

Greece developed an independent postal service in 1828 at the time of its independence from Ottoman rule, issuing the first postage stamps, the Large Hermes Heads, in 1861. A few years prior to this in 1859, a set of 3 Victoria-head stamps had been issued for the Ionian State, which were under British Rule from the Napoleonic era until 1864, marking the earliest stamps for modern-day Greece.

Greece's borders expanded during the Balkan Wars in 1912-13, and many of the so-called New Territories used overprinted Greek stamps for a time until their incorporation into the Postal System. In 1916, Greece was divided over the issue of joining the Entente Powers or remaining Neutral. The Venizelos government supported joining the war and set up a separate government in Salonica, later overprinting stamps with the term Provisional Government. A military coup deposed the royal family in 1922 and a Republic was established. Germany occupied Greece from 1941-44, regular stamps of Greece continued to be used during the occupation.

There is a rich postal history of local stamps and occupation overprints for many of the various islands and island groups that are part of modern-day Greece. Occupation overprints occurred with at least Italian, Greek, Turkish, British, German, French, Allied and Russian forces. Rather than sort through the various emissions by conflict, I have chosen to sort by island groups, in a more or less alphabetical (not geographical) order.



1. Greece, Kingdom

Independent  
1861 – 1916  
#56



2. Greece, Venizelos Govt.

Independent  
1916 – 1922



3. Greece, Civil War

Independent  
1922 – 1923



4. Greece

Independent  
1924 – 1941



5. Greece, German Occ.

Germany Occupation  
1941 – 1944



6. Greece

Independent  
1944 – Present

Kastellorizo (formerly Castellorizo) is a Greek island just two miles from the Turkish coast, comprising the easternmost point in Greece. In 1913 the local population declared their independence from the Ottoman government, prompting Greece to send military support from Samos. In 1915, the French navy took control of the island. The first stamps for the occupation, in 1920, were French Offices in Turkey stamps overprinted with "O.N.F. Castellorizo" (Occupation Navale Française) and "B.N.F. Castellorizo" (Base Navale Française). In 1921 the island was awarded to Italy and thus incorporated into their Aegean colony. In 1922 Italian stamps were overprinted with Castellosso (pictured), and then in 1923 a set of regular issues were crudely printed with the heading Occupazione Italiana Castellosso, along with continued use of the overprinted series. In 1943 the island was retaken by the Allies, and Greek stamps overprinted for use in the Dodecanese were used until the island formally joined Greece in 1948.



Castellorizo, French Occ.

France Occupation  
1920 –



Castellorizo, Italian Occ.

Italy Colony  
1922 – 1932

6810 GRC-C CRETE

4

Italy, Britain, Russia and France wrested control of Crete from Turkey in 1898. An autonomy was declared and placed under the administration of the Prince of Greece. Stamps of 1898-1899 were issued for the British Zone at Heraklion and in the Russian Zone at Rethimno. In 1908 Crete voted for union with Greece, which was put into effect in 1913.

See also Austrian, French and Italian post offices in Crete.



1. Crete, British Administration - Heraklion

Great Britain Occupation  
1898 - 1899



2. Crete, Russian Administration - Rethimno

Russia Occupation  
1899 -



3. Crete

Crete Independent  
1900 - 1910



Crete, Official

Crete Independent  
1908 - 1910

6810 GRC-CM CRETE, MILITARY

1

Military air parcel post stamps overprinted "Inselpost" (Island Post) were produced for use by German troops occupying Crete following the Italian withdrawal from Greece in WWII.



4. Crete, German Feldpost

Germany Field Post  
WWII -  
*expertised*

6810 GRC-D AEGEAN ISLANDS - GENERAL

5

This section needs reorganization.

A 1912 set of three stamps for the Dodecanese Islands were produced in Greece and secretly distributed on the islands, in opposition to the Italian occupation after Italian forces had seized the islands from the Turks. They were never placed into use. Hermes (p. 366).



Aegean Islands

1912 -



Aegean Islands, German Occ.

Germany Occupation  
1943 - 1945



Aegean Islands, Greek Occ.

Greece Occupation  
1957 -



Dodecanese Islands

Greece Occupation  
1912 -

The Dodecanese Islands are the southeasternmost island chain in modern Greece, close to the Anatolian mainland, including Rhodes, Kos, and Karpathos. Dodecanese means twelve islands, although there are 14 main populated islands including Castellorizo. Italy wrested control of the islands from the Turks in the Italian-Turkish War 1911-1912, and administered them as colonies until formal annexation in 1923. The fascist government embarked on a program of Italian settlement of the ethnically Greek islands. German forces occupied the islands from 1943-1945 and declared them to be part of the Italian Social Republic although maintaining military administration, followed by British administration and finally handover to Greece in 1947.

Overprints for the Dodecanese include a general issue overprinted for Italian Islands in the Aegean, and individual overprints for 13 islands.



Aegean Islands, Italian Occ.

Italy Occupation  
1912 - 1943



Astipalaia (Stampalia), Italian Occ.

Italy Occupation  
1912 - 1932



Calchi (Karki), Italian Occ.

Italy Occupation  
1912 - 1932



Calino (Calimno), Italian Occ.

Italy Occupation  
1912 - 1932



Caso, Italian Occ.

Italy Occupation  
1912 - 1932



Karpathos (Scarpanto), Italian Occ.

Italy Occupation  
1912 - 1932



Kos (Coo), Italian Occ.

Italy Occupation  
1912 - 1932



Leros, Italian Occ.

Italy Occupation  
1912 - 1932



Lipso, Italian Occ.

Italy Occupation  
1912 - 1932



Nisiros, Italian Occ.

Italy Occupation  
1912 - 1932



Patmos, Italian Occ.

Italy Occupation  
1912 - 1932



Rhodes (Rodi), Italian Occ.

Italy Occupation  
1912 - 1945



Simi, Italian Occ.

Italy Occupation  
1912 - 1932



Tilos (Piscopi), Italian Occ.

Italy Occupation  
1912 - 1932

Greek stamps in 1947 were overprinted with the initials for Military Administration of the Dodecanese.



Dodecanese Islands

Greece Occupation  
1947 -



Rhodes, Germany Fieldpost (Private Issue)

Germany Military  
1944 -

The earliest postage stamps to be inscribed in Greek were a set of three denominations printed in London in 1859 for use in the United States of the Ionian Islands, a federation of seven islands under British Colonial Rule from 1815-1864, after having passed through Ottoman, Russian and French control. The seven main islands were Corfu, Cephalonia, Cythera, Ithaca, Paxos, Lefkada and Zakynthos (Zante). The islands were handed over to the Greek government in 1864.

Corfu was occupied by Italy in 1923 following the Corfu Incident, an international event that tested the League of Nations and resulted in significant gains for Mussolini. An Italian Post office opened during the occupation from Sept. 11 to Sept 26., 1923, providing Italian stamps overprinted Corfu.



**Ionian Islands**

Great Britain Colony  
1859 – 1864  
*genuine*

Corfu was occupied by Italy in 1923 following the Corfu Incident, an international event that tested the League of Nations and resulted in significant gains for Mussolini. An Italian Post office opened during the occupation from Sept. 11 to Sept 26., 1923, providing Italian stamps overprinted Corfu.

The Ionian islands were variously occupied by German and Italian forces during the Second World War. The German occupation of Zante resulted in Italian Ionian Island occupation stamps being further overprinted with an inscription including the date 2-X-43, an occupation which lasted eight days. The Italian occupation of Zante resulted in an overprint of Occupazione Militaredi Zante 1-5-XIX.

According to Scott (2009) Greek stamps overprinted in Italian for Cerigo, Paxos, and Lefkas are fraudulent.



**Cephalonia and Ithaca, Italian Occ.**

Italy Occupation  
1941 –



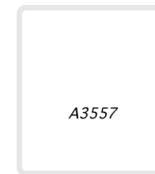
**Corfu and Paxos, Italian Occ.**

Italy Occupation  
1941 – 1943



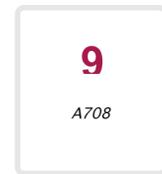
**Corfu, Italian Occ.**

Italy Occupation  
1923 –  
#8



**Corfu, Serbian Military Post**

Serbia Field Post  
1917 – 1917



**Ionian Islands, German Occupation**

Germany Occupation  
1943 –



**Ionian Islands, Italian Occ.**

Italy Occupation  
1941 –



**Zante, German Occ.**

Germany Occupation  
1943 – 1944



**Zante, Italian Occ.**

Italy Occupation  
1941 –

6810 GRC-K MOUNT ATHOS

2

Mount Athos is a religious site on the mainland of Greece, famous for its monastery, only visitable by males. Turkish, Russian, and Greek posts have existed for this orthodox Christian destination.



Mount Athos, "Monks Republic"

Ottoman Local  
1880 - 1880

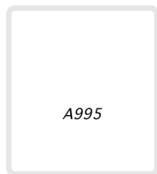
6810 GRC-M NEW TERRITORIES, GREEK OCCUPATION

5

The New Territories refers to the large northern expansion of Greece in the First and Second Balkan Wars (1912-1913), as the Greeks resoundingly defeated Turkish troops. The term encompasses the capture of Macedonia, Epirus, Crete, Mount Athos and the Northern Aegean islands.

New Greece stamps were sold in captured territories in Macedonia and Epirus before their integration into Greece. Smyrna (Izmir) was occupied by Greece in 1919, but returned to Turkey. Cavalla and Dedeagatch are cities in Western Thrace occupied by Greece in the Balkan War (see also Russian post offices abroad.) Mount Athos, historically Byzantine, and under de facto Russian Orthodox administration (see Russia Post Offices Abroad) was captured by Greece in 1913 and resolved to be a neutral territory. Overprinted New Greece stamps were produced in 1916. Mount Athos was fully incorporated into Greece in 1923.

I don't have a good place to put the 1898 Turkish occupation stamp of Thessaly (Central Greece) for now.



Cavalla (Kavala)

Greece Occupation  
1913 -



Dedeagatch (Alexandroupoli)

Greece Provisional  
1913 - 1913



Mount Athos, "Holy Parish"

Greece Local  
1916 - 1916



New Greece (Greece in Turkey)

Greece Occupation  
1912 - 1913



Smyrna, Greek Occupation

Greece Occupation  
1919 -



Thessaly, Turkish Occ.

Ottoman Occupation  
1898 -

6810 GRC-N NORTHERN AEGEAN ISLANDS, GREEK OCCUPATION

4

These are four major islands in the Northeast Aegean Sea that were captured by Greece from Turkey during the period known as the First Balkan War (1912-1913), during which the Turks lost most of their remaining European territory. Islands with Greek populations declared their independence from Turkey followed by Greek military occupations. Note that Mytilene is the same island as Metelin on Russian stamps, now known as Lesbos or Lesvos.



Chios, Greek Occupation

Greece Occupation  
1913 -



Icaria, Greek Occupation

Greece Occupation  
1912 - 1913



Lemnos, Greek Occupation

Greece Occupation  
1912 - 1913



Mytilene (Lesbos), Greek Occupation

Greece Occupation  
1909 - 1913

6810 GRC-R GREECE, NATIONAL RESISTANCE STAMPS

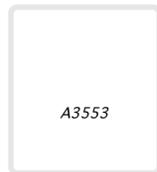
9

Stamps of the National Resistance were produced for a number of groups across a wide political spectrum fighting against the fascist (German, Italian) powers during the second World War. Hermes (p. 353) catalogs nine resistance armies with propogandistic stamps and overprints.



Agrinion (E.L.A.S.)

Greece Resistance  
1944 - 1944



Evros (E.L.A.S.)

Greece Resistance  
1944 - 1944



Free Greece (E.A.M.)

Greece Resistance  
1944 - 1944



Free Greece (E.D.E.S)

Greece Resistance  
1943 - 1943



Free Mountaineer Greece (E.D.E.S.)

Greece Resistance  
1944 - 1944



Lefkas (E.D.E.S.)

Greece Resistance  
1944 - 1944



Lesbos (E.D.E.S.)

Greece Resistance  
1944 - 1944



Preveza (E.D.E.S.)

Greece Resistance  
1944 - 1944



Serres (E.D.E.S.)

Greece Resistance  
1945 - 1945

6810 GRC-S SAMOS

4

The Principality issues, considered private, are covered in Hermes.



1. Samos, Principality

Samos Provisional  
1899 - 1912



2. Samos, Provisional Govt.

Samos Provisional  
1912 - 1914



3. Samos, Greek Admin

Greece Administration  
1914 - 1915

6810 GRC-T THRACE

5

Thrace is the mainland region that is today split between Greece (Western Thrace) European Turkey (Eastern Thrace) and Bulgaria. It was the subject of numerous offensives and occupations in the Balkan Wars (1912-13), the first World War, and the Greco-Turkish War (1919-1922). The treatment follows the sequence of the Scott catalogue.



1. Thrace, Giumilzina (Komotini) Issue

1913 -

2. Western Thrace Autonomous Govt.

Autonomous  
1913 -

3. Thrace, Allied Occupation

Allies Occupation  
1919 - 1920

4. Western Thrace, Allied Occupation

Allies Occupation  
1919 - 1920

5. Thrace, Greek Administration

Greece Occupation  
1920 -



6. High Commission of Eastern Thrace

Greece Occupation  
1920 -

6810 GRC-Z GREECE, LOCAL POSTS

1

Long Island was the British name for an island (Uzun Ada) in the Gulf of Smyrna at the entrance to the harbor of Smyrna (Izmir). In 1916 British Forces took the island from the Turks. The British commander overprinted Turkish fiscal stamps "GRI Postage" by typewriter, once the Turkish stamps were exhausted a new set of crude stamps were made by typewriter.



Long Island (Chustan)

Greece Local  
1916 -