

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 Castelrosso (pictured), and then in 1923 a set of regular issues were crudely printed with the heading Occupazione Italiana Castelrosso, 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

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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

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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

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AEGEAN ISLANDS - GENERAL

5

This section needs reorganization.

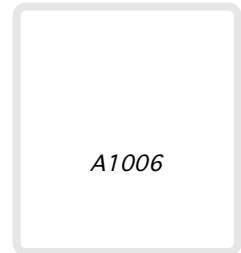
A 1912 set of three stamps for the Dodecanese Islands were produced in Greece and secretly distributed on the islands, in opposition to the Italian occupation after Italian forces had seized the islands from the Turks. They were never placed into use. Hermes (p. 366).



A2307

Aegean Islands

1912 –



A1006

Aegean Islands, German Occ.

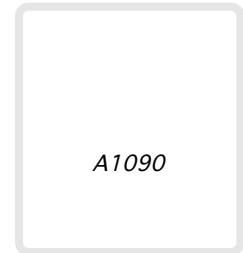
Germany Occupation
1943 – 1945



A1137

Aegean Islands, Greek Occ.

Greece Occupation
1957 –



A1090

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 formally 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 –

6810 GRC-I IONIAN ISLANDS

1

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

6810 GRC-J IONIAN ISLANDS, OCCUPATION

8

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 –



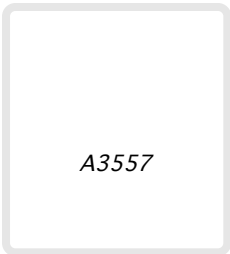
Corfu and Paxos, Italian Occ.

Italy Occupation
1941 – 1943



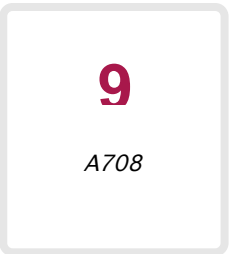
Corfu, Italian Occ.

Italy Occupation
1923 –
#8



Corfu, Serbian Military Post

Serbia Field Post
1917 – 1917



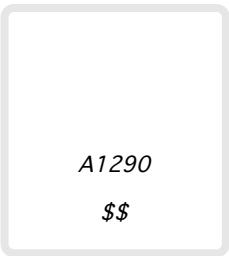
Ionian Islands, German Occupation

Germany Occupation
1943 –



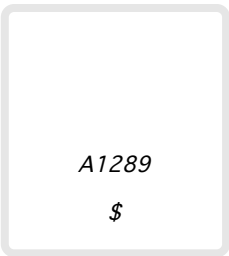
Ionian Islands, Italian Occ.

Italy Occupation
1941 –



Zante, German Occ.

Germany Occupation
1943 – 1944



Zante, Italian Occ.

Italy Occupation
1941 –

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MOUNT ATHOS

2

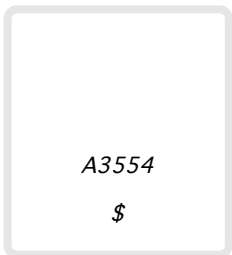
Mount Athos is a religious site in Macedonia on the mainland of Greece, famous for its monastery, only visitable by males. The monastery has always been semi-autonomous, as a site holy to all Orthodox Christian faiths. It was under Byzantine and then Ottoman control for over 1,000 years, although it retained some semi-autonomous status. From 1873-1881 Turkish stamps were overprinted for local use within the city. Mount Athos was captured by Greece in 1913, as one of the New Territories, and though predominantly populated by ethnic Greeks, remained under de facto Russian Orthodox administration. Russia ran their own Post Office for Mount Athos (see Russia Post Offices Abroad for the 50th anniversary 1908 stamp). In 1916 the Greek Government overprinted Greek stamps with the an inscription that translates to "Holy Parish of the Sacred Mountain" but the stamps were never placed into use (found only in Hermes.) Mount Athos was fully incorporated into Greece in 1924.

Since 2008, the Hellenic Postal Service (Greek Post) has issued special stamps for Mont Athos as a semi-autonomous state, which are available at its two post-offices.



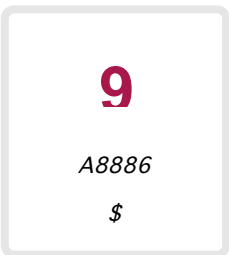
1. Mount Athos, “Monks Republic”

Ottoman Local
1880 – 1880



2. Mount Athos, “Holy Parish”

Greece Local
1916 – 1916



3. Mount Athos

Greece Local
2008 – Present

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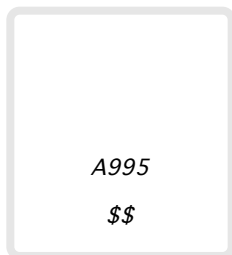
GRC-M

NEW TERRITORIES, GREEK OCCUPATION

5

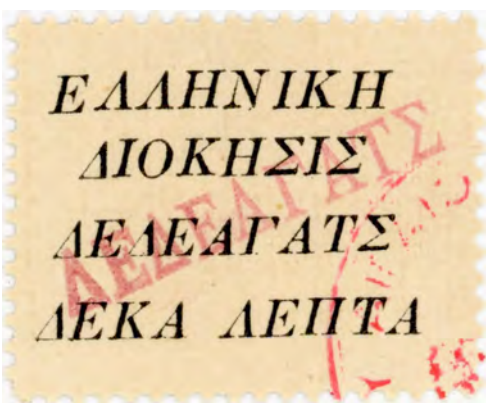
The New Territories refers to the large northern expansion of Greece in the First and Second Balkan Wars (1912-1913), as the Greeks resoundingly defeated Turkish troops. The term encompasses the capture of Macedonia, Epirus, Crete, Mount Athos and the Northern Aegean islands.

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.) Overprinted New Greece stamps were produced in 1916. Mount Athos was fully incorporated into Greece in 1923.



Cavalla (Kavala)

Greece Occupation
1913 –



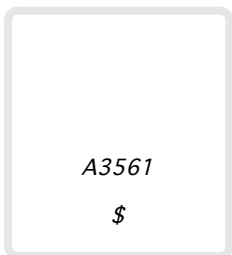
Dedeagatch (Alexandroupoli)

Greece Provisional
1913 – 1913



New Greece (Greece in Turkey)

Greece Occupation
1912 – 1913



Smyrna, Greek Occupation

Greece Occupation
1919 –

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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

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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 propograndistic 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

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SAMOS

4

The Principality issues, considered private, are covered in Hermes but not in Scott.



1. Samos, Principality

Samos Provisional
1899 – 1912
2. Samos, Provisional Govt.

Samos Provisional
1912 – 1914
3. Samos, Greek Administration

Greece Administration
1914 – 1915

6810

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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.

Gumuljina was a short-lived Independent city-state in Western Thrace, now known as Komotini, lasting from July 28 to September 16, 1913.



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 –

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GRC-Z

GREECE, LOCAL POSTS

1

Long Island was the British name for an island (Uzun Ada) in the Gulf of Smryna 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 –