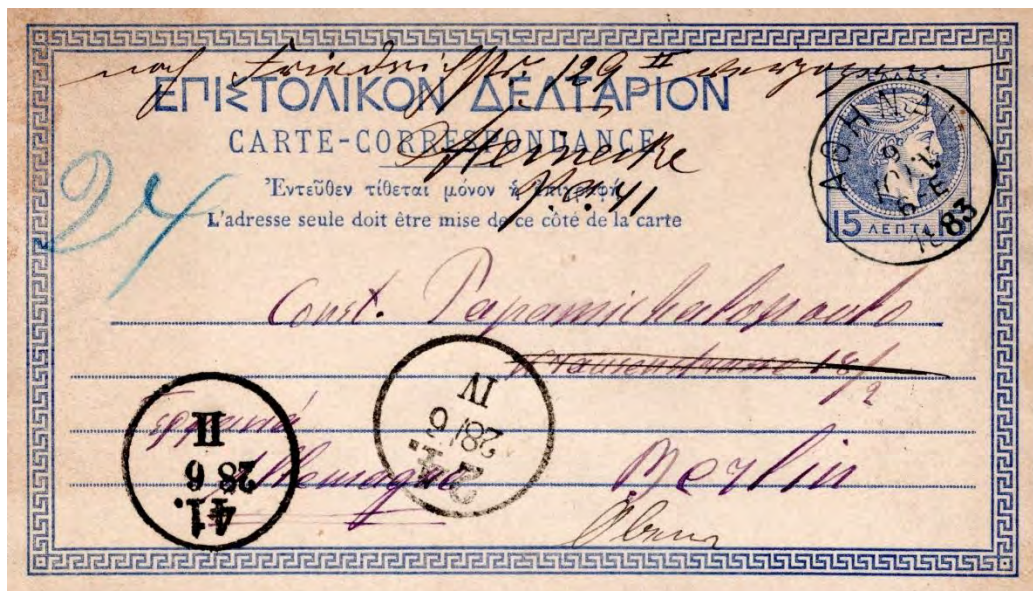
15 Lepta postal stationery card issued 1878 for international use, franked with 20L Large Hermes Head issued 1880 (without control figure back).

Posted from [ΣΥΡΑ 24.9/6.10.1882](#) (Syra) with registered number 463 to Marseille, France.

Postal Rate 35 Lepta = 15 L. for international postal stationery card & 20 L. for registered.



Posted from [KOPINΘΟΣ 18/30.10.1882](#) (Corinthos) to Budapest Hungary



Posted from [ΑΘΗΝΑΙ 9/21.6.1883](#) (Athens) [Very late date](#)
to [BERLIN 28.6.1883](#) Germany

June 30/July 12, 1883, marked the last day of validity for the 15 Lepta postage and the use of postal stationery cards for correspondence to foreign countries. The following day, July 1/13, 1883, the overseas postage rate was reduced to 10 Lepta (to all members of the Universal Postal Union), and new postal stationery cards were introduced into circulation.

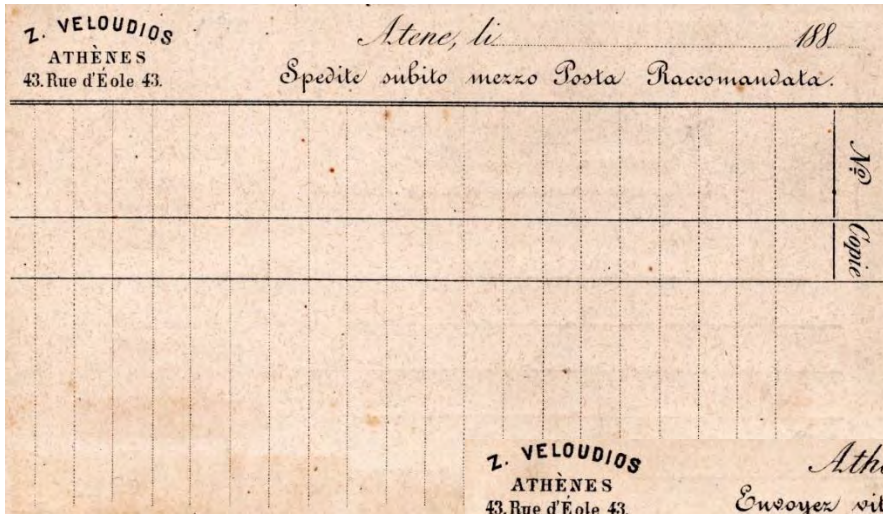
Last Day of Use

Corfu 12/7/83



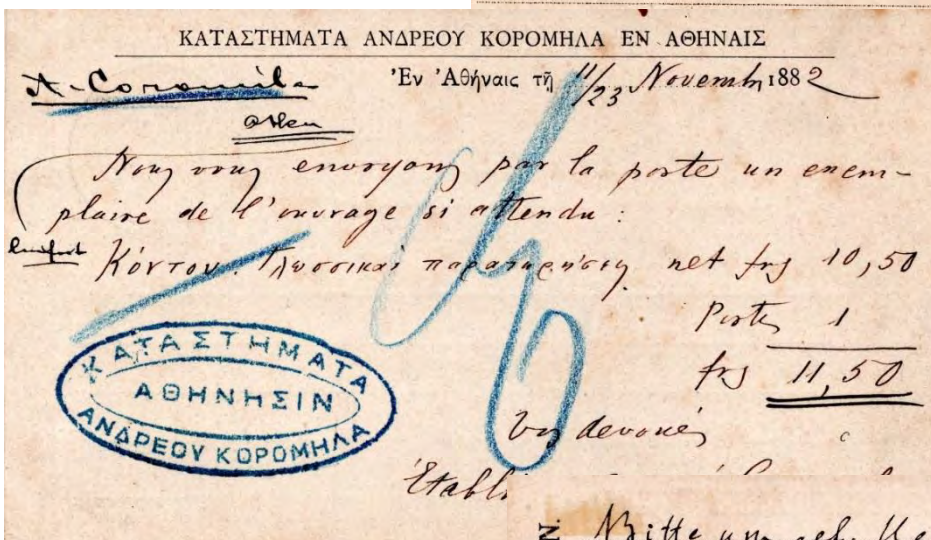
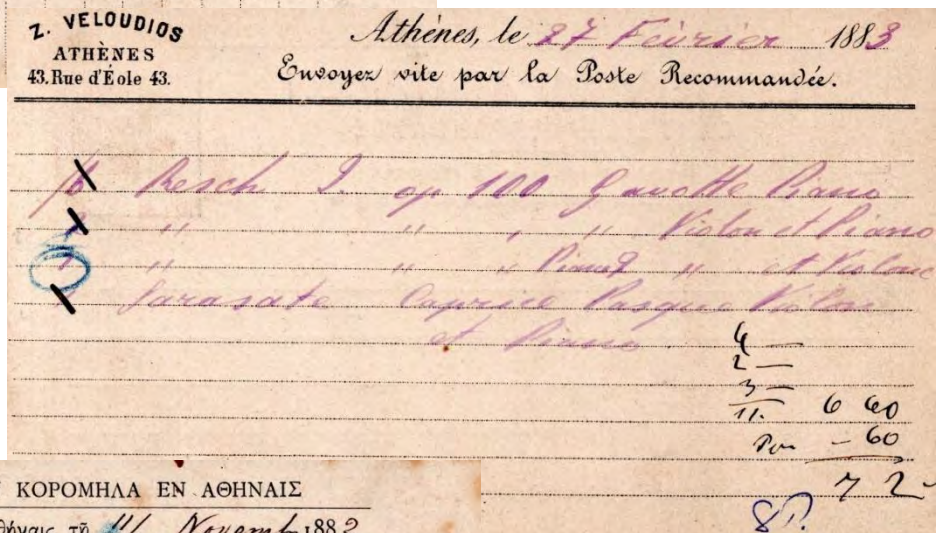
Posted from [ΚΕΡΚΥΡΑ 30.6/12.7.1883](#) (Corfu, Ionian Islands)
[Last Day of use – UNIQUE KNOWN so far](#) via Brindisi Italy to Hemmer Germany

15 Lepta postal stationery card **printed behind with private text**
(*repiquage*) from commercial company



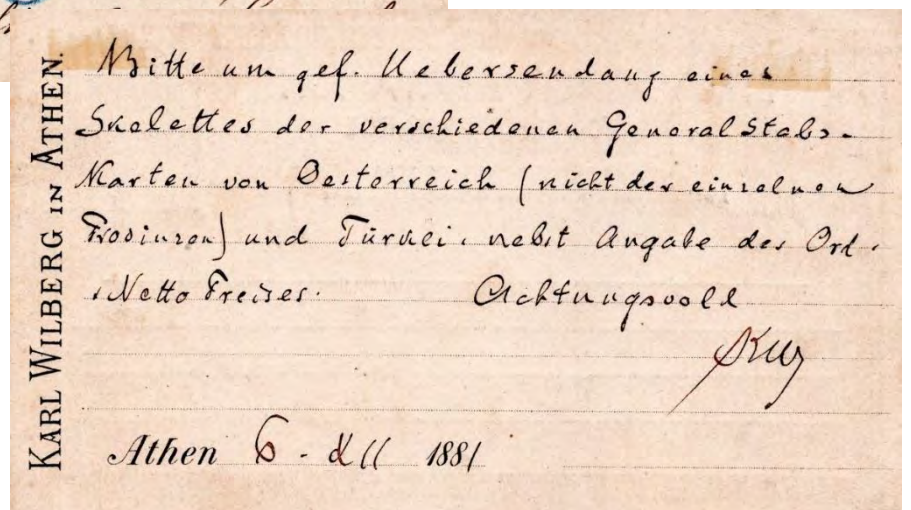
Bookstore "Z. Veloudios,
Athens"

Bookstore
"Z. Veloudios, Athens"
ΑΘΗΝΑΙ 15/27.2.1883
(Athens)



Bookstore
"Andrea Koromila, Athens"
ΑΘΗΝΑΙ 11/23.11.2.82
(Athens)

German bookseller &
Consul of German in Athens
Carl Wilberg
ΑΘΗΝΑΙ 24.11/6.12.81
(Athens)



KARL WILBERG IN ATHEN.

Mitthe um gef. Uebersendung eines
Skelettes der verschiedenen Generalstabs-
Karten von Oesterreich (nicht der einzelnen
Divisionen) und Türkei, nebst Angabe des Ort.
Netto Preises. Achtungsvoll
Kuy

Athen 6. 12. 1881

After the invention of the camera in the 1820's, any photograph of Ayvalık is not known until the early 1900s. Only some paintings and engravings are available. Somebody had to do this, because it is a historical heritage.

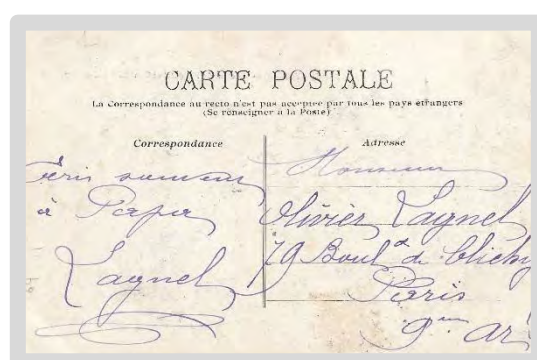
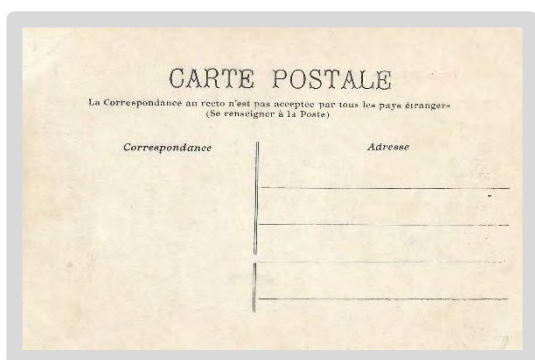
In the early 1900's, the 99% percent of population were Greek. According to the "1909 Annual of Chamber of Commerce", page 1884, there was a gentleman called "Contaxis (Jean D.)" dealing with readymade clothing industry. On the other hand, he became a postcard editor most probably in 1902 or 1903. There is no definite date of starting his new business anywhere. During my study on this subject, I noticed earliest Contaxis postcard was sent by Levant post to Paris September 11th, 1903. The latest one is June 12th, 1921, sent to Greece, with Kydonia occupation cancel. Most of the Contaxis Ayvalık themed postcards used in post between 1903 and 1910.



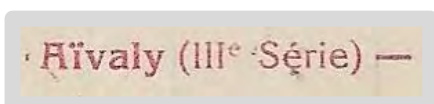
In most of the Contaxis postcards, you can see this gentleman with bowler hat, makes everybody think this gentleman is him.

The number of postcards are totally 39. One of them 2 piece foldable, 5 of them with color, 2 of them have 2 version among 5.

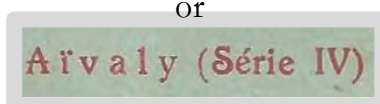
Also I noticed that there are 2 serials of postcards; 3 and 4 (Roman numeral), mentioned in front of the card, which is clearly understandable. Serial 3 consist of 6 postcard and Serial 4 consist of 9 postcards, totally 15.



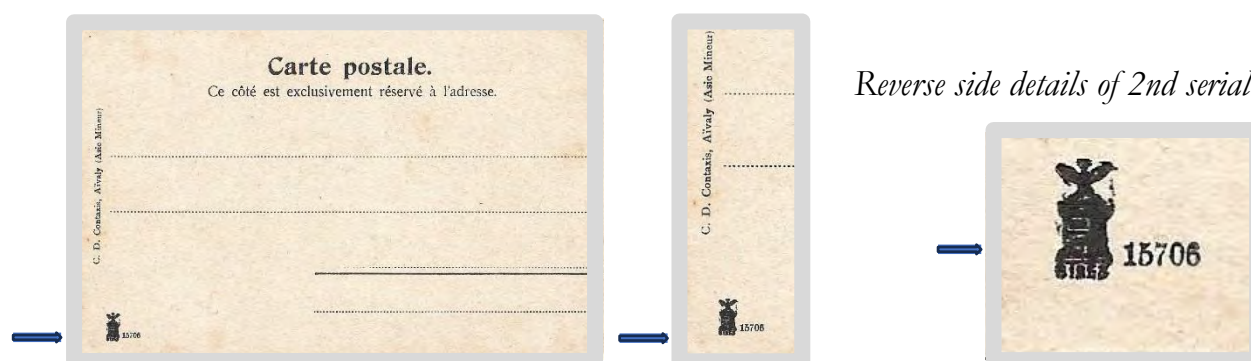
Reverse sides of 3rd and 4th serial of postcards printed completely same. Serial of postcard is mentioned at the front sides.



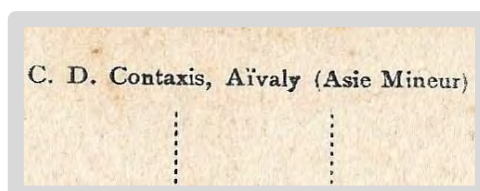
or



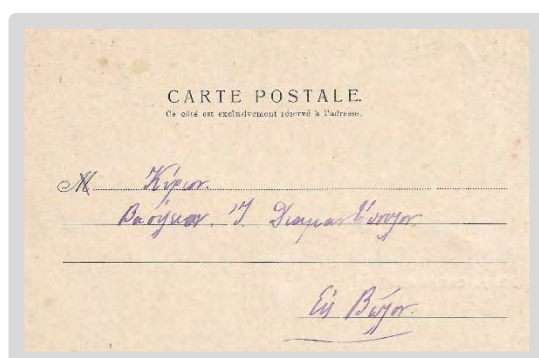
10 postcards of rest 24 has a small sign and numbers given by the printing house from 15701 to 15710 at the reverse sides. This is the 2nd serial according to my classification.



*This statement printed at the
reverse side only at the 2nd serial
postcards as the others on the
front side.*



The final part of Contaxis postcards contains 14, there is no any clue or evidence, so this is another and classified as 1st series of the Contaxis postcards. So, I can say; there are 4 serial of Contaxis 39 postcards themed Ayvalık and surrounding environment.



Headings are different style for the 1st and 2nd serials while 3rd and 4th serials are same style.

At the following pages, Contaxis postcards are displayed according to the subjects and related places of Ayvalık. Serial numbers are mentioned also.

Additionally, at the last page, “Kydonia – Aivaly” heading versions 4 Athens printed postcards are shown, similar to Contaxis style but editor is unknown yet.



2

Two postcards of Ayvalık with general view and port.



1



1



3



3

3 views from the port of Ayvalık and Angheli Yalo (Angel Sea). The view of Cafe Kanelo is one of the famous building of Ayvalık with it's stunning architecture.



2

Front door of Kydonia Academy which started education in 1803.



3

Kydonia Academy postcard.



2

Back Street of the dock with cafes and restaurants.



3



4

At the left, Palio Bakhtse (Old Garden) from the 3rd serial. At the right, bell tower of hospital and orthodox cemetery.

Ayvalık Grek Hospital and
Phalire road.
(Today, there is a marina)



2 Front door of Ayvalık Grek Hospital.



4



2

The inner courtyard of Grek Hospital.



4

2 Greks from Ayvalık, Stefanis and Thodoris.



Ayvalık Sefa villas.

1

Aziz Nicholas
neighbourhood, on
the way to Sefa.



4

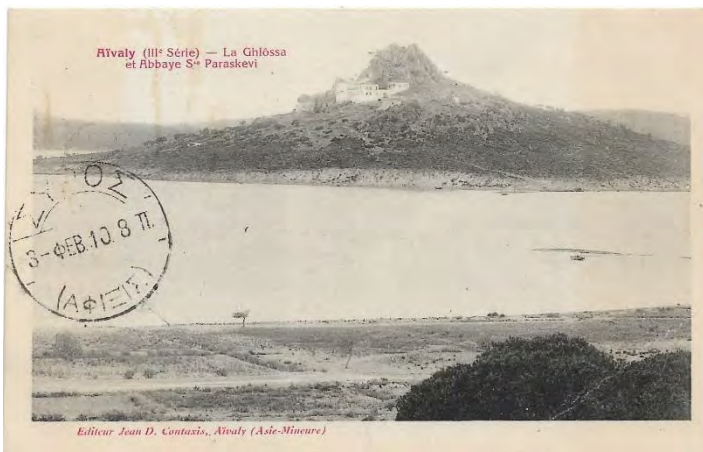


Saint Constantine chapel
and grove.



Ayvalık Saint Constantin Chapel.

2



3 Ayvalık La Ghlossa and Saint Paraskevi
Monastery.

At the right, Saint Vendredi Monastery.



2



3 Ayvalık Saint Nicolas Monastery, 3rd serial and reprinted colored copy during the same period, as a 4th serial. (The monastery building was in the Çamlık Square.)



4



2

Ayvalık Saint Nicolas Monastery.



1 Ayvalık, Gümüslü, Nikolaides Cokkinis mill, olive oil factory and distillation factory.



1 Ayvalık, tanneries. (Early 1900's, there were 32 tanneries in Ayvalık)



1

Ayvalık, Cunda Island and town.



4

Ayvalık Cunda Island and town.



2

Ayvalık Saint Jean Monastery.

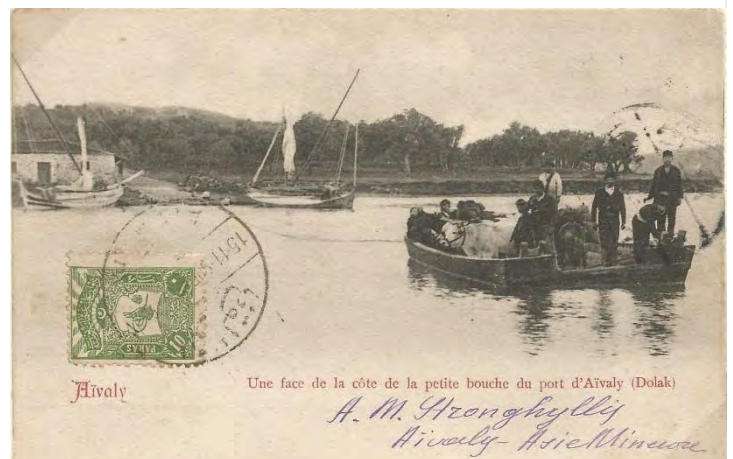
Ayvalık, Mosconissi (Cunda) Island,
Saint Dhimitri -ta- Selina Monastery.

1



1

Two postcards, two view of Dolap strait.



2



1

Ayvalık, Armudova (Gömeç)-Hacıatanas Trikopli Farm.



Ayvalık, view of Macaronia Farm.

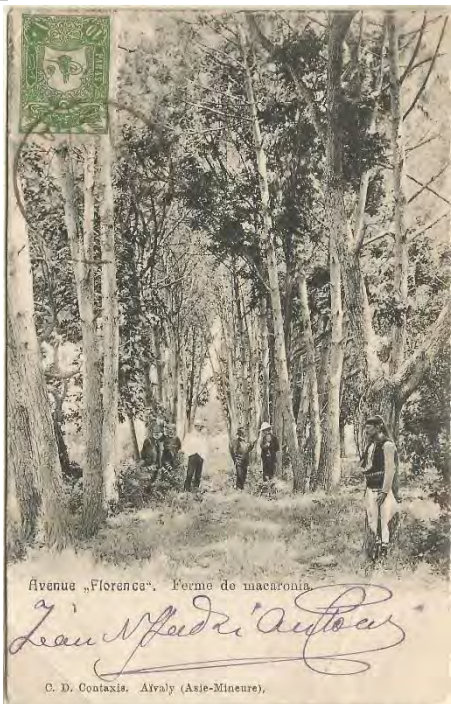
1

1 Ayvalık, view of Macaronia Farm.



1

Ayvalık, view of olive trees in Macaronia Farm.



1

Ayvalık, view of Macaronia Farm.



1

Ayvalık, Macaronia Farm, Spyridon grove



The view of Ayvalık and Sefa.
(Ziya Ağaoğulları collection)

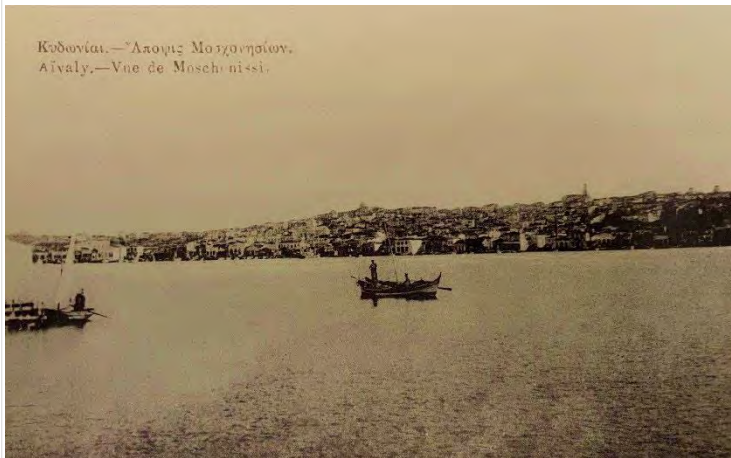


The view of Ayvalık Port and Sefa, 2 pieces folded postcard (reduced by 2/3)
(Salim Kaptan collection)

Following 5 postcards are similar to Contaxis style but the editor is unknown and probably those were printed in Greece and launched during the occupation period.



General view of Ayvalık



General view of Mosconissi (Cunda)



Saint Nicholas neighbourhood
(Seems to be the same photo of Contaxis postcard, page 6, top of the page, serial 4)



This narrow road was connection between Ayvalık and Lale Island. It was called Peratariya first, than Duba. The photo is from early 19th century. (Lale Island is a small one between Ayvalık and Cunda Island)



Saint Paraskevi Monastery.
(Seems to be the same photo of Contaxis postcard, page 6, bottom of the page, serial 2)

P.S;

Any information or material regarding editor Jean D. Contaxis or my hometown Ayvalık will be appreciated.

Please contact me: serdaryzgn@gmail.com

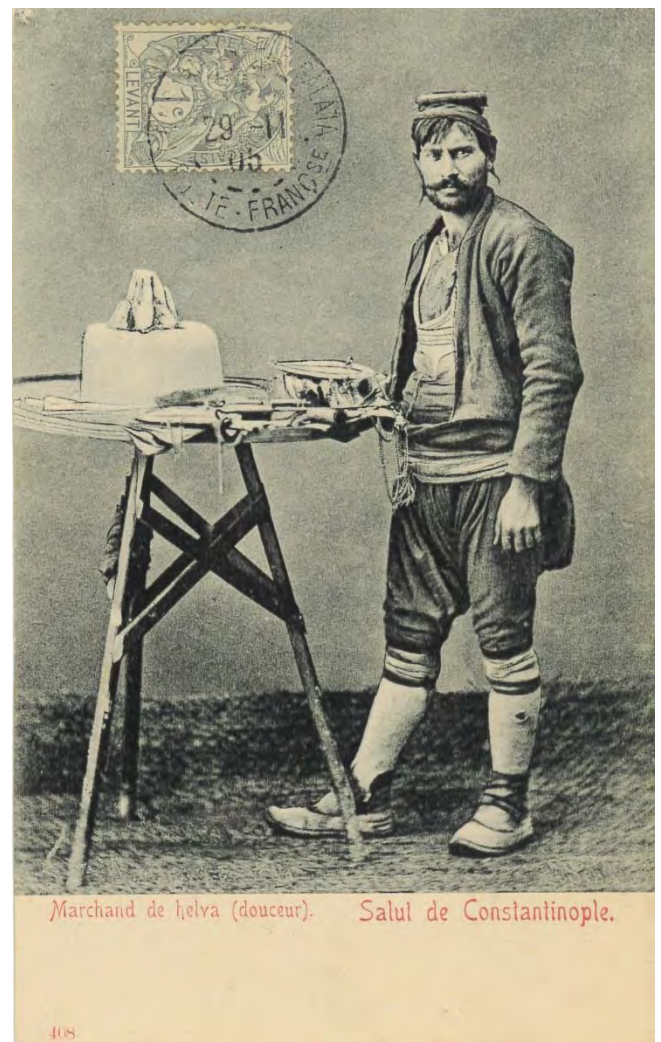
B. Kohn and the Promotion of Professions in the Ottoman Empire

by Erdal Tanil

B. Kohn was an important postcard editor and publisher during the late Ottoman Empire period. Operating in Istanbul from the late 19th century to the early 20th century, Kohn not only produced postcards but also documented the social structure, daily life, and professions of the time through visual means. One of Kohn's most notable contributions was his photographic portraits of various professions in Istanbul, which were then printed as postcards. These portraits reflect the rich diversity of Ottoman society and the daily order of traditional occupations.



*Basket Maker, Editor B.Kohn No 412,
Monochrome Collotype, UDB*



*Halva (helva) Vendor, Editor B. Kohn No 408
Monochrome Collotype, UDB
Philatelic Levant cancelation on the front*

Professions Reflected on Postcards

B. Kohn photographed individuals from various neighborhoods of Istanbul and different professional groups, and published these photographs as postcards. Kohn's postcards are not only visual documents but also important historical records that help us understand the social structure of the time. Among the professions featured on these postcards are the watchman, boatman, mancacı, toy seller, thread maker, grinder, water carrier, halva seller, fruit seller, and basket maker. Each profession carries traces of the daily lives of people in Istanbul. These professions reveal both the social fabric of the people and how trade operated.



*Fruit Seller, Editor B. Kohn
Monochrome Collotype, UDB
Posted to Montfavet at 1902
by Levant stamp & cancellation*



*Apple Seller, Editor B Kohn No 275
Monochrome Collotype, UDB
Posted to Dijon in 1903
by Levant cancellation*

Professions such as "watchman" and "boatman" were particularly significant in the streets and waters of Istanbul during the Ottoman period. Watchmen ensured the security of the city, while boatmen managed daily transport across the Bosphorus. On the other hand, professions like "mancaci" (vendor of food for street animals) and "toy seller" played important roles in meeting the entertainment and consumer needs of the people. By featuring these professions on postcards, Kohn provided a deep insight into how trade and social relations were shaped.



Holy Water Carrier, Editor B.Kohn

Monochrome collotype, UDB

*Posted to Wien with 20 paras stamp
& Austrian Post Konstantinopel cancelation*



Knife Sharpener, Editor B. Kohn

Monochrome collotype, UDB.

*The age of Knife Sharpener was mentioned
specifically as 101 years old*

B. Kohn's postcards not only reflect professions and professional groups but also different aspects of daily life. Elements like coffeehouses and tradespeople were important parts of social life at the time, and these places and social interactions are also present in Kohn's postcards.

Coffeehouses in Ottoman society were not just places to drink beverages, but also centers for social and cultural interaction. People would not only have tea or coffee but also discuss current events, converse, entertain themselves, or simply spend time. In

Kohn's postcards, scenes of people talking, playing chess, or waiters serving coffee might have been depicted. This is a detail that helps us understand the socio-cultural fabric of Istanbul at the time.

Tradespeople were another crucial element of daily life in Ottoman society. Various artisans and shopkeepers were an essential part of the city's economic life. In B. Kohn's postcards, groups like Street Vendors or tradesmen represented individuals interacting with the public and sustaining Istanbul's commercial life. These postcards not only promoted these professions but also reflected the lifestyle of the people of that era.

*Bohemian
tinsmiths*

Editor B. Kohn

*Monochrome
collotype, UDB*

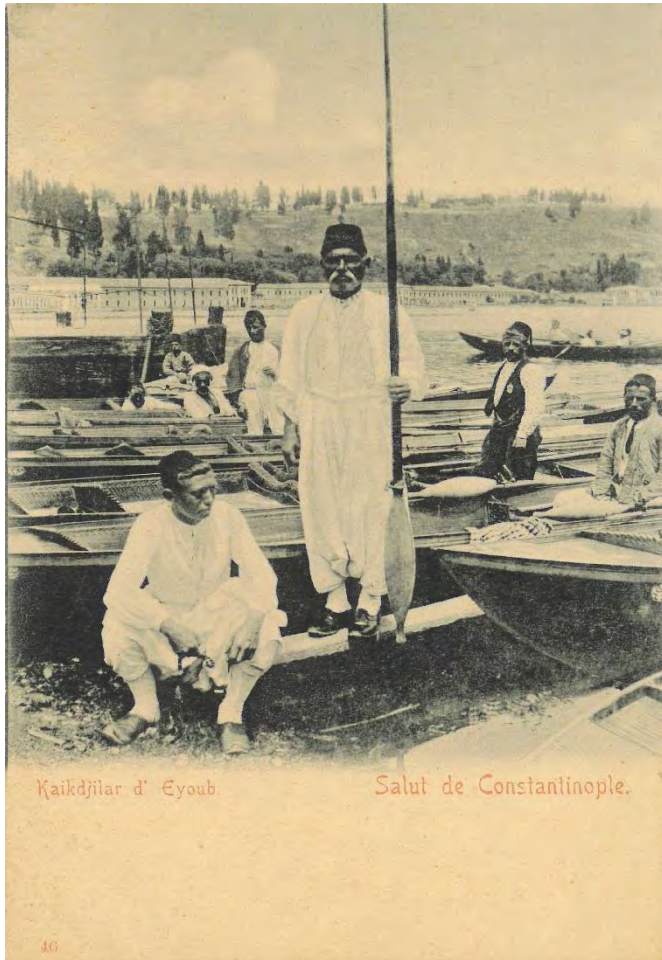


*Porters with their
Chief from Haidar
Pasha quay*

Editor B.Kohn

*Monochrome
collotype, UDB*

All these elements make Kohn's postcards more than just visual documents; they serve as historical sources that help us deeply understand the social fabric of Ottoman society. Kohn's works are like seeing the city through the eyes of someone spending a day on the streets of Istanbul; they are a time capsule carrying traces of both commerce and social life.



Rowers "Kaikdjilar"

Editor B. Kohn No 46

Monochrome Collotype, UDB

*Eyüp Vet and the Pharmacist
Military Junior High School in
the background.*



The Intersection of Art and Commerce

B. Kohn was not only a postcard editor but also a cultural ambassador. He worked with artists from various cities and rural regions of the Ottoman Empire, ensuring each postcard was produced with great care. Kohn's postcards also reflect the printing technology and artistic understanding of the era. Often prepared as black-and-white photographs, these postcards serve as both nostalgic mementos and unique documents of social history that have survived to the present day.

Dog Sellers
Editor B. Kohn
Monochrome collotype, UDB



Toy seller
Editor B. Kohn
Monochrome collotype, UDB



B. Kohn's printing techniques were very similar to those used by other prominent editors of the period, such as the Ludwigsohn Brothers. Both Kohn and the Ludwigsohn Brothers employed high-quality printing methods that ensured their postcards were not only visually striking but also durable, allowing these historical documents to survive over time.

*Yarn
Manufacturer
Editor B. Kohn
Monochrome
Collotype, UDB*



An important distinguishing feature of B. Kohn's postcards, in contrast to the Ludwigsohn Brothers' work, was the presence of a period (.) at the end of the "Salut de Constantinople" or "Salut de Brousse" text. This subtle detail set Kohn's postcards apart, making them easily recognizable to collectors and enthusiasts of the period.



Grocer (Ironmonger), Editor B.Kohn No 510

Monochrome Collotype, UDB

Posted to Belgium in 1906 with Brousse double language cancelation

All of the postcards featured in this article were printed before 1906 and exhibit the "Undivided Back" (UDB) style, which means the back of the card is not divided into sections for an address and message. This feature was standard in the postcard design before the introduction of the divided back in 1906 by the Universal Postal Union.

Coffee Shop

Editor B.Kohn

Monochrome

Collotype, UDB

Posted to France at

9.11.1905 with

French Levant

Stamp and

Constantinople

Pera Poste France

cancelation



We have also seen DB style postcards of B. Kohn in his last period of life.



Guard "Bekdji", Editor B. Kohn

Monochrome Collotype, UDB

Posted to Paris at 20.01.1904

It seems like it was written as if it's a letter

During the period when Kohn was active, postcards were of great interest in Europe and other parts of the world as well. These postcards, depicting every corner of the Ottoman Empire and various professional groups, became important souvenirs not only for the local population but also for foreign tourists and collectors.

Conclusion

B. Kohn's work created a visual archive that offers important clues about the social structure of the Ottoman society. Each postcard serves as a promotional tool for a profession and a visual document of Istanbul during that time. Kohn's efforts can be considered a cultural heritage and a pioneering contribution to postcard collecting. These postcards allow us to better understand the lifestyle, people, and professions of the era.



Feeder of Street dogs "Mancaci"

Editor B. Kohn

Monochrome Collotype, UDB

In the Ottoman Empire, there was a profession called "mancacılık". A "mancaci" sold food for cats and dogs, which were called "manca."

People would buy this food from the mancaci and feed it to the animals. The mancaci regularly fed the street animals in place of others. This profession reflects the society's sense of responsibility and care for animals at the time.

References:

Professions subject to postcards at Ottoman Empire (Refik Erdal TANIL)

Yılmaz, G. (2019, September). Ottoman Era portcard editors, 1895–1923 Anatolia, Thrace, İstanbul. (p.146–147). İstanbul: Personal Publication

Multilingual Trade Cards and the Power of the Non-Muslim Population in the Ottoman Trade Economy

by Hakan Akcaoglu

The Ottoman Empire began to lose its former grandeur starting from the 18th century, unable to keep pace with Western industrialization and falling behind in science and technology. The Ottoman Empire, due to its religious conservatism, also failed to catch up with the Western Enlightenment. Lost wars no longer brought spoils, yet the ruling class of the empire did not cut any of its expenses, leading the state to gradually become poorer. After every lost war, the Ottoman Empire granted various privileges to the strong Western states under the system of capitulations. The commercial life of the empire fell under the control of these Western states, and Western merchants were exempted from taxes, exploiting the empire almost like a colony. Particularly after the wars lost in the early 19th century, the trade life of the Ottoman Empire fell into the hegemony of the great Western powers. The increasing taxes impoverished the people, and the non-Muslim population in the empire did not enjoy equal rights with the Muslim population. This was a significant problem, especially for those living in rural areas outside the large cities.

Although the improvement of the situation of the non-Muslim population was a part of every agreement with Western states, the practical applications were never found sufficient. This inadequacy was not only due to the shortcomings of the implementations but also because of the Western powers' use of emerging nationalist movements to instigate trouble. Despite the Ottoman state's efforts to restore internal peace through the Tanzimat and Constitutional movements, unrest never ceased.

The Trade Economy and the Influence of Non-Muslim Merchants

In the Ottoman Empire's large cities, trade was dominated by the non-Muslim population. One of the main reasons for this was that a large portion of the available Muslim population was engaged in military service. Additionally, young Muslims who received religious education were distanced from both commerce and military service. For many years, non-Muslim subjects were exempt from military service, or if they did serve, they were only assigned to auxiliary roles. In contrast, they paid higher taxes than their Muslim counterparts. While the non-Muslim population made up 20–25% of the general population, they were responsible for 60–70% of the total taxes collected by the empire. The literacy rate among Muslims in the empire was less than 5%, whereas the non-Muslim

population had access to their own schools and missionary schools, and in some cases, they could even study in Europe. As a result, they had the opportunity to expand their horizons and communicate more effectively with their European counterparts, increasing their chances of success in trade.

The period's powerful states were England, France, Italy, and Russia. Despite Germany being one of the strongest powers of the time, its influence on the trade life in Ottoman cities was not very visible. Trade with Germany remained confined to the elite class and did not spread to the general population, which had a significant impact on the Ottoman Empire.

By using their commercial privileges, Western powers had formed partnerships with non-Muslim Ottoman citizens they favored, provided them with credit, and granted them consular representation. Muslim Turkish merchants found it difficult to compete in this environment. Some non-Muslim Ottoman citizens, in order to take advantage of the tax exemptions, switched their allegiance to the Western powers and obtained privileges as their citizens.

In the Ottoman Empire, particularly in large cities, non-Muslim merchants began to use promotional and advertising strategies common in Europe. During this period, the most significant advertising tools were wall posters, newspaper and magazine ads, and the beautifully designed invoices and promotional cards of their businesses. Starting in the 1890s, multilingual trade cards began to be used. Initially, the graphic designs of these cards were copied from the famous store cards in large European cities, but over time, unique designs began to emerge. Eventually, skilled designers in the Ottoman Empire also began to specialize in this area.

Multilingual Trade Cards in the Ottoman Empire

The non-Muslim minorities living in the Ottoman Empire were Armenians in the east and Greeks in the west. In the large cities, multilingual shop cards used by businesses were printed in languages corresponding to the population density: Armenian, Greek, Hebrew for Jewish citizens, Bulgarian, and, to a lesser extent, Serbian and Russian. Additionally, Old Turkish (Ottoman) and the international language of the time, French, were always present. Businesses, according to their customer profile, could use their native language first, followed by other minority languages, in addition to Old Turkish and French. These cards could be used for advertising purposes, but they were also given when an order was placed or a down payment was made. Whether for promotional purposes or necessary for

an order, these cards had to be affixed with a fiscal stamp and sealed to make them legally valid, thereby generating additional revenue for the state.

The Rise of Shop Cards and Changes in Later Periods

By the early 20th century, these shop cards had reached their peak both in quality and quantity. However, with the abolition of the capitulations in 1914, the impact of World War I on Europe, and the subsequent migrations and forced departures, these cards lost their former grandeur. Nevertheless, some businesses continued to produce these cards. Following the establishment of the Turkish Republic and the transition from Ottoman Turkish to the Latin alphabet, the use of these cards gradually decreased, though they continued to exist until the 1950s.

Conclusion and Legacy

These beautifully designed cards, which presented a visual feast, were one of the most significant examples of the multicultural Ottoman Empire of the period. Unfortunately, that colorful mosaic of people has broken apart, and we no longer live in the same country with many of the peoples who once spoke those languages. What remains are these finely crafted cards and some of the handwritten notes on their backs, representing a beautiful legacy of the past.



Jean K. Galanoudis and Stamatis Nikolaidis
Shoe Trading Sultanhamam Constantinople
4 languages Old Turkish, French, Greek, Hebrew



J. Nikitits Erben

Gun Merchant Bahcekapi Constantinople

4 languages Old Turkish, French, Greek, Armenian



Benyamin Araboglu & Fils

*Depot de Cristaux, porcelaines,
lamps, Tünel Galata*

*3 languages Old Turkish,
French, Greek*

75 para fiscal stamps on the
back





Anastasios Apostolidis

*Warehouse of Trunks
and bags*

Sultanhamam Constantinople

*3 languages old Turkish,
Greek, French*



S. V. Vergopoulos–Central Store

Various objects crystal, porcelain lamps

Tunel–Galata–Yuksekkaldırım

3 languages old Turkish, Greek, French



Theodore Chryssomalis

Dentiste Sirkedji

4 languages Old Turkish, French, Greek, Armenian



Konstantinou N. Volovini

Crystal lamps Mega Glass store Galata

3 languages old Turkish, Greek, French



Tamianos Papazian
Shoe Maker
Mahmout Pacha
5 languages
old Turkish,
Armenian
French, Greek,
Hebrew



A. & G. Gallerini
Construction Materials Tophane
4 languages old Turkish, French, Greek, Armenian



P. Macastar

Metals

Rue Mahmoudie

Galata

4 languages old

Turkish, French,

Greek, Armenian



A. XANTHOPOULOS

GALATA

Rue Mahmoudie № 30

GRAND ASSORTIMENT

de Fusils de Chasse

Douilles de Chasse

ACCESSOIRES DE CHASSE

REVOLVERS

CAROUCHES, ETC.

A. ΞΑΝΘΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ

ΓΑΛΑΤΑ

ΟΔΟΣ ΜΑΧΜΟΥΔΙΕ 30

ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΙΣ

ΜΕΓΑΛΗ ΣΥΛΛΟΓΗ

Οπλων κυνηγετικών,

Περιστροφικών, Καρυλίων,

Φουγγιών και λοιπών

Χρειωδών Κυνηγίου

Ա. ԲԱՆԹՈՒՐՈՒԼՈ

ԶԻՆԺԻՐԼԻ ԽԱՆ

ԱՍԵՆ ՏԵՍԱԿ ՈՐՍԻ

ՀՐԱԶԱՆՆԵՐ

ՈՐՍԻ ՎԵՐԱԲԵՐԵԱԼ

ԱՄԵՆ ՆԻՔԵՂԷՄԵՐ

ԱՏՐՋԱՆԱԿ ՓԱՄՓՈՒՇՏ

ԵԼՆ.

ԿԱԼԱԹԱ

Մահմուդիե ճամշտի 30



A. Xanthopoulos

Hunting shells, shot guns

Galata

4 languages old Turkish, French,

Greek, Armenian

60 para fiscal stamps on the back



CHR. PAPPADOPOULOS
 MACHINES
 À COUDRE
 en tous genres
 AIGUILLES CISEAUX
 ET DE FERS À REPASSER
 Ourzoun Tcharchi Djadessi
 N° 314-316
 PRIX MODÉRÉS

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ΚΑΤΑΣΤΗΜΑ ΡΑΠΤΟΜΗΧΑΝΩΝ
 ΠΑΝΤΟΣ ΕΙΔΟΥΣ
 ΨΑΛΙΔΙΑ, ΒΕΛΟΝΙΑ ΚΑΙ ΣΙΔΗΡΑ ΤΗΣ ΚΟΜΛΑΣ
Χρ. Παππαδοπούλος
 Οδός Ουζούν Τσαρσί Τσαδεσί Άρ. 314, 316
 ΤΙΜΑΙ ΣΥΓΚΑΤΑΒΑΤΙΚΑΙ

Chr. Pappadopoulos
 Sewing Machines
 Uzun Charshi

 4 languages old
 Turkish, Greek,
 Armenian, French

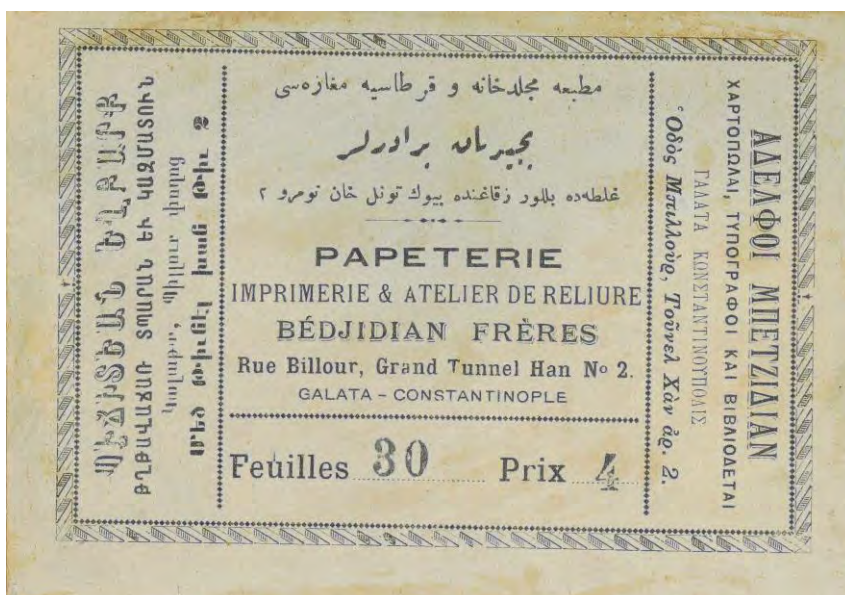


اوسپ طولابان
 هر نوع ساعت قوردون و مجوهرات
 متعلق وكموشه
 تاجرى اوانى
 استانبولده چارشوى كبرده ورقي خان

Գ.Տ.Ո.Ս.Տ.ՈՒՆ
 ԺԱՄԱՅՈՅՅԻ. ՇՆԹԱՅԻ ԵՒ ԳՈՂԱՐԵՂԻՆԱՅ
Յ. ԹՕԼԱԵԱՆ
 Կ. ՊՈԼԻՍ, ՄԵԾ ՇՈՒԿԱՅ, ՎԱՐԱԳՅԻ ԽԱՆ
ΩΡΟΛΟΓΙΑ, ΑΛΥΣΕΙΣ
 ΚΑΙ
 ΚΟΣΜΗΜΑΤΑ ΠΑΝΤΟΣ ΕΙΔΟΥΣ
I. ΤΟΛΑΓΙΑΝ
 ΜΕΓΑΛΗ ΑΓΟΡΑ, ΒΑΡΑΚΤΖΗ ΧΑΝ
 ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΙΣ
MONTRES ET CHAINES
 EN TOUS GENRES
 BIJOUTERIE ET JOAILLERIE
J. TOLAYAN
 Grand Bazar, Varakdji Han.
 STAMBOUL

J. Tolayan
 Jewelry Grand Bazaar
 4 languages old Turkish, French, Greek, Armenian

*4 languages
old Turkish, Greek,
Armenien, French*



Cleanthes Hadjopoulos
Mega store of modernizations
Yeni Djami
3 languages old Turkish,
Greek, French
7 kurush fiscal stamps on the back



Ghrisezhorites Brother

Beyoglu

3 languages old Turkish,

Armenian, Hebrew



Garabed M. Pusgolian

Antiques Grand Bazaar

4 languages old Turkish, Armenian, Greek, French

28/6/73
 Nissim Moutal & Co
 نسیم موطل و شرکاسی
 غلامه : یکی جامع : تونل سوقاق : نومرو 67
 سرلی و چینگو اوانی؛ خردوات؛ آلودونیوم؛ غاز اوجاتلری مع تفرعات؛ بللوریه؛ پورسان و سائرہ
 נסים מוטאל אי קומפ"
 נאחאס, לייני-דזאמי, קאנזאס טונל "67
 קינדקליריח, הינגזניס, פורקליז, ציליריח, גאזיראס, לזוננזיוס היטס"
 NISSIM MOUTAL & Co
 Galata,
 Yéni-Djami, rue du Tunnel, 67.
 QUINCAILLERIE, ÉMAILLÉS,
 PORCELAINES, VERRERIE, ALUMINIUMS,
 RÉCHAUDS A PÉTROLE
 ET ACCESSOIRES EN TOUS GENRES
 ΝΙΣΙΜ ΜΟΥΤΑΛ & Σας
 Γάλατα,
 Γενή Δξαμή, ὁδὸς Τουνέλ, Ἀρ. 67
 ΧΟΥΡΔΑΒΑΤ, ΕΜΑΓΕ,
 ΠΟΡΣΕΛΑΝΑ, ΓΙΑΛΙΚΑ, ΑΛΟΥΜΙΝΙΟΥΜ,
 ΓΑΖΙΕΡΕΣ
 ΚΑΙ ΗΛΙΚΑ ΠΑΝΤΟΣ ΕΙΔΟΥΣ



Nissim Moutal

Porcelain lamps

Galata

4 languages old Turkish, Hebrew, Greek, French

60 para fiscal stmps on the back

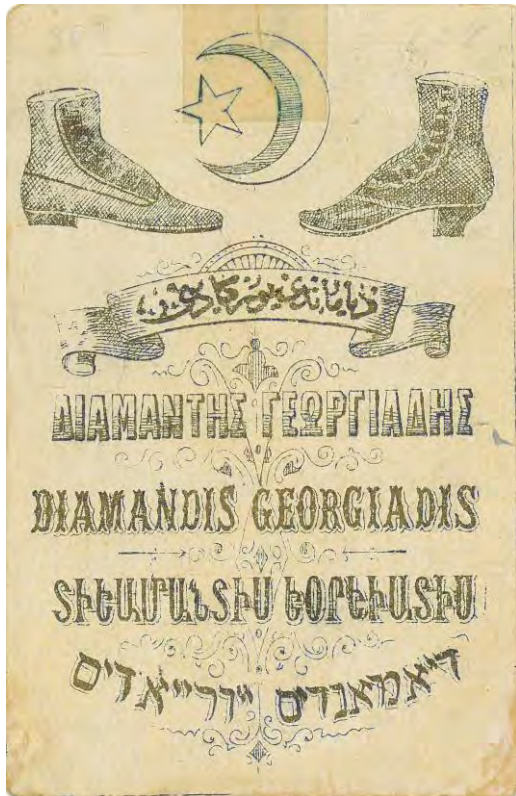
M. Stone.
 Der gestohlene Kuss. — Le baiser volé.
 — Zloděj — Det stjålne Kysset.
 قوجو پينجي اوغلي
 م. نوع ماكيه تميزجي - استانبول - جادريجلر جاده سنده نومرو 128-130
 ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΣ Γ. ΠΕΧΙΝΔΖΙΟΓΛΟΥ
 ΕΠΙΔΙΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ ΠΑΝΤΩΝ ΕΙΔΟΥΣ ΜΗΧΑΝΩΝ
 ΣΤΑΜΒΟΥΛ, ΤΣΑΔΗΡΔΖΙΛΑΡ ΤΣΑΔΔΕΣΙ ΑΡ. 128-130
 ԾԶԾ ՓԷՇԻՆԺԻՕՂԼՈՒ
 ՀԻՐ ՆԷՎ ՍԱԹԻՆԱ
 ԲԱՍԻՐՃԻՍԻ
 ԻՍՏԱՆԳՈՒԼ
 ՋԱՅԵՐՃԻԼԱՐ ԺԱՏԷՍԻ
 Ն.Ո. 128-130
 CONSTANTIN G. PECHINDJIOGLOU
 Mecanicien & Reparations
 en tous sortes des machines
 STAMBOUL
 TCHADIRDJILAR DJADDÉSSI
 NO. 128-130

Constantin G. Pechindjioglou

Machine reparations

4 languages

old Turkish, Greek, Armenian, French



Diamandis Georgiadis

Shoe and boots

5 languages old Turkish, Armenian,

Hebrew, Greek, French

Alyanakides

Manufacturers Store

Cakmakcilar Constantinople

4 languages old Turkish, Greek, Armenien, French



Hotel Asie Mineure

İzmid (Nikomedia)

4 languages old Turkish, Armenien, Greek, French

THE FIRST SHOPPING CENTER OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Orosdi Back (Ömer Efendi Store)

by Hakan Yilmaz

The mid-19th century was a period of rise in terms of the vision of entrepreneurs and merchants of the Western world. This rise of the Western world, which created a new demand pattern, resulted in the gradual abandonment of the traditional lifestyle, especially in Istanbul, towards the end of the 19th century. As a result of the close relationship established with the West, consumption habits quickly began to follow Western norms and the newly formed middle-class shaped import habits accordingly. Undoubtedly, large stores played important roles in this process.

Therefore, it can be said that the Ottoman shopping centers, the covered bazaars, were replaced by multi-story stores after the 19th century.



The first store company that we can call a shopping mall (AVM) in the Ottoman Empire, OROSDI-BACK wholesale-retail stores, started its commercial life as a clothing store founded by Adolf Orosdi in Istanbul in 1855, and continued its activities under the name "Ömer Efendi Store" in order to be welcoming to the Ottoman subjects. Orosdi-Back is one of the pioneers of places where most of the necessities of life in the Ottoman Empire were found together and where easy shopping opportunities were widespread.

This store, which has a wide range of products from perfume to ornaments, hardware to toys, haberdashery to laundry, resembles today's modern shopping centers, and after becoming a company,

Adolf Orosdi was a Hungarian officer who had came to Istanbul as an exile in 1855.

The BACK family, a Jewish family of Austro–Hungarian origin located in Istanbul, deals with this store and establishes a partnership with Adolf Orosdi. From this partnership, the OROSDI–BACK company is formed by combining the surnames of Adolf (Leon) **OROSDI** and Herman **BACK**, the head of the Back family. The partnership turns this store into a chain. The first store in Istanbul was opened in Galata. As the business expanded, the large store building in Eminönü was built and moved here.

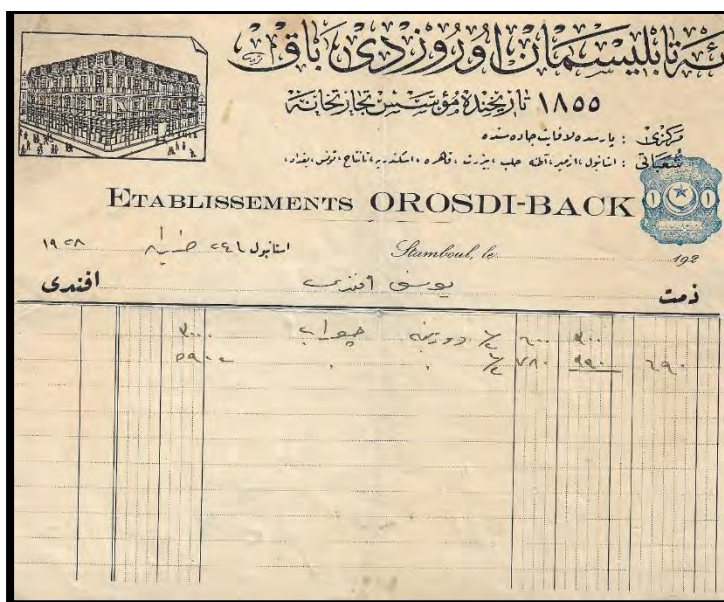
This building was used for many years as both a sales and production facility.



Interesting logo is the "elephant riding a tricycle". This logo, which started to be used in 1891, before the incorporation process, was the only registered logo used throughout the company's operating period.

The picture on the invoices below show the first branch building of the Orosdi–Back store in Eminönü–Bahçekapı, It was opened in there, because of the Sirkeci train station, which opened that year, would revitalize the area,

The details about the design of the new store are, the ground floor of the five–story store was arranged in the form of Paris Bistro. The first floor of the store has draperies, watches, umbrellas; the second floor has yarn, hardware, perfumes, and an accounting and cash desk; the third floor has linoleum, laundry, and musical instrument sections; the fourth floor has clothing sections; and the fifth floor has a dining hall and a fabric warehouse.



The Examples of invoices from the company.

A sample from Mehmet Akan Collection

The headquarters moved from Istanbul to Paris in 1888.

An envelope sample with the Orosdi-back Letterhead with France Headquarters address (126 Rue La Fayette, Paris).

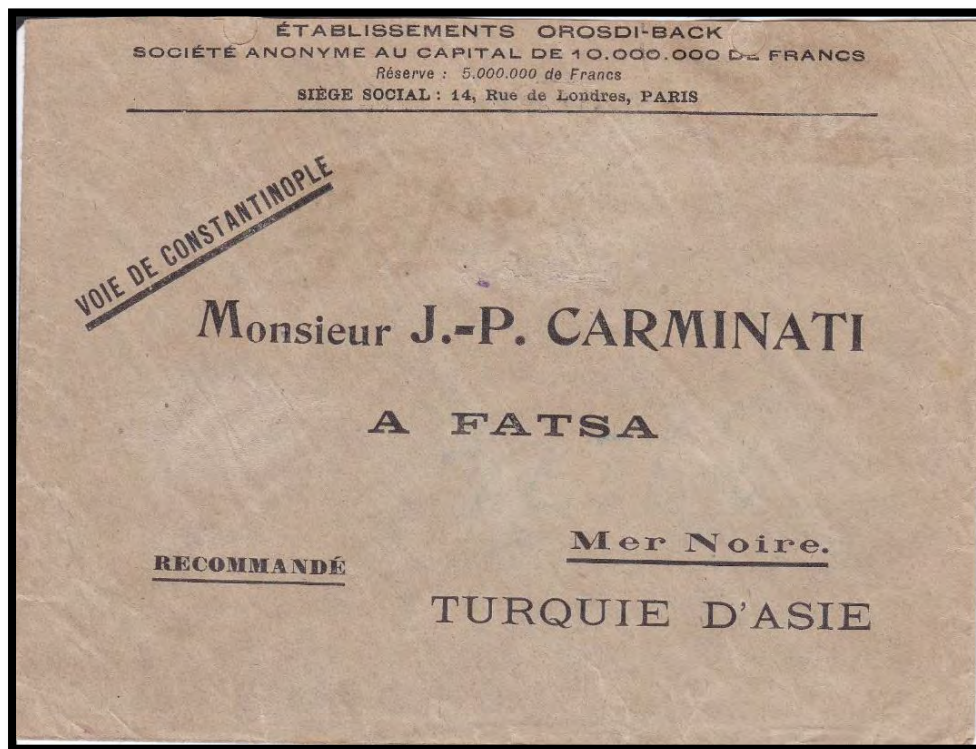


The initials of the Orosdi-back name, "OB", were applied (Perfin) to the stamp on the envelope.



On the Right, Censored envelope sent from Istanbul store to Augsburg, Germany in 1915.





On the Left,
envelope sent
from Paris | to
Ereğli -Turkey.

Stamps have
been removed.



On the Right,
1 piasters
Ottoman letter
envelope sent
from Edirne to
Istanbul store.

The Istanbul store's commercial activities continued during the early days of the Republic.

Cover with Republic period 1926 London print stamps.



After receiving the support of Ottoman Bank, they increased the number of branches to 25 during the First World War. They opened stores In Europe Vienna, Manchester, Birmingham, Lyon, Roubaix, Milan, Chemnitz, Barmen and Gablonz.

In the Ottoman Empire Istanbul, Izmir, Bucharest, Salonika, Samsun, Cairo, Alexandria, Port-Said, Aleppo, Beirut, Bizerte (Tunisia), Tanta, Baghdad, Basra, Plovdiv (Plovdiv) and Tunis until 1903.



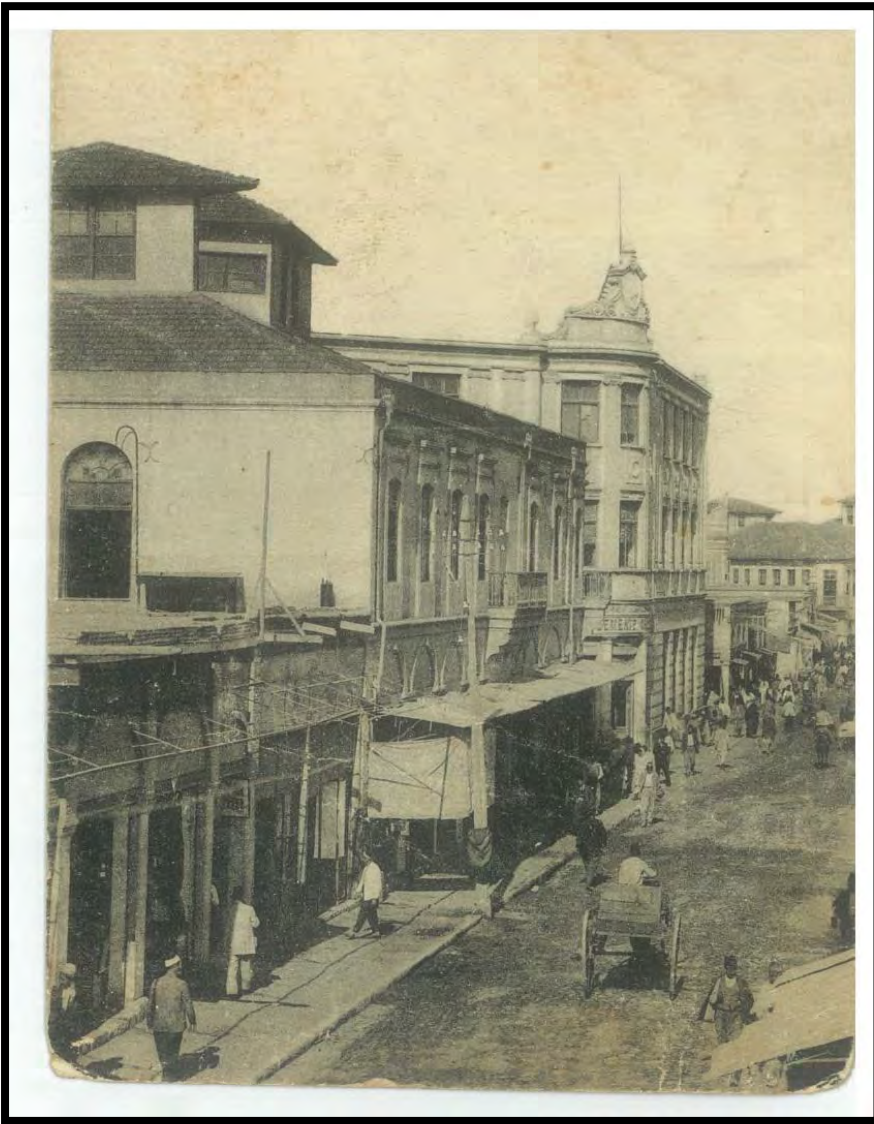
Censored envelope sent from Izmir store to Wien (Without Arabic letterhead).

The Izmir store's activities continued during the early days of the Republic.

Two covers with different letterhead are presented and both of them have Republic period stamps of 1924 Star and Crescent issue and 1926 London print respectively.



Another branch of Orosdi-Back was also active in Adana. Europe, which had supplied its cotton raw material from America until 1865, turned to the Middle East after that. Adana, located in Çukurova, the source of cotton raw material, was in a position where sea and railway transportation could be provided simultaneously due to the newly opened Mersin-Adana railway line. These conditions encouraged Orosdi-Back to open a branch in Adana, and the company started commercial activities in Adana in 1903, but opened its branch in 1909. While the company directed the retail trade of the region, it also maintained control of the Adana cotton market for a long time. Some mills in the region gained the opportunity to introduce their products to domestic and international markets through the Adana branch. The store, which began to lose its effectiveness at the beginning of the Republic period, suffered a major fire in 1927. Instead of reviving the store, the company preferred to liquidate it. The place where the store, which has left deep memories and traces in the social memory of the region, operates is **Horozdibeği**, which is still the pronunciation of the concept of Orosdi-Back by the local people.



*Postcard of Adana
Orosdi-Back store.*

*The building with
the dome on it is at
the back of the
photo.*

The Adana store continued its operations without interruption during the French occupation.

Two examples of envelopes sent from Adana stores to the İstanbul during the French occupation are presented.

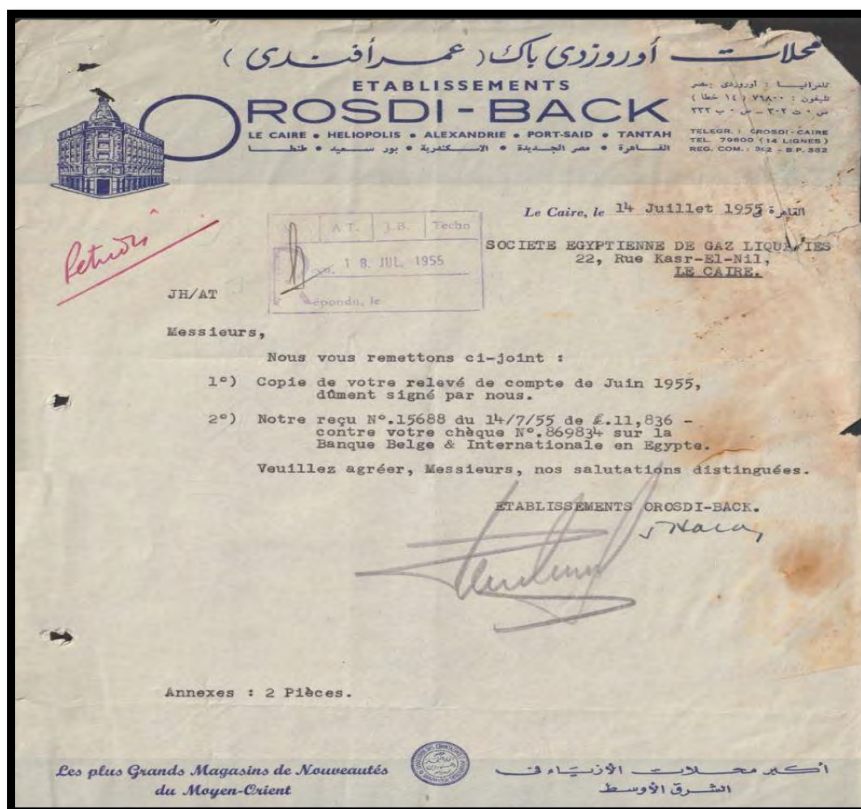
The envelope in above used French "Cilicie" overprint stamps, while the envelope below has stamps with "Cilicie" overprint applied to the Ottoman cigarette stamp.





On the Left, a registered envelope sent from Adana to Paris before 1927 fire, there are Ottoman & Republic period stamps on the envelope.

Cairo Branch. The six-story rococo building opened in 1909; in its better days when it was still a private-sector company.



The company has now grown. The Orosdi family and the Back family also form a partnership by marrying their children. The stores opened in Egypt were a turning point for the company. A document dated 1955 from the Egypt-Cairo store, with the letterhead Orosdi-back, written to the Egyptian gas company. There is a picture of the building belonging to the Cairo store on the document.

A document dated 1955 from the Egypt-Cairo store, with the letterhead Orosdi-back, written to the Egyptian gas company. There is a picture of the building belonging to the Cairo store on the document.

The success achieved in Egypt did not go unnoticed by the French Emperor François-Joseph, who gave the title of "de surany" to the Back family, as he directed the Egyptian society towards France. After these developments, both families (Orosdi and Back) moved their residence from Istanbul to Paris.

Port Said Branch has been opened in Prince Farouk Street



Two postcards showing the store opened in Port Said.



The Aleppo-Syria Branch, which opened in the early 1900s, continued its activities after Aleppo was taken over by the Ottomans and during the years when the French occupation continued.

A sample of an envelope sent from Aleppo to the Istanbul center in 1920. The stamps used on the envelope are the surcharges applied by the Syrian–Arab Kingdom on Ottoman fiscal stamps.




The name Orosdi–Back was also used as **OROZDİ–BAK** in the early years Republic after the Ottoman Empire.



An example of an envelope with the letterhead "OROZDI–BAK" sent by airmail from Istanbul to France in 1939.

Examples of invoices with OROZDİ-BAK and Orosdi-Back (a sample from Mehmet Akan Collection)




Etablisman OROZDİ-BAK

1855 tarihinde müesses ticarethane

MERKEZİ: Pariste Lafayet Caddesinde 126

ŞUBELERİ: İstanbul, İzmir, Adana, Halep, Bizert, Kahire, İskenderiye, Tunus, Bağdat, Beyrut

ÉTABLISSEMENTS OROSDI-BACK



İstanbul, 5/11/1931

Serdar Zade Yusuf Kemal Efendi **Zimmeti**

x	1/2	Çay	Zilet mahonası	50	510	
x	1/2			mk	600	
	1/2		Lozpor		240	1350
	1	Kurt	Pambukaki	101	56	
	11			10%	224	283
	6	Çay	İpek kordor	50/2	210	210
	5		Kurdela	2527/9	425	
	12			12	1250	1685
x	1	Çay	Sapka	Kurt	1320	
x	1/2			Storba	1100	
x	1/2			A	1500	
x	1/2		Karkot	8036	225	
x	1			8025	240	1985
						8510

The economic and social effects of Orosdi-Back on the Ottoman society are, which is understood to have played an important role in the social transformation of the Ottoman society as well as its commercial aspect.

Shopping at Orosdi-Back was seen as an element of prestige in society. This situation, which can be considered as the prototype behavior of today's brand addiction, was also an expression of the definition of social status and economic class through a brand in its own era. Orosdi-Back prepared catalogs and presented them to the public in order to encourage product variety, product quality, aisle arrangement, fashion following and unnecessary luxury consumption, and introduced itself as "the largest and cheapest business house in Turkey" in the advertisements it gave to newspapers. Undoubtedly, it encouraged the groups with high purchasing power to buy unnecessary items.

It is undeniable that the store, which influenced the luxury consumption, has a serious follower group. It is also undeniable that a natural separation has occurred between the regulars of the store, which is understood to strategically attract the attention of female customers in the advertisements and win them over, and the public, whose agenda does not include unnecessary luxury consumption.

Becoming the focal point of visibility with eye-catching display windows, Orosdi-Back, which, similar to today, is a place that is frequented not to shop but just to wander around, has played a leading role in the emergence of a consumer class that is constantly eager to buy things, even if they do not need them.

Orosdi-Back served as a brand representing especially the Armenian, Greek, Jewish and Levantine groups in the Ottoman social structure, as well as the Western Muslim population that adopted the Western lifestyle. The biggest aim of the brand, which always offers new products to the groups that follow European fashion closely, is to attract more customers to the store by making them boast, "I bought it from Orosdi-Back"

This first shopping center and continued its commercial activities in Turkey until it transferred its assets to Sümerbank in 11 September 1942.

It was purchased and used by Sümerbank during the Republic period. It is still known as Sümerhan.

(Fatih-Büyük Postahane Cad.No:78)



References

Hakan Yılmaz Collection

Mehmet Akan Collection

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